

MY ARMY DAYS, December 3, 1943 to December 5, 1945.

Domestic – Went to Fort Devens, December 2, 1943. Boarded Europe bound ship in Boston night of May 12, 1944

Overseas – Sailed from Boston May 13, 1944 to December 5, 1945 when I was discharged.

LIST OF PEOPLE WHO ARE MENTIONED IN MY LETTERS.

Mrs. Ackerson – Baptist church member.

Mrs. Arnold – my 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher.

Mrs Dutton – Baptist church member.

Marjorie Klay – childhood playmate.

Miss Craig – Warren Scott's maternal aunt.

Almon Fredericks – relative of my mother's.

Emily "Em" Fredericks – wife of Almon.

Mrs. Foster – lived on Walnut St.

Mrs. Ethel Hendrie – neighbor on Walnut St., went to the Baptist church often with us.

Miss Keany – my French teacher in high school.

Mr. Marsell – Minister of the Baptist church where we attended.

Colin Marsell – minister's son who was badly wounded in the military.

Alice Martin – bookkeeper/secretary of my dad's boatyard, Simms Brothers.

Mrs. Newell – neighbor on Walnut St.

Ruby Newell – childhood playmate.

Betty Richardson – childhood playmate.

Warren Scott – classmate of mine.

Alice Shedd – classmate of mine.

Ken Smith – classmate of mine.

Gertrude Spinney – classmate of mine who chased me for a date. She turned out to be a nuisance.

#May 16, 1944. Written on board ship. Address was Inf. Co. E, A.P.O 15318, c/o Postmaster N.Y., NY. Miniaturized V-mail. #1

Dear Mum and Dad,

I don't know when these letters get to you for, of course, they can't be mailed until we get to land. The officers on board are censoring the letters now and this speeds the mail.

This sea trip is quite interesting for I've never seen anything like this before. The day after leaving port, we hit a small storm and were there a bunch of men seasick. So far I haven't felt it at all but don't know what would happen if we ran into a real storm. It was sunny the first day and everyone the ship was on deck. But the next day we found hardly anyone there. Today I noticed that they are all over it and are all on deck again. Some of the boys never saw the ocean but claim now they are making up for lost time.

We get good meals, better than some back in the States. The only thing is that we get only two meals a day. At first I could feel the difference but now it doesn't bother me.

There is a P.X. on board and I can get almost everything I need - from candy to supplies. The prices are so cheap I can hardly believe it.

With love, Harold

#May 16, 1944. Written on board ship. Address was Inf. Co. E, A.P.O 15318, c/o Postmaster N.Y., Miniaturized V-mail. #2

Dear Mum and Dad,

The Red Cross has provided each of us with a little kit full of handy articles which are very nice. There is a nice compact sewing kit in it which I like the most.

I like to stay on deck all day –not upstairs as some say – for I like the feel of the salt air. I enjoy watching the ship push aside the water and like to watch the other ships with us. It certainly is a wonderful sight to see all the ships push ahead through all kinds of weather but still keep the same formation.

I've been to a couple of movies which are quite old but enjoyed them just the same. The first night I went there were only a few of us in the hall for most were sick. But the next night it was packed. Tonight, they're giving a stage show but would rather stay near my bunk.

With love, Harold

#May 16, 1944. Written on board ship. Address was Inf. Co. E, A.P.O 15318, c/o Postmaster N.Y., NY. Miniaturized V-mail. #3

It seems as though while I'm on board I've lost track of time. Sunday we had a service and I was wondering why they had a service that day until I found out the day. The chaplain is a wonderful speaker and very forceful with his deep voice. There were quite a few men to the service for I suppose many of them feel the need of spiritual guidance the nearer they get to danger. At Meade there wasn't anybody at the services for they all wanted to go out and live while the living was good.

Isn't it true what many men say, especially ministers? That men turn to God only when there is nothing else left. Of course, after the war many may become real Christians.

I will write every day but probably you'll get the letters all at once.

I'm looking forward to seeing some of Dad's relations sometime. Keep your chin up and try not to worry.

With loads of love, Harold

#May 16, 1944. Written on board ship. Address was Inf. Co. E, A.P.O 15318, c/o Postmaster N.Y., NY. Miniaturized V-mail. #4

Today is certainly a beautiful day and the sea is as calm as a mill pond. This is the first day the sun has been out any length of time since we started but all in all, the weather has been good and the sea calm.

Ever yday there is community singing on the aft deck which is led by the chaplain. Everyone seems to get a great kick out of this singing including many of the officers, In the morning all the songs are more or less religious but in the afternoon, they're the popular ones.

I heard a radio broadcast from N.Y. this morning and it was only 10 o'clock there while it was 12 here. It really was a job keeping up with the change in the clocks and once nobody seemed to know just what the right time was. I can hardly keep track of the time or the date lately for every day seems the same as the preceding one.

With love, Harold

#May 26, 1944. Somewhere in England. Sent via V-mail but not miniaturized. Co. D, 1<sup>st</sup> Prov. Bn., 5<sup>th</sup> Repl. Depot, A.P.O. 15310, c/o PM, NY, NY. #1 blanked out by censor. #1  
Dear Mum and Dad,

This is the fastest form of communication I can find so that is why you haven't heard from me before this. It hardly seems possible that I'm here after seeing you only awhile ago.

The little bit I've seen of the countryside strikes me as being very beautiful and to my surprise there are many rhododendrons (I really don't know how to spell it) around the

countryside from deep red to pale red. The trees and everything are beautiful but I'm not familiar with very many.

Last night four of us went to a place on the camp where you could get something to drink such as tea and cookies or cake. I went and got four cups of tea and some cookies and what a time! The girl gave me coffee instead and then I gave her American money and neither she nor I could figure out the bill to the cent so she handed me some more cakes after I told her to forget the change for she knew I had given her too much and that wouldn't do.

With love, Harold

#May 26, 1944. Somewhere in England .Sent via V-mail. Photographed and miniaturized. Co. D, 1<sup>st</sup> Prov.Bn., 5<sup>th</sup> Repl. Depot, A.P.O. 15310, c/o PM, NY, NY. #1 blanked out by censor. #2

Dear Mum and Dad,

None of the boys liked the coffee so I went and got some tea and this time I got it. The bill came to six pence so I gave her two nickels (a dime) but she wouldn't take it unless she had the real dime. I don't know whether she had been gypped before but, of course, there must be some reason. It is certainly a good thing we are getting our money changed into English (when photographed, two lines remained blank) the American system and deal wholly with the English and I believe that is very sensible.

It was there we met a boy from (blanked out by censor) who has been here quite awhile and he was helpful in getting us familiar with the country He says he's had more fun in England than he ever did in the U.S.

I haven't been anywhere yet so can't express my opinion but am pretty sure I'll have a good time.

With love, Harold

#May 26, 1944. Somewhere in England. Sent via V-mail. Photographed and miniaturized. Co. D, 1<sup>st</sup> Prov.Bn., 5<sup>th</sup> Repl. Depot, A.P.O. 15310, c/o PM, NY, NY. #1 blanked out by censor. #3

If I had known at the time I would have kept my old camera and brought it with me. I would like to have pictures because I never expect to be back again. So I ask if you would go to the bother of buying another 35 mm. camera (not very expensive) and keep it ready till I send for it. When I have you send it, would you please also send some Kodachrome and outdoor type and a couple rolls of black and white. Also I would like the booklet in my top drawer called exposure computer, I believe. The 35 mm is the same size as the Leica in case you didn't know.

You had better find out the postal rules before you send anything. If you don't think it best don't send it to me. It is a nuisance I admit but please do it for me.

With love, Harold

#May 26, 1944. Somewhere in England. Sent via V-mail but not miniaturized. Co. D, 1<sup>st</sup> Prov.Bn., 5<sup>th</sup> Repl. Depot, A.P.O. 15310, c/o PM, NY, NY. #2 blanked out by censor

Dear Mum and Dad,

The climate and scenery is something like home more so than in some parts of our country. Many of the boys here are having an awful time trying to understand the way they speak but I don't have too much trouble I've always heard that a Bostonian could understand an Englishman better and I guess it is true.

I'll be writing to the rest in a short time but as yet haven't had much time.

I wish you knew where some of my relatives live - I mean telling me the street - but I suppose you don't know.

I wonder if there is anyone over here whom I know for if I could get the A.P.O. number I could find them

Keep up your chin like the Britons and let's pray the war will be over soon.  
With all my love, Harold

#May 26, 1944. Somewhere in England .Sent via V-mail but not miniaturized. Co. D, 1<sup>st</sup> Prov.Bn., 5<sup>th</sup> Repl. Depot, A.P.O. 15310, c/o PM, NY, NY #3 blanked out by censor  
Dear Mum and Dad,

I can't get over the difference in time for we are six hours ahead of you. The English advanced their clocks two hours (war time). And so in to summer it doesn't get dark till nearly eleven o'clock! Some difference!

I would also appreciate if you would send me that overseas edition of the Boston Herald which is put out by Jordan March. I don't know whether you can subscribe or not. I would like to have a home newspaper over here.

How's the yacht business going, Dad, I hope Mr. Nielsen doesn't act up too much now for that is a headache. Mr. Crocker, I suppose, still swears as much as he did and goes home with Mr. Nielsen. Have you been to his home lately? I did enjoy going there for we used to have a wonderful time cruising in the "Sea Horse." Let's hope the war is over soon and we can start sailing together the way we used to. Those certainly were the good old days. With love, Harold

#May 26, 1944. Somewhere in England .Sent via V-mail but not miniaturized. Co. D, 1<sup>st</sup> Prov.Bn., 5<sup>th</sup> Repl. Depot, A.P.O. 15310, c/o PM, NY, NY #4 blanked out by censor.  
Dear Mum and Dad,

I'm just decided that I want you to send the camera and film even if you have to send two packages. Be sure and find out about the postal regulations.

As you can see I'm sending this letter by V-mail but next time I'll try airmail for I'd rather write right along rather than break it up. When you write to me try sending my airmail and I'll see how many days it'll take.

Today I got a haircut from one of the soldiers who was a former barber. I hadn't had a haircut for nearly a month so what a mop I had! I'm so sick of catering to my hair that I got a G.I. Now it is nice and short and I don't have to bother with it as much.

Please write as soon as possible.

With all my love, Harold

#May 26, 1944. Somewhere in England .Sent via V-mail but not miniaturized. Co. D, 1<sup>st</sup> Prov.Bn., 5<sup>th</sup> Repl. Depot, A.P.O. 15310, c/o PM, NY, NY #7  
Dear Mum and Dad,

A lieutenant was discussing the difference between England and America yesterday and happened to mention about a bill passed in Congress sending any boy under 24 to college after the war. I don't know much about it so when you write tell me everything including this bill. It would be wonderful in many ways, wouldn't it? For then I could finish college.

With love, Harold

#April (May) 30, 1944. Somewhere in England. This probably should be May 30, 1944 since I did not leave Boston until May 13, 1944. Co. D, 1<sup>st</sup> Prov.Bn.,.5<sup>th</sup> Repl. Depot, A.P.O. 15310, c/o PM, NY, NY

Please forgive me for not having written sooner but I really haven't had much time except to write to Emily. I've decided to send most of my mail by air for I believe the system is just as efficient as v-mail. This way it doesn't break up the letter quite so much.

A couple of days ago, all my money was changed into English currency and what a time at first to get used to the difference. I am thankful that you made me take as much as I did for many are broke now. Because of moving around the way we have we don't know just when we'll get our pay.

Today we took a short hike and in that time I had a little chance to see the countryside. Some of the villages we went through looked like pictures in a magazine. I notice particularly that all homes are fenced off by some sort of block such as shrubs or walls. All the people we saw looked so cheerful and many were on those English type of bikes. Once in a long time we saw a car but those are very rare now because of the lack of gas (petrol).

Be sure when you write to tell me everything you know of for I'm anxious to get a letter from you. Tonight I can't think of anything so will write you again soon.

With all my love, Harold

#Unknown date, Somewhere in England,, Co. D, 1<sup>st</sup> Prov.Bn.,.5<sup>th</sup> Repl. Depot, A.P.O. 15310, c/o PM, NY, NY

Dear Mum and Dad,

Yesterday I sent my automatic pencil to you so you should receive it soon. They (the store) apparently only glued that break so see if you can have a new casing put in it.

Last night I went to the service club and listened to a quiz program conducted in front of the audience. I knew quite a few questions but every once in awhile I couldn't have answered them. I didn't take part in the quiz though.

The night before I went to the movies and saw a good show but was that theater crowded! I never saw theaters fill up so quickly as they do around here.

I was so glad that I able to get home those nights but I never expected to be so close. I really enjoyed every minute of it and I know you did too.

See that Dad at least tries to have the reflector repainted for it would be much better than being without it. Also have him or Miss Martin find out if they can have that exposure meter fixed.

I happened to go to the library a couple of nights ago and found a photographic book. In that I found out just what kind of a shutter in the Leica and it is quite unique. It doesn't matter to you how it works, I suppose, but knowing how it works for it will make it easier or me. Take good care of the camera and see if you can take some good pictures and try to center the picture and get the exposure better. Just don't leave this new film in the camera for the color film should be used up quickly. After using it awhile I am sure you will get better but the first three or films might not be the best.

There really isn't much to say just now but will write soon.

Keep up the good spirit for I appreciate it very much.

I'll start my correspondence soon but as yet haven't really gotten organized so that is why I won't be writing Mrs.Newell and the rest for awhile. I did get a letter from Emily yesterday and the first letter you sent after my furlough. It sure did take a long time to come and had all kinds of writing on it. It looked something like some of the mail that the sailors at the yard used to receive for the mail had to chase them all over the country.

Today I saw a soldier who had hair like an artist. I bet he is a barber's nightmare! I though the army was particular but he was in the air corps so that may explain things.

You mentioned about John Bodge and I sure hope it isn't true.

Send me letters as soon or as often as you can for I enjoy them all! I'll write as regular as possible but o course circumstances might change that and I may not write as often as I would like to.

So long for now.

With loads of love, Haold

#May 31, 1944. Somewhere in England. Co. D, 1<sup>st</sup> Prov.Bn.,5<sup>th</sup> Repl. Depot, A.P.O. 15310, c/o PM, NY, NY

Dear Mum and Dad,

Just before writing this letter, I turned washwoman and washed some clothes although I didn't have too much water to use. The only water we could use for washing purposes on the boat was salt water so I couldn't wash very well.

I wrote some letters on the ship but haven't told you about the rest of the voyage. It was a very a quite trip and the only thing we could see was the other ships and water! Finally we did make port and I can tell you that land although foreign looked pretty good to all of us. I don't believe I was ever made to be a sailor. For a couple of days later I could still feel the sway of the ship though no one else could. It is strange it should affect me that way instead of making me sick.

The first bit of land was sighted on one of the sides and everyone rushed onto that side. I can tell you that the ship had quite a list to it so the captain had some of the men go to the other side.

I was really surprised to see such beautiful trees and lawns in among so many houses – all stone or brick, not one wooden. I don't remember ever seeing such a beautiful waterfront anywhere back in the U.S.

Last Sunday I got up at 8 o'clock and started off for the 10 o'clock service but much to my surprise it seemed as though all the Protestant men in camp had gone there. Finally I did get into the chapel at the 11 o'clock service and then it was only because I went early and waited. The chapel was plain but had some flowers on an altar which was decorated quite nicely. Nearby was a portable organ which sounded pretty good but of course, not quite as nice as a large one.

The person giving us the sermon was major but not a chaplain . He said he was substituting for the regular one. He did a good job and I found out he was an ordained minister before coming into the army.

This morning some of the old fellows from Camp Croft were shipped thus breaking up a nice friendship. As you can see by my address, this is a replacement center and anything can happen here.

I forgot to mention that as I was nearing shore I saw some boats just like Dad's except they had a British flag on it. Have they turned many over to the British? Dad might have read Miss Martin's letter asking this question for I wrote to her yesterday.

A couple of days ago we went on a hike but didn't mind going for it gave me a chance to see the countryside. We went through a couple of villages and in each was the conventional pub. I really enjoyed seeing everything for this country is so different. That day of the hike was warm and beautiful so everyone was out riding a bike. There were people from only a few years old to quite old, even as old as Grandma.

It is still so hard to realize I'm in a foreign country and so far away from home. To me the whole thing seems like a bad dream and sometimes I expect to wake up and find none it is true.

It is a good thing I don't smoke for it would cause me an awful lot of trouble. You see some things are rationed here and require stamps just like home. On the ship, we got a full carton of cigarettes free from the Chesterfield Company. That sure is a good way to advertize even though it does cost a little.

The more I use the English currency the easier it becomes but I can tell you there was plenty of swearing going on the first few days after we had the money changed. The pound is worth just a little more than \$4.00 so it seems as though we have hardly anything.

I'll be waiting soon again and will I be glad to get a letter from you soon. It seem as though I've been away for ages instead of only a month. I'll be wonderful to get home again though. With all my love, Harold

#June 4, 1944, Somewhere in England. From the replacement depot.

Dear Mum and Dad,

Yesterday for the first time since I left the States I got a letter from you and one from Emily. Everybody now feels better now for the first mail came yesterday giving all the news from home. I can tell you I would rather have received your letter than \$100 for it made me feel much better.

I forgot to mention that I also got one from Warren which he sent to Camp Croft, April 12, but after trailing me all this time, it finally reached me. They sure do have a good postal system to keep track of everyone in all branches of the service. The envelope had five different addresses on it and reminded me of the mail the naval officers & men used to get at the boatyard.

As you can see by the address, this camp is only a replacement depot. So I expect to be shipped out any time but keep writing till I notify you of a change. Only a few of the old Camp Croft bunch are left but Fred Villeneuve and the boy from Connecticut are still here with me.

Yesterday I was on K.P. – an old familiar word. I've been on it so much I feel like a mess sgt. I sure would make a wonderful husband with all my kitchen experience. This wasn't too bad but was almost too long. One nice thing about having this job is that I got plenty to eat. I even had some oranges which I understand is quite had to get in this theater of war.

This afternoon I used my ration card at the P.X. and got some candy and other things which are rationed. Even at this, it isn't too bad only I can't get enough candy. But I suppose I'm better without it.

Bicycles on this post is something prominent for that is about the only way to get around. A lot of the officers have bikes – even the colonel. They are wonderful bikes and have high and low gear so they can go up hill more easily. That has always been the type I've wanted back home. Image seeing both of you pedaling around on a tandem! I'm afraid it wouldn't ever be a reality.

Dad, write me once in awhile instead of having Mum do all the work for I'd love to hear from you too.

I must say Dad has certainly changed for the best. I'm glad to see that you're going to the circus for you need to have some sort of fun. You live once, so they say! I'm glad Mum, that you don't have to do all the work outside alone and would love to be back and help you.

As I am writing, I can hear the post band playing and doesn't it sound good! The band is really good and plays some popular songs as well as marches.

I'm trying to be a little more careful with my handwriting and believe I'm doing better than before.

I certainly don't like the V-mail as well as airmail for I received a V-mail from Emily and it either wasn't developed as dark as it should have been or she used light ink. But it was still visible enough to read.

I'm glad you're going out more than before and sometime I'll be home to have a good time with you two.

With all my love, Harpd

#June 7, 1944. Somewhere in England. With 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry division.

Dear Mum and Dad,

I've just finished eating supper and now have some leisure time. It looks as though it is about three o'clock although it is actually 6:30 for the sun is still quite high in the sky. In the summer they tell me that the days are real long and in the winter real short - sounds like the north pole.

The food over here isn't bad at all and the unit I'm in now is a lot better than the last camp. I'm glad I'm out of that replacement depot for they were just organizing it and so things weren't the best.

Tonight I just some rations - sounds like home - but in this case we don't give up points, only a card which is stamped when we get all the rations. To hear how much we get a week might sound like a small amount but to me it is enough although I would sometimes like to eat more often. I sure do get awfully hungry being outdoors all the time.

As yet I haven't had much chance to get to a town and see English people but soon I expect to. Many of the fellows complain about everything about the country, the same way they did back in the States - some complain even if everything is perfect. But I don't mind it because I've made up my mind to accustom myself to strange customs.

I might have told you some of this before but no one of the old bunch came with me. Two of the cooks from Croft went to the airborne infantry and I can tell you they nearly had a conniption fit. When I got to the division headquarters, they asked if anyone could play a bugle and I said I could. He then assigned me to the company where I am now. They tell me the former bugler went crazy! I sure hope I don't but the former bugler was in four years and no wonder he went crazy!

One thing wonderful is the way all the non-coms treat us. Instead of being like a general, they are true friends and not gruff at all, Some difference from basic training. Just the same I wouldn't mind being back at Croft or anyone of those camps.

Sunday, I got a letter from Grandma and was glad to get it. I got that back at the replacement camp and just got it before being shipped here.

Today we got the first confirmed report that the invasion has started but before this, all it was was rumors. If you don't get letters as quickly as you should, you can blame it on that. It certainly will be wonderful if they can push them right back to Berlin. I suppose you've heard all about the invasion and I bet there is plenty of rejoicing.

Don't forget the camera, stationery, and candy please.

It really is terribly hard to write much but I'll find more to say tomorrow.

With loads of love, Harold

#June 10, 1944. Somewhere in England.

Dear Mum and Dad,

Tonight I just sent a cablegram for I don't know ether you've received any of my letters yet or not. We weren't able to send any cablegrams while in the replacement depot so all I could do was send a letter which was probably held up.

I'm in with a fine bunch of fellows so it makes it a little more pleasant but as I always claim, there is no place like home. I get a great kick out of the two of the fellows for they are always arguing. It reminds me of Marie McKinnon for when he would say something was black, the other would swear it was white. They do have a good time arguing and then later they laugh.

I've met a few fellows here from Boston - one from Brockton, Taunton, and West Roxbury and other towns. But it seems as though there are quite a few southerners here. You can get all of them started just by mentioning about negroes. I sure do get a kick out of listening to them though for they certainly do talk so different than what I'm used to.

Then there is another man who reminds me of Mr. Reinhardt for he never wears teeth until it is time to eat and then he plops them in his mouth till after the meal. Of course, Mr. R. doesn't even bother to put them in to eat.

One day we went on a march and then I got to see more of the countryside. I never saw so many foxgloves growing wild beside the road. Most of it though was red and quit large. Then in swampy areas, there are plenty of yellow wild iris, nothing like the common blue ones I'm accustomed to seeing at home

Yesterday I got some more rations and at that they seem to suffice although if I had it, I could eat more.

I finally notified the "Yank" magazine of my change of address and expect to get it sometime soon. There seems to be some reading material available and I read all of that.

I expect to see sometime again some friend of Miss Keany. Maybe you don't remember but she was one of the teachers I liked so well in high school. I really would like to them all again.

All I can say is don't be too surprised at anything that may happen for the truth must be realized. Just pray and keep your chin up.

There isn't much to say now. So I'll say good night and with all my love, Harold

#June 12, 1944. Somewhere in England. From the replacement depot.

Dear Mum and Dad,

I don't remember if I told you that I sent a cablegram a couple of days ago and it should get there tomorrow. Of course, this letter won't get there till long after the cable but I thought I'd tell you.

I want to wish Dad a happy birthday but doubt if it'll get there in time. Sometimes the mail is sent faster than other times so don't know just how long it'll take.

I forgot to tell you why I sent a cable. When I got to the replacement depot in England, I tried to send a cable but couldn't. So all I could do was to write letters but all the letters were being held up because of the invasion. I hadn't known if you had ever heard from me so I sent the cable. I don't know if you understand or not but it really doesn't matter. I suppose you got all of the letters at once.

Don't forget to send some stationery and 6 cent airmail stamps and the camera and film and other things I've requested.

Tonight we had some steak and did it taste good. I haven't had much beef since I've been in the army.

This evening I played the bugle at retreat but I wouldn't say it was the best for the bugle wasn't right but now I've fixed it.

Every morning he bugler from the next company plays reveille and is it pretty sick sounding! Sounds something like some of the bad buglers back at Croft.

Here it is ten o'clock and still so light that I've lost track of time. I guess I'd better go and wash and get some sleep. So good night and with all my love. Harold

P.S. I think you misunderstood, Mum, for I didn't send you anything for Mother's day. I really felt sorry I didn't but I didn't have a chance at all so please forgive me. With more love. Harold

#June 13, 1944. V-mail sent with change of address. Now it is: Co. E, 330<sup>th</sup> Inf., A.P.O. 83, c/o postmaster, New York, New York.

June 13, 1944. Letter to my parents Somewhere in England (letter was placed in an envelope addressed to Gladys Martin).

Dear Mum and Dad,

Just now the sun is out and the weather is beautiful but you should have seen it up till the afternoon! It just rained cats and dogs and I mean rain! Rain is something we haven't seen for nearly twenty four hours. It seems as though it is always cloudy but when it does get fine, it is beautiful.

Sunday I was able to get some extra sleep and just took it easy all day. That night I went to church which was quite full. There were even a few English boys here at the service. The chaplain who is a captain gave a good sermon and after church I went down to a pond nearby where a sergeant was baptized. The major who did the baptizing said he believed in immersion so I took him to be a Baptist. Many of the fellows said this was the first time they had ever seen anything like that.

The little pond belongs to an estate and was a very fitting place with many flowers all around. They even brought the small portable organ down and we had a service right there beside the water.

There is a home nearby that reminds me of Casa Loma in Toronto but a little different style of architecture. But you could tell that it wasn't a poor man's house. I went to the gardens to see what was there and found the whole place full of vegetables. There were an awful lot of tomatoes in green houses in full bloom and many other things.

I walked around a little more and came across a few statues here and there but they were being eaten away and the old iron gates must have been something in their day. But the whole estate is deteriorating and there is no upkeep of the place. I don't know what happened to the people but know if it was kept up, it would really be a beautiful place.

The bugle has been blowing flat so I tried to fix it. But by so doing, I've made low C a whole tone lower and all the rest are all right but I never use this low note so it doesn't matter so much.

I went to the dentist today and had two teeth filled and did they do it quick! This lieu tenant, I found out, came from Worcester, Mass. So I asked him if he knew the Binns'. He said he was their dentist for quite some time and has worked on Harold. I must write to Aunt Gert and tell her about it in the next letter I write her. If you do happen to go see her before I write, the name of the dentist is E.A. Aigala or Aigola or something like that. Quite some coincidence, don't you think?

Tonight I went and saw a U.S.O. show brought to this camp from the States. I really enjoyed everything. There were a couple of dancers, acrobats, and a magician. There was played an accordion and his name was Tiny. But in stature, he wasn't so for he must have been nearly 6 foot.6 inches and must have weighed nearer three hundred pounds. I really

did enjoy that show and thought of you when I saw that accordion. I guess he ought to be able to handle a small thing like that!

Send me some candy sometime after you send the first package and see if you can wrap up a few cookies with it. I do want to taste your coolies even if I have to eat them with a spoon.

That will be all for just now so I will say good night. And with all my love, Harold

#June 24, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I've been moving so rapidly that I've really hardly had time to even breathe.

After just getting used to pounds and shilling, I've got to start and get used to francs and centimes. What a life!

Little did I realize that when I took French in school I'd ever had a chance to use it. These Frenchmen go much too fast for me to even try to understand and besides I've forgotten quite a few words in two years.

You know it seems like years since I've left home and it'll be one of the happiest moments of my life when I can return home.

The thing I remember is the last kiss I gave Mum. I had kissed her before I went to the car but found out that I had forgotten the bag. Then I rushed back and got it and there I gave you my last kiss till the day I come home which I hope isn't too far.

I came to France on a ship built at Lawley's and was quite surprised for as many times I saw them building, I never thought I'd ever be on one. How small this world really is.

The other day, they were distributing books and I got one named "Paul Revere." That book actually makes me homesick for it talks about places I know so well. It even talks about John Adams driving cows to pasture down in Braintree. Just at present so many things, especially pleasant memories, are running through my mind. But it isn't worth writing about.

As yet, I haven't seen what you have dreaded but really don't know what is to happen. I sure do hope this war is over soon so I and the rest can get back to their loved ones. I feel so depressed tonight.

I am thinking of both of you and love you with all my heart.

Keep up your chin and try not to worry too much although I know it is hard. With all my love and affection. Harold

#June 26 1944, Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Today has been quite a warm day and reminds me more of our own weather at home. It is so different from England with all its rain.

As yet, the last letter I got from you was sent the first of this month but in time, hopefully, they'll get to me. I hope my letters have been getting through to you and hope you got my cablegram. I was just looking at the date and to think I left to go back to Meade only two months ago yesterday. It seems so much longer, in fact, years but I know the war went last too much longer.

One of the boys here is a French American and comes from Manchester, N.H. He can speak good French so he can jabber right along with them and make them understand. It is funny to see some of the boys try to use a French book and make the people understand. About the only way is to use sign language. Some of the natives wear sabots – I hope those

are wooden shoes - and do they make an awful noise! I sure would hate to take a hike with those on.

Probably you can guess that there is so much to say but, of course, can't tell much. I will say the army is just as much of a mystery as ever and I don't think I'll ever understand it.

I used to give the Air Corps credit for I thought they had it really tough but now I've changed my mind and will give the -to the infantry. Without them there wouldn't be much of an army

That'll be all for now. With all my love and affection. Harold

#July 1, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I started to write this letter in ink but because it rained last night, I couldn't do anything but write in pencil on this damp paper. I always hate to have it rain for everything gets so wet and damp.

Just now our outfit is fighting the Germans some place in France and, of course, I'm with them, naturally. We're living in foxholes all the time but isn't too bad yet. The only time I can get much sleep is in the day for most action goes on at night.

Today I got a package from Aunt Gert and you couldn't guess what was in it. It was boullion cubes! I suppose Judy had told her that they were good. But I would much rather get a letter.

I got a letter from you a couple of days ago and it was dated the day of the invasion. I can tell you I was glad to get it all right. I got a church paper from Mrs. Hendrie the same day and also a v-mail letter from Al and Em. Tell them I can read it good now in contrast to the first one.

So far my watch has been very serviceable and has been running all the time. Sometimes I forget to wind it but still it runs.

The mail is coming in good so I expect to hear from you more often. I hope by this time you have gotten my new address for then it won't take so long.

So Warren is at Sampson. I didn't know just when he was going. A few days ago I wrote to him but addressed it to his home.

It sure will be wonderful to get home and have things normal again. Let's hope it'll be over soon. With all my love, Harold

#July 12, 1944, Somewhere in France. #1 (in the same envelope with #2 and #3 below)

Dear Mum and Dad,

Lately I haven't had much time to write letters for I've been busy chasing Germans. So probably I won't be writing you quite as regularly as before and there may be times you won't hear from me for quite awhile.

I've been getting letters regularly so will list them so you can see for yourself. I've gotten all except no. 7 and 9 letters but I suppose they'll be along. I got four dated June 13 through 16 on July 6, June 22 on July 9, 2 on June 24, July 11, June 29 on July 12. I was rather pleased to get a letter from Dad and was happier when I saw it was nice and long and full of plenty of news. So now you can see that I'm finally getting them all and soon we can answer each others letters I've also gotten letters from Mrs. Hendrie, Mrs. Newell and Betty and it didn't take long for those to come. Tell all of them I'll answer as soon as possible but can only find time to write to you. Don't forget Em either for she sent me a nice long letter which I enjoyed reading and also a few v-mail letters. I'm sending one half the letter in one envelope and one half in the other because of weight. With love, Harold

#July 12, 1944, Somewhere in France. #2 (in same envelope with #1 above and #3 below)  
Dear Mum and Dad,

You'll please have to forgive me for writing on V-mail but that is all I have with me. I'll number these so you can keep them straight and all this bunch will make one complete letter.

I got paid the beginning of the month for two months and have now got over one hundred dollars. As soon as I can I'll send home one hundred which you can put in the bank. I still will have about twenty five dollars left so I'll be all right. There is nothing to spend the money on here in France. The money I myself should get will be sent home sometime next month - that will be \$20.

It seems as though all we are getting is cigarettes and the trouble is I don't smoke. But that gives someone else more so I don't mind. Once in awhile we get rations such as soap, candy, etc. and it doesn't cost us a cent.

I certainly will be glad when I can have something different than the rations we are having but I suppose we're lucky to be eating at all. With lovem Harold

#July 12, 1944, Somewhere in France. #3 (in the same envelope with #1 and #2 above)  
Der Mum and Dad,

It hardly seems possible that it is nearly the middle of July and past the fourth. I saw a few fireworks myself the fourth. I have no conception of time and I can hardly realize that school is out and Betty is going into high school. I suppose it is hard for you to realize I'm where I am as a matter of fact. Just think, a year ago I was in college and having a great time. One of the other runners here has a master of arts degree which is pretty high and look where is.

France is such a beautiful country, it hardly seems possible that war should or could disturb such a place. Everything is so green and the sun shines a little more than it did in England.

One day, I washed some underwear and put it out to dry. It seemed as though that was the word for it to rain and did it rain! That poor underwear never got a chance to dry for quite a few days. With love, Harold

#July 12, 1944, Somewhere in France. #4 (in the separate envelope with #5 below)  
Dear Mom and Dad,

There are many little gardens in the yards of these French homes and they make me homesick for it reminds me of our garden at home. These gardens have peas, carrots, cabbage, etc. in them but no one to eat them for the houses have been evacuated. A few days ago we stopped near a garden so I ate everything I could eat. I had peas, carrots, cabbage, and raspberries. The beans weren't out yet. One of the fellows saw the raspberries and said "Oh, there are some strawberries." I guess he must be from the city for he should have know they grow on the ground not on bushes. There are plenty of ducks, hens, and even rabbits running around the farm yards with nobody to take care of them

You mentioned about Miss Martin writing me and as yet I haven't got her letter. That was some poem she wrote of your benefit, Dad!.

There are a few men in my company who are 38 and are old enough to be my father. It hardly seems possible there is such an expanse or range of age in the army. With love, Harold

#July 12, 1944, Somewhere in France. #5 (in the separate envelope with #4 above)

Dear Mum and Dad,

If I had known all the trouble I caused over the camera, I wouldn't have bothered with it at all. I thought that we nice of Peggy to think of you and I'm enclosing a short note to thank her.

I want you to send me some more colored film after I use this up that is coming so send some when I ask. I want you to send me a box of cookies and candy for it is nice to get a package from home

I started to send this by V-mail but will stick these sheets in an airmail envelope. It isn't the fanciest but at least it's a letter from me.

I hope and pray the war won't go too long for I'm anxious to get home and start in again. Sometime soon it'll be a reality though for the war can't last forever.

Send some pencils too. I'm sending half the letter in one envelope and half in the other because of the weight. With all my love, Harold

#July 20 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

This isn't the nicest stationery I've ever written on but at least it is a letter. This paper comes from a French notebook that I found in one of the houses. By the way, did you have to pay any postage due on my last letter? I put that heavy V-mail in it and probably made it too heavy for 6 cents.

The mail is coming through just fine now for I got a letter which Dad wrote the 8<sup>th</sup> and I got it the 17<sup>th</sup> – just nine days. The same day I got two from Mum dated July 5. Today seems to be the day that all back mail is pouring in for I got a letter from you dated June 27<sup>th</sup>, one of the missing ones, one from Marjorie, and one from Miss Martin, all about that date. The strange thing is that I got Miss Martin's second letter dated July 2 on July 14 and her first letter June 25, yesterday. But now the mail is coming through good and there is very little holdup. The funny thing is though that I never got your seventh letter but have gotten very other one.

I believe you're doing all right on the camera so keep up the good work. Maybe you'll grow to like it so much that we'll each have a camera. Dad, you should learn and then we would have plenty of pictures for plenty of things. I'm really pleased the camera turned out so good for we couldn't tell by the first film

I have so many people to write to but have very little time to write except to you. I wrote to Mr. Marsell today but can't mail it till I get some more airmail envelopes. I'm using my last one for your letter. I'm pretty sure I can get some more though. I had plenty of them once but at present I can't get at certain articles I had to leave behind. Mrs. Hendrie sends me the church calendar and paper so faithfully and I appreciate it very much.

It seems as though almost every home here has cider – hard – in the cellar. Of course, with all the apple orchards around they should. Once in awhile some of the fellows will come across some strong wine and do they have a wonderful time. For my age, I believe I've seen and done an awful lot but I guess it must just be the will of God. This combat certainly draws everyone nearer to God. In fact some who hardly believed in Him before are quite strong in faith now.

Every time we move to a new area, we have to dig foxholes. I'm getting so used to digging that if I can't get a job at anything else. I can get one on the W.P.A. as a ditch digger. But I understand that has been done away with.

I'm a bugler in a rifle company which is always on the front lines. That is what a rifle company does. I'm a messenger between battalion headquarters and the company. So

I'm very rarely on the very front lines. I bet that will be a relief to know. To see some of the things that go on I often think, this world calls itself civilized but is it? As a messenger I do everything and anything that needs to be done around battalion H.Q and even carry wounded on stretchers. I'll give those Red Cross men (medics) the highest praise in the world for they deserve it. They have told me that blood plasma is certainly a life saver in many cases and after giving it to a patient, it seems to revive him almost immediately.

Warren wrote me from Sampson and told me he is nearly through the course – that didn't take long. And he believes he is going in the amphibious section of the navy. He plans to be home soon and plans to drop down and talk with you.

We are all like cats for we dig a hole to go to the toilet. It is funny the way things go for every time you are busy, the Germans start to shell and you have to run for your foxhole. The Germans must try to get us in an awkward position!

I found another fellow in our company from Malden. He has a B.S. degree from Tech. and ends up as a squad leader. They certainly do some funny things in this army.

I do hope my letters – what few I send - are getting through ok for they have to go through so many hands. I'll write as much as possible but I won't be able to write regularly.

You contrasted my picture with Carroll Daiute and I believe that I have a pretty nice, young mother. I wouldn't call Dad very bad looking at that and think he is so distinguished looking and looks sort of sophisticated. Ha! I am quite surprised that you, Dad, can write such a fine letter and so long. I believe you need more practice so send me some more letters. I don't believe you ever tell me the same thing as Mum so I get just twice as much news. I think the world of you and feel sort of ashamed I felt about you the way I did before coming in the Army. But now I know the truth.

This letter is getting so lengthy without any news that I had better close and get it off tonight. I know what it must be like for both of you, but all we can do is hope and pray often. Good night my darlings and I'll see if I can get another letter off tomorrow. With all my love, Harold

#July 21, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Today was an important day for I got all new clothes and discarded my old dirty ones – I mean dirty. Everyone thought it must be a holiday. At times I often wonder why I don't get sick but I guess the army has put me in too good health. I remember a time when the slightest change of weather would give me a cold.

I feel so sorry for the poor French civilians for they just don't seem to know where to go. There are every type – young and old – carrying along a few belongings. Some drive along a few head of cattle and jabber in French so fast that it sounds funny. In all wars, I guess the innocent must suffer as well as the guilty. It's too bad that such a beautiful country has to be devastated and cursed by wars.

I have been telling you about eating rabbits' food and speaking of rabbits reminds me of the other day. I went out to get some cabbage and there were some rabbits nibbling on some heads. I couldn't let them get ahead of me so I grabbed a head and ate it myself. Greedy, eh what?

I forgot to tell you in my last letter that my watch has finally stopped after all these months. It was strange why it should happen for all I was doing was cleaning my watch – outside – with my handkerchief. I decided to clean around the stem and pulled it out and then was when it stopped. No matter what I did to it, it wouldn't seem to start again.

As yet, I haven't had a change to send that money I've been meaning to. But I hope to send it home soon and then it'll add to my money at home. I was afraid at first I might

only be able to send V-mail after this letter for all my airmail envelopes will be used up on this letter. But tonight I believe the mail man will be bringing me some more envelopes. So I'll write as often as possible. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if on these last two letters you had to pay postage due for the letters certainly were heavy with this heavy paper in them. By the way, how do you like the way I'm trying to write a little better than before and hope I'm succeeding.

You said you didn't know if it was all right to write on both sides of the sheet and it is for your letters aren't censored at all.

Won't Gert give up and forget me. That certainly was a mistake writing her back at Croft. She's certain a wolf in sheep's clothing.

You don't know how much I appreciate you doing all you do for me. Sometime I may be able to return everything when I get home

Would you please send me some candy and cookies when you have time. I want you to send me some film so I'll have plenty when I get the camera. When I get the camera, I'll let you know and you can send these films, I believe if less than 8 ounces by airmail. You had better check up on that though.

I certainly hope this war gets over soon and we can get home. Russia is really going to town, don't you think? I actually believe you at home know as much if not more than we do. Sometimes the news is a couple of days old but at least it is something to read.

I guess I had better not write much more or the letter will be too heavy. Keep up your chin and pray often and keep as busy as you can. With all my love, Harold

#July 22, 1944, Somewhere in France  
Dar Mum and Dad,

I have a little time, so want to get another letter off to you. Today some mail came in and all I got was two Boston Herald papers from Mrs. Hendrie. It is nice to be able to look at them and appreciate her sending them so regularly. Next to you, she has sent me more letters and things than anyone.

I have often thought that it is too bad that I won't be home to see Aunt Francis and Uncle Don when they come to visit. Just think, it was a month before war started that I saw them last down in Nova Scotia when they were on their honeymoon. Time sure does go fast. Sometime though after the war we'll be able to see them and maybe go to Newfoundland and see all my relations. I bet we'll have a wonderful time after I get back. It seems as though since I've been gone, you two seem to be doing more and it really pleases me. You can only live once and you might just as well get some enjoyment while you can. I was glad to know that you had gone to the circus but was surprised because I never thought Dad would ever enjoy anything like that. I guess I haven't gotten Dad figured out yet. You puzzle everyone, Dad, even your own employees who should know you.

I don't know whether you ever got some V-mail letters I ever wrote to you on the ship for you never mentioned them. They were supposed to have been mailed when we got to England but I don't know if it ever was done.

I'm near a house just at present and have a small kitten near me now. I bet Fluffy would be awfully jealous if he was here. It sure does make me think of home. I started to say at the first of the letter that the mail came in but there was no letter from you. I would enjoy having one now and reading it. Whenever I get a letter from either of you, I read it several times until I can almost memorize it word for word.

I just got a haircut today and I can tell you I needed it badly. I haven't had one for nearly a month so you can imagine what it must have been like. Now I look nearly scalped.

But it won't take very long for it to grow again as you know. As I was waiting to have it cut, I listened to a radio - the first time since I've come to France and didn't it sound good.

This isn't as long as some I've written but there is nothing to say just now. So I had better close and see if I can't get it out on this evening's mail. With all my love and affection, Harold.

#July 22, 1944. Somewhere in France

Note at the beginning of this letter: I found this envelope so I could send this letter but it is certainly a mess.

Dear Mum and Dad,

Yesterday I gave my money to the company mail clerk and he is going to mail it home for me. So all that will come in one letter will be a money order. I'm really glad that it is on its way for I didn't like to carry so much around with me. I've got plenty left - about \$20 - and I doubt if I'll use much of that. The money order is for one hundred dollars. I thought I had better let you know just how much it was so to make sure that much gets to you though I doubt if anything will ever happen.

Some of the fellows often wonder how I'm able to find so much to say and in fact, I'm surprised myself. These last three or four letters have been longer than usual but still there is nothing in them. But I know you love to hear from me never the less.

Tonight I was reading about the G.I. bill of rights which was taken from the original manuscript. I can tell you these politicians make more work out of something simply by using such complicated wording. But I was able to understand it and guess I'll be able to save or rather keep some of my money that I have in the bank. The bill I know was passed a long time ago but I was never able to get the full dope on it.

It should happen that Miss Martin got a letter before you. I really didn't mean it to happen but it did. When I first got to England, all I had available was some V-mail so I got some off immediately thinking they'd go through. A few days later, I wrote to Miss Martin and used airmail for I was able to get some envelopes. The invasion certainly caused an awful mix up in the mail situation. But now as I have said, they're coming through good. I'm waiting anxiously for a letter from you for I haven't had one for a couple of days. I like to get letters from everyone but would rather have them from both of you.

We have some southerners in our battalion and still I have quite a time understanding them. One of the runners or messengers with me - whatever you want to call us - is from South Carolina near Spartenburg and I have to ask him to say a word as much as five times before I can understand him. One time I asked one of them why all southerners use the word "- you all - and they ask how can you tell whether it's plural or not. Apparently, they don't know all the rules of English grammar.

It's odd though that almost every radio operator in this unit is a southerner and they seem so hard to understand. There was a discussion tonight about the labor situation and the fellows here are thoroughly disgusted. I imagine on July 4<sup>th</sup> plenty of men complained about working instead of having a holiday. But that day wasn't a rest for us and we worked hard. Men were giving up their lives while all these fellows back home griped about working. We here don't get paid for overtime and we have to work overtime all the time. Isn't it true that a human never knows when he's well off and I would gladly change places with some dissatisfied man.

We've heard the news about the Russians being in East Prussia and I can tell you it is mighty welcome news. There is a rumor going around now that Walter Winchell predicted that war would be over July 29<sup>th</sup> or some such data. What I want to know is if it is true. I don't believe anything unless authenticated.

I noticed I just used the word "if" and I can tell you that word would certainly be missed if it wasn't in the English vocabulary. That word flies around so frequently that that seems to be all that is ever used.

It seems as though I write an awful lot and yet say nothing but sometime I'll be able to tell everything.

I'll send this tomorrow but I haven't gotten any airmail letters yet. I expect some tomorrow though.

Keep up your chin and I feel the will be over soon. It's strange though that the greater the distance between us, the nearer we are drawn together. It really is hard to express my love for you for there is no superlative great enough to describe it. Americans use all the superlatives up and when they want to really use a superlative, they are licked. With all my love and affectionm Harold.

P.S. Please tell Betty I'll write her a long letter soon.

#July 24, 1945. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Finally I got a letter from you last night and was I happy. Your last letter was dated July 11 and I got it on July 22.

It's fine that you're so friendly with the Daiutes for you seem to have a grand time together. It's swell that you can have such good ice cream sodas as you do for as we know, they weren't so hot last summer.

I didn't have time to write but a few words last night so I'll finish it tonight. Oh! My darling Aunt Lillian wrote me a letter yesterday and I never in my life heard of such foolishness. It said somewhere in Wollaston probably because I have to put somewhere in France. Then she signed it Lillian and Pussy Purr Mew as if that was so clever. She doesn't strike me as being the intellectual type at all but I suppose she can't help it.

I am going to use both sides of the pages so as to save some. I understand it is all right. If anything is censored it will just have to spoil the other side. By the way, have any of my letters been censored at all?

I was telling you about Lillian and her foolishness. She wrote about 2/3 of the letter and finally Eric wrote the other 1/3 sensibly. I still cant figure out why he ever married such a fool.

Yesterday I wrote a letter to Miss Martin so probably she'll let you read it. I wrote Alice and Betty today so slow but sure, I'm getting my mail answered.

There is some of bush or weeds around here which when touched will make everyone itchy and I mean itchy! I can't understand why but it does. I can tell out everyone keeps out of them as much as possible.

Since I've been in France I've seen more planes at one time than ever before. What a bunch of them I saw one day. I suppose they were out on a bombing mission. I sure am thankful that the Germans haven't got too much Luftwaffe or it would make it awful unpleasant. Everyone back home seems to know this preceding statement.

This morning when I woke up, I had a pain in my stomach so I went to the aid station where they gave me some pills and tonic. Tonight is the first time today I felt good.

This is just a note for I must get it mailed if it is to be mailed tonight. As soon as I can, I'll write another long one Thanks for both of you acting the way you do for you don't know how much it means to me. I fully realize what a worry I am and nothing or nobody can deny that fact.

I'm always thinking of you both and I love you always. With all my love and affection, Harold

P.S. I recently wrote Mr. Marsell a letter in case I forgot to tell you. Mrs. Hendrie is sending me the Boston Herald regularly and I think that is nice of her.

#July 27, 1944. Somewhere in France (I am using both sides of the paper in this letter.)

Note at top of letter: Got a letter from Eric and couple of days ago but none from you for few days – last letter I got on July 22. Got your church paper but don't bother, Mrs. Hendrie sends them.

Dear Mum and Dad,

How fast the time goes by for here it is only two months to go and then my birthday. It's evident that I'll be in the army then but all I can do is hope not too much longer.

One day I got a laugh out of the communications sergeant. We were staying near a house which was all caved in except for a small bit and he happened to go by and see some clean white sheets. He grabbed them and decided to sleep between them that night just so he could say he had done it. Well, the next morning I asked him how it was and he said how he never was so cold in his life, so I guess that put an end to that.

The other day I noticed a great difference in the size of the three Co. E runners-messengers. One is 6 ft. 3, I'm 5 ft. 10 and the other is 5 ft. 2 so I guess there is an awful variety in size.

The short fellow comes from So. Car. near the Georgia border and what a southern drawl he has. Sometimes I have to ask three or four times before I can understand what he is saying. I noticed he slept on his stomach all the time and later he told me that was the way his mother had taught him from birth. She never gave him an ounce of milk either and fed him on water. He claims he's never had more than a couple glasses of milk in his life and here he is nearly thirty. That is some way to bring up a child having him do everything most mothers don't do.

Once I came across a house that was left intact so I looked around and found quite a machine shop of all things! The owner apparently built horse carriages for one was half made and another completely and I will say they were beautiful. It sort of reminded me of the boatyard with the planer, lathe, and saws.

I have met a fellow here in headquarters who is a corporal and a fine fellow He was going to college when he was drafted and now he is 22 so he claims when he gets out of the army he'll go to work instead of bothering to go back. It certainly is too bad though that the army has to spoil so many careers but, of course, it had to be done.

The first sergeant of my company has been in the army eight years – he's an old army man. But I can tell you I'd never want to do it and wouldn't ever bother with the army once I get discharged. There is another sergeant who has been in the marines and army quite a few number of years too. But all I can say is they can have it!

We're being fed good and we eat mostly army K rations. You've probably heard me talk about them when I was home. After getting used to them, I don't mind it at all. But to have variety in the menu, we have a hot supper brought to us so that makes it pretty nice. I've decided to utilize all available room on this paper because I haven't got too much left. But I am sure it'll do me until I get the stationery you sent me.

I am enclosing a French 50 franc note which we allowed to send. It is equivalent to \$1.00

A couple of days ago, I sent a cable which was a form one – one which you write three numbers on. There is a list of all kinds of messages and beside each is a number. I'm sure you've seen them before.

Please send me some cookies, candy, and nuts when you have a chance. It sure is wonderful to get them. I haven't had any myself but I've eaten some of the other fellows'.

Will you please send me some more film when I notify you. I got the camera. For by the time you get the letter and package comes through, I'll have probably used up some of the film.

When you get the money order, please let me know and then my mind will be at ease. Take care of yourselves and don't worry so you'll look old. You know I'm pound of my young parents. With all my love and affection, Harold

#July 30, 1944, Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Today is Sunday and such a beautiful day As you have read in the papers we had quite a little spell of rain and I mean rain! One time, my foxhole had three inches of water in it so I got out and stayed in one of the houses. It certainly has been muddy and I've seen some fellows who were absolutely covered with dry mud. Slowly but surely, it has been drying out until the roads are terribly dusty. Some of the jeep drivers come in and their faces are covered with dust.

This is the first time I've been able to really rest and take things easy. This rest probably won't last long but at least it is a breather. Boy, yesterday was quite a day for I washed my entire body – first time for quite awhile. I even got clean underwear and wasn't that a treat. I really don't feel like the same person though with all clean things on.

I forgot to tell you that I'm in the 83<sup>rd</sup> division so if you see anything about it in the paper, you'll know that I'm there too. We had two war correspondents visit us a few days ago so maybe we'll be getting a write up.

Naturally there are many things which I cannot tell about but when I get back – which I hope won't be too long – I'll tell all. I can tell you though that I had many narrow escapes and I believe it was only by His grace and Will that brought me through without much more than a scratch. I did get a little scratch but that healed up in a few days so it couldn't have been bad.

One day, some German planes grew bold enough to come over our lines but because of such good anti-aircraft not all of them returned. One plane fell close to us so all of us got some of the plastic windshield. Then I made a little heart out of it and put the word "Mother" on it and the date. Sometime, I hope to be able to send it home but guess I'll have to make a small package.

As yet I haven't gotten any of your packages yet but expect them sometime soon. About three days ago, I got a letter from you dated July 14 and one from Miss Martin dated the 18<sup>th</sup>. He's got here in 9 day so the mail is coming in pretty good. I finally did get the letter from Grandma which she sent to my old – first – address back in England. It took 2 full months for me to get it through. And I want to ask you how come the Manager, Dining Service, 179 Summer St., Boston is sending me the Boston Herald – miniature – and who or what is he. I also want to know who sent me one from 79 Tremont St., Braintree.

Did you ever get the money order, and the 50 franc note? I certainly am asking an awful lot of questions. I sure will be glad to get the stationery so I can write a decent letter

A couple of days ago, we stopped near a little church which had been shelled. It certainly was a shame to see it destroyed the way it was, but there were a few things still left. The altar was left standing completely and the organ so I played Bells of St. Mary's on it and it sounded mighty pretty.

This will be all for now for I can't seem to think of much. I'm not in the writing mood.

I put my life in God's care and if it be His Will, I'll come through without a scratch. I truly believe He has been watching me for there were a good many boys who got hurt.

May God watch all the loved ones at home and keep you. With all my love and affection. Harold

#July 31, 1944, somewhere in France.

Dear Mum and Dad,

As you can see, I've finally got the stationery and I can tell you I'm glad to be able to write on something decent again. Today, I hit the jackpot for I got 9 letters and one package! Your letters ranged from July 13 to July 19. I also got one each from Mrs. Hendrie, Mrs. Newell, and Emily. Em sent me two little packets of air mail stamps like what you sent me so I'm pretty well supplied. The best letter of all was from you, Dad. You can write good when you want to and hope you keep it up. But both of you write the best letters of anyone.

I've noticed in these letters that you want me to tell a little more than before but I believe I cleared up some things in some of my letters that you haven't received yet. Our battalion went through some bitter fighting and had quite a few casualties but thank goodness very few were killed. The army, though, replace them quickly and we continued on our way. July 4<sup>th</sup> was the day we started to push but instead hit sort of a rubber spot - advanced so far and then had to resume our old position. But the next day we really started to push and have been going up till recently.

I believe I told you about us fighting at night but what I meant to say was that there was only night fighting in one particular spot when we were in a defensive position. All the rest was done in the day for these Normandy hedgerows are too hard to fighting around during the night. So things used to quite down at night except for an occasional shell.

As I told you before, I'm here at battalion headquarters as a company runner so I wasn't up on the very front lines like a rifleman. Sometimes, I used to follow the colonel around as he planned and carried through his operations. The holes we stay in are about 3 feet deep 2 feet wide and 6 ft. long - just right for sleeping. When we put hay in it, it was pretty comfortable. When I used the past tense, I mean this happened up till this little rest. Of course, after that I don't know.

Oh! Today is pay day and everybody is in the best of spirits even if there is nothing to spend the money on. I got nearly \$20 and yet I'm having an extra twenty taken out and sent home. So you should get the money soon. Everybody is now saving whether they want to or not for there isn't one single thing to spend money for.

I spent nearly five days in the navy. We boarded the LCI #400 made in Lawley's and started to come to France. But the channel winds grew so strong that we were in the harbor for nearly four days. So I really was in the navy for awhile. I can sure tell you I wish I had joined it but of course, it is hard to know if I would have been any better off.

If I haven't told you something you'd like to know, let me know and I'll see if I can let you know. As I said before, my last few letters have told much more than the old ones. I hope I told you that I'm in the Infantry still and this division is supported as all others by artillery, signal corps, etc. But I'm right up within a few hundred yards of the enemy.

I'm so glad to see, hear, that Mr. Robbins is taking an interest in you and your camera and that he was able to get you a new exposure meter. I can tell you that meter is about the best to be had. What are you going to do with the old one? Save it? You certainly turned out to be really good at that and hope you keep it up. Now, Dad, if we could only get you to use one and buy us each a Leica, then we'd be a photographic family. Thank Mr. Robins for me too for I appreciate it. We certainly are going in big for this stuff!! Eh what? As yet I haven't received the camera but of course, we move so fast. The packages take a little time. But I expect it any day.

I believe I'll send home about ten dollars this month, not by the army but send it home via a money order. Did you get the other one?

I think I'm doing pretty good at writing now. The longer I stay at it the better I get. But really it's a wonder I can write as well as I do for most people are still nervous. I used to be but sort of got over it and am I glad! Some can't keep their hands from shaking yet.

Thanks for the picture of the honor roll. I suppose I'm there somewhere.

I'm glad to find your faith and strength so strong and mine is the same. I believe it is only due to Him that I came through without a scratch. I really have something to pray and be thankful about

Keep up your chin and let's hope the war will be over soon. With all my love and affection, Harold

August 1, 1944. Somewhere<sup>4</sup> in France.

Dear Mum and Dad,

This certainly is a beautiful day with the sun out and so nice and cool. These days make me feel so nice and happy and glad I can still enjoy nature.

This morning, I sent home a money order for \$20 in an air mail envelope without anything else in it. So please write and let me know whether you got it or not. I really don't care whether it's put in bonds or the bank. I'll leave that up to you. I sure am saving a lot of money especially since I've come to France.

You mentioned that you bought a G.E. exposure meter and I hope Mr. Robbins told you there is a different film speed. On the Weston meter, it is 8 in daylight and 12 in tungsten as you know. Look on the paper that came with the film and see if it doesn't have two groups of film speeds. One is Weston and the other G.E. I believe, Maybe you got instructions with the meter so then you can find out. But, anyway, check up on it and make sure for I'm pretty sure the film speeds are different.

One thing there is plenty of is cigarettes and I mean plenty. Camels seems to be the most popular so I guess the billboards and advertising are right. So many times everything is a lie. There is plenty of candy too but always the same – a bar of candy. The candy tastes like the bar that comes from the K rations and which very few like. But since I've been eating these K rations, I don't mind them at all. Didn't I hate them when I first ate them but now think they're O.K.

Mail certainly is the best morale booster that the army has got. After reading the mail, everybody's face just gleams with delight. I can tell you I walk nearly a mile quite a few times a day in order to see if there is any mail from you. So far there has been no camera but I sure hope it comes through soon safe and sound.

I sent home a French 50 franc note which is equal to \$1.00 and I hope you got it all right. I have a few small souvenirs such as coins and stamps. One of the stamps has a picture of Hitler on it. He certainly isn't much to look at and to think we're here because of him.

Today, a Frenchman came around and started to talk French. Well, somebody knew French well enough so they had a swell time jabbering away. Finally the Frenchman started to talk to a couple of us and he showed us on the map where his family was and where the Germans were. I could understand a few words but of course it isn't as though I took it up last year. In two years, I've forgotten an awful lot. The French are great at using their hands. This one waved his all around but still I don't see that it helped too much. He had a bicycle and pack and what a pack. I don't know how he carries it for it certainly is heavy. He claimed the Americans are very kind for they give him all kinds of things such as cigarettes, candy, gum, etc.

We've been given all kinds of books from Life magazine to Newsweek. So I can read once in awhile.

Keep your chin up and just have faith in God. There isn't much to say for I'm not in the writing mood, Keep smiling, With all my love and affection. Harold

P.S. Please send me some candy and cookies and everything but soap. I have plenty of that.

August 2, 1944. Somewhere in France.

Dear Mum and Dad,

I was so glad to get your letters dated July 24 today and to find that you're starting to get my mail again. I know how you must have felt.

I mentioned about having \$20 taken out of this month's pay but due to a slight mix up, the money was given to me. So I sent a money order for \$20 but don't expect the \$20 from the government. Just the \$10 plus the bond will come.

Everyone here I understand is to get the combat expert infantryman's pension or award or whatever it is. So I expect to get ten dollars more per month. Don't feel badly because I'm not a corporal or a sergeant for I believe I could be but absolutely refuse to. I'd just as soon come out of the army as a buck private. I sure am saving an awful lot of money while being here, don't you think?

Yesterday I went to the dentist to have one of my teeth filled for one day I was chewing on some candy and the next thing I knew there was silver among the candy. It must have been poorly put in but anyway now it is fixed. He didn't have to drill very much as it didn't take much time. The dentist was the same as the one I mentioned in some of my old letters. I don't think I ever told you about being in Wales. It certainly was a beautiful country with real high mountains all around. I sure would like to have had a camera then for there were some beautiful scenes. There were plenty of sheep around and stone houses on the side of a bare mountain. But the thing that got me was all the mountains had swamps on their sides! And I mean swamps. Did you ever hear of such a thing? For some reason the water doesn't drain off at all.

It is really nice to have this stationery and so nice to write on. I only use it to send to you and use some other paper when I write to the others. People are writing me quite regular now so I get plenty of mail.

I thought you'd have a little trouble with the exposure meter but as I said in my last letter, check up and see if the Kodachrome doesn't have a special G.E. film rating instead of the Weston speed. If you can't find out for yourself, check up with Peggy for I'm positive the speeds are different when you use a G.E. meter, for some reason. I believe the G.E. developed a speed of their own and that is what they use on their meters. Tell me if you understand what I mean and tell me if you checked on it. Maybe in the instruction book that came with it, you'll find the film speeds. I really want to see you make some good pictures for now we've proven the camera is good

If it is at all possible can you send me a couple black and whites of the both of you and some of the kids. In fact, any kind of pictures would suit me.

Just think, today is the second of August and how time does fly! The years certainly are flying past. I certainly hope I don't have to stay in the army too long. I won't mind it too much if I'm discharged before I'm twenty. I'm determined to go back to college but if I'm discharged after I'm twenty, I'm not going. I don't believe. I feel as though I would be too old. But, of course, we'll just have to wait till we find out what happens.

I've only been gone a few months and yet it seems like years. Just have faith in God and I'm sure He'll carry all of us through. Thanks for being so swell about it all even though

I know you've through some terrible torture. Keep up your chin and God be with you till we meet again. With all my love and affection, Harold  
P.S. The Psalms I like the best is #121.

#August 3, 1944. Somewhere in France

Postmarked envelope in which the \$100 money order was placed. Nothing else.

#August 7, 1944. Somewhere in France. Sent this telegram to my parents. (I only had a few sentences from which I could choose.)

You are more than ever in my thoughts at this time. Keep smiling. Fondest love and kisses. Harold Simms

#August 9, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

We've been having quite a little bit of excitement so I couldn't write as I know I should have done. But I'm sure you realize the circumstances.

Well, at long last I had a chance to use some of French and I didn't do too badly at all. I've asked them how far a certain town was and told one woman that I learned a little French in school. Then she told me she had learned some English in school a long time ago so we sort of collaborated and we did all right.

It was a strange thing, one of the Frenchmen could speak perfect English so I asked him how that happened and he said he lived in Boston all his life except for 12 year!. Wasn't I surprised to find he lived in Scituate and knew where Braintree was. The reason why he came to France was that his wife was sick and so he decided to bring her to a better climate but in spite of this, she died. Another man spoke English and he had learned it on the Isle of Jersey just off the French coast.

The French people certainly were glad to see the Americans and even kissed us! They certainly are great wine drinkers and offer us plenty. I've tried some but can't drink it. I even tried champagne and don't care for it. Pretty special!

The cooks told me this morning that I have a package and I'm pretty sure it's the camera for they said it was quite heavy.

The French have been giving us the most beautiful flowers I ever saw such as big dahlias and beautiful gladiolas. They certainly love flowers and I sure wish your garden could be like some of theirs for I know you'd be awfully proud. I saw some carnations with every color there – carmine, pink, white, yellow, and white with yellow and red stripes. Then I saw some beautiful daisy-like flowers and they were of all colors.

I don't seem to be very much in the mood for writing but will write again as soon as I can (I sure am making an awful lot of mistakes).

God has taken good care of me and if it be His will, I'll be home soon. I'm always thinking of you. With all my love and affection, Harold

#August 10, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

As I am writing this letter, there is a piano playing quite close to me and doesn't it remind me of home! I sure would love to hear you play again.

I have a couple of souvenirs but nothing like some of the fellows have. Some of them need a truck to follow them and then all they could do was throw the junk on the truck. I saw some German cameras that nearly broke my heart for they were all broken to pieces. They were good cameras but I am sure the one we've got is better. A couple of fellows have

got cameras but they aren't the most expensive. Though I wouldn't mind having one as a souvenir. A couple have ten power binoculars and I can tell you they are certainly wonderful. There is the common 6 power German binocular but they aren't the best.

I've got some stamps from several countries that I picked up from among from among some German equipment. And I have a fancy pocket knife which is something like our boy scout knife. Other than that, I haven't bothered with any of their things.

Yesterday a Frenchman and woman were so happy to see us that they each kissed me on either cheek. I've often read about things like that but that is the first time I have had it done to me. I never in my life saw so many happy people in all my life. The bells in one town were tolling and everyone gathered near the church and began to sing.

Every civilian here rides a bike just like in England. I suppose that is due to the gas shortage. Even the priests were coming down the road on a bike but the nuns were walking.

Yesterday I got a letter from you dated the 27<sup>th</sup>. I suppose you are too busy canning to write me so often but if you can, write me often because I do so look forward to receiving your letters. You wanted me to tell you some things but I told you some of those things a couple of letters ago. (am I making a lot of mistakes).

Ruby started to write a letter June 19 and she finally did mail it one month to the day so she was pretty speedy. Nevertheless, I was indeed to ge one from her.

I'm just praying that the war won't last too long and that we can be home in a short time. Keep up your chin and keep busy. With all my love and affection, Harold

#August 11, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Today I received your letter dated July 31 and found that the letter numbered #22 is missing. I never knew Mrs. Soule went to the hospital though I did know she was planning to. I still haven't heard whether you ever received my two money orders, one for \$100 and the other for \$20. I would like to know so I would know definitely. And did you ever get the cablegram? I certainly hope my letters are coming through good even though I sometimes don't write for several days. Yesterday I really wrote some letters for I did six of them. As I said in one my other letters, I'm pretty sure the camera has come but they haven't had time to get it down to me. I'll be sure to let you know though. But please be sure to let me know about the money order even if you have to write the answer in two letters to be sure I get it. I sure do hope I get #22 letter.

I certainly laugh at the people at home who seem so optimistic. It is far from being won unless Germany should collapse from inside. We've been through an awful lot even though the war might seem to be nearly over (Phew. Am I making an awful lot of mistakes. I'm trying to write too fast).

For the past couple of nights I've been sleeping with all kinds of blankets over me. We found a German supply room full of all kinds of junk. Boy, I never realized the Americans were such souvenir collectors. They have everything from needles to haystacks. As I'm writing this, one of the fellows found a phonograph and is playing it but doesn't it sound terrible, though we've found some pretty nice radios and they can get all kinds of stations.

This life isn't too bad at all once I got used to it but I hated it till a couple of weeks ago. The human certainly can get used to any condition if he is subjected to it. Though, some of the people, especially the peasants, don't live much better than us. They certainly are poor people and work hard on their farms, in fact, I felt one of the girl's hands as she shook hands with me as I passed her and weren't they rough, worse than most American men.

You told me in one of your letters about your poppies and it reminds me of seeing fields of wild poppies – both red and orange. I bet you sure wish you had some of them. I have told you about the beautiful flowers around here so hope you can picture them. This section of France (or area) is very nice and very green. We were told that there is no winter around here so it makes an ideal climate. The weather has been beautiful after that week of rain we had a couple of weeks ago. The weather has been nice and cool - just comfortable. Every time I think of it getting cool I think of you and the rest sweating and having it so hot. This is the hottest month isn't it? Just think, winter is nearly here again. The time sure seems long but I hope it won't be too long before I come home.

I haven't had a letter from Betty in quite awhile so don't know what has happened to her. I forgot to tell you I got a letter from Mrs. Hendrie today. She certainly is wonderful to bother to write to me so often and I appreciate it very much.

Please be sure and tell me about those money orders when you write next time. God has been with me and has been very kind to me even through all these trying times. I look to Him always. Keep up your faith and I know He'll carry me through. With all my love and affection, Harold

#August 12, 1944 Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

This morning the mail clerk told me that I have another package but as yet he hasn't been able to get either the camera or the candy. I sure will be glad to get it but at least I know it has around safely.

Believe it or not, last night I slept in a bed and wasn't it wonderful. That is the first time since I left home. I'm afraid when I get home, I'll find it more comfortable to sleep on the floor or ground! But I'm sure I'll be able to get into the swing of things again.

As I am writing, one of the medical men is picking a pretty bouquet of dahlias in a garden quite close to me. These medics certainly are angels of mercy when anyone is wounded or hurt. They are right up there on the front lines and go through all kinds of things we do.

Around where I am at now is all kinds of things to eat. Everyone is rushing for a couple of plum trees. These plums are green even when ripe and are smaller than the ones at home. And are they sweet! Not quite as sour as the ones we used to eat.

One day a bunch of replacements came to our company so I went and saw them come in. All of a sudden I heard a voice yelling my name and much to my surprise, I found one of the fellows who had gone through basic with me and had come as far as England with me. But there we were split up. It sure is strange that we should be split for nearly two months and then he should end up right in my company. I don't know if you ever heard me mention Max Haber who is a Jewish fellow who I really like. He'd do anything for anyone. He told me that Fred Villeneuve from Providence is somewhere in this division so I guess I'll try to find him somehow even if I have to write to his wife. A division has a lot of men in it (about 20,000).

There is a dog near here who has four pups and she won't let us come close. Whenever we do come close, she shows her teeth and growls so no one dares go near her. Some of the fellows would like a puppy as a mascot but I'm afraid they're out of luck. The fellows let out a pig which was shut up in a pen for no civilians were around to feed it. The thing went crazy running around and I thought once we were going to have pork for it nearly ran into a jeep. Then the pig saw a mud mire and didn't it rush for it. The pig looked like a bulldozer the way it pushed its snout through the mud. Why, I don't know!

The other night, the cooks brought us hot food and guess what it was steak and French fries! I certainly got a pleasant surprise for that morning I had been talking about having a meal of steak and French fries and got everybody's mouth watering. We usually eat two meals of K rations and have hot food for supper so it makes it pretty nice. The cooks do a good job and work hard to give us decent things to eat. The cooks now are using up some captured German food which is excellent. The German army got all the good food and I mean good while the people at home starved. We've had some German chocolate which I like very much and some cookies. The cooks have plenty of lard, sugar, and coffee of theirs and not telling what else. I still don't like coffee and would rather have tea. One night they did have tea so I was rather happy but much to my disgust, the tea was terribly bitter for some reason.

Almost beside me is a cute white rabbit with very pink eyes. Some are not much to look at but he really is pretty. There are a couple running around here that are the biggest ones I ever saw.

I want to know if you'd please send me some more film – some color, some black and white. I'd much rather have too many than too few. I'm including those films I've got. Anyway send me a couple of films and two or three of the other. And please send me a box of cookies and candy when you get a chance. By the way, I don't want you to send me anything for my birthday in case you were thinking of doing it. I'd rather have you put some money in the bank for me. Did you ever get my money orders and cable?

Sometimes, I'm on the very front lines but usually am a short distance behind. I really feel lucky to have been put where I have. I'm still doing the same thing. We've got another runner for my company who I found is a month younger than me. They certainly take them young.

My letters I know aren't very interesting and I surprise myself that I write so much when here isn't much to say.

This will be all for now God be with you and keep you. With all my best love, Harold

P.S. Don't you think I did a much better job at writing and not making so many mistake? I was more careful tonight. Bonsoir as the French would say. With more love. Harold

P.S.S. I forgot to mention that I had a swell feed of raw peas today. That's the way I like to eat them. I write to you every day I can. You notice I sometimes I write a few days in a row.

#August 13, 1944 Somewhere in Franc.

Dear Mum and Dad,

I have a chance to write so I'd better take advantage of that time.

Maybe you've notice on the envelope that I've been made a private first class which is one step higher. I've been one for quite awhile but have been sort of reluctant in telling you for before that rating wasn't confirmed. This is high enough for me now and sometime I'll explain why. I won't know what to do with all my money between getting more money from the raise and this new combat infantry expert bonus but I'll keep sending it home. I sure was surprised to hear how much money I had saved up and I want to thank you for doing all you have for me. You certainly have done plenty and will go out of your way in order to d something for me like getting that camera.

Yesterday just after I wrote your letter, the missing letter came. It was #22 sent on July 28. Just the same the mail is coming though good and I'm glad to hear that my mail is going through good and fast.

If you like the work this photo-finishing place that Mr. Robbins takes his films to, why don't you find out where the place is and go there? Not that I'm conceited or anything like that but will you send me a picture of me that you had made by that place so I can see how good it is. Send me any pictures you can for I'd love to get some. I lost that picture of the honor roll or else burned it so if at all possible, please send me another one.

I just saw ducks waddling around and they waddle just like poor old Mrs. Herbert. But the duck reminds me more of Lillian with their ding toes and aren't they tall and skinny.

We have a boy with the bunch of messengers who is of Swedish descent but is American born and lived in America all his life. And doesn't he speak with an accent! All his W's are pronounced as V's. It's sort of strange though that the Germans pronounce their w's the same way.

The other day some of the fellows brought back a bunch of combs that they found. These combs are like barbers' and aren't they good – just the way I want them. Then they brought in some bottles of perfume which I wouldn't say was very expensive and wrapped them up to send home I can imagine what they'll be like when they get there. I'd never bother with anything like that though but would rather buy you some good perfume in person. By the way, how is the perfume doing?

I forgot to tell you that I went to church services last Sunday. The chaplain certainly works hard for he gives about twenty sermons or services a week. I certainly enjoy going very much and wish I could go more often but sometimes he doesn't come around for a couple of weeks. Slowly but surely I'm reading the new testament for whenever I get some spare time, I read some. Yesterday I found a new testament written all in French.

I don't know if you've ever heard me speak about one of the other messengers named Swett who comes from So. Carolina. Just after he got paid last month he disappeared at the company and I never saw him for a couple of hours. The next day one of the fellows in our company mentioned about Swett losing all his money in a game of poker. Well, we razed him for quite a long time and he says that that taught him but I wonder!

All the houses I've seen so far in France have slate roofs but the strange thing is that they're (the slate) laid right on the framework instead of some sort of base such as wood like on our roofs at home. Most of the people around here are either extremely poor or extremely rich but once in awhile we find a middle class Frenchman called the bourgeois class.

That one day I wrote and told you about not going back to college if I'm over 20. But now I've changed my mind and am determined to go back regardless of my age. I sure will be glad to get back again and start to learn something again.

I wrote a request in the last letter and wanted some film, some color and black and white. So when you have time will you send it to me. Why don't you find out how heavy a package can be when you send things airmail. Maybe you can send some of the film that way.

Please send me some candy and whatever you can find.

Look to God for comfort for He can comfort us very much. Keep up your chin and keep yourselves busy. With all my love and affection, Harold

#August 15, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Yesterday it was impossible for me to write but I can write today as you can naturally see.

At last I got the camera and it is a pretty camera. It certainly was wrapped up solidly and came in good condition. The thing that got me was that I got five packages all at once so had to send a couple back to the kitchen to save for me!!! That's always the way things go. I ate the cookies and wouldn't say they tasted too good. Naturally cookies that old aren't very good so please don't bother to send any more cookies. The candy, in fact everything, came in good condition and I want to thank you very much for sending them. I also got the stationery but please don't send so much at once for I can't use it all and just have to lug it around. It would have been fine if you had sent only one for I hadn't used more than half of the first box.

I was just listening to the radio and everyone seems to be quite excited because the war is certainly gaining huge momentum. Let's hope and pray it won't be long now.

Just as Miss Keany used to tell us, the water here in France is certainly terrible. Once in a long time though we do find some fairly good tasting water though. We put what is called halzone tablets in water that we get out of the pumps but we usually use water purified by the engineers.

We're starting to call the bunch of messengers here at battalion headquarters the "souvenir platoon" for they've collect more junk. I did get a couple of things I'd like to send home. I found some mechanical drawing instruments which aren't too bad except they have a very little bit of rust on them and need to be cleaned up. Then there are some glass slides which I want to send for they're nice. The color slides can be mounted in these slides between the glass and that'll protect them from getting all scratched up. These slides are hard to get in the States and these ones are nice. I also found some more stamps and will probably send those in an envelope instead of a package. There are some pretty nice ones among the bunch. I also have got a couple of cheap cameras which I'd like to give to some of the kids but save them till I get home. A few of the fellows in my company got some Leica cameras but I still haven't found anyone that compare to ours. Of course, it partly belongs to me for I persuaded you to buy it. But still I wouldn't mind having another one. If I should see one laying around I wouldn't hesitate to take it. But it hasn't been my good fortune to be able to get one. I've only seen a couple that I thought was really good – maybe worth about \$100. I also picked up a German watch which I believe is issued to their troops. It's a good one and now have one on either wrist. Everyone would like to buy or trade it from me but I won't get rid of it. Only if I could get a Leica or some similar camera would I part with the watch. Well, that's enough about the camera My cameras - the one you sent me - is a swell camera.

Yesterday I bet you can't guess what I had. A cucumber! More than one, in fact about five that I found in one of the gardens. I had a garden special for dinner which consisted of peas, beans, cabbage, cucumbers and anything I could find. Oh yes, and apples, pears, and plums. The plums certainly were nice.

Yesterday I had to laugh at some of the fellows for they were riding horses around and bicycles. I did get to ride a bike but did want the horse. They had one horse saddled up and another one would follow the first around no matter where they went. The Germans were in such a hurry to get out that they left more junk around and we got plenty of stuff we could paw through.

I guess I'm just not in the mood for writing so will write again tomorrow if possible. Pray with me that the war will be over and we can all get home soon again. With all my love and affection, Harold.

P.S. I think I told you I was a P.F.C. Dad, will you please write me a letter for I love to hear from you as well as Mum.

#August 16, 1944. Somewhere in France  
Dear Mum and Dad,

I got two very welcome letters from you yesterday, the 15<sup>th</sup>. One was dated Aug. 1 and Aug. 5. As yet there hasn't been any sign of #25 which is missing. But I'm sure it'll be here for it has happened before.

You still haven't mentioned whether you've ever gotten the money orders, one for \$100 and another one for \$20. Please let me know for if they ever got to you, I'll have it traced. It's too much to let go unnoticed.

I started to send some stamps home but they wouldn't let me so I guess I'll have to wait. Though I do believe one envelope did get through but I'm not sure. That \$10 check you got last month is right for I haven't changed it to \$20 but I requested that \$20 be sent home and taken out of the last month's pay. I don't know if you understand but I couldn't send the money for I didn't get \$20 last month.

I saw a photo shop in one of the towns and didn't they have some swell equipment, some nice enlargers, driers, in fact all the equipment that is needed for the darkroom. But alas I couldn't touch them for it was French equipment. Some of these Frenchmen certainly have nice large homes, especially near towns or cities.

I forgot to tell you that one of those packages was sent from the boatyard. It was sort of strange though, that I should get all those packages at once.

It is just impossible for me to write today for I don't seem to be in the mood. Trust in God and I know He'll bring us together again soon. With all my love, Harold

#August 17, 1944. Somewhere in France

At last, the missing letter has turned up, #25 and it has told me what I've been wanting to know. I was quite anxious to know about the money order and at last my mind feels at ease about it. This letter was dated Aug. 3 and I got it yesterday. I also got one dated Aug. 7 from you and one from Mrs. Hendrie. She certainly writes me regularly, almost every 5 or 6 days.

You were right for I was in Wales for awhile and was near Manchester, between there and Chester.

Imagine the weather being so hot and stuffy home while here the weather is perfectly ideal with the sun shining most of the time and the weather is so nice and cool. I sure wouldn't mind having our summers in New England just like here.

Come to think of it, will you please tell me what the average exposure you found for color film so I can base my exposures on that. And if possible ask Mr. Robbins or Peggy what the average exposure is for black and white. I believe it's about 1/25 at between f8 and f16.

I'm so sorry to hear that Dad hurt his ankle and know that it must bother him greatly. I'm glad to hear that you wrote to me for I sure do enjoy getting letters from you.

I sure am sorry to hear that Maynard is having such trouble. He seems to feel so conspicuous when his arm sticks out and I really wish they could do something for him.

I didn't mean to startle you by sending that cable for I meant it only to supplement all the letters.

Oh, yesterday we had steak and French fries and didn't they taste good. They seem to be feeding us steak more often than I can remember. They also feed us fresh vegetables such as beans, peas, and carrots and they certainly taste lots better than the canned stuff. We certainly need some green vegetables after eating those K rations for so long.

Yesterday I wrote to Warren who is at Newport and expects to be there for at least six weeks so he has been pretty lucky. But I can't complain for so many of the fellows I was

with are suffering more than me by shrapnel wounds, etc. I don't know why but I seem to write him a whole book and yet when I wrote yours, I couldn't get more than one sheet written. I certainly have to be in just the right mood or else I can't do anything.

What a bunch all we messengers are for we are always arguing over small things and yet are the best of friends. I think it's because we haven't much more to do.

We're at present having another little rest as we did a couple of weeks ago and probably will push off soon again Men can't fight continually without having any kind of a rest. And if I do say so myself, this division has gone through some of the worst battles that the Americans have run up against. But this division has proved its worth and has been an outstanding division.

I've got a new pair of pants and shirt like what I wore home on furlough and was mighty glad to get it. My work clothes which are called fatigues were filthy. I've been changing from O.D. clothes – furlough clothes – to these work clothes and then back to O.D.'s. The O.D. stands for the color olive drab.

The bees or insects are terrible around here especially when we eat. These insects insist upon getting into the food and don't the fellows have a swell time cursing and trying to get them out of the food. It reminds me of picnics and ants!

I found a nice case which I can put my camera and all the film in. I saw a camera one of the fellows has got and I must say it's about as good as mine, or I should say ours, but hasn't got a coupled range finder. Then he picked up an exposure meter so he's all set now except he hasn't got any films. Anyway, I'm satisfied with the one I've got here and the one at home. Have you taken any more pictures? I hope you haven't had too much trouble with the new exposure meter. Please let me know how it's going. I suppose and hope you took some of the folks when they were down to visit.

We certainly are going to have a wonderful time when I get home and I sure hope we can go to Nfld. as Dad has planned. What you say, Dad?

I'm always thinking of you and I love you so dearly. I'm glad to see you're taking things as you are but know how both of you must feel. Keep up your chin and keep busy. With all my love, Harold.

#August 18, 1944 Somewhere in France.

Dear Mum and Dad,

I slipped up a couple of hours for I usually write around ten o'clock in the morning. I suppose you notice that I write once a day for I enjoy writing to you.

Last night, I saw the three best cameras in the battalion. Two belonged to lieutenants and one belonged to a private. Each camera was worth well over \$200 - a Contax, Leica, and something that wasn't quite so well known. But I like the Leica best of all and the thing is the camera this lieutenant has is exactly the same as ours. So we've got a good camera in my opinion.

Yesterday I got the letter from Dad just after I wrote so I'm finally up to date on these letters. I also had a fine letter from Grandma written in St. John. People don't seem to be writing quite as much as they used to even though I am absolutely up to date. It took quite awhile but I finally got up to date. I really don't mind not getting letter from other people but would if you didn't write. Probably they'll start writing soon again.

Pretty soon I'm going to send home a new medal some of us fellows got. This medal is called the combat infantry medal and is worth \$10 a month more to me. Just think now I get \$75.00 basic pay a month but of course I have some taken out each month. My money certainly is mounting up and I certainly will have a little nest egg when I get back and when I go to college, I won't have to draw from the bank but instead through this new

ruling, I can get part of my education free. The government certainly is doing a lot of things to benefit the fighting man.

One day we captured a lieutenant colonel and didn't he strut around like a rooster among hens. And wasn't he dressed up! Like someone who stepped out of a band box. When our lieutenant colonel, our commanding officer, and the man whom I'm with quite often, came out to speak to him., this German just stared at our officers because of the clothes. Our officers as you've probably read dresses just as a private and our officers had his clothes all torn. What a difference - one so dressed up and the other looking almost like a pauper in comparison.

Added August 19

I never had a chance to finish writing this letter so will do so today. I went swimming yesterday in a reservoir and didn't I have a great time! That is the first time I've had a good swim since last summer. There certainly were plenty of fellows there and it is the first real bath I've had in a long time.

I've taken a few pictures of a lake, houses, people, and even a cross which said "vive Jesus"! Which means long live Christ. It was ver beautiful and as I've mentioned before, these crosses frequently are seen along the roads.

I'm glad that Aunt Frances and Uncle Don were able to get to see you for it not only gave you enjoyment but kept you busy enough not to worry as much as if you were all alone. I'm sure by the way you talk you had a wonderful time.

I just had a few nice apples and weren't they good. Those were the first good apples I've tasted since I've come to France. there are plenty of orchards of apples but most of those aren't very good and are used for cider. The French certainly have plenty of cider as well as wine. The Germans I understand took most of their wine away and left only the cheaper cider. It certainly doesn't taste much like our sweet cider even though some if is called sweet cider. Believe it or not, I found a fig tree – the first time I ever saw figs growing on trees. I tasted one and didn't it taste terrible for it wasn't fully ripe. Yellow jackets (like hornets) were having a great time eating the ripe ones. It is strange though that these insects go so much for anything sweet in regular drones. There are more of those things around than mosquitoes or flies and make themselves regular pests.

I guess I'd better go back to the dentist and have one of my front teeth filled. This very small cavity has been coming for a long time but brushing my teeth helped to keep it small. It is in back so I don't believe it'll show at all even though I is filled.

Please don't worry about me too much for things aren't as bad as it was for awhile. And don't worry about my teeth for they're O,K.

Keep your faith strong and pray often and I know the war won't last too long. I love you more than ever and you both mean the world to me. The ocean and long distances can't sever our love for each other but instead makes us closer.

I must go now so I will try and write tomorrow. With all the love in the world,  
Harold.

#August 20, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Yesterday I was sitting on the sidewalk and along came a couple of boys. One said with an accent "How are you" and much to my surprise I found the two of them to be Irishmen, of all people! One was in France to become a priest when the Nazi invaded so he was trapped and the other was on the Isle of Jersey when they came. This latter fellow was confiscated and made to work but because he was a citizen of a neutral country, he couldn't

be forced to join the army. The boy who wants to be a priest has been doing work too and studying on the side. Just think, neither one of the fellows has written or heard from home for four years! Just think how worried their folks must be! And we complain. I guess there are many people worse off than me and you.

These French people have gone through so much torture and the sad part is to see them return to their homes and find only a heaping pile of rubble. One woman who could speak fairly good English told us she had been without butter, coffee, tea, sugar, other such items for over three months! She said that her son was in Germany working and that they nearly killed him and she said it has been miserable for a long time. It certainly is very pathetic though.

Today is Sunday and what a beautiful day. Just think, as I'm writing this at 9 o'clock in the morning, you're both in bed for it is only 3 there. The days are getting noticeably shorter for at one time it grew light about 4:30 and dark about 11:15. Now it doesn't get light until 6:30 and dark at 10.00. So you can see the days are getting noticeably shorter than for awhile.

I sure would like to go to church today for I feel I have much to thank God about and want to sing hymns heartily. I've always told about how unlucky I've been but now when I look back on things I feel very lucky indeed.

Today I hope to be able to take a picture of a church near here modeled after Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. It certainly is a beautiful church and plenty of people are going to services held there. I mean the French.

I've found my French to come in quite handy in the last couple of days. I can't say too much for I've forgotten most of my main verbs but I can still speak some. If I had known at the time I would have had you send me that condensed French book but I suppose it is no use now. Though, when you do send another package would you put in that book? It is orange and black, I believe, and has a heavy paper cover. I might get it in time and I might not for I hope the war will be over before the book gets to me. Please send me a package of candy and other things but please don't bother with cookies for they only will get stale on the way as the others did. Most of them didn't get so stale but rather retained a funny taste which comes from the waxed paper.

You know nothing would please me more than to be able to call home this afternoon but of course, it is quite impossible.

There is a messenger here who is about 30 – a South Carolinian – and does he grunt and groan when he does anything. Who does that remind you of, Dad? You certainly used to be able to grunt and groan and I suppose you still do for you can't teach old dogs new tricks.

Talking about dogs reminds me to tell you the messengers now have a little dog. I don't know how long he'll last for he'll probably get lost but we'll try to keep him.

We're having another rest and are in a pretty nice spot. We have a piano handy and plenty of pretty girls walking by. I'm still going to wait until I get back to the U.S.A. before I have anything to do with girls.

You were right in your assumptions about England. We certainly used to have a swell time at Old Silver when we used to visit the Fishers. I sure will have fun when we can do it again but until then, I'll be content in having second best.

I've grown to know more fellows in battalion headquarters than I do in my own company for I haven't been with my company for so long. I do go often to see if there is any mail for me. As yet I haven't had any letters from you today. Oh! Just as I wrote this in came somebody with a letter from Miss Martin but I expect to get one from you tomorrow.

I wish you had some snapshots of you that you could me. Of course, I'd rather have a recent one that you took with the new camera. But I suppose you haven't got any.

You both mean more to me than ever before and I hope and pray it won't be too long before I can go home.

With all my love and affection, Harold.

#August 21, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I just got back from having that front tooth fixed and it isn't a cavity after all. Instead it is an old filling which has become very sensitive so he fixed it up in a jiffy. To get to the dentist was some drive – almost forty miles. Usually it is within a mile of battalion headquarters but under the circumstances it couldn't be any closer.

Yesterday, I finished taking one roll of film and I want you to send me some more. When you buy black and white please don't get super XX film for it is too fast but rather a film something like panatomic X or nearly the same film speed which I believe is 24. Please let me know what the daylight film speed of super XX film is for I can't remember exactly I don't know how good these pictures are going to turn out for I had to do an awful lot of guessing but sometime I'll find out.

A woman war correspondent for Life Magazine came around here the other day with two swell cameras and took a picture of a mess line which I was in. It might be published in the magazine so get it once in awhile to see. It certainly was a novelty to see a woman photographer dressed up as a soldier with all the equipment like us.

Talking about girls, I've seem more beautiful women around here than I ever did. Some of them went to church yesterday in quite nice looking clothes.

This place reminds me of the Jerusalem drive and makes me quite homesick. I sure feel more at home than I have for a long time.

I found some film which I suppose was originally German – three to be exact but they only have 12 exposures per film. One has been exposed and can be anything from nude to church. But I believe it is of churches and bridges because a fellow here translated the German writing on it and that is what it said.

Pretty soon I'll be getting paid and I expect nearly forty dollars so will send some of it home. I certainly am pleased to know I have so much in the bank and in bonds for if anything should ever go wrong, I'll have some money for my education.

I asked you in one of the other letters what the average exposure you found for color film. I want to get some good color pictures if at all possible.

I met a fellow who is the dentist's helper and he is from Lynn. He spent much of his time in Braintree and has swam in the lake. It certainly is strange to be able to find so many people near my town. He said he met somebody from Braintree last week at the dentist's office and I am wondering who it could have been.

It is sort of strange but I thought my fingernails would be all chewed to pieces because of nervousness. When I was home and when I was nervous, I would bite my fingers. But now my nails are longer than they ever have been.

I'm just rambling on and on today for I'm not in a good mood for writing. But I'll try to say something.

The war seems to be progressing very nicely and I hope it will continue. I certainly hope Drew Pearson's prediction comes true. It certainly will be wonderful to get home. Just as long as we don't have to take another sea voyage to another theater of operation. I just pray that it never happens.

I can't seem to do much at writing today but will try to be better tomorrow after I come back from the dentist. He put in a temporary filling today and I have to go back tomorrow.

I love you both so very much and am always thinking of you. Keep up your chin. With all the love in the world, Harold.

P.S. Please send me some pictures if you've had any made up in black and white. I haven't had any letters from you today but expect one tonight. With more love.

#August 23, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I'm sorry I didn't write yesterday but I had to go back to the dentist and that took all day. Eight of us got over there and then the ambulance which took us over was suppose to come back but it never came. So that meant we were stuck over there for the night As I was wondering what to do, I saw one of our battalion jeeps over there so I grabbed a ride. I don't know how the other fellows got back but I suppose they found some way. That was some jeep ride for they certainly do bounce around.

When I was there at the dentist waiting for the rest to finish, I went and saw a show in which two girls (American) sang and danced and they certainly were good. Nearby was a clubmobile which is a little kitchen mounted on a truck where they make coffee and doughnuts. It certainly was better tasting coffee than the cooks make. Incidentally, the dentist put in a permanent filling and what a splendid job for I can hardly see where it was. Because it was a front tooth he used porcelain – the place was in back so it wouldn't have shown anyway. The night before I saw two movies which were very good and I hadn't seen them so that made it more pleasant. The room the movie was in was big enough to hold a house twice our size so you can imagine how huge it must have been. Then the night before that I saw another stage show in which men sang, and very good, and danced. In fact, they did almost everything. It certainly is nice to be able to have some sort of entertainment.

Some of the French cars that chug around are driven by coal burners attached to either side of the car. I can tell you that you when one passes because of the terrible stink. But then again there are some nice cars but they're so different than ours in the States.

Your letter dated the 9<sup>th</sup> came yesterday and also the blank paper. Please don't send any more blank paper though until I let you know for I have plenty. I have almost two full boxes which you sent so you can see that I have plenty. Mrs. Hendrie sent me the church paper and I was surprised to find my letter in it. That was one I had written to her. I also got a letter from Em and I was surprised to see that it took 22 days to come via airmail! Quite long!

Please, Mom darling, don't worry about the conditions I live under for it is good now. For awhile it wasn't the best but now I wash everyday with plenty of water and have plenty of clean clothes. The mud doesn't bother me for I'm usually in a house – I sleep in one.

I tried to rewind my film but I couldn't for the life of me figure out how to do it. I finally took the camera apart and rewound the film by hand and that was when I found out how it should be done. So now everything is fine and I know all about the camera. This camera even has a lever which will enable me to get into the picture. It is ten seconds from the time I press this lever until the time the picture is snapped. It's called a self-timer The U.S. Navy uses a camera like mine except some parts are plastic instead of being aluminum so they must be pretty good. I've taken some nice pictures of churches and crosses.

I've surprised myself for I wrote nearly three full sheets every time I write. Sometimes when I get started it's awfully easy to keep going but sometimes it's an ordeal.

Please don't worry about me too much for I'm living under good conditions. Keep your chin up for the war is going good now.

God has been kind to me and I look up to Him as I know you do. With all the love in the world. Harold

P.S. Please send me a package of candy, gum, etc. don't send me any more writing paper for awhile for I have two boxes.

#August 24, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Last night I got a letter from you and wasn't I greatly pleased for it was so long – seven sheets. Some of the fellows certainly were surprised to see so many sheets. You don't know how pleased I am. That letter was dated Aug. 15. I also got a letter from Miss Martin and one from Emily. It was sort of a strange though, that I should get a letter from each of them only two days before.

I told you I got a nice letter from Grandma but I won't answer until she gets home. So when she does, please let me know. You mentioned about Warren and I believe I told you what he is doing. He was at Newport studying so he was lucky.

Please send me some film via airmail if at all possible for I'd like to have them on hand. Please let me know what the average exposure is that you have found so I can base my exposure on it. Is it f8 at 1/50 or what? We'll make a photographer out of Dad yet, won't we Mum?

I've got a nice little desk to write on and all around on it is my usual mess of plain junk. Remember when I used to clutter up my room. I carry around some stuff for my convenience and then everyone asks me to lend them something. But I refuse to because I not only had to pay for most of it but I carry it all around on my person and they don't carry anything. I believe they'd take somebody's eye teeth if they could. The world is certainly made up of all types.

I had a good dinner yesterday for I had some roast beef and two helpings at that. So they feed us pretty good as you can see.

I typed this envelope out with a captured typewriter and the keyboard isn't standard. If you follow a standard keyboard you'll get commas, periods and what not where you are suppose to have letters.

I forgot to tell you that #29 letter hasn't come yet but suppose it'll get here today. It is strange that every once in awhile I'll get a new letter before one written two days before. I suppose somewhere along the line there is a bunch of inexperienced men so that may cause a delay. I'm glad to know that I was able to tell of some of my activities without it being censored.

The war seems to be going quite favorably and I really pray that it won't be too long before it'll be over. It really won't be too bad if we should ever have to stay as occupation for a few months but I'd much rather get back to the good ole U.S.A.

Yesterday I met a very beautiful girl with a good looking husband. They could speak English very well and I thought they had quite an English accent so I asked them where they came from and they said the British Isle of Jersey. So they definitely are British and English is spoken in the large towns on this isle. Only in the country do they speak French and then it isn't really French – rather more like French Canadian.

I picked up a little dictionary which I found among some American equipment. It's English and you'd be surprised how much I've used it I'm reading Walter Lippman's book "U.S. Foreign Policy" and come across quite a few words I don't know.

I'm just reading the 91<sup>st</sup> Psalm and I think it is beautiful and wonderful. Religion certainly is wonderful and to have a great trust in God can give one a feeling of great satisfaction. He certainly is my Keeper and I put all my trust and faith in Him. As I have said before, I thought I was very unlucky but I'm growing to feel altogether different when I look back over some of the things that happened. I got home 3 days from Standish, basic

training wasn't too hard, and many other things such as that. I'm glad to see that you're putting so much trust in God and I know you shall be rewarded.

There is so little to write about and I use up all the news for I guess I write too often. But in my estimation, I would write 10 times a day if I could write something. I've written almost every day when I could and can and will keep it up.

Here it is 10:30 and you're not even up. You should be ashamed of yourselves But it's only 4:30 back in the States.

Thanks for being so swell about everything and for sending me all you have. I'm glad you won't write things that'll make me worry very much.

Keep busy and try to keep your mind off of the war. With all the love in the world,  
Harold

#August 25, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I'm slipping for I usually write letters before dinner but I'm writing this just afterward.

Last night I saw another movie and had a great time. They usually show us a musical comedy picture and this actress was very funny. The place it showed was certainly crowded for when the word gets around there is to be a movie, everybody rushes for the place and me n the middle of the bunch. It certainly is fine to have some sort of relaxation.

I just finished eating a short while ago and guess what I had for dessert. Carrots!! I went to a garden near here and had a swell feed of them. France is a nice place to be if you like raw vegetables for city and country folks alike raise quite a size garden. Did I tell you about trying some figs? We found a fig tree so I tried one and are they terrible. Maybe they weren't quite ripe enough or else I would have liked them. They are good only when dried and delivered to us through a store. We had plenty of apples and they're very good. When we first got here in France, the apples were puny and terrible tasting but as we moved on they grew better.

The weather has been fine and just comfortable. I suppose it's real hot at home just now The place around here reminds me of Nantasket where it is always cool and the scenery nice.

The French seem to be doing an excellent job at taking care of Nazi collaborators. I guess anyone who sympathized with the Germans will find themselves very unpopular with the true French.

There is plenty of swimming around here and I've gone but today is too cool. I bet Betty would like to be here.

There isn't anything else to write about so will close. Let's pray the war will be over soon. With all my love, Harold

P.S. don't forget to tell me what the average exposure is for color film. I'm going to use it soon. With more love. P.S. Please send me some more stamps

#August 26, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Last evening I got your missing letter #29 so now I'm up to date. I had one from Dad and was very pleased. It isn't that I am not pleased to get a letter from you, Mum, but because Dad will write to only me. I call it a real treat. The Boston Herald started to come again from Mrs. Hendire and was glad to get the home town newspaper.

I've been figuring up my money that I should get his month - \$39.55. I was wondering f I should add \$10 more to the ten you receive per month or whether I should get

a \$37.50 bond. In the first case I would have \$29.65 per month and in the second I would have \$20.90. If you have any suggestions, please tell me for I don't know just what to do. I have plenty of spending money and could get along easily on \$20. Let me know what you think. If my bonds are not coming through see if you can write and check up. I suppose they have to be filed and everything and as a result take a little time.

Yesterday, I got a haircut which I really needed badly. The barber had to use his thinning shears and still he didn't take out all he should have. He said that most people whom he used these shears on have thin places in spots after he finishes but he said that I had so much that it didn't matter.

Today is very beautiful and the weather has been quite ideal neither too hot nor too cold. I feel sorry for you at home to think that you're going through such a hot spell. Only last Sunday was it raining and that was for but one day. Other than that, the days have been perfect.

Last night I went to another movie and enjoyed it even though I had seen it before. The name was "The Amazing Mrs. Holliday" with Dianna Durbin. The so-called theater is usually jammed as was last night. It sure is relaxing to have some sort of entertainment.

Last night I went across the street to a bench and on it was a messenger and in his lap was a cat which was the color of ours. But the only thing was that this cat was smaller and didn't have a very pretty face. I still think ours is the best and think he is the prettiest cat I've seen yet.

Some of the fellows around here have nicknames such as rabbit. That fellow does look something like one when you look at him at a distance. Then there is Kid Williams. He carries around his pistols too. Then there is Pollock if that is the way to spell it because of his Polish ancestry. They haven't any name for me though.

I got a pack of cards in the package from the boatyard and aren't the fellows having a swell time with them. One likes to do card tricks and so he entertains us that way.

You certainly had some trip to Provincetown but you have nothing on me for we rocked after getting out of Boston Harbor.

This will be all for now. With all my love. Harold

#August 27, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I must get a letter off to you before I go over to the company to see if I had any mail.

This morning we overslept and nearly missed breakfast but somehow one of the fellows woke up and asked me what time it was. The new watch certainly keeps excellent time and I think it's a very good one. Anyway, I rushed to get breakfast and nobody followed me for a long time. Every morning when I get back, I wash and I'm always the first to get a back and wash. So this morning two of the fellows washed before they went to eat for they said I was too much of a flash for them.

I don't believe I ever told you about any of the fellows with me. There is a new messenger with us from E company for the old one was wounded. This fellow is one month younger than me so he's the baby of us all. His name is Nelen and he comes from Pennsylvania. I like him about the best of all I've met in the army and we do many things together such a taking walks, playing ball, etc.

Then there is Swett from So. Carolina. I'm sure I told you about him - his mother fed him only water. He is quite small, only 5 ft. 2 and he weighs just about as much as me so he is quite chubby. Talking about weight, I weighted myself on some German scales and I don't think they could be right for I weighed myself and found myself to be 175 or 170 - somewhere around there. Most of the fellows claimed that they were right but I can't see

how I've gained with all the running around I've done. The German scales were in kilograms and I weight only 80- kilos. But to convert it into pounds, you multiply by 2.2.

These three fellows - I'm including myself - are from E company, Company F has three men too. One is a very petite boy and quite cute. All the girls when they see him look at him and sort of smile for he is such a contrast to most of us. I believe he's about 5 ft. His name is Alexa Yugoslav name. There is also a guy from Brooklyn with the foist and the toid accent. He loves to argue in fact we all like to and have a swell time sometimes just for fun. His name is Stasi. The third man (William Schaub) from this company is the elder of us for he is 34 and comes from Baltimore. He is married and without children, and in many ways is the baby (father) of us all. Reminds me of Dad the way he's so sry.

Now for G company. There are two new men from there. One of the names is Greene and he comes from New Jersey. He is married and at 20 has a baby girl nearly two. The second fellow's name is Ruguso and he is a wild type of fellow. He comes from Rochester, N.Y. and this Swedish fellow, Johnson who I've told you about is his accomplice and stooge. Those two are always on the rampage - I hope that makes sense.

Last of all is Co. H with only two messengers for one was wounded. One (Shirley Surface) came from Charleston West Virginia, capital of that state. He is a comical fellow and we have a swell time listening to him and his tales. And last but not least is a fellow by the name of Nunziato who comes from Albany, N.Y. so he isn't too far from home.

I've been very well and I'm living under good conditions now. I'm not saying that just to make you feel good. Please, don't worry about that and naturally I know it's no use to tell you not to worry for as long as you're human you; will worry about me. But please try not to too much. This isn't much of a letter but I guess you'll be glad to get it.

Keep up your chin. The war news looks good. With all my love, Harold

P.S. Thank goodness I never got a letter from Gert. Please send me some more stamps.

#August 27, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Today is a very beautiful Sunday and the temperature is just moderate. This morning I went to church and enjoyed the service very much. It certainly is surprising how much I can enjoy church. The chaplain is a major and has replaced our regular man who is a captain.

Just think today is the 27<sup>th</sup> of August and one month from today is my birthday. As I mentioned before please don't send me any for my birthday but rather put the money in the bank. It is rather a long time until Christmas but that seems to be what the post office is talking about so I'll tell you not to send me much more than candy, etc. Maybe a few little items but I'd rather have you put the money in the bank. I'm saving money slow but sure. When I told you about being able to be a sergeant, I meant what you guessed. I'm entirely satisfied and I'm not a buck private anyway.

One of the messengers with us has a decidedly Swedish accent. He has lived and was born in this country but still he has the accent. He pronounced V as wee and the W as a vee. He is the most gullible persons I've ever met for he'll believe the most fantastic stories that I ever did hear. He seems to be a non-sectarian for even though he is a Protestant, he'll go to the Catholic church if his friends are of that religion.

Last evening two of us went out for a walk and saw plenty of old places. Some of the buildings were built in 1721 other in 1856, and here many of them were in complete ruins, burned right to the ground. It certainly is a shame to have such old things destroyed completely except for the walls.

Yesterday I put on all new clothes and this time I put on work clothes. I switch from O.D.'s, like what I had home on furlough, to work clothes, back to OD.s and then back to work. So I'm having a swell time. I also washed my hair and wasn't it filthy. I guess I've changed so since I was small and now I'm quite immaculate. I can keep a lot cleaner than when I first came into combat for now I have all kinds of toilet articles.

As yet I haven't got any more of your packages and none from Mrs. Newell but it'll get to me some time soon. I hope you get my package all right. I plan to put all the good pictures taken with the Leica in these glass mounts so they won't get scratched. Sometime when things get back to normal, we might be able to buy glass mounts and put every good picture between glass. I hope that film you are sending me has a speed of only 24 for it is much easier to regulate.

We're located in quite an awkward place for mail so I might not get any from you for a few days. But nevertheless I'll keep writing. This is all for today and am going to write to Em sometime today. I should have written to her before this but I haven't felt much like writing except to you.

God has been merciful and kind and if it be His will I will come through without a scratch. Keep up your chin. With all my love, Harold

#August 29 1944.Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I'm wiring this letter while in the C.P. or command post where they plan operations. I'm a contact man for a couple of hours. He brings a message to places where there is no telephone communications.

Yesterday I went to the company and the executive officer gave me my combat infantry medal. So I guess I'll send it home when I send my watch and the heart I made out of the German glass from a plane. Don't plan to send the watch back to me but rather have it fixed and keep it for me. The new watch that I've got is a good one and it'll do me.

There really is so little that we or I can say but I'll try to say something.

Yesterday on the way over to my company I met a man who could speak English. He said he learned his first English word during the last war from an American soldier. Then he worked for the Southern Railway of England and never left France. That railway had an extension – steamboat – to France and so he learned English by being in contact with English men. He exclaimed how much different the Americans talk from the English.

Being on the Sea Horse certainly was lots of fun and we certainly used to use here an awful lot. I sure wish I could be home to use it.

We have an artillery captain with us who is called the forward observer for he tells the guns how close they are hitting their targets. He is a very tall man, I bet nearly 6 ft. 4 and I certainly am glad I don't have to dig his foxholes. Lately we haven't been digging any though and it is quite a relief.

It is so hard for me to try to write today so I'm not going to write any more until tomorrow. With all my love, Harold

#August 30, 1944.Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I just finished a good dinner so now I feel in the mood for writing so we'll see how far I get. The meal consisted of corned beef, potato, stewed tomatoes and pears.

Today I went over to the company to see if I got some mail from you but all I got was a letter from Ruby. I was pleased but would much rather have had one from you but I'm waiting patiently.

I was reading in the papers how the government plans to discharge us and it looks as though I'll be in for quite awhile. I certainly am very anxious to get home and go back to college. Oh, well! Things will turn out somehow. I've just been reading the war news and it certainly looks good and I hope it continues.

I have been eating quite a few blackberries these last two days for they grow so plentifully around here. The hedges for fields are often made from these bushes. They grow so big and are quite sweet. Sort of reminds me of home and last summer when we used to go up to the circle and pick them. We'll be doing it sometime again though.

There's plenty of cow manure around here and what a stink! Dad and his cow manure You'd be right at home over here. I still don't crave that sweet smelling odor at all.

The fellows in the other room are having a swell time eating limburger cheese and the only way I'd go in there would be with a gas mask on. The stink is far from sweet. I can't see how people can eat cheese with such a awful smell gut I've heard that it isn't bad at all. After eating so many K rations for awhile, I grew sick of American cheese for that was what was in each dinner unit. But since I haven't eaten these rations for awhile, I'm not sick of eating cheese now

I was living like a king a few days ago for I was in a hotel without beds. But we found some mattresses so we were comfortable. We were right on main street so we could watch everyone coming by. Breakfast was served at not too early an hour. What a beautiful place the colonel was staying. Almost the entire house was made of stained mahogany and there were all kinds of expensive ornaments.

Just a few minutes ago, I listened to a phonograph which was captured. They had some beautiful music on some German records such as Strauss waltzes. Some of the equipment the Germans have are really superior to some of ours, especially in the line of optical works.

So far I haven't received that new package you sent me but I expect it soon. Please send me some candy, cookies, gum, etc. also send me some stamps but don't send them in the package for that way is too slow. Those stamps aren't imperative for I have about a month supply left. But the mail takes quite awhile to go through.

Soon I'm going to send a package home with the watch, combat infantry badge which gives me \$10 more per month and a heart made from glass from a German plane. If I can I'll send home a book about Hitler's conquest which is all in pictures.

This will be all for now but I'll write tomorrow and so something more. It's quite hard to write everyday and fill up three full sheets.'

Keep up your chin and pray often. With all my love, Harold.

#August 31, 1944. Somewhere in France.

Dear Mum and Dad,

I'm getting fast for here it is 8:30 and I'm starting on your letter. The days are starting to get quite chilly about like the last of September back in Boston, I sure hope it doesn't get too cold in winter around here. The days are getting noticeably shorter for it gets dark about 9:30 and gets light about 7:00 now. So you can see how different these times are compared to when I first went to England. Pretty soon if it keeps up we'll only have a few hours of light and will have to go to bed with the birds. How I wish I were a bird for then I could fly straight home.

I mentioned in my letter yesterday that I was in a hotel for awhile on a main street. There was a bench on the sidewalk in front of the building so the fellows would set there sometimes and look at all the girls walking by. Some were beautiful and others were horrible. If Ruby is supposed to have a typical French complexion, this couldn't be France

for I don't think I saw one girl with as dark skin as hers. They are right in style with the Americans for they wear makeup and have short dresses - I would say from one to four inches above the knees. I still like to look at their legs and have seen everything from elephant legs through piano legs to bean pole legs - just like faces. While there we met all kinds of people. Some could speak English and some couldn't but we managed somehow. There was one little girl about 7 years old who used to spend more time, I think, with us than home and she would play ball with us. Then there was a very beautiful woman who always dressed in black with two children - a girl about 7 and a boy about 5. That black I would have thought wouldn't be very attractive but I thought it was every nice on her. And the way she dressed the children - they have very nice clothes and very stylish. She could speak some English and the pathetic thing is that her husband is a slave worker inside Germany. Then we knew a little petite nurse who couldn't speak English. I couldn't make here understand me at times so I would write and then she could understand. So more than once that would be the way I conversed with some of them. The reason why so many knew English was because that town was visited much by the Americans and British before the war.

In the country now, the French are harvesting their wheat, hay, etc. and everyone in the family works including the girls. They certainly use crude instruments and I believe they work fast under such conditions.

Yesterday, it rained almost all day but this morning the sun has come out and is going to be beautiful. I certainly hate to see rain for it makes me feel miserable. I'm glad it hasn't been raining very much since we've been in France for it certainly can hinder operations

I told you about hearing the phonograph in the next room in yesterday's letter and today I heard it again so I went in a few minutes ago. There were quite a few classical records sung by Caruso. I believe he was the most celebrated tenor in the world, wasn't he? After listening to so many phonograph records and three or four phonographs, I'm determined to get one when I get home and get some nice records. I know before I got into the army I was thinking of it but I never did get it. Some of my plans might be big but I'm determined to do them such as going back to college, going places, etc. I hope, Dad, that you will do what you said for I sure would like to go to Newfoundland and travel around for awhile. Sometime when I get older, I would like to come to Europe and tour it with a color camera. I certainly is beautiful and very interesting.

I don't know if we get paid today or not but I'll send money home as soon as possible. I'm anxious to build the amount higher and want to thank you for helping me so much for I'm sure I would never have had so much if it hadn't been or both of you.

I'm inclosing an article which I got from one of the army newspapers. We've been waiting for quite awhile to get into the papers but they wouldn't release the fact that we were here in France for some reason. Now maybe there will be some articles about us in some of the papers in the States. If there is, save them and if there is any article about St. Malo that you can find n back papers, be sure and save them

Slow but sure, I'm getting the Bible read and have finished the Book of Mark. I have to really concentrate on it but enjoy it and feel much better after reading it. Keep praying to God and I'll do the same.

With all the love in the world, Harold  
P.S. I haven't done bad at writing today for I've written more than usual. Pretty good!!  
At the beginning of I wrote "have Miss Martin copy (type) the article [below] and save it for me."

(Included in the above letter - hand written)

*The Stars and Stripes*, Monday Aug 28, 1944  
83<sup>rd</sup> Division, Now in France

The 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division - the outfit that took St. Malo and its fortress "Citadel" - was officially taken off the secret list last night with the announcement that they were fighting in France.

Arriving on the Continent from the rock, rainy mountains of Wales, the 83<sup>rd</sup> tasted fire near Carentan and later assisted in the drive east of Perier.

Transferred to the Brittany Peninsula, the 83<sup>rd</sup> launched the hard punching drive on St. Malo and Dinard, bottling up 12,000 Germans in one of the most heavily fortified areas of France.

The division's P.W. cage included remnants of Hitler's paratrooper divisions, S.S. troops, members of port security battalions, Luftwaffe ground crews, and ack-ack personnel from ships in harbors fighting as infantry, Russians, Poles, and Italian customs men. At St. Malo's Citadel, the 83<sup>rd</sup> captured Col. Von Aulock, who stated during the truce "I am a German soldier and German soldiers do not surrender.

During the 83<sup>rd</sup> operations in Brittany and Normandy it has been credited with 12,366 prisoners, of which 984 cleared through medical channels.

Formed Aug. 15, 1942 at Camp Atterbury, Ind., the division's men hail from 47 States and Alaska and Hawaii. Most of the "83<sup>rd</sup> Thundering Herd" - as it calls itself - are from Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Tennessee, and Kentucky.

Later part of the division went to Camp Breckenridge, Ky., while the rest of the men trained in California.

The 83<sup>rd</sup> sailed from New York and it arrived on the Continent (where) they trained in Wales.

#September 1, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I made a mistake, the very first for I hardly realized it was Sept. so soon. I certainly hope that this will be the month!

Yesterday I got paid and couldn't account for ten dollars so I went to the first sergeant and got it straightened out. We got 5n 5 of the 10 dollars for the combat infantry badge and I haven't been receiving pfc .pay as I should have. An order came down from regiment about the combat infantry badge and saw that I was a pfc so I'm sure I am. Anyway he's going to have that looked into and I think everything will be all right next month. Today, I'm getting a money order for \$30 and will send it tomorrow. That means for this month I've saved a total of \$58.75 including the bond.

We used to think we saw plenty of planes come over us back home but that was nothing compared to the time we took the St. Lo-Perier highway. There were 3,300 planes one day and nearly 4,000 the next. I now know or have an idea of how Berlin must feel during a bombing. The American troops were quite a distance away and yet the concussion just shook the ground. I think I mentioned in one of my letters about planes and that was the place where I was.

I supposed you noticed that I printed yesterday's envelope. That is because I wanted to see if I can still print at all and I guess I can. I sure will be glad when I can get back to school and start in again to draw. I certain am anxious to get back and start work again.

Yesterday we drew PX rations which included cigarettes, gum, candy, tooth brushes, tooth paste, soap, razors, razor blades and a couple of other things. So you can see that they give us plenty of miscellaneous goods. We don't have to pay a cent for it either. The fellows were certainly glad to get them because they were all out of cigarettes and were begging

each other for them. I definitely am glad that I don't smoke for I don't have to bother with them the way some do. And the candy has silver wrappers. Oh yes, and the gum has it too.

I guess this will be all for now. May God bless you and keep you. Every night now I try to read a little of the Testament. With all the love in the world, Harold  
P.S. I love you more than any other people in the world.

#September 2, 1945. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I'm a little late in writing this for it's after dinner now. Usually I write in the morning.

Yesterday, I got a letter from you dated Aug 19, #32, so now I'm looking for #31 which hasn't come. I also got the package from Mrs. Newell and every few of the cookies were smashed. Most were perfectly whole and I was rather surprised that they weren't worse off. Also Mrs. Hendrie sent me a Herald and the church calendar. I think it is so nice of her to think of me the way she does.

I don't think I ever told you about the English children asking the "Yanks" for gum. They always said 'Got any goom, Choom?' But here in France, they're even worse for they ask for everything, especially cigarettes. Children as young as 5 smoke in front of the parents and they never say anything. Some different back in the States for the parents are pretty strict about cigarettes smoking. They like to ask us also for candy and chewing gum in English. The French seem to be learning English faster than we're learning French.

I'm enclosing a money order or \$30 this month and still have about \$15 left and that gives me plenty. I have managed to spend about 3 francs since I've been here. Every cent to save will help toward a more secure future. I guess I'm like you, Dad, for I love to save my money.

Yesterday I got a complete new outfit of clothes and they fit me perfectly. The army certainly keeps us well clothed. The supply sergeant has a German accordion which has only a twelve bass. He can't play it at all even though he tries and doesn't it sound horrible. I would love to have you here to play it for me or me there listening to yours. There have been more things picked up. Our company has a nice trumpet which they picked up and which they are going to let me use as a bugle when we got to a place where they need me for calls.

The kitchen at headquarters has a cute little dachshund puppy (how do you spell it?) and they named him Tiger. He has sort of become the whole company's mascot. He certainly is a frisky little thing and always into everything.

According to a bulletin published in the division paper, this division is to have a several page spread in a forthcoming issue of Life Magazine. So be on the lookout for that issue and save it for me. I might not be in any of the pictures but I'd like to have it nevertheless.

My package that I told you I was going to send home is on its way now. There is my wristwatch which I want repaired but not sent back to me, a combat infantry badge, and a heart cut out of glass from a Germany plane.

Things aren't as tough as they were so try not to worry so much. Keep up your chin. And pray with me that the war will end soon

Both of you are the dearest and best things I have.

With all my love, Harold.

#September 3, 1944, somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Just think, war started five long years ago today. That certainly is a long time and I hope drew Pearson's prediction comes true.

The weather hasn't been so nice lately for it rains on and off all day long. I'm glad I had a couple of blankets for it has been quite cold but now it's getting a little nicer. Sort of like the spells we sometimes have in themed-summer when it grows cold enough to start a fire.

Last night I spent a little money – almost the first – for a couple of fried eggs, bread, and potatoes. Those eggs certainly tasted good and I sure wouldn't mind having some of you cooked eggs. Didn't I hate eggs when I was younger but I guess I've changed. This place where I ate was a little French cafe and my French came in pretty handy. Some of the fellows tried to get me to drink some traditional wine but I just can't down it.

Today, one of the fellows and I took a walk around and met a group of people having a picnic. The oldest woman could speak English and she claimed that this was the first picnic in five years. These French certainly have gone through an awful lot and the people in the States have no room for complaining as they do. I'm sure if they saw conditions as I've seen them, they'd be much different.

There has been more in the papers about our division so I'll send that to you when I get ahold of a copy. The first write-up that I sent you is the first one mentioning our division and the fellows have been looking forward to it for a long time so they could send the information home. Lots of things they couldn't tell before but now that everything has been made public it is possible.

We get quite a few magazines which are given to us by the special services division of the U.S. Army. There is almost every type of magazine in the pile so we have something to read.

I forgot to tell you that Mrs. Newell's cookies tasted very good and retained their taste. The wax paper didn't seem to bother it at all so I don't know what to say caused yours to be the way they were.

More people have been trying to buy my camera and would pay more than what you paid but I absolutely refuse to for I want to have a record of my being here. By the way, keep sending film, both kinds, once in awhile so I'll have enough. And I hope you have sent me the average exposure for color. I'm making more mistakes today.

I must get the letter in soon if I want to get it off by tomorrow so will close. I am reading the bible quite often and try to read a little every night. I'm now part way through Like and rather enjoy reading the Bible.

I'm glad that both of you are brave for it helps me out greatly.

With all my love and affection, Harold.

#September 5, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Yesterday is the first time I've missing a day writing when it was possible to write. I haven't been mentioning anything about your letters for I haven't had any for awhile. For some reason about two weeks ago everyone found their mail coming through very irregular. But please don't worry for it'll be here sometime.

As far north as France is – in the same latitude as Nfld. – doesn't seem to affect the flowers much for they're still in full bloom. There is a nice walk around here where there are all kinds of roses still in bloom, nasturtiums and many whose names I don't know. There is one flower that is the most peculiar type I never saw so I guess I'll take a picture of it if possible. It is too bad I haven't got a close –up lens. By the way, how're you doing with the camera and the new exposure meter. I sure hope the meter works. Just think, we have

three meters and two cameras so all we have to do is buy another camera and each of us will be able to take pictures. What do you say, Dad? It certainly was wonderful of you to let me buy that Leica and I do hope you're getting your money's worth in color. When we go to Nfld., we'll have to get some good pictures.

I sure wish I could have been with you this summer when you used to go swimming down at Nantasket, Scituate, and Cohasset for I bet it was great fun. Oh well, sometime I'll be home and then we can have a great time together.

I often wondered how long a soldier has to be in the army before he is entitled to two years of free education and finally my question was answered. It is three months entitled to one year, two years in the army to three years, etc. So if I am in over a year, I'll have two years of free education and that certainly will help out.

Yesterday I went into a store and there was a little girl about 13 years old so she said. She could speak very good English and learned it from her mother who can speak almost perfectly. She looked a lot like Ruby with a dark complexion, large brown eyes, a very pretty face, and a nice manner. She is one of the nicest looking girls I believe I've met in France.

Last night it rained and what a storm. It was sort of freakish for it didn't rain so hard by sort of came in sheets in fine drops. One of the fellows and I were walking around when the storm hit so we hurried back to our house and did get a little wet. The weather is funny for it'll be perfectly fine out and the next minute it'll be raining. Then more sun.

Keep up your chin and don't be too worried for there isn't as much cause for worrying now. With all my love, Harold

P.S. I'm enclosing that article about our division as I mentioned in one of my other letters.

#September 6, 1944. Somewhere in France.

Dear Mum and Dad,

I just got back from the company where I went to get some mail. And I did get two letters from you, one dated Aug. 21 (#33) and Aug. 23 (#34) so the only letter I lack out of all of those is #31 and expect that soon. I also got one from Mrs. Newell and one from Aunt Gert dated June 22 which was sent to my first address in England so that accounts for the slowness. I like to get mail from you so much that I would a couple of miles to get it today.

This letter is going to be devoted more in answering some of your questions than telling you anything for there is so little to say.

I never saw St. Lo in all its devastation but I did see Perier and wasn't it an awful mess. There wasn't one house left standing in the town except for part of the large cathedral. It certainly was a scorched earth policy.

I still can't see why or how my letters are interesting for I don't say anything but rather ramble on and on. Anyway, I'll keep going – letter writing – and make it as interesting as I can.

You certainly are keeping me supplied with food but now the only thing to do is wait. I don't think it'll be long though. You certainly are doing good at writing for I always get a nice long one. You mentioned about the money orders in one of the letters, #34, and the reason why I misunderstood is because I read it as one money order so I thought you had gotten only the \$100 one. But now I'm straightened out and am glad for it relieves my mind.

I'm very sorry about addressing Ruby's letters to you but somehow I had you on my mind. I wouldn't be surprised if I do it again sometime but next time you'll know better. I don't know the name of the man from Scituate and will never find out again for we passed him long ago.

The one thing I want to know more about in detail is about the camera. I can't understand why those pictures shouldn't turn out if you used that new meter. Didn't you? I wonder if it is possible to have the shutter checked on for the camera shouldn't give any trouble like you have. It must be the shutter or something. Please ask Mr. Robbins and get things straightened out for that camera cost too much to not work perfectly. It might need an adjustment in the shutter. Ask him, please! But I wonder why it is that the group of pictures before came out perfect. Boy, it has been puzzled! I hope you'll let me know for I'd like you to get some good pictures. Well, so much for cameras!

I hope you're not trying to work too hard thus causing your kink in the back. Please don't work too hard for I know what'll happen if you do. I have a little news and more to say but have got to go on guard now for a couple of hours.

God be with you and don't worry. I'm all right. With all my love, Harold.

#September 7, 1944

My Darlings,

I started to write this letter on a porch overlooking the landscape but it started to rain so now I'm inside. I was so glad to get those two letters from you yesterday for nothing peeps me up more than yours. I believe I mentioned when I was home on furlough about having a year's subscription to "Yank" magazine – an army magazine; When I was in England I wrote and asked them about it and yesterday I received my first issue of this magazine.

The fellows are having a swell time trying to make a little crystal set, a radio, out of earphones, wire, and a razor blade. But I'm afraid they're not getting very far. This idea was sent to some army paper how to make it but what we've constructed doesn't seem to work very well.

There is one fellow among us whose name is JOHNSON and his ideas about the future and life, are the queerest I've yet hear. He's quite ignorant and has only had one year of high school so that probably accounts for his mistaken idea. He believes the only way to get along after the war is to just take life easy and work only when he can get a salary that suits him. I'm afraid he won't get very far and I'm just the opposite of him in some of my opinions. He must be an idealist but sometime he will wake up and find himself in an in an entirely different world than he assumes.

I mentioned about a fellow named Staci who is with us. Everyone has nicknamed him "Rumor" Staci for he can dig up more of the most fantastic rumors than anyone. When he used to bring messages to his company, the company commander used to ask him, "Any more rumors today?" But being in the army this long has taught me not to believe everything I hear.

Now I'm back on the camera again. This'll be the last time I mention it and now it's up to your discretion whether to do as I suggest or not. If at all possible, send the camera to the Leitz company – the makers of Leica – in New York City, I believe, and see if you can have it checked up. I want you to do this if the next film is not all right. But if you have no film in it, now send it. A good camera like that should be checked often and should always be in A-1 condition. But I'm afraid it isn't in A-1 condition now. But first write a letter to see if they still repair for I wouldn't want you to send it like the meter and get it back unrepaired because of too much work. I sure wish it was all right. Ask Mr. Robbins first as I have said before and then you can get the address from him or someplace. I really am interested to see you get perfect pictures with it. With the camera as expensive as it is, it should take perfect ones. Now do you understand why I'd like to see it fixed. I'm sure there is something definitely wrong. I won't mention the camera again for awhile.

Yesterday I stood the familiar duty of standing guard but this time it was in the day. Usually, I get guard detail at night very other day so it isn't the same as if I had it every night.

The other day I saw the most unusual flower that I've ever seen. It is very hard to describe and I can't say it is like or similar to any other flower I've ever seen. In other words it's in a category all by itself. If possible I'm going to try and get a picture of it before we move so I can show you after I get back.

So many times I wish I could phone for I think it would shorten the distance between us. But such is war and naturally it's impossible. We are so far apart but usually I try to think of you as being only a short distance from me. It makes me feel better to think that way.

The kitchen here at battalion headquarters has got a German one cylinder motorcycle and doesn't it sound like a speed boat. From a distance, I would swear I was standing in your yard, Dad, looking out into the water. Please write me a letter soon for I love to hear from you. By the way, I answered Miss Martin's last letter, didn't I?

This kitchen bunch certainly has lots of fun speeding around on that motorcycle but I'm a landlubber and will keep my feet on the ground before I'd take a ride on one of them. I wouldn't mind having a bicycle around though for it would be much easier than walking everywhere. But it is not very easy to have one unless I'm stationed somewhere for I can't carry it wherever I go. All the French population from 80 to 8 and from priests though to refined, wealthy ladies (use them).

I still have a good sense of humor and can still laugh. I don't think you'll find much change in me when I get home and I believe it'll take more than the army to change me. I know you'll be pleased to get those articles I cut out of the paper and I'm glad I can send them home.

Don't be so modest about your letter writing fore I read every word of it and find all you have to say, no matter how uninteresting it might seem, very interesting. Mrs. Newell wrote me a very nice long letter and I enjoyed that very much. She only mentioned one thing that had and that was about my absent-mindedness in my addressing. I have got to be careful for I might say something to Ruby I don't want anyone to read. Ha! Well, anyway, we've both on equal terms for we think of each others' letter are very interesting and letters of our own are so boring. I really hope I don't repeat myself in each letter.

I'm still keeping it up for every night I read some from the Bible. I find it is quite interesting but when a little younger, I could never make much sense out of much of it.

My faith in God is very strong and I know yours is too. Well I guess I haven't done so badly today and will close now. With all my love, Harold.

#September 8 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Today I just sent a camera home which isn't very good and takes about 6 x 8 pictures, but I'll keep it for the lens is pretty good.

The other day I went up to see if the mail clerk had any stamps to sell me. I'm not out entirely but don't want to get too low on my supply of stamps. The mail clerk didn't have any so I was wondering how I could get hold of some and the first sergeant told me he'd give me all of stamps for he never writes. I offered to pay but he refused to take it and says he can get all the stamps he wants. You often read in papers about the hard-boiled, tough first sergeant but this one is a swell fellow and is quite young. Maybe, in the States they're tough, but around here, they're pretty good.

I'm enclosing an article which might be of interest for it completes the last article I went you. When I get home, I want to past all those articles in a book and make a souvenir out of it.

Whenever you send film, I wish you would please send it separately and via first class. It is so much faster than third class and wouldn't cost too much for film isn't very heavy. My camera is in good working order and soon, I guess, I'll try some color film All I can do is guess at the exposure but maybe it'll come out all right.

Last night I received a letter from you. It turned out to be the missing letter, #31. So now I've gotten every letter of yours up to Aug. 23 so now I know the mail is coming through all right. I believe from the way you spoke, the mail seems to be getting to you too. I've been writing to you everyday if possible and have surprised myself because I never thought I could think of enough to say.

Yesterday we had a little relaxation by going and seeing a movie which was called "Follow the Boys." It was a good picture but showed too much of war to suit me for I see enough without seeing more. The army rented a theater and we sat in the most comfortable seats since we left home. Boy, that really was a treat and everyone enjoyed sitting in the seats more than seeing the picture, I believe.

My hair is getting awfully glossy and I can't understand it for no one else is that way. My hair has been subjected to every kind of weather known but still it glistens. I guess my hair is naturally oily Is that the way with yours? I've decided to let my hair grow for I can keep it better that way for it doesn't look so ragged after a couple of weeks. I'm not having much trouble letting it grow for it grows plenty fast.

You both are dear to me before I left home but now you mean more to me than ever before and I'm sorry I ever felt the way I did about you, Dad. Now I know of my grave mistake and was really too young to realize that you were doing for me. I sure would like to get a letter from you telling me about the yard. I really do enjoy reading yours even if Mum or Miss Martin does tell about a few things you do.

I can tell you that the war news certainly has changed since you've written and the drives are gaining momentum as you've probably read in these last few days papers. You thought the Allies were going to by-pass Paris but they didn't.

The only thing I believe I need is some candles. The days are getting so much shorter so we need them. But other than that, I'm well supplied and have plenty of handkerchiefs and other things. Oh, could you send me some of that candy if it won't spoil like what you sent me at Camp Croft. They were some kind of candy covered almonds and were Princess Eugenie's favorite or something like that. I hope you know what I mean. Please send me some candy, gum, etc. whenever possible.

I'll write again whenever I can so until my next letter, I'll send you love and kisses. With all the love in the world, Harold.

P.S. I forgot to tell you about the thing that most of the fellows swear about. That is the bees which hang around us when we eat. They come in droves and just pester the daylight out of us trying to get into the sweets such as desserts and sweet drinks. They bother me from the time I get my food until the time I eat it. And between that time there is more fly swatting and swearing going on. But the cold weather will drive them away and I hope we won't have them around much more. With more love Harold

#September 10, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I'm sorry I didn't write yesterday but due to unforeseen circumstances, I was unable to write. That is quite a line, eh? But it's true.

Today I hit the jackpot for I received 3 letters. One from Miss Martin, Ruby again, Charlie McNulty, and a "I'm thinking of You" card from Grandma which I thought was very nice. But I didn't get any from you as yet but hope to have some tomorrow.

Today is a very beautiful day and they had church services in a large field. As the chaplain was preaching the sermon, church bells in a nearby town started to ring and made it seem more like home. Those bells certainly gave a new feeling to the service. I sure do enjoy going very much listening to his new man for he is a splendid speaker, much better than many I've heard. We sang "Blest be the Tide that Binds" and I suddenly realized that we used to use that tune as the birthday song in Sunday School.

Last evening one of the fellows got our room so smoked up by burning some paper that we had to open all the windows. But we forgot to close them when it was bed time and as a result we nearly froze. But tonight I'll fix them for I got another blanket from the company and now I hope I'll be warm.

I bought a couple of cheap French books which gives me a little list of words I might need and have been learning them. Maybe by the time I come home, I'll be able to speak some French but then it won't be of any use. But I guess I'll take up French in college if I have to have extra points.

Today, everyone around here was talking about the new point system of being discharged. But I'm not even giving it much thought for I know I'll be in the army for a long time yet. And we might as well make up our minds to that fact. Oh well, I can't stay in forever and when I do get out I'm going to run back for Tufts.

Dad, you would love to sleep when the supply sergeant of E company sleeps for he's in one part of a barn and the cows in the other. What a stink of cow manure and I'm sure you'd love it for you seemed to when I was home. Mum tells me that you had a pretty good garden this year and I guess that manure helped a lot. And by tying those tomatoes up helped to produce more, didn't they?

I hope you've received some of my packages and as yet, I haven't got anymore of yours but expect some in anytime soon.

Just think, in just a short time it'll be my birthday. To me it seems impossible but it is too true.

There isn't anything more to say so will close. With all my love, Harold.

#September 11, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Last evening I got quite a surprise for I received a letter from you in only six days! I'll say that that is travelling and I sure wish they'd all come through like that. As yet between #35 and #39 haven't arrived yet but I suppose they'll straggle in.

At last I got my box of candy from Miss Martin. It sure took a long time to come but I still enjoyed eating it. There were all kinds of candy, a large bar of Swan soap and when I saw a lamp cover, I wondered what was going on. But when I looked in, there was some nice elderberry jelly and the jar wasn't cracked at all.

Yesterday I saw the most modern car of all times! I swear it dates back to nearly 1900 or even before for nothing is round but rather the fenders are sort of square. It will only carry two people, uses a lever for shifting but does have a large wooden steering wheel and a little motor that is about a third as large as an ordinary engine. I bet we could nearly hit 10 miles per hour!

Yesterday, after I wrote, I decided to wash my field jacket and my leggings. After I got finished, I sure was surprised to find that they came out so clean. But the field jacket, because of the wool lining, won't dry out very fast and I'm letting it dry out today.

I've seen one of the most picturesque homes I've ever seen since in France. It was a very low house with nice flowers in front with hens, cats, and dogs, all around. That seemed the most typical home I've seen and is just like what I thought many homes in France were like.

I'm very poor at writing today so will try to do better tomorrow. Keep up your chin and keep praying. With all my love, Harold

P.S. Send me more film – as much as you can, about four. Please send me some candy, gum, cookies, etc.

September 12, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I received another letter dated Sept. 6 and it only took 6 days to come! So the mail is coming through fine now if only it'll keep up.

Since the packages are so slow, I want you to send me some more stationery for I'm getting low on one box and will be starting the other box soon. There is no special rush but I would like you to mail it soon so I'll have it in about a month and a half.

Would you please check up in Boston about sending the film first class. There might be a limit but I'm sure a couple of little films won't weigh much. I'd rather get the films separate from the packages for I'm getting low on it. But anyway, do the best you can and you might be able to. The postal regulations from this end are so different for our limit is 50 and they can be sent in any way – from airmail down to 4<sup>th</sup> class. I've sent three packages home, one first class for the watch was in it, and two at third class for they weren't very important. So sometime within the next couple of months you should be getting them.

Oh, I forgot to tell you that yesterday afternoon, just after I finished your letter, I received a letter from you dated August 25 so now I have only three letters missing.

By the way, did you ever get the letter in which I told you to send that little French book – the one in the bookshelf or on the desk with cardboard covers. If you haven't sent it yet, would you send it separately and first class if possible.

Yesterday, as I was walking round, I came to a field where there were a bunch of little calves and weren't they cute. And frisky! Why I never thought they would ever tire out. And there among them was a mother and a baby horse. The young colt certainly looks funny and appears to have all legs – like Lillian.

You mentioned about sleeping on a mattress on the floor but you have nothing on me for I've done that too, not because I wanted to get relief like you. We've found mattresses without the beds so we use them on the floor. It's better than sleeping on the hard floor.

I guess when I write to Grandma again I will write only on one side for I don't want everything censored on both sides even though it is mean for one side. We have one officer in our unit who censors the letter after writing them and then they are sent to a base censor who slits open the edge and censors the letter. When we hand the letter in we don't seal it at all so it isn't slit open but once when it gets on its way. I've been wondering why Grandma's was censored and can only figure that it is because she lives in Canada. Write just the way you do and no offerer than you do for they come so irregular anyway. One of the fellows' wives writes him every day and his mail is even more irregular than mine.

I got another letter from Miss Martin so she really is writing quite often. I thought that was very nice of her to send me two packages though

Last night I had some steak and potatoes in a French restaurant and it wasn't bad but not the best either. Some of the fellows went into a much classier place than me and got a four and seven course dinner. One said they were so slow in serving that he got hungry

between courses. They do take their time and aren't like the Americans who run around like hens with their heads cut off.

The boy who went with me is the one I told you about from my company. His name is Francis Nelen and a swell fellow. We did more talking last night, even more than on a hike. When we are made to do something, we gripe but when on our own we will do anything. Last night I really felt dressed up for I had a brand new pair of O.D's on and they had such a press that if you touched it you would cut yourself.

Well, I have written much more than I planned to but the words flowed freely. This isn't the best writing for I'm in a hurry to get it mailed.

You two are the most previous things to me and I love you dearly. I don't think I could have two nicer parents. With all my love, Harold.

#September 13, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I've been so busy today washing and setting up a tent that it is nearly supper time. But anyway I'll have one off tonight and another one tomorrow.

I forgot to tell you that I received those pictures of myself and don't care for the portrait very well. My nose seems crooked for one thing and it looks so posed. But I suppose that picture is better than nothing. I agree quite heartily with you that the Kodachrome picture is the better open and would like to see it in color.

There have been so many vineyards around lately that I feel more like I'm in Italy but people still speak French. I have spoken with some very young children and they understand me quite well and if they can understand, I guess I'm not doing too badly. If we were in one place long enough, I'd get to know some French family and get them to help me speak and pronounce correctly.

Yesterday was the first time in France that I've seen a little running stream. I don't mean that there aren't many streams but that they stay still and get polluted. I would imagine these streams would be a good breeding place for mosquitoes but the strange thing is that I haven't been bothered by them very much, even in the middle of summer. It is hard to believe that winter is nearly here and that the last time I saw you in the spring. Things seem to happen so fast that I can hardly keep up with the times. It sure will be a wonderful day when we all arrive home from overseas but I'm afraid someone in the government is trying to keep us in. The fellows all claim that it isn't up to the government how to run their future lives but what can they do.

As I mentioned in one of my other letters, Miss Martin sent me a box. Those books she sent were very interesting especially "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" for I've seen the motion picture of that name just before I left Camp Croft. It is very interesting story but many don't like it because it is a character story with little excitement I used some of the Swan soap she sent me and like it much better than any I've had. So if you have any extra space in the boxes you send, please put in a bar of Swan.

A couple of days ago, I went to a town and looked around. That was where we had some steak and that place reminds me more of the U.S. than any place yet. We visited two magnificent churches and weren't they large! Sort of reminds me of the Notre Dame Cathedral that we've all seen picture of.

I guess I'd better get this letter of tonight so it'll go in tomorrow's mail. Thanks for being so wonderful but I know what is going on inside of both of your minds. With all the love in the world. Harold.

#September 14, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Yesterday before I wrote your letter, I was quite busy washing some dirty clothes and taking a bath. At least I can say I had running water for I used that stream that I mentioned in yesterday's letter. Wasn't the water cold! But anyway I didn't mind it quite as much as the rest and when I was finished I was really clean and weren't my hands lily white. Some of the fellows joke with me because my hands are like a girl's instead of being broad and masculine. But I claim there is nothing I can do about it. After I washed, I changed my clothes and put on some brand new equipment so you can see they furnish us with nearly everything.

Last night I wrote to Mrs. Newell a letter and as I wrote, it rained some. After it stopped, there was a beautiful rainbow way off in the distance. I believe that's the first one I've seen since in France. Looking at that sight gave me a funny feeling for some reason.

The Germans have used horse drawn vehicles in conjunction with their more modern means of transportation but still they're a little old fashioned. They had left quite a few horses behind so everyone used them to ride. Later, I learned that one of the fellows had been kicked by one and had been sent to the hospital.

It is strange the way fate works for when safety seems to be at hand, something happens. One boy had an appendicitis attack when in a rest area. Life certainly works in strange ways, though.

I am writing this letter in a pup tent which I pitched with one of the fellows. We could be in a house but like it in the open better. We've had good quarters and can't complain at all.

The Americans found a large cave near here where the Germans left all kinds of equipment – everything from canned foods down to white linen. They certainly took most of the food away from the French for most of the food is packed by French concerns.

Yesterday we got our PX rations and everybody was happy for most were out of cigarettes. But all I wanted was the candy and gum. One of the messengers has a bad habit of smoking almost too much. I certainly am glad though that I don't smoke for then I don't miss them.

I am doing a terrible job of writing for I'm not in the right mood, I guess.

I will write tomorrow unless it is impossible. Keep up your faith high in God. With all my love, Harold

P.S. Please send me a box of candy, cookies, gum, etc.

#September 15, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here it is nearly 10:30 so I guess I had better get started on a letter. I realize how you feel and so like to write once a day so you'll feel better. I don't remember but I believe I asked you for another box of stationery, didn't I?

Last night just after supper, I went to the company and found two letters of yours waiting for me. Those were a couple of back ones and so I've received all letters up to #41 except #35 and #38 but I expect these two to come in a very short time. I hate to miss any of your letters if I know that you wrote. That was a good idea about numbering them so it is quite easy to keep track of them. I haven't gotten Dad's letter yet, either.

Yesterday I decided to do a little extra writing so sent a short letter to Miss Keany, one to Charlie McNulty and three to find out the address of some fellows I went through basic training with. The three are Richard Nelson – the boy we had to our house, Fred Villeneuve – the one in Providence, and Sam Harris – the one who reminds me so much of

Warren Scott. I wrote to their wives and asked them for the addresses rather than use the old English ones for the way I'm doing it is much quicker.

I'm keeping up with the Joneses for you have a case of scotch whiskey and I have a couple bottles of wine and one of rum. So you're not getting ahead of me. Ha! I suppose it's German but I don't care the first thing about it. The smell is nearly enough to put me out. I've also got some German candy which isn't the best but not too bad. It looks as though the Germans used everything for their army and let the civilians starve.

Last night I heard an orchestra playing and listened closely for it sounded beautiful. It was from a radio and the song was "Songs My Mother Used to Sing" or something like that. We've sung it in Grammar school. But it certainly reminded me of you so very much. It was indeed beautiful and a very nice song for Mother.

It was a most beautiful sunset last night for the sun was like a red ball. It cast such a funny shade of red on the trees that it made everything look beautiful. It is hard to describe but everyone noticed it

Now I'm back on the camera again! It is quite possible if there is nothing wrong with the camera that either the exposure meter is out of kilter or else the film speed is given wrong. I've found with some of the leaflets that come with the film that the speeds aren't always given right. You can find the correct speed though by looking in my pile of photo magazines and finding the issue of May, 1942. It is a cover and is large, has a large photogravure section and lists all the latest camera and photo accessories. I still believe that the meter used with such a good camera should produce good pictures. When the war is over, I'm going to have both checked up on if you don't. I still suggest having the Leica checked up.

There is so little to talk about that I'll close. Yesterday, I read all my religious books which I've picked up and then put them in a place where everyone could see them. I was quite surprised seeing some reading them. Pray often and keep up your chin. With all my love and affection,, Harold

#September 16, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I had better get the letter written before I go to church at 11:00. I don't like to miss any of the services for I feel as though I should thank God as often as I can and try to go more often.

Yesterday afternoon, I received your letter dated September 8 and was surprised to find that you haven't had any letters dated after the 20<sup>th</sup> of Aug. for I've been writing every day except for about two days. I guess the mail isn't going through or else the mail is held up here at battalion. I sure hope you have some by the time this gets to you. I also got your picture of the honor roll, letter, and stamps. Thanks for all.

Last night, three of us started for a little town here just to look around and we were fortunate enough to get a ride. It was only a small town and had a few stores so we strolled around. We ended up buying peaches, pears, tomatoes, one of those foot and a half loaves of bread, and a steak dinner. So you can see we had plenty to eat. When I was ready to go to bed, I thought I'd bust for I was so full.

We ended up in a little restaurant and decided to get some steak not knowing just what we were getting. But we took a chance and it was well worth it. We each had two good sized pieces of steak, plenty of French fried potatoes, tomatoes, and bread. And we got that for about 75 cents – 35 francs. So that wasn't too expensive at all. Then when we started home, one of the fellows got a whole loaf of bread and when we got back, I ate some bread

and tomatoes. The French bread is all dark and very good to eat and in my opinion, probably better for us than the light American bread.

This morning, I've been reading a book by the name of "Botany Bay" and am finding it so interesting that I guess I'll be at it till it is finished. (I'm trying to write too fast and so make mistake). The army furnishes us with plenty of reading material and I have two more books. These are usually very popular books they give us so they're approved by the public.

Yesterday we got more PX rations and this time we got more than usual – a package of gum, 5 packs of cigarettes, and 5 bars of chocolate. But I traded my cigarettes for the chocolate and gum. The boy sleeping with me – Francis Nelen – doesn't smoke either so he did the same thing. He and I are quite alike in many ways.

The weather sure has been acting queer lately. Yesterday it rained some and then turned out to be a perfect day. Now this morning, it started out to be fine, then looked as though it would rain, and now it's really fine again.

Last night at 3 o'clock, we set the clocks back one hour so we got an extra hour's sleep. That means that we're only five hours ahead of you unless you're gone back to standard time. But I believe you're still on war time.

I've been bargaining with a little French girl but it came about unexpectedly. She wanted to buy some German sardines I had - 2 cans to be exact. I had picked these up but don't care for them. Everybody around can seem to make a meal of it but not me or Nelen. So I told this girl she could have them but no money, so instead she gave me three eggs. So we had eggs that afternoon.

Are you sending me the church paper so I can see what has been written? I hope I receive some of those packages soon so I won't have to either carry them around or get them all at once.

My faith in God is strong and I know yours is too and I'm sure He'll bring me home safe and sound. With all the love in the world, Harold.

#September 16, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I must explain what I meant when I keep saying to send those films first class. One boy got three packages one day sent first class and each was a little under eight ounces. So I feel that you could send maybe three or two in a package that size. Even if there are only films, I don't mind for I'll be needing some soon. Keep getting some every once in awhile and please see if you can't send them the way I just said.

I'm enclosing a reprint of the announcement that the 83<sup>rd</sup> is in France for I want all the articles to come from a newspaper rather than write it by hand or typewritten as I originally did. I'm also sending you a picture of myself with a few other boys. I'm the second soldier from the left and am right behind the number 83 on the bumper, left side of jeep looking at the picture. It isn't a very good picture but at least will be something. Will you bring this picture down to Peggy and ask her to let it soak in hypo for this one wasn't and as a result will bleach soon (I'm laying on my stomach trying to write and it seems so awkward that I'm not writing very good penmanship.).

Last evening I got another letter dated Aug. 21 so that means that I've received all except #25. But that will come along soon, I suppose. You had some questions for me to answer but I believe that the three articles I sent home cleared up most of them. I also got a V-mail from Warren but he didn't say much of anything except about Kenneth Smith. I'm going to write to Ken today.

One thing I cannot figure out is the weather for one minute the sun is out and nice and warm and then the next, it's raining and really cold. That's the way it seems to be

lately and I hope it doesn't keep up for too long. I've been so lucky for I've only had a sign of a cold but other than that, I've been in excellent health.

I have other things to send home but as yet the censors won't allow it. I was going to send more stamps but it was forbidden all of a sudden so I'm carrying about four envelopes full of stamps. I don't want my films developed until I get back to the States because I want them developed in fine grain developer. That means I'll be carrying them with me and I'm pretty sure it'll be OK for I keep them in a nice dry place – in a German case which I found. It'll hold my camera and some film so it seem as though it was made to order. Send me any kind of fine grain film but didn't bother with super XX. What you are sending is quite all right.

Probably everyone says my letters are interesting just to be polite for I can't see what is so wonderful about them. Was I surprised when you told me about Mr. Marsell devoting one complete column to me! I hope you are sending it to me. I guess I'll save all of these articles that I write and later can keep it in a scrapbook.

Last evening it rained just before sunset and at sunset, it was very pretty. There were two rainbows off in the distance for some unknown reason and then the beautiful sunset. They sure are pretty around here.

I certainly am thankful that I'm not in the Southwest and I believe God was and is taking care of me. When I think back at everything that has happened. I'm more sure He has. I got home three extra days, came here to France instead of southwest Pacific, got into what I specialized in instead of being a rifleman, and had a long furlough then many. Some only had eight and nine days.

I didn't plan to write too much for the letter will be heavy with the two enclosed items. Sometimes I get going and it seems as though I'll never stop and other times it's hard to think. But I believe I do all right considering that I write every day. I know writing everyday gives you great comfort and it is because of you that I do it. I think both of you are the most wonderful parents in the world and am now just beginning to realize it. When I was younger, I didn't have too much sense. The Americans have such a habit of using superlatives that I really can't find a word to express my true love and great love. Just don't worry for things are going along very fine. With all my love, Harold.

#September 17, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Last evening I received a dehydrated letter from Alice as all the fellows call them. You can probably guess, they mean V-mail and very few if any like that way of corresponding. I'm glad there are only a couple of people who send me letters that way for I don't like it myself. I forgot to tell you yesterday that I got a nice birthday card from Emily and sent from her new address.

Alice told me that she bought a pin with her and my name on it and then showed Gert. Didn't she burn up with envy for Gert thought I had sent it to Alice. Oh, these women!! She told me about some of the girls getting married with whom I went to school. I bet there'll be plenty of changes when I get home It's quite hard to believe that they are old enough to get married. It really makes me stop to think that we're all getting older and that there is nothing to do about it.

Yesterday I mentioned that I was going to church and did go. The chaplain gave a sermon and it really made me think, almost more than any others I've heard. He wanted to know if the future peace and security was to be brought about by the will of man or the will of God. I'm afraid if it's of man, we'll have recurrence in a few years. I certainly hope that all these religious war veterans of which there are many can ban together and do

something. I really believe after going through this that man can put his future and security in His hands if only they will and we'll come out on top. He gave us all kinds of current illustrations and was so persuasive in his sermon. I believe you'll agree that it was a good topic and will be a problem which will face us very shortly. Will we have a secure peace? My gosh, the way I'm going on you'd think I was back in college giving a talk on the subject. I guess I shouldn't have said much for I'm sure you were bored.

Now that the clock has been put back an hour, it grows dark about eight o'clock so that is about the time we crawl in bed. I don't feel every tired now when I wake up in the morning but, oh, wasn't I tired when I was in combat for awhile. Last night was one of the first nights I've dreamed since I've been in France and of all the dreams, it was of home! I could see everything so clearly as though I was right there. But I certainly hope that it won't be too long before I can go walking down Walnut St.

Yesterday, I let my feet soak in the stream and wasn't it cold! So cold I could hardly put my feet in. Finally I did and then it was fine. It's awfully cold water to wash with but after using it, I feel wide awake.

I've finished one book and am now on another one entitled "How to Think Straight." It's a book on how to argue and put over a point. Sort of like "How to Win Friends and Influence People," eh?

Today I saw a funny thing happen. As I was passing by a little brook, these five or six hens jumped out so I went to see what was going on. There were three left so I made a motion to grab them and did they scatter. But one had the misfortune to land in the water and here was a hen swimming around just like a duck! That certainly was funny for I knew how they hated water. That is the first time I've ever seen it happen.

There is nothing else to say today so will end and then clean my rifle for it needs cleaning quite badly. Keep up your chin. With all my love, Harold.

#September 17, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I don't believe I put the date on yesterday's letter so if you get one without a date, you'll know when it was written.

Yesterday I did a little exploring on my own and went through a bunch of ruins quite close to here. These ruins were once a castle which I and all the rest estimate to date back to nearly 1400. We could see the place where the moat, dungeons, and other things were – even a fireplace was left standing. It really was a sight worth seeing but only the walls were left and the inside was all coated with grass and trees. Just think, once there lived in that castle, a wealthy man with probably plenty of serfs. History is so fascinating to me, especially when I'm near where the actual scene took place. I got a couple of nice pictures of the runs and will be able to talk about them.

This morning, I went up to see if there was any mail and I really hit the jackpot. I got a package dated Aug. 22 sent from Schraft's or bought from there. That didn't take long at all. Now I suppose some of the others will now be coming soon. I also got a letter from Warren in which he told me what he is doing. He's a fire controller and I didn't know if he controlled the fires in the furnaces or not. But later he went on to explain that he is more like an observer who sees that gunfire is placed in a target. He says it's a good job and will give him a high rating. His letter was sent first class the same day as the package and they got here together - pretty fast work! Mrs. Hendrie sent me the Boston Herald and I do appreciate it very much and she is so faithful. And she has three or four boys to take care of too! The "Yank" magazine came in this bunch of mail too. And the best thing was a letter

from you! It was the missing letter so I've received every letter up till Sept. 8. So they haven't lost any of my mail.

Last night I went to town again and wanted to get something to eat. But because the U.S. Army is one hour later than the French civilians, we didn't get in until it was too late. They don't serve after 8 o'clock and yet here it was only 7 by our watches. But we finally struck a place where we had an omelette and tomatoes and bread. It was too late for potatoes so they said. It was so good. I wish I had made a double order. The tomatoes were those yellow kinds and I don't find them to have as much acid as the others (red).

Winter seems to be close at hand when night comes for it is quite cold. But during the day it is like spring and is almost hot at times. I sure hate to think of winter coming but there is nothing I can do to stop it. I only hope Germany gives up before the real cold weather comes.

Yesterday, the first sergeant let me have a copy of a "Popular Photography" magazine and am I at home! I sure like to go through that magazine and find everything interesting. I also get "Life," "Pic," and some funny books - the morale builder of the army.

It's strange, though, that sometimes I can give you so much information but today I'm not doing so well.

Oops! Look at what I see in my tent. The largest caterpillar I ever saw! About twice as big as an ordinary one and all covered with fur. The bees are terrific today and are in all sweet things. I've got a can of dates open and every once in awhile I have to shoo them away.

Well, now, I'm just talking foolishly and am going to write Grandma a letter today. With all my love, Harold.

#September 20, 1944, Somewhere in France.

Dear Mum and Dad,

These last three or four letters have been all mixed up on the date for I was one day behind time. But it doesn't matter too much for you know that I write every day.

Last night I got quite a surprised and received a letter from Miss Grant. It was so unexpected that I didn't know who it was at first. She said after she read my letter in the church paper that she resolved to write me then and there. She really thought it was an inspiring letter so I've been complimented already on the letter.

The candy in the package is very good and is just the same type as Miss Martin sent me. We've used those playing cards all day yesterday in just a game for fun, not gambling. I guess they don't have the money to gamble for many are short this month. I've still got about six dollars and find that plenty. We'll soon be getting paid again - only ten more days. And only one week until my birthday!

Last night as we were talking in the dark, I noticed quite a few shooting stars. When it grows really dark and the heavens light up fully, it makes an inspiring scene. God certainly has created beauty beyond what any human could. In the daytime, everything is so beautiful and green. Winter or fall I should say haven't overtaken us yet for the leaves on the trees haven't started to turn. I suppose everything at home is really turning color now.

Yesterday, three little boys came up to a jeep we were in and began talking. One of the fellows with us could speak French fluently so he asked if they'd bring something to eat. They scampered off and the next thing we knew they had their arms full of grapes, peaches, and pears. So four of us in the jeep had a swell time eating. I've seen quite a few vineyards around and I notice the grapes don't grow more than a foot or two high. (I'm having trouble with my pen today. I guess I'll clean it out). There is so little to tell that I guess I'll see if I can get this letter off in today's mail

Keep your chin and have trust and faith in God. With all my love, Harold.

#September 21, 1944. Somewhere in France.

Dear Mum and Dad.

I'm rather clever this morning for here it is only 9 o'clock and I've had breakfast and am all washed and clean. I'm getting this off now so I can write more this morning to Ken Smith and Miss Grant and maybe Miss Strout. Yesterday I managed to get two off besides yours – one to Grandma and one to Warren. He told me who took those pants but he obliterated the names so I couldn't see them – on purpose, naturally 'I was going through an Indianapolis paper yesterday and came across an article that I'm enclosing It struck me to be so truthful that I thought I'd send it to you.

There is something that is troubling me and I can't seem to make up my mind. It's whether I should go back to college and take a civil engineer's course or whether go to another college such as the University of Michigan, where Tom Beard went, and major in photography. It's a hard decision and I'm going to be very careful about picking one or the other. Both are great things of the future and I'd much rather get into color photography which I'm pretty sure will replace black and white. I think, Mum, because you've been around me more, you should be able to give me some good advice and also you, Dad, because of your worldly knowledge. Each of you can give his opinion in a little different way. Maybe you don't understand what I mean but I hope so. Maybe by the time I come home, I'll have my mind made up. Oh, I do wish I could be home and talk with both of you about it for it's so hard by corresponding. And it's an important decision.

Yesterday was a beautiful day and really warm – one of the warmest we've had since we've been in France. And last night was quite warm in comparison to some nights. As I'm here in my tent, the bees are just swarming in because of the candy that you sent. All I do is cover it all up and they disappear. There's an awful noise going on a couple hundred yards from me for there is a whole flock of birds making the noise, reminds me of cackles (do you spell it that way?)

I saw on one of the bulletin boards in a town near here that the first train from Cherbourg has arrived in Paris so you can see things are being repaired rapidly. Oh, it won't take them too long to repair most of the damage.

I hope you got those magazine articles all right and I hope those packages get home before too long. In fact, I hope it won't be too long before I get myself home.

There is nothing to write about it seems. Guess I'm not in the mood. I'll try and write you a longer one tomorrow and until then, I send you my love and kisses. With all my love, Harold.

#September 22, 1944. Somewhere in France.

Dear Mum and Dad,

It is still early in the day so I'd better get this letter written so it'll go off today.

I'm been carrying these couple of German notes that I'm enclosing for quite awhile so it will be better to have them home. I've often wondered if you ever got any of my packages. Probably your next letter will tell me.

These last couple of days I haven't felt too well. Two days ago my head started to feel awfully queer so I went to the doctor to see if he could do anything for me. He took my temperature and it was 101 degrees so he gave me some sulfadiazine tablets and aspirin. I believe it was sunstroke or something like that for the days have been awfully hot lately. But yesterday my temperature was down to 99 and today I feel pretty good except I still have a little headache. But I'll be better soon so don't worry, It isn't anything very serious.

We messengers have got a good reputation at our companies. They hate to see us come because we might bring some bad news. They certainly have a great time kidding us and have nicknamed each of us "Bad News Charlie." But everyone likes us when we bring good news.

Trains are beginning to run again and every night and day we hear their odd whistles blowing not far from here. In the night, it certainly sounds eerie for the whistle is like nothing I've ever heard in the States.

If you haven't already, I wish you'd please send me some stationery. It certainly goes fast when I write so often. And send more film too. I haven't tried any color yet but am going to shortly.

Please send me candy, gun, cookies, etc.

I won't be able to give either of you a Christmas present this year but I wish you'd accept some money that I send home and buy yourselves a present. Now don't say I work too hard for my money and should save it. I believe I'd get more enjoyment out of hearing what you got with the money. When I send the next check, please take ten dollars for it and get something. I sure wish I was closer to home than I am. But maybe by the time Christmas 1945 comes around, I'll be there. Let's hope so.

There is so little to tell that I'll close now. Trust in God as I do and he'll grant us our wish. With all my love, Harold

#September 23, 1944. Somewhere in France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Yesterday I received a letter, Boston Herald, and church newspaper from Mrs. Hendrie. I haven't had anything from you for several days but some will be coming along soon. Your last letter was dated September 8.

Do you remember how superstitious I used to be? Well, I'm more so since I've come to France and of all the numbers, I've found nine to be my lucky one. So many things have happened on the ninth. I left for the army on the ninth, and hope I get discharged on the ninth!

When we got into bed last night at 7:30, it began to rain. In the middle of the night though it poured so hard that it woke me up. But anyway, we had a nice warm and dry place in the tent. Every night we go to bed early for it gets dark then and there is nothing to do but sleep. It has stopped this morning and I am writing inside the tent. News and happenings are now so scarce, I can hardly write a descent letter

I just about feel all right except for a slight headache. The doctor, this morning, told me he thought I had a mild case of flu. I don't know what it was but know that I had a miserable headache yesterday. Please don't worry for I'm all right now. This has been the first time I've been really sick since I've come into the army.

There are plenty of blackberries growing all along the roads around here. The people at home would be in their glory for you don't get all scratched up when picking. There are plenty and yet the natives don't seem to bother with them at all.

There was a horse-drawn trailer like the auto-drawn ones back home – which was parked close to where we are. The family were refugees from someplace where the Germans were still fighting. The little girl had a deep gash in one side of her face and made it look quite ugly. If she didn't have it, I believe she'd be a very good looking girl though. They used to come around and see us quite often.

As soon as I can, I'll be sending home some pictures – post cards – of a couple of places I've been in. All I have to do is find a suitable box and then they'll be sent.

I carry a pocket dictionary around with me all the time and have found it to come in very handy at times. Sometimes I want to know meanings but mostly spellings. Some words I get confused as to whether I should use an a or e.

This will be all for now. Keep up your chin and pray often. With all my love, Harold.

#September 27, 1945. No location.

Dear Mum and Dad,

Last night, I received some of the mail which I haven't been getting regularly. I got nos. 43 and 44, one from date, one dated June 21 from Miss Martin, a new letter from her, a Boston Herald from Mr. Swain, and the Sunday School Times. Boy, I certainly get mail in bunches sometimes. When I got them, it was so dark I had to wait until this morning to read it. It really gets dark early now - 7:30.

Am I sore on my rear end now! I was sitting in one position on a jeep and got awfully sore. Only one person really could fit in the seat comfortably but we squeezed two on. That now is the only thing wrong with me for my flu or whatever it was has gone away. I have been awfully lucky though for most have slight colds, some quite bad, but as yet, I haven't had any.

I have seen some very nice houses, most of these being modernistic. That is one thing I have seen very little of in our section of our country. The day I see a wooden house I think I'll let out a whoop for as yet I haven't seen one on this side of the ocean. I have seen some houses built right in the sides of cliffs and I bet they are awfully damp.

Before I forget it, send me more stationery for I'm getting low. I believe I mentioned it once before but can't remember. There is nothing that I really want and can't give you any suggestions.

I just got straighten out on the date and have found it to be my birthday. I certainly hope I don't have to spend another birthday in the army! I sure wish the war with Germany would hurry up and get over. I really pray! I have missed writing due to circumstances but now I'll keep writing everyday unless something happens.

Yesterday, I got the shock of my life for that Jewish fellow, Max Haber, got a letter from Fred Villeneuve's wife and she told him that her husband was now a prisoner of the Germans. Things happen so fast sometimes it's hard to keep up with the fact. Just think, he and I were home together about five months ago. As I still say, the future hold many surprises, some good, some bad.

I guess I'm just not in the mood for writing because I can't seem to remember anything. But I'll try again tomorrow.

Lets pray hard that the war will be over soon and that all loved ones can return home. Pray often! With all the love in the world, Harold.

#September 28, 1944. No location

Dear Mum and Dad,

As I'm writing this, I'm beside an open wood fire getting a little warm. It was quite damp last night but the sun soon takes it away.

Well, yesterday I had a very quite birthday and was glad I could enjoy it. About all I did was cover potatoes with clay or mud (not dirt) and bake them in an open fire. Boy, those tasted good and I mean good. I ate skins and all, though I'd much rather be home and eat your cooking! I was sort of disappointed yesterday for I didn't get any letters or packages but I hope some come in today.

I just washed a few minutes ago with some of that Lux that you sent in every package. It was excellent soap and I hope you keep sending some. I really feel clean now but oh for some nice hot water instead of such cold water.

I'm still at a loss as to know whether to go into photography or engineering but I suppose time will straighten things out. But oh, sometimes I give that subject deep thought and try to figure out which one. And I always end up undecided.

You asked me for some suggestions as to what to send and I've finally thought of some things. First, please send me one of your nice fruit cakes for Christmas. I don't think it'll be too heavy for you can send up to five pounds. And send some small cans of canned foods such as meat, fruit, etc., even peanut butter and crackers if possible. I think now you'll get the idea what to send instead of candy all the time.

Last evening I tried a new kind of bread and it was the best I've tasted since I've come over here. It tastes something like the sour rye bread we used to get once in awhile. Some of them drank beer with the bread but I can't drink anything of that sort. The trees under which we are sitting are quite big and really straight – good for making masts, Dad! I believe they are beech trees but don't know very much about these.

Yesterday I saw the fairest little girl I've seen in almost all my life, I believe she was an albino and had very, very poor eyes. It's funny though that the very fair haired people have poor eyes usually.

I've seen a fancy type of bread around here it looks like a big doughnut with a hole in the middle. I like the dark bread around here than the white we have back in the States.

Keep up your chin and do all you can to keep busy. With all my love, Harold

#September 29, 1944. No country listed, probably Luxembourg.

Dear Mum and Dad,

Yesterday afternoon I went to the company to get my mail. The mail had just come in so I waited while they sorted it. The pile kept getting lower and lower and finally I gave up hope but there on the bottom was one from you dated Sept. 19 so I was happy. But now I have to wait for four letters which you wrote before this.

Col. French isn't my commanding officer but instead it's Lt. Col. Norris, battalion commander. Our regimental commander is Col. Foster. Those articles you sent me are very interesting but I had to laugh at the article about the combat badge for it makes it sound like something wonderful. It is a nice badge but the write-up was more colorful than really should be.

Today I'm sending home another package with some coins and picture postcards in it. As soon as you receive some of my packages, would you please let me know? So far, I haven't had any packages from you but there will probably be some in a few days.

Last evening they had a G.I. show presented by a few members of our division. They had music and a little swing band. After that was over, I went to bed – that was only 7:30. So you can see I had a good night's sleep. There isn't anything to stay up for because it gets dark so early now. I sure wish and pray that the war could be over soon so some of the fellows can get home. I'd be satisfied to just have it over. That certainly will be a wonderful day.

Tomorrow I get paid or should and will send most of it home. And please, please take ten dollars of it and get yourself a Christmas present, and Dad too. I would feel happier to have you spend that little bit. It would give me great pleasure for you to write and tell me what you bought with my money.

Last evening for supper we had some steak covered with mushroom. I don't like mushrooms but the steak is really good. Every once in awhile, they give us a good meal of steak.

I'm writing this letter near an open fire and as I'm writing, some of the fellows bought some sausage and are now cooking it over the fire. They also have hot bread which isn't bad tasting at all. Boy, in this army we do everything and anything. Nobody had better suggest me camping out when I get home or I'll jump down their throat. A nice house looks good to me now.

I've been issued more clothes lately so guess I'll change clothes again. They also gave us some PX rations so now I'm supplied with candy and gum but those won't last too long.

Because I write every day, I can only get about two sheets written. Don't worry too much but I know mothers too well to say that very often. I know you worry and I know how you feel.

I'm thinking of you constantly and am looking forward to the day I can come walking in the house. That'll be a glorious day! I think so much of you both. With all my love, Harold.

#September 30, 1944. No country listed.

Dear Mum and Dad,

It hardly seems possible that today is the last of September but it is true. Oh, I sure pray that Germany will fall soon! Yesterday I didn't get a letter or package but maybe today I'll get one.

Last night I had a few surprises. First of all, we had steak for supper, Second, I went over to the company with a message and happened to go to the kitchen where I found them serving ice cream! Of all things. That was a real treat for I haven't had any ice cream since I left the States. It didn't have the same flavor or taste as a good a vanilla but it was good nevertheless. Max Haber, you know who he is – took basic training with me – went to a neighboring town and bought enough for 180 men. Boy, that was some amount. The company sent him because he's so versatile with languages and he said the girl's eyes nearly popped out when he asked for so much. Anyway he did get it and it was delicious especially with cherries as I had them.

The third pleasant treat we had last night was a movie. The name of the picture was "Two Girls and a Sailor." The only trouble with it was that it made everyone homesick because of night clubs, beautiful girls, etc. They gave the showing in the woods on the side of a little slope so it was like a little amphitheater. The fellows really crowded in and all had a very enjoyable evening.

After I finish this letter, I had better clean up my tent for it's a mess. I can make more mess in the shortest space of time than anyone else. Even if I am that way I know you'd like to have me home. And after I clean up, I'm going to wash in nice cold water. Boy, it's so cold at times, it almost makes me jump out of my skin! Dad, did you ever jump out of your skin as you often said you'd do? Please, when you have time, would you write me for I do enjoy getting them from you. And don't put quotation marks around Dad when you sign it for that is your name to me and not some nickname.

I don't know as yet what you did for me for my birthday but I bet it was nice whatever it was. You two are so wonderful to me and I don't believe a boy could have any nicer parents in the world One thing I'm very thankful for is that you each has good common sense and have some worldly knowledge. Sometime, I'll tell you just what I mean when I say that. Pray very often for maybe God will hear our prayers and grant us our

desires which is only to get home once again perfectly normal and healthy. God has been so good to us. With all my love and affection, Harold.

#October 1, 1944. No location.

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here it is Sunday again but I'm afraid there won't be any church unless the rain lets up. I would so like to go for I feel as though I owe God everything. Nobody has sent me the church paper yet with my letter in it so would you please send it if you already haven't.

Yesterday I received quite a few letters but haven't had any from you. Betty kept her promise and sent me two V-mail letters plus a nice birthday card, Miss Martin sent me a letter in which she asked me to write but could you please check up for I believe she should have had one before unless the letter got lost, and a letter from Emily. It makes me happy to have so many people write me so faithfully and often and it seems as though I get more than many of the fellows.

I received the letter in which you enclosed the article about local boys in the service a few days ago. But it wasn't until yesterday that I came to my senses and realized that Barbara Roberts is engaged. It didn't come as too much of a surprise but it shows how things change after we get out of high school. There are more girls getting married lately, it seems! I guess there'll be plenty of changes when I get home.

Miss Martin asked me to guess who was the elegant looking person at the launching and I said my mother and she agreed heartily. I got a great laugh out of her telling me that you were dashing around the yard with her following you with the exposure meter. Boy, two of you to carry that little bit of equipment? I hope these pictures turn out better than some. Maybe we'll learn to take some good pictures with the camera once we get onto the hang of things.

Mum, the reason why I refer to you as "you" is because I feel as though I'm answering your letters. It isn't because I'm leaving out Dad for I don't believe I could have a better father in the whole world. I'm really sorry I thought what I did. And Dad, I enjoy your letters just as much as if Mum wrote them.

I see by the paper that Churchill is becoming very pessimistic since the Allies hit the Siegfried line and says the war has good possibility of being over the first of next year. Boy, don't I wish they'd make up their minds. But I am afraid that if we don't lick them before winter, we'll carry it on until next spring. But I sure do hope that it doesn't last that long.

I guess I'll put on my good clothes today and wash up. There is no place to go but I like to feel good and clean once in awhile.

Boy, Betty certainly is having her troubles in high school for she doesn't like this teacher and that. But I guess she'll get along all right. I sure wish I were back there now.

This be all for now for new is rely scarce. With all my love, Harold.

#October 2, 1944. No location

Dearest Mum and Dad,

It is a beautiful day but still cool enough to stay beside a fire. We've had winter clothes issued because it really gets cold sometimes. The most valuable part of my clothes is the overcoat and gloves, I believe. Yesterday I received a letter from you dated Sept. 23 but am a little mixed up in numbers for you numbered Sept. 19 and 23 both #49 and yet in the last letter you said something about a letter written Sept. 21. So with three letters, I'm sort of mixed up but am sure it'll straighten up in a short time. By the way, would you send me a couple of combs when you send me a package. Please send me a package of candy, cookies, gum, etc. I have a comb but might lose the one I have or break it.

You want me to tell you about the combat infantry so I'll tell you what I know. About 34 or 50 of 180 men received this medal near Dinard. We had to be in a combat for a certain length of time so that meant only the original men who I came with me from England received this and there were only about forty old men left, that was quite awhile ago. So I guess there are certain qualifications but I can't tell you all of them for I don't know all.

When we were in St. Malo, I was living in a hotel - quite some style, eh what? We were living on main street so could see everything that was going on. One morning we heard an awful commotion and when we looked out saw a collaborator who was being made to walk through the streets. He certainly was a sorry looking sight for the French made him walk through the streets with a German uniform on. He had to give the German salute with one hand and carry a sign in the other which told what he was. The French must have beaten him up for he had a bloody nose and a couple of black eyes. I understand he was tried and shot to death because he had a few of his fellow countrymen killed. I guess there'll be very few collaborators who get by easily.

The coast around there reminded me so much of the drive down Jerusalem Road for they both are quite rocky with nice clear water around. I felt quite at home around there with the large beach which was something like Nantasket.

There was a beautiful seaside walk which bordered directly on the ocean. It was once lined with palm trees and flowers but now it isn't much for the walk has been run down. But you can see how beautiful it was once by the pictures I'm sending you (postcards). The city of St. Malo is much different than the pictures for all the city has been burnt by the Germans. It certainly was a horrible looking sight but I suppose the French will fix it up soon.

I sent some picture post cards of St. Malo, Dinard, Dinan, Angers, and Tours and also Paris but I was never able to get in this latter city. You want to know just what I've sent via packages. I've sent four packages in all - one with the glass slides, another with my watch and combat infantry badge which should be getting home soon for I sent it first class - the other third. Still another with a folding camera and finally the one with the coins and pictures (postcards) in it. I've been in all those cities and to see what the Germans did at Tours made me look with awe. They blew every bridge leading into the city, those large beautiful bridges. Those Germans would do anything I guess.

Last night I went to see another movie which I enjoyed very much. It was called "Show Business" with Eddie Cantor. Boy, he certainly isn't much to look at. It was a musical show as well as comedy. The fellows just packed or I should say jammed in to see it and it lasted a couple of hours.

My camera is still with me and I won't part with it. The sergeant still would like to buy it but I absolutely refuse to sell it.

I believe I'll write a couple more letters today but always make sure that I get one off to you even though short for I know how you feel.

I'm going to wash now and will write tomorrow. With all my love, Harold

#October 3, 1944. No location.

Dearest Mum and Dad,

This morning is fine and beautiful and is quite a change from the rain. But at least I've been dry and have been able to keep the camera dry. I'd hate to let it get damp for dampness can raise havoc with films.

As I'm sitting by the fire, soft strains of music - quite idealistic and romantic, eh what? - are coming from the radio. The most of the music and programs are German and they play the more classical type of music which I and a few others like. There are a few

fellows here who can speak German so we get along all right. Yesterday I didn't received any mail but certainly hope there is some today.

Yesterday just before dinner, the chaplain came from the first battalion and gave us a good sermon. It seemed more like home because of the organ played by his assistant. There were quite a few men there but believe there has been more. When they aren't subjected to danger, they seem to forget God. I often wonder what will happen when we get home. I feel closer to the church than ever and believe I'll go to church more when I get home.

Some of the fellows have brought some real nice cigarette lighters near here, even better than the ones purchased at home. You have never mentioned much about rationing and what you have to eat and etc. I'm not worried but would just like to know. Have points been taken off anything?

Last night I went to another movie which was entitled "Pin-up Girl." It was in technicolor and was really very beautiful. And imagine my surprise when I saw "Skating Vanities" in this film. They did a few things that we saw in Boston. But it was quite interesting to see them on the screen. Boy, I sure wish I were home and could see them in person again!

One of the messengers told me about a sergeant in his company coming from Middleboro. So I thought I'd give you the name to see if the Soules know him,. His name is Pete Farley and his or his girl friend's address is 75 Oak St. I believe he lives somewhere around there. Maybe they don't know him but there is a chance that they know him.

Yesterday I had a few baked potatoes which I cooked in the hot coals of an open fire. I covered them entirely with mud and let them cook for quite awhile and were they good! But not as good as you do.

I'm not too good today at writing so will try to write a better letter tomorrow. But it is quite hard to write everyday and say very much.

Keep up your chin and keep smiling. With all the love in the world, Harold.

#October 4, 1944. No location

Dearest Mum and Dad,

Yesterday afternoon I received four letters - two from you folks, one from Mum and one from Dad, a birthday card from Miss Martin and a card from Miss Grant. So now I'm happy! I was indeed to find that I have so much money in the bank and I have you two to thank for it. You mentioned about getting twenty dollars by check and I can't imagine what it is for, I wouldn't even have the slightest idea where it came from for all the money has gotten home safely.

Yesterday I donned my good clothes and stepped into town. It was quite a walk and the climax came when we had to climb up a long hill in order to get into the city. We finally got up over the hill and then began to explore the place. The first thing we saw was a line leading into a store so we got in line to see what it was. Well, we came out with two ice creams apiece! But I wouldn't say the ice cream was very good but finally ended up eating three.

Then we just wandered around looking at different stores and came across a photographic store. A man there could speak English so I asked for some film and he gave me two 36 exposure films. I went out and sent one of the other fellows in and he got me one more - I could only afford one more as yet I have not been paid but expect to in a couple of days. So now I have three films and that should carry me through until I get a package from you. The next store was a bakery in which we got two pieces of pie each. I should

mention that there were three of us in the group. The pie wasn't too good because the people don't have all the ingredients available.

Then I saw some post cards and got some of those. Finally we ended up in a theater in which an American film was playing "It Started with Eve." The picture was in English but under titled with French. We enjoyed it very much but after I got out and found that it was quarter of six and so missed supper. But I did manage to get a loaf of bread and munched on that. We finally got back and then it was nearly dark so I crawled into bed and had a good night's sleep. Well, that's enough about my exploits.

I realize that you write me regularly and never thought that you don't write me the way you should. Dad has guessed entirely wrong about me. I'm going to hang onto the films and keep them for awhile. I must write Miss Martin this morning for through some mix-up, I believe, I forgot to answer her before. So I'll get it off as soon as I finish yours.

I love you more than ever and am realizing more and more what wonderful parents I've got. With all my love, Harold.

#October 5, 1944. No location

Dearest Mum and Dad,

Yesterday I received a single letter from you dated Aug. 18. I enjoyed every word of it and like nice long ones. Once in awhile I can write a long one but my day is so much like the day before that to tell you anything would only be boring.

Well, yesterday I got a very much need haircut, not so much on the sides but to be thinned out. So few of the soldier barbers have thinning shears that all I can do is have the sides trimmed. What I'm trying to do is let my hair grow because winter is coming and I need some wool to keep me warm. Finally though, I did get hold of a barber who had those shears and he did a good job. Boy, he really cut the hair out and still there was plenty to spare. I bet bald headed men are quite envious of me. Ha!

Gosh, my leg is starting to burn up because I'm too close to the fire. They sure do get hot. The fires are our meeting place and we do everything around them. But if we get too close, the heat burns, naturally. Oh, I forgot to tell you that I have a little wave in my hair but don't know if it'll last when my hair gets longer.

I forgot to tell you in yesterday's letter that we had a U.S.O. show the day before yesterday, didn't I? Oh well, I'll repeat myself if I have. We received word about 8 o'clock that the show was coming and would show at ten o'clock. But nevertheless, all or most of the whole battalion was there before nine. And when they did come, the fellows let up a great big yell. And when they saw the girls, some of them went crazy! There were three girls and three men in the show and they were really good. The best looking girl, I will have you know came from Cambridge quite close to Harvard so she said. And I can tell you it sounded good to hear someone with a Boston accent. The Bostonians certainly have a unique speech and I can always detect it. This girl I speak about was the best in the show for she used puppets like you've seen Ruby use placed on her fingers and wrist. When someone knows how to use them, they are really a source of entertainment. She could also sing and play the banjo. Sounds like Lillian?

There was a good comedian who was master of ceremonies and could tell some pretty good jokes. Boy, he told some pretty good ones about some of the officers in our battalion. He played the banjo with this girl that I mentioned and sang also. One thing most of the fellows got great enjoyment out of was looking at the civilian clothes he had on! There are very few who like this army well enough to want to stay in the army if a discharge is offered them.

Then there was an accordion accompanist who could really play it. That was the only form of music they had other than the banjo.

And there was a man tap dancer who could really make his legs move. There was a girl with him too who could dance equally as well.

Finally there was a girl who they introduced as the most beautiful girl in France. And when I saw her, I nearly fainted for she was quite a let-down compared to the build-up they gave her. She had a big mouth plastered with bright red lipstick and wrinkles. But I will say she could sing and sang quite a few songs.

Meanwhile, my rear end was going to sleep for I was sitting on the cold damp ground. I finally I couldn't stand it any longer and had to go to the rear and stand up. Everyone including me was sorry to see it over.

A few days ago, I heard this hot off in the distance and in a few minutes the colonel appeared with three partridges in his hands. They – the officers – had a swell meal that night. Last night I noticed a couple of deer hanging from a tree so I suppose he went out again and shot them. We all have to have some sort of recreation once in awhile.

I was over to the company yesterday to get my mail and I had a piece of steak over at the company mess kitchen. I know everyone there and have a swell time kidding around. Our company mess sergeant sure does prepare some swell meals. With all these swells I sound like Mrs. Richardson.

You told me about the trouble with the film and from the way you spoke, I'm afraid you didn't get anything but blank film. Oh well, I guess it's a case of live and learn. But now you'll have to be careful and be sure that the film has caught before you close it. I suppose you'll know the results by the time you get this letter. I'm sorry to hear of it but don't worry for it isn't worthwhile. You have enough to think of, I'd say!

Don't go to all the trouble of getting me panatomic film for I don't care what kind it is. I just happen to mention that because it came into my mind first. Honestly, that's true! And if you can't get any outdoor color film don't bother to send me anything but black and white. As soon as I take up this roll, I'm going to try some color and hope they come out all right. Boy, I really wrote a letter today and surprised myself. Keep up your faith in God and I'm sure things will turn out all right. I love you so very much and miss you as much as I know you miss me. But as they say in France, "C'est la Guerre" which means "it's the war." I'll write as soon as possible, probably tomorrow. With all my love, Harold.

P.S. Send me Lux soap for you know how much I liked it when I was home. "Lux, the beauty skin," I say. But I'm afraid no one will see my skin. I'm going to write Don as soon as possible.

#October 6, 1944. No location.

Dear Mum and Dad,

Yesterday, I didn't receive any mail but hope to get some soon. I never gave it one thought that you didn't write regularly. Maybe in my letters you got the wrong impression. Now I'm straightened up on the mail numbers but the way the mail comes, it was impossible for awhile to keep things straight. I received the 13<sup>th</sup> one day, the next day one dated the 19<sup>th</sup> and the next one dated the 23<sup>rd</sup>. So you can see that they were coming in very irregularly but now the back letters are coming in. Anyway, I'm glad to get a letter no matter how they came.

This morning when I woke up, I had a good laugh. There were five of us sleeping in a small room where there was a small coal pile. Three of the fellows slept quite close to the pile of coal and two of us were several feet from the pile. When we woke up, I looked at one of the fellows and he looked sort of queer. But because of the light, I couldn't see just what

was wrong. Finally when they did out into the daylight, we found that the three who slept near the pile were black as Negroes. Boy, I can tell you, we had a swell laugh. Apparently, the coal dust had fallen on them and made them dirty.

The fellows sure have a swell time laughing at me for I carry much more than most of them. But I notice that they don't laugh when we get into a rest area and some come running to me to borrow something. But I carry that myself so don't lend things very often. Some people, though would try to take everything of mine if they could but I won't let them. Boy, it sure takes all kinds to make up the world.

You mentioned that you couldn't find Dinard or Ile de Cezembre but they are so close to St. Malo that only the latter city might be shown. A river separates St. Malo and Dinard and just outside the river outlet is the island. We were training to take the island as is stated in the article - amphibious training - but the German officer gave up the morning we were to attack. I'm so glad he did there were no casualties.

I believe we are to get paid today but am not sure. If I do, I guess I'll send most of it home for money isn't much good around here. I like to send money home and see how my bank account keeps mounting up. But I really have you two to thank for having so much money. I believe I'm the luckiest fellow in the world to have such wonderful parents!

Nothing happened yesterday so there isn't anything to tell about. So I guess I'll close now. With all my love, Harold.

#October 8, 1944. No location.

Dearest Mum and Dad,

I'm very sorry but due to circumstances, I wasn't able to write yesterday but I'll try to write a little longer letter today. I'm afraid your fears have been fulfilled. I won't say any more but please don't worry too much.

This morning, Sunday, we had a church service and I was so glad for I feel as though I need to go once in awhile - every time there is a service. We now have our old chaplain back - the one who went through all the fighting with us. He says he has grown to call us his boys because of that fact and would rather be with us than either of the other battalions.

The day before yesterday we got paid and was I surprised to get sixty dollars and sixteen cents. I don't know why the extra cents. That was much more than I expected but believe it is some of my back pay for being a private first class. I believe I'll send home fifty dollars so you can add that to my bank account. I sure am proud of that account! What a confusion the money made because we aren't used to it. If we keep up, we'll have had every kind of currency in Europe!

I believe I mentioned about headquarters company having a small dashund named Tiger who is company mascot. The other day he had the best time of his life and I had a swell time watching him. He was chasing hens and cows and really had them on the run! Imagine a little thing like that making a big cow run.

I forgot to mention that I received you letter dated September 29 today and two days ago got one dated Sept.25. That means that I have missing #45 and #51. But those will come the same as the back ones have done. I sure wouldn't mind, though, getting some of the packages you've sent. I wish I hadn't asked for my French book and guess I'll send it home as soon as I receive it. Tell Mrs. Newell that I'd rather have the badge home for it's no use wearing it around under conditions such as I am subjected to.

Talking about package reminds me that I wish you'd send me some cross-word puzzles - not like in the Globe for they are little too hard for me. Please send me some candy, cookies, gum, etc. whenever you get a chance.

This morning the fellows found a small porcupine which was all balled up with his needles sticking out. He wouldn't show his face so they started a fire around him and tried to burn him out but he wouldn't budge. They didn't know what to do then so a fellow who knew came along. This man put the animal in a bucket of water and it was only a matter of a few seconds when he showed his face. And what a cute little thing he was with his two front paws just drooping. This fellow seems to know what to do and could pick it up without getting the quills in his hands.

I mentioned about the fellow named Francis Nelen who I like so well. He sleeps with me at night and what a time we have sometimes for he pulls the blankets off me. More than once I've woke up and found myself uncovered and then I'd give the blankets an awful yank and finally I would get the blankets over me again. Sometimes I threaten to stake my side down and then he won't be able to uncover me. Sometimes he'll get into bed and put his cold feet on me and if you don't think I nearly hit the roof, you're mistaken.

Yesterday we were passing by a group of cows and nearby was a girl who was knitting while tending cows. Boy, she sure reminded me of you because wherever you went you'd bring your knitting. We met a school teach in one of the places we stopped at and she certainly was pleasant. She could speak French, German and a little English so we could understand her each other most of the time. She gave us pears and apples all the time and also gave us some stamps. She said she was a school teacher for 43 years and now was principal. She had in her day 44 pupils of all ages so I can imagine she must have known quite a few things and seemed quite well educated. She claimed her father was a teacher also so it seems to run in the family.

Well, I did manage to get a little longer letter than usual. I'll write as I said before everyday if possible.

God be with all you at home who have loved ones in the service. With all my love and affection, Harold.

P.S. I forgot to mention that I received a letter from Mra. Hendire and in it she enclosed the news letter in which was my letter. I also want to send you a poem which I copied out of the army hymnal which we use all the time.

Lord Jesus. Thou hast known  
A mother's love and tender care,  
And Thou wilt hear while for my own mother most dear  
I make this Sabbath prayer  
Protect her life, I pray,  
Who gave the gift of life to me,  
And may she know from day to day the deepening glow  
Of joy that comes from Thee.  
I cannot pay my debt  
For all the love that she has given,  
But thou, loving Lord, wilt not forget her due reward.  
Bless her in earth and heaven.

I believe it is a very beautiful and just the way I feel!

#October 9, 1944. No location  
Dearest Mum and Dad,

This morning I went to the company to get some mail but they didn't have any today. But tonight I expect more mail. I sure wish they'd send my packages on so I could get them. All I'm afraid of is they'll all get to me at once. Maybe they're keeping them until

Christmas! Ha! Oh well, everyone is having the same trouble so I'm not alone. I'm glad though that you got the watch, badge, etc. for I valued them more than my other packages.

I wish you'd send me a couple of combs, maybe four, and a nail file via airmail or if too heavy via first class. I lost two combs since I've been here in the European Theater and broke one so now all I have is about half a comb. So I wish you'd send me at least one as fast as possible.

Yesterday and today I'm just disgusted and discouraged because of what I use to tell you when I was on furlough. The army is all alike and sometimes I believe I'm living so I can get discharged and live my own life. Boy, I can hardly wait for that discharge. Some people might find the army a good life but I don't like inefficiency – in my opinion. Well I believe I'll be better off when I become a civilian again than most of these people who out-rank me. Oh well, that is a thing of the future.

Just at present, I'm trying to read three different magazines or books – Reader's Digest, Coronet, and a book about Marco Polo's Travels – so you can see that I'm busy. Sometimes it seems as though I'm not in the mood for writing and as a result I only get one written to you. I only owe three letters now so I believe I'm doing fairly well. By the way, would you send me a mirror that won't break- I mean covered somehow but I don't want a metal mirror. And put some razor blades in a package. Please send me a fruit cake sometimes. This is a request for a second cake. Even if it's bought I don't care so much for things are still being rationed, I believe.

This morning I was so hungry that I went back for a second helping and I will say that is very rare. This morning they had pancakes with a sauce or syrup made of heated marmalade, I believe. And boy wasn't that good! They also had good cereal, bacon, heated prunes, and coffee. I find I can drink coffee better if there is only sugar added and no milk. I sure would like to get a good cup of milk or a cup of tea like what I had in England.

I'm not in the mood for writing I guess. Keep your faith strong and He will bring us together again soon. With all the love in the world, Harold.

#October 10, 1944. No location.

Dearest Mum and Dad,

I am quite happy today for I've been getting all kinds of things Last night I got a package which was in very good condition and started to unwrap it. Well, I never thought I'd ever get to the inside for there were so many wrappers and when I did, there was a box of Fannie Farmers chocolates. Boy, were they good and that is the first time I've had any chocolates since I came overseas. The box or package came in perfect condition. All the candy is gone now – 3 o'clock and I did get plenty for myself. They all thought it was good and by the way they were eating it, I would say it was. All I can say it was delicious!

Today, I received four letters. - two from you dated Sept. 27 and Oct. 2, one from Dad dated Sept. 28 and one from Aunt Gert after she got back from visiting you. I was sure pleased to get those pictures but I wouldn't say they were the best of either of you. But the picture of Ruby and Maynard was very good. One thing I will say is that I'm seldom without mail when there is a mail call. It makes me feel better to get mail and get more than most, maybe because I write more.

You wanted to know just what those medals were in the package I sent you and to tell the truth, I don't know. I found them but can't remember just what they were like. Anyway, they are some souvenirs. Those glass slides will be good things to mount our best color slides in for they will protect the emulsion and won't scratch the film.

Last night I also received two Sunday School Times and the Yank magazine. A couple more of the messengers got packages so we had quite a time eating. I'm glad I didn't get all the packages at once like I did the last time.

You talk about cow manure! Well each house where we are now has a pile of it stacked in front. And when we walk down the roads our feet are covered with the manure. I suppose, Dad, you're glad for now you're getting your wish and I'm even walking in it. We slept in one barn where the chickens and hens were loose and I can tell you I was glad to get out of there for to have them crawling round all night over you is no fun. It's a great life all right. There are plenty of cows around here but they are so dirty! Not like the nice clean ones we saw in England and France. The people drive a whole flock right down the main road and sometimes block the entire road so a jeep can't get by but they (the cows) soon move if the jeep honks.

A captain and I went to what they call rear echelon - quite a way behind the front lines. Well, I never in my life got so confused in my direction for I couldn't remember how to get back. The captain said that was the first time he had been lost in his life so you can see how easy it is to get lost. We took more wrong turns and more extra driving than necessary but finally we got back and just in time for supper. But I never thought we would ever make it. As we were going through a wooded area, we saw a deer jump out and run along just in front of the jeep. That is the first time I ever saw a wild deer run in the woods and he was so scared that he didn't seem to know which direction to turn. We kept him in sight for quite awhile but lost him later. It sure was a perfect shot but to use the kind of rifles we have would rip the meat and skin to pieces because these weapons are much too powerful for game. I saw what happened to a partridge and he sure was ripped up by one bullet. It wasn't fit to eat at all.

You mentioned in one of your letters that the only place you could get any Lux is in Remick's store. Boy, it sure must be hard to get that kind of soap and I know that is the only kind that won't hurt your hands. By the way, has the cold weather bothered your hands and have they been all right this summer? I sure am glad that your kind of arthritis doesn't spread to other parts of the body. Well, if the only place you can buy this soap is in this store, go there as often as you can.

We are at present sleeping in a mold loft - I mean hay loft. What's the matter with me! Guess I'm thinking of the shipyard. We have plenty of straw here so it is nice and soft. I have five blankets now and two shelter halves - these when two are placed together for a pup tent. So you can see we keep pretty warm at night. We also put our overcoats over the blankets so we keep even warmer. When I say we I mean Francis Nelen and me. So many of the fellows have put on their long johns, as we call the winter underwear, because when they're on, we look like John L. Lewis in his boxing tights. But I can't seem to wear them so what I do is put on a pair of O.D.s - the kind of clothes I wore home on furlough - and a pair of work clothes with my summer underwear on. I keep plenty warm that way, even warmer than winter underwear and one set of clothes, I have a size eleven glove which were issued to everyone and I have found that very few fellows can wear such a large size. The average is size nine. I guess my fingers are quite long - the piano type, eh, what?

Well I really wrote more than I expected but I know you welcome a long letter. Keep up your chin and pray often. With all my love, Harold.

P.S. I forgot to tell you that I'm sending home fifty dollars and have turned in the money for the money order but division headquarters was too busy today to make out the orders. So tomorrow the mail clerk will get them and then the next day I will sent it.

Boy, my bank account is getting larger. Boy, you are so wonderful to me!! With more love, Harold

October 11, 1944. No location,  
Dear Mum and Dad,

Today's mail haven't come in yet so don't know if I will have any today. The mail clerks are a little later today because they are getting our money made into money orders. Boy, I bet there are thousands of dollars being sent home each month by men in this. Very few men keep hold of very much for there isn't anything to spend money for. It sure is different from the way it was back in the States for then most spent almost all their month's pay.

I suppose you'll be voting this election. A few of the fellows have voted but so many of them aren't bothering to vote this year. Most are thoroughly disgusted with the way politics is being fought over.

I don't believe I every told you about seeing double rainbows one night or evening. I should say. That is the first time I've ever seen two at one time and believe it's a rare occurrence. We saw quite a few rainbows during one period of time for it would rain for awhile almost every day and then the sun would come out.

Just before I started this letter, I finished cleaning my rifle because with so much rain lately, it started to rust. It wasn't very hard for me to clean mine for my carbine doesn't rust the same way as some do. One of the messengers had such a rusty rifle I don't believe he could have fired it. But he worked and worked for nearly three hours and now it's beginning to look like a rifle.

October 12

Yesterday I started to write this letter but something came up and I couldn't finish. So I'll try and write a good long one today.

Last night I went up to get the mail for I knew our mail clerk had a full bag. There were plenty of packages but much to my disgust, I didn't get any. All I got was two Sunday School Times and a Yank magazine and the Upper Room from Mrs. Newell. But hope I get something today. I will say I've been getting mail almost every mail call but I do wish these packages would come.

Last night when I was on guard guarding the area, I thought about why the camera should work better at larger openings and I finally believe I know. First of all, you've probably noticed that as the lens opening bigger the more space between numbers. Isn't there much more space between 3.5 and 4.5 than 11 and 16 – these are examples. And I believe you've noticed that not all speeds are on the camera such as 1/25, I believe and it jumps from 1/20 to 1/8. Usually it's very rare a speed such as 1/20 and a lens opening such as 3.5 come together. Usually it'll be 1/20 at 4 so you'll have to guess at 4 but it's much easier on these larger lens openings because the space between numbers is greater. It's impossible to get that camera to take a picture at 1/25 of a second. I believe if I remember correctly so you have to take either 1/30 or 1/20 and change the lens opening. I believe you'll understand although it isn't very clear. The best thing I can suggest is to go ahead and use the large openings and when you have to have a great depth of focus – everything in focus from right close to infinity. The larger the lens opening the smaller the depth of focus – you'll have to be very careful when you want greater depth. So the only thing I can suggest is to be very careful when you expose. That all for the camera now.

A couple of nights ago I had a great laugh. All the messengers and a few others sleep in a hay loft and a couple of pigs are on the floor under us. That night the pigs started to squeal and carry on and what a noise – like a barnyard serenade. One of the fellows got so mad because he could not get to sleep with all that noise going on so he got up and tried to quiet them down. But in so doing, he made more noise than the pigs by yelling at them. The

only thing he did was stimulate them and they made twice as much noise. So he came back to bed and he was so furious that he couldn't speak. The pigs finally quieted down and finally we got to sleep.

I would like you to please send me a flashlight for the nights are so long that I really need one. I would like one as close to the following description as possible but if you can't then send me whatever you can. I would like one that is painted, not shiny, and one that's in the shape of an L (ell). And send me quite a few bulbs but not many batteries – maybe four (two in and two out of the flashlight). And I would like you to send me a pair of small scissors like what you use on your fingernails. And please send me some candy, gun, cookies, etc. I hope I've been giving you a few suggestions lately.

No matter how old a soldier is, he still likes to read comic books! A couple of days ago we got a pile of books and I noticed the first ones to go were the comic books.

Today I feel a little more accomplished than some days for I washed myself, my feet and cleaned up some things I had. I threw away some junk which was only surplus. Now after I finish this letter, I guess I'll wash some clothes. And I had better get some more letters off.

A couple of days ago I had the best cider I've tasted since I left the States. This cider was just made the day before so was really fresh. I didn't like the cider I got in some places for it was too strong to suit me.

The news seems to look much better than it did for awhile and I sure hope it keeps up for I'd hate to be in combat all winter.

Anyway, keep up your chin and pray often. With all my love, Harold.

#October 13, 1944. No location

Dearest Mum and Dad,

As I'm writing this, you are in bed probably for it's only four o'clock at home. We used to be British double summer time but now we've gone back an hour as I probably told you before. Because of the lack of lights, most of us go to bed when it gets dark about 7 o'clock. That is as early as when I was about eight or ten years old. But we rarely sleep through the whole night for all the messengers have to stand guard sometime during the night – usually four hours guard. So I guess I had better turn nocturnal and sleep during the day.

Last evening or I should say late yesterday afternoon the mail came in and I had a package but no letter. The box had gun, Canada mints, nuts from S.S. Pierce, candy covered almonds from the same store, and a box of hard candy. The package had no date on it so I have no idea when it was sent. Anyway, that means that two packages have come since the bunch of six. I should say three packages for I got one nearly a month ago. You certainly do wrap the packages well for I haven't had one package broken into at all. In fact most look as though it came through the mail back in the States for it's in almost perfect condition. I've seen some awful looking packages come into the company – all broken up. When they come in that way and the fellow isn't there, the mail clerk distributes the goods among the company for the postal service won't accept packages in that condition.

Yesterday was the first time I ever saw a horse being shod (shod) and it sure was interesting. I would think that chiseling their hoofs would really hurt and from the way the horses moved around, I guess I really hurt. I don't know why but I noticed that all the horses have their tails cut short. Maybe you could tell me, Dad.

I think you're doing fine at writing so often, Dad, and am so glad to get them. I enjoyed reading your letter about your trip to Washington and it sounds as though you saw quite a little. I sure was pleased to get those pictures of you and Mum but I don't like that

one of you at all. Boy, those beans really grew this year and I'm sorry I wasn't able to see it. From the way you spoke, I guess these new types of tomatoes yield more fruit if they are let to climb like they did this year. Mum said that you had more tomatoes than last year. I wish the next time you write you'd tell me just what you grew in the garden and whether you get much at harvest time. And Mum, I'm curious to know what color dress you had on in that picture. It looks like the green and white one you had. Well, I'm so glad to hear that you are finally going to get the dining room furniture for you've needed some for quite awhile.

I've been rambling on for there isn't a thing to say. All I've been doing is standing guard at night and writing letter and resting in the day. Sounds boring, doesn't it? This is the kind of life I like- nice and quite and able to rest once in awhile. Some of the fellows can't sit still for very long for since they've been in combat they want to be on the go all the time. I believe you'll find me the same and I hope to find you the same. With all my love.

Harold

P.S. Please send me some stationery via first class, if possible, for I'm getting very, very low. And at all possible would you see if you can get an every-ready case or my camera. It's the Kodak 35 for f3.5 lens and coupled range finder.

#October 14, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg

Dearest Mother and Dad,

Well now you can see for sure where I am (in Luxemburg). It certainly was a long move and that was the time my rear end got so sore. It seemed that when we got here, the rain just let loose and rained quite hard for a couple of days. One of our command posts was located in a nice hunting lodge but was so small that most of us slept in tents. A command post C.P. is the nerve center of the army for from here all operations are planned and carried out. The man who owned this lodge also owned a beautiful country club in the middle of a golf course, so he must have had some money. He was quite well educated and could speak French, English, German and the Luxemburg language. He explained that the native language is a mixture of German, French, and English but German is most predominating.

When the Germans took over, every child was required to learn German and German only. But before they came, French was required as well as German. Boy, to explain it is complicated, eh what?

I mentioned that I got paid last week but I didn't tell you in what kind of currency. It happens to be in Belgian francs and I can tell you more of us were puzzled. You see the French franc is worth 2 cent, while the Belgian is worth 2 1/4 cents. So that made things really complicated especially when it came to debts being paid. I'm enclosing the money order for fifty dollars which I got last night. The Luxemburgers have currency of their own but there is so little that it can't be called an international currency. They will accept any kind of money - German Marks, French or Belgian francs, British pound, or American dollars. Sort of complicated!! I don't know why they paid us with what they did, but they did. Now in order to spendit, we have to have it stamped by a local civilian post office in order to make it valid. For what reason, I can't tell you!

The country is mostly agricultural and everywhere I look, there are cows. There is plenty of open pasture land but is wooded in some areas. As I said before, it's so easy to get lost around here for the town names seem alike and there are so many roads.

Today I had hot water to wash with! The first time since England. But I've done well with cold ad am able to keep real clean. With hot water though, it's much easier to get the dirt off. A couple of us got a large can and filled it with water then started a fire under it. So

today I really look slicked up with the hair combed. Conceited, eh what? I see the mail truck just coming in so I guess I'll go up in a few minutes and see if I can get any mail. I sure hope there is something.

I guess I'm not in the mood for writing because there is so little to tell that I can't seem to think of much today.

Keep up your chin and pray often. With all my love, Harold.

#October 15, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg

Dearest Mum and Dad,

I went up to the company today and found a little first class package waiting for me and also a Boston Herald from Mrs. Hendrie. Would you please tell her to be sure to get my complete address on or else it takes a couple of extra days to get here. Once she forgot to put my company on and this time she forgot to put my regimental number – 330<sup>th</sup> Inf. This package was so small that I had a pretty good idea that it was a couple of films and sure enough it was. But I didn't get any letters today. The package was dated Oct. 8 and the newspaper Oct. 6 so first class came through in pretty good time this time. But I can't understand what happened to the airmail for the last letter was dated Oct. 2. I guess they get sort of mixed up once in awhile. But I believe I'll get them in a day or so.

Once in awhile I become a "chow hound, as we say in the army. A chow hound is a man who likes to eat and eat and gets ahead of everyone in line. I didn't get ahead in line but sometimes I'm so hungry I go back for seconds. One morning, they had pancakes which I like a lot. So I finished eating and started through again. But I didn't like to go through at first because of what the other messengers would call me but I said the heck with them so I went ahead. Just after I got through a second time, I saw another messenger go through for seconds and behind him was another. It finally ended up that all eleven of us messengers went through so we had a great laugh for we were all afraid at first of what the rest would say. Boy, sometimes they kid the lives out of each other. I still haven't learned to like hash and stew as you said I would, I'm afraid this army hasn't changed me very much even though it has tried to get me in the "army mood" – so called. But I can't get that way for you're not suppose to think for yourself.

A couple of hours ago I went to church which was in a little school room. They've had services in all kind of places and in all kinds of situations. The chaplain said that he has conducted services in fox holes, open fields, school rooms, and even bar rooms because of no other place. He certainly is a good preacher and I do so enjoy listening to him. Because we were inside, the singing sounded so much better and louder than in the open fields as you can probably see. The singing sure reminded me of being back in our home church because all the songs we sing here are what we used back home.

There is a large Catholic church – the Luxemburg religion – near here and it sure is decorated with all kinds of flowers and evergreen branches. Just before getting to the church, there is a large arch covered with flowers, etc. and on top is the American flag. I noticed a lot of Christmas trees placed on either side of the road and I can tell you they'd bring a nice price back in the States. They grow wild all around here so that is where they get them all. I understand that a priest was ordained a couple days ago and today he held his first mass. The people certainly dress up on Sunday around here and look more like Americans on that day but I wouldn't say they look very nice on work days for they don't their old rags it seems.

The people around here are immaculate though and are always scrubbing their homes and around the outside. It's too bad though that these people never have had the chance to live in a place like the good old U.S.A. But I guess there has to be a peasant class

and it seems as though they are "it." There certainly is no place like home and although I realized when I was there, I'm realizing it more and more.

Before I forget it, I wish you'd send me some stationery via first class for I'm just about out of stationery. If it would only come through like the film it would only take a week. That package really traveled. I want to thank you very much for sending me those films and because they can be sent first class and so light, I believe you can send them without a request. Isn't that right?

I had better not run this over on to another sheet for I'm getting so low. So I will close now but I'll be writing a long letter tomorrow if I feel the way. I do today. Boy, I could write a whole book if I had the paper.

God bless both of you and as you know, you mean the world to me. Don't worry too much for I want to return to a young looking mother and Dad.

With all my love, Harold.

P.S. Please send me another fruit cake if you can get hold of one even if it's bought. It's better than candy all the time. Send more stamps.

#October 16, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg

Dearest Mum and Dad,

I'm not as happy as I could be for I haven't had any mail – letters – from you in a week. I can't understand why I don't but I suppose something is screwed up in the postal system. Boy, I wish things would get straightened out so I can hear from you. But maybe tomorrow I'll get something.

I forgot to tell you about making a temporary shelter and the consequences. When we moved into the place we are now, we were put in a place with the hens as I mentioned once before. Five of us didn't like the place so we went into a field and made temporary shelter. Oh, it was a beautiful sight with every star shining and the moon out. But early in the morning it clouded up and then the heavens just opened. And did we get wet and did the shelter leak! So we grabbed everything and ran for the barn and the hens so we finally ended the night among these creatures. Finally an officer found a better place for us so we moved into the hay loft where we are now.

A few times I've been inside a house which has been heated and I'll tell you I don't like much heat now that I'm used to living outdoors so much. When I get home, I guess that temperature will have to be about 55 degrees in order for me to be comfortable. How would you like to live with a temperature that low?

There is one Jewish fellow around here who can speak good German and he certainly is wooing all the girls around here. Everyone he sees, he tells them that he'll bring them back to the U.S. and I bet he must have told fifty of them. Boy, what a line he hands them! This particular fellow I talk about (Saul Gordon) from Manchester, N.H. and he isn't very well liked by those of his own race so he must be bad. Whenever he comes to see any of us, we know he wants something.

We were asked this morning if we were married and how many children. The three E co. messengers were told to report to the C.P. where all the offices are. I had no idea what it was for but nevertheless we went. And then we were asked that question. And all the time I thought it was something important. I suppose it has something to do with this point system discharging that you've probably heard about. I guess it looks as though I'll be in this army for along time if they carry through this point system for I am young, single and not much time in the army. Oh well, I might get fooled.

Boy, oh boy, I'm not in the mood for writing at all today so I'll close now. Keep up your chin and trust in God. With all my love, Harold.

#October 18, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg

Dearest Mother and Dad,

I was waiting to see if I had a letter from you before I wrote and it was so late last evening when I received one dated Oct. 4 that I didn't have time to write you.

Yesterday, I decided I'd like to finish up my black and white so I could replace it with color. The leaves are just beginning to turn and the countryside is very colorful so I'd like to have a few color pictures. I sure hope they come out good! Yesterday in order to use the film, I went to a nearby church and took a few pictures of the inside, outside, and a couple of stained glass windows which are very pretty. I would like to get a color picture of one of the stained glass windows. As we were coming outside, we met the priest who had that particular church. He could speak English quite well so Francis Nelen who was with me and I spoke with him for awhile. He told us about the atrocities of the Germans and how much alike the Luxemburgers and Americans were. He said we were so different from the English for they were so much more reserved and serious. But the Americans are happy go lucky and above all want freedom. He claimed that these people are like that but many of our officers call all these people Germans so I don't know who'd be right.

Just awhile ago, it looked as though the weather would clear up so I rushed out with my camera but much to my disgust, it grew cloudy again. But maybe sometime it'll get fine enough to be able to take some color pictures. So far, no luck!

Last night it just poured when I got into bed around seven and kept up until I went on guard. It seemed as though luck was with me for when I went off, it began to rain again and didn't stop until I went on guard a second time. We've been going on every night for 4 hours, two on, four off, and then two more on. Well, it certainly was queer though that it should stop both times I was on guard. I guess they're trying to make all the messengers a nocturnal crew for they stick us on guard so much at night. But as yet, they haven't got me used to it for I like to sleep at night. When I was at home I used to go to bed good and early and had a good night's sleep.

We've been getting in a bunch of clothing made in England but made in conformity with our plans. And so the fellows curse for they really aren't as well made as ours and their gloves when on look hilarious for they are the baggiest looking things. I suppose because of shipping, it is quite hard to get things shipped all the way from home. I still claim that the U.S. makes the best of everything in the world and the more I see of other people, the more I think so. And I realize now what a high standard of living we have and am so glad to live where I do.

Boy, what I wouldn't give for my sleeping bag and if you could send it, I'd certainly request it. It is so much easier to handle than blankets and is so much warmer. Between the two of us, we have five blankets and sleep on two and cover with three. But you'd be surprised how much these five blankets weight.

One of the corporals who put us on guard had a nice watch which he borrowed from a fellow and he broke it. Was that fellow mad and I don't blame him! Well, last night this corporal woke us up and I asked him what uses for time now and he showed me this big alarm clock he carries around now. It sure looks funny to see him carry that around.

We, the messengers, don't do much in the day now except write, wash, and sleep for we do all our work standing guard at night. It has only been in the last few days that we have stood guard for so long at night. If it wouldn't get dark so early, we could do much more.

Sometimes I have an awful time getting clothing supplies for our company supply sergeant and battalion headquarters supply sergeant won't give us any. Boy, at times we're

like a bunch of orphans. There is only one officer who thinks enough of us messengers to find us a place to sleep and get us supplies. Before he came, they didn't care what happened to us but we always got along. I'd rather write every day but can't write much more today for I can't seem to think. With love, Harold.

#October 19, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg

Dearest Mother and Dad,

Yestotherday I went up to get the mail but because the mail clerk was too busy to sort it out, I went through them and found my own letters. I did and after going through a few large piles, I got a letter from you dated Oct. 7 so I was happy.

The townspeople I notice are getting prepared for the winter for they are gathering all their fruit and are slaughtering. With the fruit they make cider (apple and grape) and I enjoy watching them make it. They have a couple of large wooden buckets and they have a crushing machine. The apples or grapes are put into the machine and are crushed to bits between large cogs. This crushed fruit falls into the tub and left to stand I suppose for aging. Then all the liquid is drawn off and the cider is stored. I suppose that's the way at home but I never saw anyone make it. So many of the things they have here are sort of old fashioned but I suppose not everyone in the world lives as good as the American.

As soon as I read in your letter that Mrs. Hendrie hasn't received a letter for a long time, I wrote one right away within a half hour after reading your letter. I'm sure I wrote to her a couple of weeks ago and wouldn't be surprised if she got one just after you wrote. Well, slowly but surely, you're getting your secret ambitions which you used to tell me. At least you're getting some nice silverware and I feel happy for you. I sure am glad you're talking some money and getting something. Dad, in your old age you're getting better. You sure are changing and I've decided long ago that you're a pretty good father even though I did get mad at you sometimes.

I forgot to tell you about slaughtering pigs and how they do it. The people cut the jugular vein to kill them and then they'd put hot water on the whole pig and pull the hair out. When this is done and the pig washed thoroughly it is pure white. Then a hole is made from the rear to the snout and a pole put right through. It's sort of a funny sight and reminds me of medieval times when they used to roast the pigs whole. I don't know how they're stored for I've never been that nosey. Probably they cut them up to store. I forgot to mention that they're slit down the back and the insides cut out. So many things such as this is new to me and is interesting.

I notice quite a few girls around here have their ears punched and earrings put through. Grandma, I believe, had this done and if I remember rightly, she said she'd never have it done again. The earrings at home are so much easier to put on than these. I'd think. Have you bought any new ones, and if so please describe them to me. The same if you've bought any dresses.

Would you please send me a kit to keep my stationery in. I believe you know what I mean and I want stationery you send to me to fit it. (a folding kit). And send me some pictures of the boatyard even if they're old –pre-war – for some of the fellows would like to see it. And I would like to have snaps of these new boats, if you have any for I never saw the complete boat except for the proposed plans. Please send me a fruit cake. That's one kind of a cake that should keep. Now don't bother unless it's moderately priced.

There was a movie here last night but I was unable to see it for I was on guard at that time. But I didn't miss much, I understand, for the picture was third class. The officers decided to have the show up in the hayloft where we are. When we heard the bunch of fellows was coming, we hid all our equipment for you can never tell! Boy, they swarmed all

over the place and jammed themselves in. The screen they used was a captured German one and pretty handy for carrying around. But all it was was a plain piece of cloth and not bending like ours at home so it didn't give the illumination it should have so the fellows told me.

What weather! The stars can be out and the moon up and in less than an hour just pour and the entire sky be overcast. I never saw such unpredictable weather and I sure am glad we aren't in foxholes right now. At least in the loft, we are dry.

I hope to get another letter tomorrow and then I'll write a long letter if I'm in the mood. I'm thinking of you always and enjoy writing to you every day. I know my letters so often makes you feel better. Keep up your chin and pray often. With all my love. Harolf

October 20, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg.

Dearest Mother and Dad,

Yesterday, the only letter I got was a birthday card from Miss Ring. But three of the messengers got packages so we had quite a little to eat. I sure wish the package with stationery would come for I'm really getting low probably a couple of week's supply.

I was so sleepy this morning that I slept for awhile and when I woke up, the sun was out. So I really jumped up and grabbed my camera which now has color film in it. Then I took it and began taking pictures of some of the fall scenery. That is one of the few chances I've had to take any for the sun just won't shine for very long. The trees are really beautiful now but the season seems to be much later than at home. I also took a couple of pictures of some planes which were flying overhead. The scene though was the strangest sight that I ever saw. The planes were so high that the vapor from the engines just stayed suspended in the air and looked like rockets. I believe you understand what I'm trying to describe.

I forgot to ask you how the glass slides got to you. You didn't say whether any were broken or not but I believe they were all right. And did Dad ever get that reflector for the projector re-silvered. If you didn't it won't give as much illumination as it should. And the last thing is about the watch.

The company supply room of my regular company is only a short distance from me now. So now I'm getting supplies much easier than before. Quite a few times before, the supplies for me were given to the company and because we - the messengers - weren't there, they were tuned back to the supply room. And at times it seems as though I can't get supplies. But now I make sure they get to me and the supply sergeant is going to make sure we get them now.

Because it gets so dark so early now, I decided I needed a flashlight so I could find my way. That's why I requested it. But in order to help me though, I made a flashlight out of a tin can. All it does is hold two batteries in place and then has a hole for the bulb. Everything is kept together by tape. But I sure have troubles sometimes for it'll turn on when I don't want it and when I do want light, the crazy thing won't light. At least it gives me light sometimes!

At last I got hold of my duffle bag in which I have all my clothing. It usually was at the company supply room but because that is usually too far away, I brought it with me to battalion. The bag I brought home on furlough is called a barracks bag. But this is called a duffle bag and is made of real heavy canvas and has two straps on it. It's so much easier to carry around even though more can be gotten into it.

Yesterday when I was looking through a Yank magazine, I came across an article about schooling if a fellow is kept here in this theater and just waiting to be shipped home. He has his choice of so many things. I believe I could best describe it if I sent it home. It looks now as though my chances of getting out of the army aren't as slim as they were for

the government has decided age and dependency doesn't count at all. Boy, if they did take that into consideration, I'm afraid I would be in for a few years. I wouldn't mind taking advantage of this program if at all possible but wouldn't want to study civil engineering until I got back to the States. As I said once before, I might go into photography after all. That will be a thing to figure out when I get home. And I can hardly wait to get back.

Pray often and I'm sure we'll be united soon. Be sure and keep yourself busy. With all my love, Harold.

#October 20, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg.

Dearest Mother and Dad,

As I'm writing this letter, I'm eating some maple sugar candy which you sent me. Today I received a package and because there is no date, I'll describe it so you'll know which one it is. There was the maple sugar candy, hard candy, caramels, candy-coated almonds, life savers, gum, two films – one color and one black and white, and a box of nuts which certainly retained their flavor. This package came in good condition and not like most which are usually torn up some. You certainly do a good job at wrapping. There was no letter from you but there were three - one from Em, one from Betty and one from Ruby. Em sent me some pictures of Aunt Frances and Uncle Don at Silver Beach and I must say I was surprised. Uncle Don is so stout compared to when I saw him last and Aunt Frances looks different with the glasses. Oh, I sure wish I could have seen them for it was five years ago when I last saw them. I hope you'll send me pictures whenever you have any for I do so enjoy receiving them. Em said she'd like to see your description of the house and grounds that you wrote me!

#1 October 21

I didn't have time to write too much so will finish it today. Just a few minutes ago, I came back from church services. Because the chaplain had another service quite a distance from here, he had to cut the sermon quite short. The attendance seems to have fallen off some for we aren't exposed to immediate danger the way we were back in the hedgerows. Humans certainly are queer the way they turn to God only when in immediate danger.

Last night as we were standing guard, we saw this lighted projectile go soaring through the air. It's one of those buzz bombs which was on it's way to London. Those things are launched so far from us that between the time it is launched and the time the noise gets to us is well over half a minute. So it must be quite a distance. We aren't exposed to them at all and all are headed for England. Boy, I sure wish I had a picture of it as it goes through the air. It goes so high we soon lose sight of it though.

Yesterday was the first time for a long time that I've had any oil in my hair. One of the fellows got hold of some hair oil so he let me use some. And is my hair shiny today. Quite a sharpie, I am! I just washed my hair a couple days ago and what a mess it was for it wouldn't lay down. The oil is the cream oil you sometimes use and I believe that's the best type.

Yesterday I was going to do a lot and felt quite ambitious. But I didn't get as far as I thought I would and only got some of my equipment put away. I have my duffle bag with me. I believe I said and plenty of things are in there now. Though today, I have washed and am getting your letter written now so this afternoon I'll answer some other letters.

I'm enclosing a couple of Luxemburg bills which I got hold of last night. I believe it's the prettiest money I've seen since over here. Notice on the 50 franc bill that it has rainbow colors on one side. You'll have quite a collection of things when I get home.

I guess I'll go to dinner now so I'll close. I love you both truly and hope it won't be too long before we're united. With all my love, Harold.

#October 23, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg

Dear E

Est Mother and Dad,

Today I hit the jackpot and received nine letters from various people. They seem to come all at once and after me just getting all my letters answered. I got one from Miss Keany who wrote some of it in French. But I understood and was so pleased to hear from her. She said she was proud of me and for what I don't know. And Miss Martin gave me the latest gossip about the boatyard. I also got one from Charlie McNulty and he tells me some of the town news which is scarce so he says for all the kids we knew are in some branch of the service. Oh yes, I got a birthday card from the Ackersons. Now I'm down to your letters. Today I received the missing letters which I spoke about (#45, written Sept. 15) and also the beautiful birthday card. It certainly was wonderful of you and made me sort of sad when I read the verse. I also received some of your late letters - #56, 57, and 58. So now I'm completely up to date. Boy, letters sure come in bunches!

I want to tell you that if I went to write every day, I'm going to and nobody will stop me. I enjoy writing you every day and it's very rare I can't think of anything. I'm stubborn like you, Dad, and please don't tell me not to write so often. I know you're thinking of me but I'll write. Enough of that! Now don't ever say you couldn't go on if I weren't so thoughtful. Don't ruin your life worrying about me too much. Other people have loved ones in the war so you're not alone.

I'll never forget the time I first got my Agfa and began to take pictures. There were two double exposures because I forgot to turn the film and weren't you mad. But you said that I'd learn by experience. Well, that incident reminds me of the trouble you're having. I'm not mad but just disappointed because the pictures came out blank. All I can say is that "you'll learn by experience." Just be careful and I know the next ones will turn out.

I'm enclosing another piece of Luxemburg money which I think is quite pretty. But no money in the world is quite so pretty as the good old U.S.A. money. I saved one dollar and have been carrying it around in my billfold through everything. I've also a British pound that has been in my wallet since England. That's about the only souvenir from that country I've got.

It's about two hours since I wrote the past paragraph for I just finished eating. We got in line and what a wait! The reason we had supper so late is because the chicken were caught late and so took quite awhile to cook. If you ask me it wasn't chicken but old hens. We had chicken, wine, which I wouldn't drink, peaches, potatoes, salad, and coffee. So you can see we had plenty tonight but that isn't always the way. Sometimes the meals are pretty lousy.

I was reading a couple papers tonight and politics seem to dominate the news now. I don't care a thing about the election and would rather get the war over first. The fellows here seems to be divided in half as to who is the best man for president. One of the fellows received some clippings tonight and it told about some of the fourth termers beating up a couple of servicemen because they wouldn't vote for him. If it's true that sure is going to extremes.

I have to laugh at the first sergeant of this company (headquarters) for he is wooing a girl around here but still he doesn't speak a word of her language. He uses an interpreter and all I can say is that is some way of make love having someone around.

I'm glad that you are using my money to get a present but nearly eight dollars is an awful lot for one spoon. It should last for the next fifty years so I hope you won't ask for any

till then. Oh, I wish I could be there for Christmas and it would be the happiest moment in my life.

I sure am glad that I don't smoke for it sure is a nuisance. All these fellows who smoke count their cigarettes by ones to find out if they'll last the week out. One fellow has about three cartons which he has been saving and are the other fellows jealous because he has so many.

I guess this will be all for now and I'll write tomorrow. Pray often and please, please don't worry so for things aren't as bad as you might think they are. Keep up your chin. With all my love, Harold.

#October 25, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg

Dearest Mother and Dad,

I didn't get a chance to write you yesterday for I had so many letters to answer. I have so little to say too because one day is like another. I wrote four yesterday and received three. Sort of looks hopeless! But only one of these was a letter and that was from Mrs. Villeneuve. She said that she received a telegram (Aug. 10) telling he was missing in action. Then another came Aug. 22 and said he was a prisoner. She received her first card from him Oct. 6 so at least contact has been made. It is too bad that happened but at least she realized he is safe. The other two letters weren't letters but a birthday card from Marjorie Klay and one from Mrs. Hendrie. But at least as I say, better late than never!

Last night the fellows were having a great time arguing about politics. Some say Roosevelt is better and some Dewey. That is really one of the first times I've ever heard much politics discussed. The argument was hot and one fellow really got mad but the others only argued more so he'd get madder. I certainly had a good time listening to the crazy arguments they give sometimes.

There are two children in this town who are the prettiest children. I've ever seen. They are brother and sister and have the nicest complexion. Whenever I try to draw the boy who is the younger to me, he grabs his sister invariably for he's so bashful. The girl isn't quite as bad though and will come near. The American soldier seems to like children from the indications around here. Every soldier seems to have a dozen around him and even plays with them sometimes. We Americans seem to be a unique bunch and at times I wonder what foreigners think about the way we act. We are too happy go lucky and too willing to help anyone out. I don't believe all these people appreciate what we are and have been doing for them.

The Russians seem to be really moving just at present and I sure hope they keep it up. I would be glad just to have the war over even if I don't get home for awhile. Oh well, I think things will turn out for the best but time is needed.

I've just been out to dinner. Sounds like an executive!! Seriously, I just returned from dinner and while eating, one of the boys handed me a letter written on October 13 from Dad. I sure was glad to get it and you write a good letter, Dad. Practice makes perfect, so keep writing often and I'll have you writing letters more and more instead of telegrams. There is one fellow who would like a picture of the LC.I. and he is a company messenger like me. His address (his wife's) is Mrs. Henry C. Swett, Dunbarton, So. Carolina .another person from down there but he is down near the Georgian border. He certainly has a Southern drawl and even though I've been around him for nearly four months, I still can't understand him all the time. More than once I have to ask him to repeat a word three and four times and I feel foolish doing it for it's so rude.

After I finished eating dinner, I watched some men making apple cider and I must say that dirt and everything goes in to flavoring it. They don't even bother to wash the fruit

they use. No wonder there is so much disease and plague throughout Europe! They certainly aren't as sanitary as we back in the States!

It seems as though I can't write today. I never forget either of you for a moment and I love you so much. With all my love, Harold  
P.S. Once in awhile send me numbers in bank account and bonds. I'm proud of it.

October 26, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg  
Dearest Mother and Dad,

I went down to the supply room a while ago after mail arrived but came back with only P.X. rations. All the mail that came in today were for replacements - mail that had been sent to a replacement depot like what I was in when I first went to England. Then this mail is forwarded. The mail sure comes in bunches and I wish it would come in more steadily.

These rations that I got consisted of four sticks of gum, four packs of candy, and four packs of cigarettes. In other words, four days supply. We're supposed to get one of each thing every day but that doesn't always happen. Back in the hedgerows when we were on the offensive, or I should say whenever we're on the offensive, we get plenty of everything for not only do we have these rations but also the candy, cigarettes, and gum from the K rations. I have to laugh at how jealous one of the fellows is at another because the latter has a couple of cartons which he was able to hang onto. Some people in my estimation are never satisfied until the other has nothing though it is different if he has more than the rest. There are an awful bunch of people in this army whose motto is "Don't do as I do but do as I say." Those types of people sure get me mad!

I'm sending home another Luxemburg bill which is worth ten cents and is American-made. I really have no use for much money unless I can get into a large town or city where there are things for sale. But a good many of the fellows spend their money in a beer joint right next to where I sleep. Every evening the place is quite crowded and everyone is having a good time drinking and smoking. How I hate to go in there for it's so full of smoke which chokes me. Sometimes I have to get one of the fellows for something and I really fly in and out! People back home can seem to have a good time like this but not me! Home is made for me. I guess I'm a homing pigeon!

Some have been telling me under what conditions they took basic training and I consider myself lucky to have trained in such a nice camp. The barracks in some camps are just covered with black tar paper with a wood stove in one end. That sure is different from Camp Croft. And the roads were usually muddy except in the real dry season. I know now that I'm luckier than I realized when home on furlough.

I had more chance today to see the countryside and this really is a beautiful country - when the sun shines! This land is so picturesque with little hamlets or villages set down in all the valleys. The hills aren't too high but do offer some means of protection. The scenes are like what you see in magazines. It hardly seems possible I'm seeing in person what I saw in the books. When I get home, it'll seem like a dream, all this - a nightmare at that! I guess I'm an idealist at times for sometimes I sort of daydream about what I'm going to do when I get home Boy, some crazy ideas come through my head sometimes. I'm just at the age when it's hard to decide what line to get into as a career. Oh well, there is plenty of time to figure it out.

I didn't write much news and I'm not going to say that this'll probably be boring for I know how I feel when I receive your letters. I'm glad just to get a letter no matter how short or no matter what the subject is. When I started out to write this I couldn't think of a thing to say but I did better than I thought.

Keep up your chin and look to Him for comfort. He can do it. With all my love, Harold.

P.S. Please, if at all possible, send me the films in what is called "tropical packing." The film keeps so much better but don't go out of your way. I believe every kind of film comes in this "pack."

#October 27, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg

Dearest Mother and Dad,

Yesterday just before it started to get dark, I began to write a letter. But then I went and ate supper and when I came back, the lights weren't on so I couldn't write. Nobody had a flashlight or candle so we were out of luck. Yesterday, all the company messengers moved into a house near to the hayloft where we have been for quite a while. But the nights are getting so chilly now that a house is the best place now. The room I'm in has a coal stove with two ovens in it so we use these ovens to cook things. As I'm writing, I can hear the sizzle of some apples which we put in to bake. I don't know how they'll turn out but anything is worth a try. It certainly is nicer than being in the barn.

Yesterday I received a letter from you dated October 17, so that isn't too bad. At least all the letters from you have gotten to me so now I'm up to date. Today I'm waiting for the mail but really don't expect any.

All the fellows are having a great time laughing at me because of all the clothes I put on when I'm standing guard. I start by putting on two sets of clothes - one pair of fatigues and one pair of O.D.'s. Then my field jacket goes over that with my overcoat over everything. Then I have on a pair of overshoes to keep my feet warm and two pairs of gloves plus a wool knit cap which is on my head under the steel helmet. Sometimes the wind blows so hard and is so cold that I still get sort of chilled. But anyway, I'm warmer than the rest so don't care if they make fun of me. What'll I do when winter really comes?? I sure hope that by the time winter sets in, this war will be over. Oh, how I wish it would happen!

I just ate my baked apples and it wasn't bad at all but the bottom of my mess kit was really a mess and all burnt. It's clean now though for I scrubbed it with steel wool and had quite a hard time. Next time, I guess I had better put some water in the mess kit instead of baking them without waer. I sure would make a swell housewife!

Most of the dogs around here are well trained and keep the cows moving. Boy, when one cow gets out of line the dog barks and snaps and gets the cows back again. A dog sometimes handles them alone and does a real job of it. That's the kind of a dog you'd like to have wouldn't you, Dad, when you get on a farm? It wouldn't do for Mrs. Soule to be here for sometimes as we are standing guard between 3 and 5, one rooster starts to crow and the rest answer. And there are plenty of roosters around here. After everyone is quiet again, there is a short time of silence and then it starts over again. Boy, she'd love that! Sometime as we stand guard there is more howling and meowing going on. Cats around here are no better than at home. Last night a cat let out a howl just as I passed and didn't I jump.

It is sort of strange how I happened to get into this division the first of June and yet some of the bunch I came over with were put in the same division a month and a half later. I sure feel lucky though that I was able to get in when I did.

I don't believe I ever mentioned about my trip overseas. It took twelve days to come across and I landed at Liverpool (England). From there I was put in a replacement depot between Chester and Manchester 10 miles from Chester. From there I went to the division which was near Stoke on Trent and Newcastle. This Newcastle isn't the big city and has more to the name but can't remember. I never said much about this so in my next letter, I'll tell more.

#October 29, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg  
Dearest Mother and Dad,

Today is a day for cheering for the sun has been out all day. That is so rare that the sun almost hurts our eyes!! But no joking, it's sort of strange that the couple of days that have been cloudless have been on Sunday – sort of a tribute to God. I just got back from church and today the major chaplain gave us the sermon instead of the usual captain chaplain. He had quite a bad cold so didn't do as well as usual but I enjoyed listening to him. But it was so hot in the room that I nearly fell asleep. I went to get the mail this afternoon but all that came in was replacements mail.

There is so little to tell that I believe I'll mention about the time I was in England. I left the States about 4 o'clock the morning of May 13. The day before, we left Myles Standish by train and came quite close to the observatory on top of the Blue Hills. This train went right into the Army base and from there we boarded transports. The ship I was on was quite small but we were better off than many of the fellows. Some of the ships were so crowded that they could hardly move. The trip wasn't too bad but when we sighted land, we were happy. As I said yesterday, we landed in Liverpool (after dark and transferred by two decker English bus to the train station where we boarded a troop train to take us to our destination) and then went to a replacement camp (repo depot) near Chester. From there I came to this division which was training in Wales for awhile. Then we came back to England and went to a camp near Newcastle on Tyne (we bivouacked in front of a huge estate nearby).

When we started for France, our company went by train to a camp near Southampton but in that ordeal, we got sort of mixed up and so landed in the wrong camp. But finally we got straightened out and then boarded an L.C.I. for France. But because the channel was so rough, we stayed in South Hampton harbor for three days on that little vessel. Boy, it was crowded. But finally on the fourth day, we landed in France and then began all the adventures. Boy, is this account terrible for I can't seem to get things in the right chronological order. But I know you're glad to get any kind of a letter from me.

Oh, by the way, will you please send me a tube of camphor ice because I'm looking forward to the time when my lips begin to chap. And also I'd like some Vicks or I should say a jar of Vicks and some Vicks nose drops. I may need them sometime – I'm looking forward to the time when winter sets in. Don't think for a minute that I have a cold for I haven't one now and haven't had any yet.

I'm glad you look to God so often and I know we'll be re-united soon. With all my love, Harold.

P.S. Please send me some candy, cookies, gum, nuts, etc. And send another fruit cake.

#October 31, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg  
Dearest Mum and Dad,

Today I didn't get any letters but I did get a package of cookies which was packed by the Golden Cookie Bakeries and came in a wooden box. It came in perfect condition and retained its freshness and flavor. I sure am glad you wrap all those packages good for I've seen some received in pretty bad condition. Sometimes they get lost because the name either gets obliterated or the wrapper falls off.

It sure is nice sitting in this room this afternoon at a table instead of on the ground or hayloft. In front of me is a bottle of some powerful drink but I forget the name of it. The people around here drink it and it makes whiskey seem like a bottle of pop. This stuff is

almost pure alcohol, about 180 proof. I can't see how anyone can drink it for their insides would be burnt out.

And on the other side of the table is a fellow playing cards with my cards. Those cards that came with the ready packed box that you sent sure come in handy when we aren't busy. None of the messengers bother to gamble so there isn't much money floating around.

Talking about money reminds me that today is payday and I have no idea how much I'll be getting paid. Last month I seem to get too much so maybe this month I'll get less than usual. The officer should be around in a very short time so I will finish this letter and won't make it too long.

Last night I wasn't on guard and I still can't get over it. The corporal who puts us on guard I guess decided to give me a break. I sure enjoyed my sleep!

I believe in a couple of days I'll be able to send you a picture of myself. But I'll keep you in suspense and let you know how and where I got them

These last few days have been much warmer than sometimes and the flies are around in herds. Boy, there are a mess of them in our room so the fellows got some towels and began to shoo them toward the window. Then they'd open the window to get them out and instead of the ones inside going out, the ones outside came in. But finally we got hold of some fly paper and it certainly solved our problem. Now the flies are hanging on the paper by the hundreds. Cannibals, aren't we?

I'm getting some of my clothes washed now for the woman whose house we're in is doing it for us. I'm glad we could get someone for she probably has hot water. Because of a shortage of soap in this country, we have to give her soap so she can do it.

I'll be sending home some more money in a few days and some pictures.

Don't worry too much for things aren't too bad at all now. Naturally I can't tell but we aren't endangered the way we have been sometimes. Pray often and keep smiling! With all my love, Harold.

PS. This might sound crazy but I wish you'd send me some tea. There are two of us who like it better than coffee. I sure don't care for coffee at all.

#November 1, 1944 somewhere in Luxemburg

Dearest Mother and Dad,

I had better write a short letter tonight or I might not get any written tomorrow. I'm to be down at headquarters tomorrow to run any messages that have to be taken. We messengers take turns going down there and we like it because that means the person who is there isn't put on guard (duty) that night.

I was supposed to get paid yesterday but as yet, the officer hasn't gotten around to me. And mail was supposed to come in but there is no sign of it yet. I certainly hope I'm given some mail and my pay.

I'm sending home a couple of papers which our division publishes and I want you to keep them. In one issue is a short life history of Col. Foster who is our regimental commander. I notice in the other one that Vogue magazine, October issue, has published a few pages about our division. I wish you could get hold of an issue - maybe from the company if no other place.

Today was a nice day and its strange it should be on a religious holiday - All Saint's day in the Catholic religion - for it seems as though it is fine on Sundays. Like a tribute to God. I did get a couple of color pictures taken and it was beautiful scenery. Just as I came out of the house with my camera, there was a buzz bomb going up way off in the distance. It had a vapor trail left behind so showed up pretty good. I took a picture but whether the

exposure is right or not is another question. I really don't know how any of my films turned out but I expect to find out quite soon now. I sure hope every picture comes out, especially the color.

Some of the fellows have sleeping bags which all front line troops are supposed to get. They are supposed to get lots of things but don't always, though. I still wouldn't trade mine at home for these are made out of one layer of blanket material. Over this is a waterproof cover so at least it is dry.

I can't seem to be able to write much but will try my best tomorrow. Keep up your chin. With love, Harold.

#November 3, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg

Dearest Mother and Dad,

At long last I got paid this morning – three days late – and got more than I expected. So I asked the officer if my bond had been cancelled for that's the only way I could account for the surplus money and he found that it had been cancelled. So now I get nearly sixty dollars a month. In a couple of days I'll be sending fifty dollars home. I can't understand why the bond was cancelled but really don't care for now you can put all the money in the bank. Last month was the same so you won't get a bond for the month of September.

This morning we got up in time for breakfast but that is very rare. Unless we're on guard the last shift which is from five to seven in the morning we don't get up. When we're on other shifts, we get into bed again and almost every morning we oversleep because nobody wakes us up. I didn't say that when on the last shift we're up when breakfast is ready. But missing breakfast doesn't bother me for we have all kinds of supplies on hand. Almost every day we buy a loaf of bread which is nearly two feet long. But because it's made of rye or something that makes it dark, it is quite filling and too much makes me sick. So I don't like to eat more than a couple slices a day. In order to supplement the bread, one of the fellows got an eight pound can of orange marmalade. That seems like an awful lot but we've had it only three days and it's nearly gone already. There are only seven of us so you can imagine how much we put on the slice - it's bread on jam just like when I was home. Boy, I sure like jam and will certainly dive into it when I get home. Once in awhile we have other things such as meat, crackers, and a few other things we are able to pick up. So you can see that we have plenty to eat.

I'm sending home another article from Stars & Stripes showing pictures of some of the commanding officers and men we have captured. It's sort of strange though that our division has captured two of these - Colonel Von Aulock at St. Malo and Maj. General Erich Elster who surrendered 20,000 men at Orleans. Our division has sure been active in this French campaign.

Lately, we've been figuring out the points each of us has. And mine figures up to be thirty four, equal to a lot of married men and older men. I guess they aren't going to let them have any more points for marriage or age. According to Stars & Stripes we've got three stars for the E.T.O. ribbon (European Theater of Operations) so that means we have been through three campaigns. The Battle for Normandy, Battle of Northern France and Battle for Germany. When I get home, I'll have more decorations than I'll know what to do with. Reminds me of that sailor we saw on the train for Boston who had so many ribbons on and thought he could do anything he pleased. The conductor sure fixed him though when he lit a cigarette. I really don't care a thing about the ribbons though and only want to get home. Just think, the twelfth of this month is my first anniversary in the army. I was inducted and got my oath on that date. Boy it's seemed like years since I've been tossed into this life which is so different from what I was used to. But I was able to adapt myself in not

too long a time so I know I can go back and adapt myself easier than some. Boy, victory will be the happiest happening in the entire world.

Lately the mail has been coming in very poorly but I did get a package this noon which was full of candy, nuts, gum, etc. and was it heavy! It didn't have any films in it but I'm not as anxious to get films as I was for I have enough for now. I'm trying to get some films developed now so I can send you some pictures but for some reason it seems to have been misplaced so now they're trying to locate it. Boy, it would aggravate me if they lost it for I have pictures of scenes from St. Malo to here. But in a couple of days I'll go back and see if I can get it. That is why I said I might have a surprise for you. But now I gave it out before I should have.

The woman who owns the house where we are now staying has four children and they come in once in awhile. Somehow we talk with them even though we speak different languages. These people seem to look so much older than they really are. It must be because they work so hard. I'm thankful that neither of you has to toil the way these people do and never get anything out of it. Anyway, they are happy so I suppose that is all that counts.

Lately, I've been trying to draw a little and have been having lots of fun. I want to do something in order to pass the time.

Keep your chin up and I hope to return to a young looking father and mother. So please don't worry too much. With all my love., Harold

P.S. I hope the stationery is on its way for I'm getting awfully low.

#November 5, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg

Dearest Mother and Dad,

Yesterday, I didn't have a chance to get a letter written so must do it the first thing this morning (Sunday). This morning we were awakened by a bugle call although it wasn't army but Luxemburg. I understand today is a holiday and the people are celebrating the fact that all their crops are in now. The town band consists of five trumpets, two trombones, one tuba, one bass, and a drum. It sure doesn't sound like much compared to what we hear at home but supposed these people think it's grand. What this band lacks in reed instruments which do for a band as violins do for an orchestra. This band has been walking through the streets for the last hour playing one song and in front are four sheep which have artificial flowers all over themselves and in front of these animals is the leader who is dressed in a smock, cow's breakfast with a branch on it - in all he really is funny looking and I had to burst out laughing when I saw it. When they stopped just a few minutes ago, I went out with my camera and took a picture of the sheep. The band and the leader had gone into a house and left the kids with the sheep to tend them. When the kids saw me taking the pictures, they danced with joy. And just as I left they (the kids) came out of the house with the leader so I went back and took his picture with the sheep. I hope you understand what I'm trying to say.

Yesterday, I received two letters from you dated October 21 and 27 so that means I'm missing three letters. Boy, mail sure is coming through terrible lately and everyone seems to be having the same trouble. One fellow sent home a package just about the same time I sent those glass slides and his wife hasn't gotten it yet. So you aren't by yourself in having such poor service. I'm thankful to get even a couple letters a week. I know you write more often but it gets to me usually in a bunch.

We never went through Reims but swung in a large arc beginning with Orleans through St. Michael (Mihiel??). I'm pretty sure we went through there. And then we came along in back of the American lines up to Esch just across the Luxemburg border. That was

where we had to stop for the night because we got lost. Then in the morning we were off again and came up further. I forgot to tell you that the last place I named was where we slept on the city hall steps!

I'm not learning to drive a jeep and am only with the captain once in awhile because he must have someone else in the jeep with him - precautionary measures. He does the driving. I'll give him credit for he drove continually from Tours up there. - that's some drive without anyone relieving him. And we drove all day and all night - no lights at all were allowed.

You were right when you said about flowers being on the front of the jeep. These flowers were given to us by the French people as we entered Dol (France) That was where some of the fellows got to feeling happy because the people gave us cognac, wine, and champagne. That was one place where the people were deliriously happy. That so called rod (in front) is a wire cutter. That probably seems like a strange thing but the Germans sometimes stretch wire across the road and when a jeep comes along, the wire just cuts the driver's head off. When in actual fighting the windshield is taken off so nothing could prevent the wire from doing plenty of damage.

You are wondering why I haven't been getting any packages and I've been wondering why you haven't heard that I've received about five within a month and a half. But probably you just didn't get those letters yet telling of my receiving them

I'm enclosing a sketch that I drew from a photograph. It isn't too good but at least it looks like a man. There is so little to do lately that I'm having fun trying to sketch.

I feel good today for I washed and am really dolled up with my hair sliced down with hair oil. Church services will be held at two o'clock so I'll be there was usual. I have so much to thank God for. There is a distinct sinking in attendance and I guess it's the same old story. When not subjected to immediate danger, they seem to leave God. I wish I could tell you the situation here but naturally I can't. But I will say that I'm not subjected to immediate danger. So please don't worry too much for your own sake as well as mine. With all my love, Harold.

P.S. Please send me some candy, cookies, gum, etc. and a fruitcake or something on that idea. My hand seems to be slower than my mind today so I'm making mistakes. But at least it isn't as bad as when I first began to write. The picture is of nobody that I know.

#November 7, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg

Dearest Mother and Dad,

When I wrote two days ago, I forgot to wish you a happy anniversary - Nov. 5. It hardly seems possible, I guess, that you've been married for twenty years. I hope you'll see as many again. Today is election day back home but around here it's like any other day. I suppose you'll be voting and just think, it'll be your first time. I hope the man you vote for will be elected. Most fellows here have no thought of the election.

The mail hasn't come in today and I didn't get any yesterday. I suppose soon my Christmas packages will start to arrive even this early. I have to laugh at the ones who get a package with "do not open till Christmas" on it. I can imagine how long they'll leave them closed.

Yesterday afternoon a truck was going to a place not too far from here and took us in to get hot showers. I needed one and was I glad to go in. I think I mentioned that I was having some films developed but was having trouble in getting it. Well, as we went through the town to the showers, I noticed the place was open so I rushed back to see if they were ready. At first, the girl couldn't find them and did my heart sink to my feet, but when I told her there were a great many prints made, she went someplace and brought them back in a

box. She had laid it aside because it was much larger than the rest. So now, I'm glad and will send home few at a time. Each picture has a story but they'll have to come after. There are three pictures of me, in a group picture I'm in but only one that seems to come out very good and at that, I'm not looking at the camera. I'll try more of me next time instead of so many scenes and see if I can get a good one. But the pictures might come out better if I send the negatives home. I'll try and send them as soon as possible, though. By the way, I'm sending home a sketch I drew and I hope you recognize the person. It might not be the best but still it isn't bad.

After I got the films, I went back and had a nice hot shower. Boy, the room was certainly full of steam so I wrapped up the film in my field jacket so it wouldn't be injured. By doing this, it was all right afterward. What I plan to do is send the negatives home and have you print these and then I'll give you some addresses and let you send them to the other messengers' homes. I know how anxious they are to have pictures. And there is one other fellow who would like a few enlarged pictures for he is making a book telling about our experiences in combat and might use some of the pictures in his book. Well anyway, I'll give the details later. I sure hope you get everything straight for there'll be a lot of directions.

The night after I took the shower, the lady who owns the house gave us some sausage, bread, cookies, and apples. So we had a swell time eating out of a plate - first time in a long time. But that isn't anything compared to the meal which another group of fellows had. There was chicken, potatoes, cider, wine, two kinds of pies, and a couple of other things which I forget. Boy, that was a real meal, much better than our own army kitchen.

The lady we have here is very kind and does quite a few things for us. Just a few minutes ago, she brought in some sweet apple cider and it was very good.

Last night I saw some large guns firing and that was a new experience. It sure throws off an awful light - enough to light up the countryside. I'm sure glad I'm not in the artillery in many ways for the noise is terrific.

I can't seem to do much writing today but at least I got more written than I do some times.

You certainly are both wonderful people and I'm so lucky to have you. After seeing and hearing of some parents who never finished grammar school, I feel that much luckier.

Keep up your chin and keep busy. With all my love. Harold

#November 9, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg  
Dearest Mother and Dad,

Yesterday there was so little mail that I didn't expect any from you but sure enough, there was one written October 28. The mail certainly is going through terrible lately and everyone is having trouble on both sides. When I was down at the supply room getting the mail, the sergeant gave us our PX rations and I nearly fell because of all we got, more than ever before. Each of us got a carton of cigarettes, seven rolls of life savers, one bar of chocolate, two bars of Hershey's chocolates with almonds, two Milky Ways, three packages of gum, four packages of hard candy, and matches. So you can see we really got some rations this time. We seemed for some reason to be the only company among the messengers to get so many and did we kid the others. One company got one pack of cigarettes and weren't they mad!

Is my face red for after I sent a letter to Miss Martin, I realized I addressed it to you. But I know you'll realize that it's hers when you begin to read it. I guess I'm awful absent minded and seem to be thinking of you when I address an envelope. Would you mind giving her the five franc note which I'm enclosing? I meant to send it to her but forgot it. Boy, am I

getting absent minded. I suppose I won't hear the end of it. I'm sending another sketch which I drew and I hope it looks something like the person who it is suppose to resemble.

There is a fellow living in this house with civilians who can speak good German and French. He has been studying English for five months in his spare time and I will say for such a short time, he's doing a good job. He read a couple of paragraphs in English and almost every word was right. And then I read a few sentences in French and he said that I pronounced my words very, very well. I believe he really meant it too and I really have Miss Keany to thank for it. I bet if I had a chance, I would learn some French in time. But let me get home and learn more English and I'll be satisfied!

November 10

I'm sorry I wasn't able to finish this letter but I was called away. I got my money order so believe I'll send it home. Boy, my money is really mounting up and I hope to have nearly three thousand when I get home. I feel as though I'm the luckiest fellow alive having parents who think so much of me!

I bet you notice the change in ink and this was due to an accident. I asked one of the fellows for some black ink which I knew he had so he went and got it but when he tried to open it, the bottle broke in half and what a mess. There was ink everywhere but finally the two of us got it cleaned up so it was all right. But our hands were just covered so I'll try and wash them. So all I could get was this blue ink but it seems to all right.

I'll have to cut this a little sort for the mail is nearly ready to go out. I've slipped lately on my letter writing but there is so little to say because all we ever do is stand guard and sleep. Please don't worry if you don't hear from me for awhile for you can be sure I'll be safe. God is looking out for us and He is very kind.

Keep up your chin and never let your faith falter. With all the love in the world.  
Harold

#November 13, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg

Dearest Mother and Dad,

Today, the mail came in and I had a letter from you. But you'll laugh when I tell you when it was sent - June 15. It was sent to the replacement depot and then went all over creation. I sure had a laugh over it but it goes to show that no matter where you are, the mail always gets through. The Christmas packages seem to be starting now and one of the F company messengers received two Christmas boxes and both had "Don't open till Christmas" but he just swore when he saw that and opened it just the same. It's impossible to save them until then for we have to travel light when on the move and that can be at any time of the day or night. I bet when we move, I'll get all the packages at once, the same as back in Dinard when I got six at once.

I'm very sorry I missed a couple days at writing but it was almost impossible because of the situation. Naturally, it's impossible to say what goes on but after the war, I'll be able to tell all.

Two nights ago and the night before that I slept in a nice soft bed. The novelty was too much for me because I couldn't sleep for quite awhile. Guess I should have either slept on the floor or put a piece of plywood under the mattress. Ha! How is that piece of plywood? The room I was in was different from the one I mentioned in my letters but now I'm back in the old room with the four girls in here bothering us even as I write. They do calm down once in awhile and then they are quit as nice but when they want to they are awful brats. The room where the bed was had really nice furniture in the place and the vanity had three mirrors - one stationary and two movable ones on either side. Probably like yours at home. This place really reminded me more of home than any place I've been yet. Oh, it sure will be

good though to get back and return to normal. I do get so disgusted with this army life once in awhile and sure am glad that I don't have to stay in here for life or I know I'd go insane.

I have been carrying a division insignia around for quite awhile and might just as well send it home. The circular lines and straight lines in orange if you look closely will spell "Ohio!"

This division as you probably remember in the article in the paper was originally known as the Ohio division and was formed in that state. And I believe that I'll send home some more pictures. It seems as though I've been sending home quite a few things lately and hope you like everything. By the way, I'm sending you a little Christmas present which I'm getting from a manufacturer back in the States. There will be three of the same come to you and I would appreciate it if you would give one to Miss Martin and send one to grandma. It's too late to tell me now not to bother for the order is on it's way and I hope you get it before Christmas. Even though it's small I believe you'll like it. Curious, eh?

Today, we had a good dinner, better than some days and had for a drink, tea for one of the first times since I came across the Channel. Boy, some of the fellows sure hated it but I enjoyed that drink, especially the way the English make it, much more than any coffee I've ever tasted. It's strange how so many here like coffee and yet there are quite a few who like nothing but tea. But give me good old milk and I can enjoy myself! The menu for today's meal included meat loaf, fresh potatoes, wax beans, bread and butter, peaches, and tea. I sure am glad that we eat fresh potatoes once in awhile for this dehydrated stuff isn't what it's cracked up to be. I suppose it would be all right if the cooks would only bother to soak the dehydrated potatoes and food long enough, but they can't seem to waste the time. Dehydrated potatoes look like rice and the powdered milk looks something like flour. There is nothing like having the original food and to have vegetables right out of a garden is a real treat.

All the fellows have been kidding me about being a drunkard for they say I've been drinking to excess. It is sweet cider they are referring to and I like it as much as when I was home. I sure used to drink lots of it. The people in whose house we are, give it to us quite often for I imagine they have plenty.

Well I see the fellows going to supper so I had better go and get something to eat. I sure miss you both so much and wish this war would get over soon again. Keep up your chin and keep smiling. With all the love in the world. Harold

#November 15, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg  
Dearest Mother and Dad,

How do you like the swell paper I'm writing on this afternoon? Pretty swanky. Eh! I and a few of the other fellows got hold of some today in a store which sold all kinds of goods - something like Cox's store in Shelburne. I haven't got too much but believe it'll last until your stationery comes.

Today the mail clerk gave me a letter from Mrs. Newell in which she put lots of jokes. I hope there'll be more mail today for me when the mail does come in. I sure hope you're getting the letters I send even though it is quite irregular.

Winter is sure approaching very rapidly and I sure hope it isn't too cold. We aren't sleeping outside but I hate to think of standing guard when it's too cold. I'm now sleeping in a new place with a bed in the room but the place is quite cold. If it is a question of having a bed in a cold room or sleeping on the floor with heat in the room, I believe I'd take the later.

This morning I went to the bakery and got some pastry - so called. The pastry sure is flat and has something lacking but this place makes the best pies that I tasted over here. Boy, it sure would taste wonderful to have some of your nice pies which I always liked.

There sure is nothing like home cooking. But I'm afraid the army hasn't changed me too much for I still hate stew and some types of meat. I'd rather go without eating than eat some of that lousy stuff - just like I was at home. Fussy!

I am sending a few more pictures home and I'm trying to send a few home each time. There is a blurred picture of a man and that came out that way because I had to hold the camera eight seconds with no support. Anyway, it was worth the try. This shows the switchboard inside col. Von Aulock's "Citadel." And the castle-like building was the headquarters for our unit at Dinard. The C.P. stands for "Command Post" and that is another name for headquarters. What I plan to do with the picture with the words "St. Malo" written in the sand is to mount this picture first and then put all pictures of St. Malo after it. I plan to have a regular book with all my pictures and clippings in it and keep it for a record. Some of these pictures can be made much nicer if only enlarged and some of the unnecessary parts are taken out. But I plan to do that when I get home. I really hope you go to Newfoundland after the war for a trip. I believe we could have a really grand time. But we'll have to plan that when I get home.

Please don't send me any more color films and rather only black and white. It's too hard to take pictures without an exposure meter. Black and white will do and then I can have them developed here. And please send me a box of candy, cookies, gum, etc. Don't worry if I need anything I'll let you know.

Well, I really didn't say anything in this letter but there is really one of the few times we found it hard to write for I couldn't think of anything to say.

Trust in God and keep up your chin. With all my love. Harold

#November 17 or 18, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg  
Dearest Mother and Dad,

Here it is getting late in the morning so I had better get your letter off today. I had to laugh at an incident which happened this morning. Just after I woke up, one of the E. company messengers came running up to tell me that I had to have my teeth inspected at the company right away. So I rushed down to the company and sure enough there was the dentist from Worcester checking everyone's teeth. But there was such a long line waiting that I waited myself nearly an hour. Just like this crazy army - you're always hurrying and then when you get there, it's a case of wait. Finally it came to my turn and when I gave my name to his assistant, he looked up and seemed pleased to see me. He has gotten to know me for I go every time I have trouble - four times since I've been over here. Then instead of checking my teeth, all he did was ask me if I had any cavities!! I go through my teeth quite closely at times and found one cavity so I told him about it. I sure laughed at that and I believe the reason why he asked me is because I'm so careful in taking care of my teeth that I hate to let a cavity get very large. Maybe when he fills that tooth he'll find more. I'm the one who goes to him when I have trouble but a great many wait for him to come to them. As a result, quite a few are having a tooth pulled and I surely don't want that.

Yesterday the mail came in and every envelop was from Mrs. Hendire, Two were Heralds and two were the church calendar and paper. This dated from September 29 to October 15 so some of the first class is quite slow. I got a letter from Mrs. Newell a couple of days ago dated Nov. 4 so you can see how irregular the mail is.

A few days ago, I was helping a sergeant by reading off a list of names in our company and their serial numbers and he would type. I came to this fellow named Carney and read his serial number and I swore I was reading my own. It turned out it is exactly the same except the last number - his is 2 and mine is 8. Pretty close! So yesterday, I checked up in our company and found out who he was and then I spoke with him. He was inducted

the same date as me but comes from South Boston. I have met quite a few fellows from Boston all right even though it 's supposed to be a Navy town. And while I was there at the company I spoke to Max Haber, the fellow I went through basic training with, and he told me that Mrs. Villeneuve wrote and mentioned some of the other fellows names. Quite a few of the boys I went through basic training have been wounded and a couple were in the invasion force which hit France. Boy, it certainly is strange how fate sometimes acts.

Some of the fellows in our company and every other company have gone to Paris on a pass for a couple of days. I suppose you read where the army is trying to send all front line troops to Paris. Quite a few have gone but I suppose I won't be fortunate enough to go. I sure wouldn't mind going and seeing some of the places Miss Keany used to speak about. They're doing more for the combat troops than they were but we don't get everything we should. The units which get these things seem to be the rear echelon groups which never get near the front. Boy, sometimes it burns me up but I can't do much about it. The old saying is that all things are being sent to the troops thus there is a shortage but we never see much of it. Anyway, I'm happy enough now and the extra junk won't make me feel any better. I get disgusted at times but I still can have a good time and enjoy the same things I used to.

Boy, what a scribbled letter. My thoughts are running too fast for me to stop so I just try to keep up with my thoughts.

The kitchen gave me a few rations which they didn't want and were going to give out. They are mostly biscuits, candy, gum, fruit bars and cereal. Some don't like this dehydrated cereal but when I get hungry it doesn't taste bad. So we won't go hungry in between meals.

This seems to be drawing to a close or I should say getting to the end of the paper fast so had better close. Don't worry too much for it can't last too much longer. With all my love. Harold

P.S. Don't bother to send me film in a tropical pack for I won't need that till simmer.

#November 20, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg

Dearest Mother and Dad,

Yesterday I meant to write but so many things happened and I was so busy that it was quite impossible. Yesterday there were no letters but the day before, quite a few came in. One from Miss Craig in which she stated that you were a wonderful woman and from all indications she really meant it. I sure feel proud of you all right. I also received a letter from George St. Andre of whom you have probably heard me speak. He's now in the Coast Guard is at Groton, Conn. teaching radio. He claimed he had lost my new address so sent it to the first one in England. It really didn't take too long for it was dated September 7. And Miss Grant sent me a V-mail on which there are particular verses to read for each day between Thanksgiving and Christmas. I thought that was very thoughtful of her. And finally I received two from you and I sure had a great laugh over the two letters. I sure think a lot of Miss Martin particularly because she is so nice to you. Boy, she must have been comical using those opera glasses! I'm so glad that you both are having a good time in spite of the circumstances and I really wish I could have been there for two important occasions – your 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and now Christmas. just sent three Christmas cards – one to you, Miss Martin, and Grandma. Now don't forget, when the Christmas gifts come, I want you to give one to Miss Martin, Grandma, and one for yourself. I know how you women are and I bet you're really curious.

About these films I'm sending. I shall give you details on it in another letter but I don't want to use this space for that. I know it's a big job but I believe you'll understand the

directions. I'll be enclosing in the box. But to make it a little clearer, I shall say something in one my future letters.

Sometimes you've asked me what army I'm in and to tell the truth, I really don't know. When we first came to France, our division was in the first army but when the breakthrough came, we were transferred to the third. After the capture of St. Malo, we were then put in the ninth and were in that army when those 20,000 prisoners were taken. After that we've been thrown around from army to army and very day it's a new one. Maybe it is to keep the Germans confused. But I believe I'm more confused than any German ever way.

We are resting right now and I got a kick out of the way one fellow worded it in a letter. He claimed "at last we are having a much needed rest!" Boy, that sure is stretching it for the rest really isn't needed. I can't go into details naturally but I hope you'll understand a little that I mean. I haven't been subjected to immediate danger. Our situation is peculiar but I sure hope it stays that way! I'll explain some of my odd statements when I get home and read over some of the letters you are saving. The room we're in is very nice and very clean. Sort of reminds me of Touraine i(hotel) n Boston the way it's so immaculate.

Henry Swett, one of the other E co. messengers received a large Christmas box and you should have seen the smile on face for that was the fist package he's gotten since he came to France. He sure rushed around with it and his fingers move when he opened it. Even though the package was large, all there was in it was some cigarettes and a two pound fruit cake. He got out his knife and began to cut the cake. At the time, I was reading and all of a sudden I heard lots of cussing! When I looked up there he was standing there holding a so called piece of cake but wasn't it all crumbled. He said he couldn't cut decently so he called on my aid and I tried for I knew I couldn't do any worse than he. Much to my surprise every piece I cut came out perfectly so I guess here must be an art in cutting. I'd make an ideal husband and meat cutter! Hey?

The other day I was up to E. company delivering a message and so stopped and talked with the cooks. They and I are great friends and they are very friendly. There they had some extra 10 in 1 rations which is on the idea of a combination C & K ration. So I took a couple units to my room and began rummaging around and came across some prepared cocoa - powered milk & sugar added. So I decided it would be hot cocoa for me before I went on guard. Some fellow near us had an electric percolator which he got hold of so we borrowed that and heated some water. Then the cocoa was dissolved and to make it better, we put in condensed milk. And it sure was a treat, really the best since I left home. It kept me nice and warm when I was on guard but now guard is so much easier than before. Where we were, the guards were exposed to wind, cold, etc. but now it's much different and much easier for guard is only two hours instead of the four hours as before. Every day we go through the box and see if there is anything else to eat and we always find something even if it's pre-mixed cereal. When I say "we" I mean myself and two other fellows. There is one bed in the room so two of us sleep on it and one sleeps on a mattress placed on the floor. So we are comfortable and warm while sleeping. The only thing is that the fellow who is sleeping with me is a little above five feet and can curl up just like a dog. So I don't have too much room. So what I do is hit him in the ribs and he soon gives me enough. I find it's much harder to sleep with a short person than one equal to about my same height.

I told you in my last letter about having a dental check and yesterday they told me to come at 8:30 to have my teeth filled. There were two dentists there, one whom I told you about and another man. I arrived there about five minutes late so my name hadn't been typed on a list that a sergeant must keep so I had to wait because he was busy typing

something else and didn't want to bother taking out what he was doing, type my name, and then continue on with his work., Finally this dentist from Worcester finished and there were two of us left so he said he wanted me. The sergeant told him my name hadn't been put down on the list. So the dentist told him to do it and you should have heard that sergeant tell him off. He sure was mad and later he told me this dentist is every impatient. So the dentist had to be satisfied with the other person. Finally when my turn came, I got the strange dentist. He started to look through my teeth and claimed that my teeth were very poor - as if I didn't know it! He didn't mean that they hadn't been taken care of but that naturally they were poor. After a careful check he found five cavities. Three are in wisdom teeth and two in other teeth. I can see that when I get home, I'm going to have them pulled. But I won't let those horse doctors pull them. They're all right drilling but they sure are careless about pulling. One poor fellow told me they didn't even use novacaine (something like that) anything along that line and it sure hurt. No sir, that isn't for me! I'd rather pay and get a good job done. I sure do have my troubles! Don't I?

I was sort of sorry yesterday but the dentist kept me so long that I missed church. I sure hate to miss any. Last week, I gave one of the chaplains a picture of him preaching which I took some time ago. You should have seen his face when he saw it and was very pleased. Giving that picture to him meant that I'd be without a print myself but I knew he'd much rather have it than me. At least I have the negative and can have some printed when you get them done. Henry Swett who likes to go like me didn't go either and not because of the dentist. He was on guard from five to seven in the morning and because breakfast was at seven thirty he lay down for a few minutes. The next thing he knew everyone was back and the meal was all over. So he just crawled into bed for a few minutes - this was at eight and he never opened his eyes till eleven. So he missed church too. "The old lazy head," I call him! We sure have fun kidding each other about doing something such as sleep, write a lot of letter, etc. We're just friendly.

Last night I was on guard the first shift, from seven to nine in the evening. I like that time for after guard is over I can crawl in bed and sleep all night without being wakened up. While standing I decided to comb my hair and did my hair snap - electricity like I used to have at home. For some reason I pulled the comb down in front of me and I sure laughed when I saw sparks dancing over the comb. Every time I tried it the same thing happened so I sure must have plenty of electricity in my hair. Darkness showed it up so clearly in the comb. I sure have surprised myself for I've written a much longer letter than I expected. Guess I'm in just the right mood today!

Please send me a box of candy, cookies, gum, etc. This seems to be all I need right now but when I do want something badly, I'll let you know.

Keep up your chin and trust in God. Thanksgiving can be a happy one even under the circumstances for we can thank God that I have come through with hardly a scratch. With all my love. Harold

P.S. I hope you got that straight about Miss Martin's letter which I know I addressed to you. I sure will have to be more careful.

#November 22, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg  
Dearest Mother and Dad,

Well, the mail came in yesterday afternoon but neither were there any letters or packages for me. Maybe there'll be some when the mail comes in about an hour from now.

I just finished eating my dinner which I wasn't particularly crazy about for they had stew beef, potatoes, asparagus, coffee, chocolate pudding, and bread. The only two things I like out of all that was the asparagus and bread. The beef had too much fat on it, in fact the

piece I had had so much fat that in order to find any real meat I would have had to use a magnifying glass. So I wouldn't eat it. And that dehydrated potatoes don't taste good. And the pudding had too much starch in it and was burnt. All in all, it was a pretty sorry meal. But it is seldom like that and yesterday we had a nice meal of ham. Tomorrow is the big day and we have turkey, large ones too. I saw the menu that E company has got and it's just like at home with pumpkin pie. But it would never be like home though and I sincerely hope that I'll be home for next Thanksgiving. Tomorrow I must write and tell you what we had for dinner.

Last night we had two treats. We were going through the chow line and I saw somebody giving out what I thought was some German crystallized honey that we captured but much to my surprise it turned out to be ice cream (vanilla) And last night, we had a movie in a large hall. I had seen the picture before but I enjoyed seeing it again.

I was talking a couple days ago about you getting most of my packages and Henry Swett said out of three that he sent, well over three months ago, his wife only received one. He figures they must be lost and has given them up for lost. Boy, this mail situation seems to be in a pretty sorry condition and the fellows are sure getting sick and tired of it. But what can they do?

Now for the negatives I'm sending home. I have included instructions in the box telling which pictures I want printed. I have included an sheet with addresses of the people to whom I want a set of pictures sent. The address in the box at the lower right hand corner of the sheet is the address where the few enlargements and negatives I requested will be sent. Don't forget to have the negative soaked just as though it is being developed again, then printed. Get all scratches off if possible even if the pictures have to be enlarged and a new negative made. Get the best job of retouching done as possible and ask Mr. Robinson where a place can be found. On the film marked #1, it'll have to all be retouched for the Frenchman scratched them something awful. Never mind the expense for everyone is willing pay. Please get an estimate of the price per set and for the enlargement and new negatives so I can collect the money from the fellows and send a money order to you. I admit it's a large order but I know you can do it.

Do your best anyway. Don't forget to have every picture printed for me though. In other words, I want nine (9) sets according to the list I included with the films, a while complete set for myself of every printable negative, and those 12 enlargements with the negatives that I specified. You don't know how much the fellows appreciate you doing it for them.

In tomorrow's letter I have several things I must tell you. It seems as though I'm becoming an army photographer more and more.

Have a pleasant Thanksgiving and when ou thank God for the meal (food), please thank Him for keeping me safe. I'll be praying of you tomorrow and for the good food we are getting. Keep up your chin. With all the love in the world. Harold

List of men & addresses:

William C. Schuab (wife), 1604 East 31<sup>st</sup> St., 1705 Homestead St., Baltimore 18, Md.

Rudolph J. Stasi, 8501-262nd St., Flora Park, Long Island, N.Y. (Returned)

Harrison L. Green (wife), 50-12 46 St., Woodside, Long Island, N.Y.

Shirley H. Surface (wife), Route 5, Box 238, Charleston, W. Va.

Francis Nelen (mother), Nicktown, Penna.

Kenneth W. Johnson, 1415 Willow St., Lebanon, Penna

Henry C. Swett (wife), Dunbarton, So. Carolina

John A. Alex (mother), General del., Amasa, Michigan

Mrs. Edith R. Bryant, Aynor, SC. (Communications sergeant.) He was writing a book about the battalion which he never produced. I typed quite a few items for him and that was to pay for the book. He took all that money and never gave a product.

Mrs. Kenneth S. Dunn, 1328 James Ave., St. Paul 5, Minn. (William Gilbert's sister)

#November 24, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg

Dearest Mother and Dad,

Yesterday, Thanksgiving, was quite an occasion and I shall tell you of my days experience. But first I want to tell you I am having ten dollar class E allotment changed to fifty so I won't have to bother with money orders every month. This new allotment will begin December and will be sent to you the end of December or first of January. Please let me know when you get it.

Yesterday morning, everyone slept in until nine for we were eating only two meals one at nine thirty and the main dinner at four. Usually we're up around seven and I will say that since I've been overseas. I've had it much easier than I ever thought of having in basic training. Of course, there was an exception when we were fighting in the hedgerows and taking St. Malo and then everyone worked hard.

Then at ten thirty, I went to a Thanksgiving church service and wasn't the place crowded. Some men who I never thought would come were there. They're probably that class of people who go to church three times a year - Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving. Nevertheless, they came and we enjoyed seeing so many men out. I really don't care too much for Chaplain Webster's sermons but like the other chaplain's much better. But Chaplain Webster is an excellent singer and I enjoyed listening to him lead us yesterday.

After church I made an attempt at two letters, Mrs. Hendrie and Miss Martin, but I just couldn't seem to write the way I wanted to so I gave it up in disgust. Guess I'll try it again today. When the mail came in yesterday one of the fellows went up to get the mail. Nearly an hour passed and he wasn't back yet so I went myself. I didn't expect a thing though for the mail was light about sure enough there was a package for me. I found the other fellow in another house with some of the other messengers and asked him why he never went for the mail. He said he knew there was none so I didn't bother to go. So I wouldn't let on at first that I had gotten a package but after awhile I mentioned it and they all laughed at me thinking I was kidding. I sure harped on that package and finally I showed it to them and didn't their tune change. We sure had great fun over it though. The package had no date on it but I'll describe it to you. There were coconut cookies in one little box, Buds (chocolate bits) in another box, hard candy, a bar of Cuban chocolate. I like everything but the last item and that chocolate just didn't taste right for some reason.

I took a couple of pictures yesterday and I do hope they turn out for I'm standing alone in one. Then Francis Nelen took a picture of me eating a turkey leg and I took one of him holding his mess kit to show just what we had. I sure hope they turn out for I want you to have them.

At four we rushed down to get the dinner and was I hungry! We ate breakfast at nine so it was little wonder. We started out with good dressing (sage), next came the turkey and for once they (the cooks) gave me what I wanted. I wanted mostly dak meat and they piled it on. Then potato, giblet gravy which I didn't eat, peas, cranberry sauce, apple pie, coffee, and a pear. Boy, my mess kit was so bulging over that I didn't know if I could carry it all. But somehow I managed to eat everything and I was so full that I had to loosen my belt. Boy oh boy, was that a meal.

Then my next meal came at six thirty when I was invited to a party for men of South Carolina and take a couple of the meal was just being served. When I got back to the table

though to eat, all the good had been taken away and I was left without anything. But I spoke to someone and some food was brought to me. I had steak, french fries, nice fresh carrots and peas, custard with cherries on top, and coffee. There was wine and champagne but I didn't drink any. I had to laugh at one lieutenant opening a bottle of champagne. He tried to get the cap off but it wouldn't come, so he put it on his knee and tried it. But he was skeptical about his knee in case the cap should come off and his clothes get wet. Finally, he did manage after an awful time to get the top off and didn't it sail through the air. I swear if the ceiling hadn't been there it would have gone nearly fifty feet. I hear that the harder the cap pops, the better the champagne so it must have been god. Another fellow tried to get the cap off and he lost some of the liquid when it foamed up but the lieutenant seemed to know how to work things and he didn't lose a drop. The steak was excellent but I believe I enjoyed the potatoes and carrots more than the steak for that was the best I've tasted since I left home.

I sure had a busy and exciting time yesterday and I hope you enjoyed yourself. It wasn't like home but I did have a good time. And to top it all, I wasn't on guard last night so that was a nice Thanksgiving present just letting me off. Christmas is the next thing, I guess, and I hope I have as good a time.

It looks as though I won't be getting my Christmas presents too early this year and it sure is a good thing those dates were set by the post office department for it looks now as though they'll just get here in time. When I get all the packages everyone is sending me, I'll have quite a little. Sure hope they don't all get here at once.

The war news seems to look very good lately and now the fellows seem quite optimistic. But just a short time ago, they were very pessimistic and very low in spirit. I sure hope it ends by Christmas but I'm not going to count my chickens before they're hatched. The first sergeant of headquarters company won a hundred dollar bet on the war. He claimed the war would be over after November 11 and has won out. For awhile, it looked as though the war would be over in no time. The way our troops were flying across France. A mail system has now been setup in France and one of the fellows received a letter from a French friend in St. Milo. The friend did an excellent job at writing in English but some of the expressions he used were too funny for words. I don't remember right now what he had said.

Boy, I'm getting flashy at writing these long letters but there has been so much happening this last week that I can tell you something. Some weeks nothing happens and so I can't write about much.

I got hold of a few Christmas cards so am going to send out some to the folks. I have nothing else to spend money on so might just as well use it that way. The individual soldier doesn't keep much money on him around here because of such lack of commodities.

God bless you and keep you and pray for all the boys in all the services. We all want to get home to our loved ones and begin a to live a normal life. With all my love and devotion. Harold

Postmarked November 25, 1944. Xmas card mailed in Luxembourg (card #1)

From Free Luxbourg, smallest of the United Nations, a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Bac of card: For lthe dbenefit of the Luxembourg evacuee.

Handwritten: I want to wish you a joyous season. And now I must tell you the reason beause I love youu more thant the rest and think tht both of yu are the best. Harold

Postmarked November 25, 1944. Xmas card mailed in Luxembourg (card #2)

Same writing in the card.

Handwritten: On this occasion, to other and Dad, when Christ was born, and the world was glad I hope that you will be happy and gay, even though I am far away. Harold

Postmarked November 25, 1944. Xmas card mailed in Luxembourg (card #3)  
Same writing in the card.

Handwritten: no poem for this card. I'm sending three cards as souvenirs – each has a different scene. Merry Christmas. Harold

# November 26, 1944. Somewhere in Luxembourg  
Dearest Mother and Dad,

I haven't heard from you for quite awhile so I can't really call this letter an answer. Out of the two large sacks of mail yesterday I received two Yank magazines and a letter from Mrs. Villeneuve. She really answers the V-mail faster than many I write to do. Oh, how I wish this mail situation would clear up for the only way to keep my morale high is by getting letters. The day before yesterday I received a letter from Kenneth Smith (high school classmate) who is back in the hospital a second time. He said this time he lost two joints of his left ring finger so I guess he's having quite a time of it. I wrote to him a couple of months ago when you first sent me his address. I should write a couple extra letters - one to Mr. Heap and one to Donald Hunter - but it seems as though I just haven't felt in the mood lately. I really should write you every day but sometimes I find it so hard to find anything to talk about for life is almost the same day after day. Some of the fellows certainly hate to stay in one place this way - or I should say area - and would almost rather be in actual combat. But I like to have conditions such as they are.

Before I forget, I want to ask you for a few things. First, I would like you to send some pictures with one of the house and some of the boatyard and any new ones you may have. Miss Martin is sending me some soon of herself, I believe. And please send me some more stamps in a letter for although I'm not too low yet, I'll be within a month.

Kenneth Smith in his letter wanted to know details on Mr. Brown – high school, junior year home room teacher - and claims he has been arrested as a spy. I know he taught German and Spanish and was very absent minded man. If you know or can find out, would you please let me know.

One of the messengers had a bottle of some sweet smelling liquid which he was bragging about as being very expensive perfume he bought in Paris. Wasn't he puffed up about it and so proud. It looked awfully thick for perfume so I asked if I may see the label so he let me. Because it was written in French he couldn't understand but when I read it I began to laugh for it turned out to be oil to prevent sunburns! Boy was his face red and he finally broke down and admitted he found the bottle. Then to top it all, another fellow came in and upon seeing the bottle began to use it as hair oil. It stuck up his hair something awful. That reminds me, I must get a haircut tomorrow if I see someone who does that work.

I know I have told you about sending films home but there is another film which is German. I carried that with me all the way from St. Malo to Luxembourg. It has mostly pictures of soldiers.

There is one mistake I made when I sent you the addresses and that was Rudolph Stasi's. Instead of sending it home, would you please send it to the following address. Pfc Rudolph J. Stasi, Co. F., 330<sup>th</sup> Inf., A.P.O.83, etc. He is a messenger for company F. Mrs. Villeneuve said Fred's address was in the 331<sup>st</sup> Inf. So he was in another regiment. I have sent a couple more Christmas cards to you more as souvenirs for they have very pretty

pictures of Luxemburg on them. There are three and they're all different. In all, I've sent out thirteen cards which is more than I've ever sent even when home.

I'm being invited along with a couple others to a dinner with some civilians. So in the next letter I must tell you all about the experience.

Keep up your chin and trust in God always. With all my love and affection. Harold  
P.S. These picture are bought and the rest of the set is coming in the next letter.

#November 27, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg

Dearest Mother and Dad,

Nearly another month has past and we will be getting paid again. This month I will draw nearly sixty dollars but after this month my new fifty dollar allotment will star coming out. The war news certainly appears good and I hope it can end before too long.

I mentioned in yesterday's letter that I was being invited to a civilian's house for dinner. Almost everyone in the town had some soldiers and two of us went to this one particular house. Neither of us could speak German nor they English so we compromised on the little French each knew. The boy who spoke the French was seventeen, a younger bother, and the mother and father. All we could do was eat and look dumb. What they should have is an international language which everyone would understand! Don't you think? Any, we got along and in spite of the difficulty we had a good time.

What a meal though. First came soup which was really good and not like the dishwater the army gives. Then we had fried chicken, potatoes, carrots & peas, salad and then another kind of meat - beef. For some reason I enjoyed the potatoes and carrots, more than anything else and really ate quite a little. In fact, veryt5hing she served was good. They had beer for the course but I just can't seem to drink beer at all. Then came the dessert with a nice apple pie with cherries on the side toe at. Like pie & ice cram. And after that came coffee. After I finished the meal, I really was full. Then these people got out their picture books of Luxemburg and other things and showed us. The man is a church organist so he played for us for awhile and he is quite a good player. Finally, time was flying so I told them that I must go to church which was at two. So they invited us back for coffee at five but because I had a couple of letters to answer, I told them we were going to another town for the night. I certainly enjoyed myself but it would have been so much nicer if only they could have spoken our language or we theirs. Anyway we missed church for they detained us too long.

In one of the towns we were just in recently, they had a café where they served beers, wines, ice cream, etc. So Francis Nelen and I went in and ordered a dish of ice cream. Well, there was so little ice cream that on the next order, we had two more helpings. If you could have seen the expression on the waitress's face. There were two kinds placed on this little dish. Really only a good mouthful! The two kinds were strawberry and vanilla which naturally didn't taste much like those at home. I sure would like a nice dish of Howard Johnson's ice cream. Send me some. Boy, I'm making myself hungry talking about food so much.

I sure wish we could have stayed where we were but we moved. It was so perfect with a nice hotel room,, showers, in fact everything we needed. And we pulled guard inside so it really was perfect. And to have Thanksgiving there made it much more pleasant. Sometime, I'll tell you where this place is but of course, not now. Lately our life hasn't been too bad for at least we can keep clean and have a place to sleep.

I'm enclosing a few more pictures which completes the set . Yesterday I sent the first half. By the time I get home, you should have quite a few souvenirs and pictures. I sure hope it won't be too long before I get home.

I'll wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for this letter might get there just about that time. You no doubt know how I feel about you and how much I love you so I won't say much. With all my love. Harold

#Postmarked November 28, 1944. V-mailr Christmas card.

Picture of the three wisemen and camels. Printed: Merry and a Happy New Year.

Hand written: my thoughts are with you in this joyous season. With all my love, Harold

#November 29, 1994. Somewhere in Luxemburg

Dearest Mother and Dad,

At last I've had a couple of letters from you. One came the day before yesterday dated the 20<sup>th</sup> and also one from Em dated the same. Then one came yesterday dated the 27<sup>th</sup> so now I feel happier than before. Mail sure keeps up my morale more than anything especially mail from you. Now I've only got eight letters missing. There was a skip in the dates from Nov. 5 to 17 so something must be going on. It'll be good when Christmas is over and the mail starts to come through good again. So far I haven't had one Christmas package so I guess they won't come too far ahead of time.

I wasn't able to finish this letter this morning so will have to this afternoon. Just after dinner the mail came and I had four letters. One from you dated Oct. 30, one from Dad dated the same day, one from Em the same day, and the church paper and calendar from Mrs. Hendrie. The mail seems to be coming through in spurts and by dates. In the letter you gave a full description of the flashlight Mr. Heap gave you and I think that was wonderful of him. I shall certainly write and thank him.

I thought that you were nice going to all that trouble to get the camera case and I hope the two parts come about the same time. Two things can be mailed together and yet they can arrive nearly a week apart. You were going to look up in my drawer for the spools but they are all down in my darkroom. I sure hope they haven't rusted at all. I have a film which has been exposed but as yet haven't had it developed. I know you're anxious to have a picture of me and there are a couple of good pictures on this film so I'm quite anxious to have it developed. If only we could have photo shops near us! You seem to be getting very chicish (sic) lately and I'm glad that you're that way for I want to come back and find I still have a young looking mother! I'm so glad for your sake that you are thinking of your self instead of worrying about me all the time.

I am enclosing a few articles I clipped out of Times and the division newspaper. That little cartoon of Gilbert is the way some of the fellows act when I get a package except in my case it doesn't have to be a Christmas package. This cartoon is printed daily and the artist is in the division engineers so this cartoon is distinctly an 83<sup>rd</sup> product. And the article about the Thanksgiving dinner gives you an idea of the meal we had. The article about St. Malo was an article I clipped out of the "Times." I know you'll be glad to get these!

I had to laugh this morning. I was awakened in time for breakfast so I went over to another house to wake up another messenger. When I woke him up, he laughed and claimed it was five o'clock and not time to get up. Then I showed him my watch and he wouldn't believe it and claimed I put the watch ahead a couple of hours. So I gave up and went. Just before breakfast was over, he came running and just got ahead of the gun. The said later he didn't know why he didn't believe me.

I've got a bag which I put all my junk in - toilet articles and writing paper and even underwear and socks. Boy, I have a pile of stuff in that little bag but I have everything I need. Now when the ever-ready case comes for my camera I'll be able to get rid of this bulky

case I have now and then I can travel light. I really have quite a load and you should feel all the clothes I wear. They must weight nearly fifteen pounds.

I hope you get word before this that I haven't been doing what you were afraid of (probably combat). It can come any time though but if it'll help get the war over sooner, I'll be glad to do it.

Please don't worry too much and just put our Trust in God. With all my love and affection. Harold

P.S. I hope you have a Merry Christmas even though I won't be there. I also hope you can go to Canada this year again.

#November 30, 1944. Somewhere in Luxemburg

Dear Mum & Dad,

It is getting quite late but I want to get a letter off tonight. Lately, the back mail has been coming in and soon I'll be up to date. This afternoon when the mail came in I received five letters. I don't remember, though, if I told you I received four letters the day before but I believe so. Today I received one from you dated Oct. 24, one from Mrs. Hendrie, one from Warren, church calendars and papers from both Mrs. Hendrie and Mr. Marsell – these all came or I should say dated on the same day. The day before I received one from you dated Oct. 30, one from Dad mailed the same day, one from Em, and one from Mrs. Hendrie. With Em and Mrs. Hendrie, I'll be able to kill two birds with one stone by answering two letters from each of them which came almost the same day even though they were mailed nearly three weeks apart.

Warren finally told me who took those pair of pants that time in high school and it turned out to be Scotty himself and Prescott. I had a suspicion it was they but never could prove anything. So now that we are so far apart and he knows I can't talk to him myself, he tells me. And Em (Emily Fredericks) sent me another picture of all the folks - they, the Fishers, and Aunt Frances and Uncle Don at Silver Beach. It is a little different than the other pictures she sent. She really is so good to me. I certainly wish you'd send me some more pictures for they help to bring me closer to home. If only I can have my film developed and printed I'd send you a picture of myself without all the extra clothing so you can see that I really haven't gotten much bigger. But I will say that this life is much easier than basic and I believe I have gained slightly. Of course, no pot belly! How's your stomach, Dad? Getting fatter?

Today, I've felt happier than some days when I don't get mail but I will say that I'm getting lots more mail than the rest. Suppose it's because I write more than the rest! I have to laugh at one G company messengers for he's writing to a dozen girls and keeping them on the string. He isn't too good looking either. Probably the uniform. Now an L company fellow is writing to one of his girls and she is answering him. I'm afraid she'd be surprised if she knew what and who he was. She had been disillusioned for he is 36, married and half bald and she is only 18. Quite a pair, eh? Lots of things go on if only I could remember it all.

Oh, I got paid today and got the usual amount of \$58.65 this month. But next month the 40 dollar class E allotment will be going home. We messengers had a jeep come specially for us and bring us down to the company and then we stepped right in front of the line and got paid. Pretty important, eh what? Tonight there is plenty of gambling going on because they're all rich but by the end of the month they'll all be as poor as beggars and have to borrow money. What a bunch! One fellow hasn't been paid for about six months and he was paid over 250 dollars - the total as he sends money home. I guess he's going to have a swell time spending it on drinks or gambling. And then the other extreme in pay. One fellow got one dollar. That really is a big pay. While I was down getting paid I also got some

PX rations - two bars of chocolate, one package of gum, and one carton of cigarettes. Wouldn't the people at home clamber for them for the way Em speaks, cigarettes are getting very scarce and lots of the less popular brands are coming on the market. I will say that we are getting almost everything we need in the way of PX rations and the fighting men do get cigarettes! In some ways we get what they claim but on some things we don't.

I suppose you've heard about the foot disease which is breaking out not in this division but in some others. I really don't know just what it is like but is called "trench foot." So every precaution is being taken to guard against it and that is by having clean socks all the time. So ever day we turn in a pair of socks which are washed and then returned to us. But the only trouble is some turn in good socks and get back holey ones. Talking about socks reminds me of one messenger who wears only a size six shoe and his company gave him a size 12 sock. He sure looks funny walking around in his stocking feet for there is almost enough extra cloth to make another pair!

Lately since we haven't been doing too much, I've been learning how to play a few different games of cards. Sometimes, it helps to pass the time away which often goes so slowly. If only I were there in school or just doing something that was useful. But no, all I do is hand around! That is some people's idea of the perfect life but I'd much rather keep busy. If only I could have gotten in photography, then at least I would have kept busy and been doing something I enjoy. But I believe I've told you about becoming sort of an unofficial photographer for this battalion. I've been taking pictures of the fellows in the companies and these pictures will be printed in a battalion book which is being printed after the war (about our overseas exploits. I get pictures I want as well as good ones for the book. Some of the messengers expect me to let them use my camera for their own use but absolutely refuse for you didn't send it so everyone could use it. And I want it at my own convenience so when I want a picture I can snap it. Some just don't seem to use their heads about things at all. Naturally the ones who don't use their heads at all are the ones who know everything and are the ones who never had much education. One from G company (probably Johnson) is so ignorant that it really is pathetic. But I suppose it takes all kinds to make this crazy world.

Trust in God and I know we shall be united again soon. He shall take care of us. I continue to pray for you and ever person at home who has loved ones overseas. With all my love and devotion. Harold

P.S. This might not get to you in time but I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, Happy Thanksgiving. At least God has taken care of me and you also. This isn't new stationery but some of the old left over.

#Postmarked November 30, 1944. Postcard showing a scene of Luxembourg. Printed on the front of the card: With every good wish for Christmas and the New Year from Luxembourg. All happiness may Christmas bring to you the best of everything. And in your heart I hope there'll be a little room for thought of me.

Handwritten on back of card: Dearest Mother and Dad, This cannot replace me, I know, but it is the next best thing. I certainly hope you have a very nice Christmas even though I won't be there. I pray that I can be home next Christmas though and then we'll certainly have an enjoyable time. I really can't tell you how much I love you both for I can't seem to find words to express myself.

I hope you receive my little gift before Christmas. It really isn't much but I want to give you something myself. With all my love Harold

#December 6, 1944. Somewhere in Germany

Dearest Mother and Dad,

My hands are a little chilly so I don't be using my best penmanship. But at least it is some word from me. The last time I believe I wrote was the 30<sup>th</sup> of November so it has been quite a while since I've written. I believe you know I write whenever I get the chance and don't think for one minute that I ever forget you. My not writing is due to the circumstances.

You remember how Arthur Foster and I used to go around together all the time and I sure wish it could be so again. Oh well, sometime I'll be home again. Please tell Em, and Mrs. Hendrie that I'll write as soon as possible but that isn't any too easy now. At last I head from Dick's wife - you remember the fellow we had at our house for two days and he's in the 28<sup>th</sup> division. And Sam Harris - the fellow who acts so much like Warren - is in the 30<sup>th</sup> division. Both are in Germany so their wives' say. Dec. 1 I had two letters from you dated October 16 and November 15 so you can see my back letters are coming in now. I sure will be glad though when some new mail starts coming in. I haven't had any since the 1<sup>st</sup> so would gladly welcome any letter. I really hope the Christmas packages don't come too soon now for I won't be able to do much with them. But I'll manage somehow to get rid of eats and I don't mean throw it away. The fruit cake will certainly disappear if I know these fellows.

I guess this will be all for now. I know it is terribly short but I want to let you know that I'm all right. Please put all your faith in God and pray so often I know we shall be united soon again. I sure hope the war won't last too long and I know I'm not alone on that thought. I love you both so very much. With all my love, Harold  
(This letter was the only one opened (slit) at the end and scotch tape sealing it with the words "opened by U. S. Army examiner.")

#December 9, 1944. Somewhere in Germany

Dearest Mother and Dad,

I know I should have written you a letter yesterday but I just couldn't seem to get around to it. I know my writing looks funny but I'm so cramped in a foxhole that I cannot do much better. I don't mean I don't have any room but that it isn't like having a desk., I'm writing on my back to you can see how the results are. I haven't had any letters or packages from anyone in quite awhile but I believe there'll be some today. Some of the fellows are getting Xmas packages and all are discouraged and say what's the use of getting packages under these conditions. Oh well, all we can do is eat up everything as quickly as possible. I really have quite a little to tell you but I have to wait a certain length of time before saying anything.

You certainly were wrong when you tried to guess what I was doing in Luxemburg for we were holding along the river there. We sure had a wonder time while it lasted. We were at one town called Bad Mondorf at Thanksgiving and we couldn't have had a more perfect set-up than there for we were in hotel rooms, had showers, and stood guard inside. And best of all, the company was so close I could get my mail very easy.

I suppose New Hampshire is very beautiful now. We used to go up there so often that I sure will miss the winter sports -enough sports around here to suit me. Oh well, the war can't last forever.

You should have seen my rifle a couple of days ago. I'm afraid it would never have passed inspection for it was all muddy and rusted something awful. It took me two days to get it clean. But at least it's pretty good now. Everyone is having the same trouble so I'm not alone. I sure wish though I could get out of this army though for I'm sick and tired of the wholething. But I suppose who isn't sick of it all.

I know you understand why I'm not writing very much. All I want to do is let you know I'm all right so you won't worry too much.

Keep your chin up and pray to God that this'll be over before too long. He certainly has been good to us and we should thank Him so very much. With all my love. Harold  
P.S. I certainly hope you go to Montreal for it'll do both of you loads of good. Have a good time and give my love to all. With more love, Harold. #Postmarked November 30, 1944. Postcard showing a scene of Luxembourg. Printed on the front of the card:

#December 16, 1944. Somewhere in Germany  
Dearest Mother and Dad,

I haven't been getting much mail now for a couple of weeks because of the circumstances but did get a few this evening - the first in quite awhile. Before I got any further, I would you please tell Mrs. Hendrie, Em, etc. that I may take quite awhile in answering their letters but their letters took so long to get here as some do - well over a month even though they were airmail and now this that I'm going through. I received a few from you and the latest date is December 3 so it isn't very old. Warren and aunt have each written me a couple of nice letters and I was sure glad to hear from him. And the Heralds and church calendar and papers are coming through in great style now. I understand I have a couple of packages waiting for me back with the mailman but he has not bothered to send it up to the front. It certainly seems good to be able to write once again and I'll see if I can make up for some of the lost time.

If only you could see me now - with a flashlight in one hand and pretty well cramped up but enough room to be able to write fairly well. I really don't mind being dirty though and being wet and cold some times when I think of what our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, must have suffered in his lifetime. This is so small compared to what He has gone through. I believe I can really praise God and know why after seeing and doing some of the things I have. He has been so merciful and how often I have prayed not for us individually but that the whole world might unite sometime and form a perfect world - the Christian world. Men deep down aren't as cruel as they might seem and if only they could be converted I'm sure they'd make good Christians. I'm not only talking about the Germans but all people. I've seen men die at my feet and I can see and realize how terrible the conditions are in this evil world which is run by the devil. God, and to believe in Him, is our only and best hope and I confess that I truly believe in Him even more than in France. So much so, that I'm going to be baptized when I return home I'm willing to stand up and confess my faith to the whole wide world. God has been so kind and I'm more convinced than ever that He is guiding me and talking care of me for men have died on all sides of me and yet I have come through without a scratch. It really brings tears to my eyes when I remember some of the incidents that happened.

To tell the truth I haven't washed for two weeks now and am filthy, but I expect to in a short time. Little do we at home realize how lucky we are to have plenty of water on hand whenever we need it. If only it was like that around here. One time for about three days we were drinking water that was running down the gutter but because we put in some halazone pills which makes polluted water fit to drink we were able to have a supply of water at hand.

I believe the most stirring sight that brought tears to my eyes when some medical half track vehicles flying large red cross flags come rolling down the street. We weren't able for a few days to either get supplies into our positions or evacuate the wounded- some of whom were quite serious. The morning these vehicles were able to get in and evacuate the wounded I thought of its similarity to God. What a stirring sight it is to have Him come in

and save us not from wounds but from our sin! And I've learned to like K rations for during this same time we didn't have anything to eat for two days. I can tell you that when those little boxes were opened they were well appreciated by all of us. But please, don't worry about me too much for just imagine what Christ went through when He was on earth. Many of the boys who never gave God a second thought are now looking to Him as their savior and it is wonderful to thank that it is possible through this war for us - the fighting men to unite and form a more Christian world. I suppose I'm taling in riddles but I believe you'll understand what I mean. I would appreciate it if you would tell Mr. Marsell how much my faith is growing day by day.

Such utter destruction I have never seen before. The Germans surely are literally leveling their towns and villages to the ground. It certainly is a shame but they want it that way so we, the Allies, shall give it to them. Oh, it certainly will be a wonderful day when they give up. What a wonderful Christmas gift! We were in one house that was left standing but just full of shell holes and what a magnificent place. It certainly must have been a rich man's house and was more like a large hunting lodge for everywhere were horns, picture of animals, etc. I sure would like to have taken two items with me but it was impossible to carry - they were two wood carving of a deer and bear and if you could have seen the hand work in it. Made out of solid oak and everything hand carved. Oh, what a magnificent piece of work. You mentioned in one of your letters about me not sending home things like what many do and you sounded either disappointed. Would you please tell me what they are sending. I don't like to spend too much money on things, not because I'm a miser but because these people over here seem to think the Americans are millionaires and charge outrageous prices. But give me some suggestions and if possible I'll get them. It isn't as easy for a front line man to get them as those in the rear who bring the lines the supplies.

A couple of days ago, I found a sleeping bag which the Army is now issuing and which is very small so on top of my toilet articles which are no good until I can get to where water is plentiful and my camera, I had quite a load. Everyone laughed at me for carrying that bag but it was my turn to laugh that night when I was warm and they nearly frozen. For a couple of days, I slept without any cover except my overcoat and I can tell you it was cold and we didn't get much sleep. I sure felt miserable but now that I have that sleeping bag, I'm all set. Even if it is hard to carry in the day, it's wonderful at night. Like God again. A Christian might have it difficult at times but in the end he goes further ahead.

Do you remember that boy who went around with me so much and I used to speak about him quite often. He has gone to visit grandpa (God) - your father - and I hope they'll see each other. (I was trying to tell my parents of Nelen's death).

Yesterday I received my first two Christmas cards - one from the Ackersons and one from Mrs. Villeneuve. She feels much better now for she has heard from Fred once again. He has been promoted to corporal and seems to be in good health and spirit.

Dad, I think it is perfectly wonderful the way you are putting money in the bank for me. You are so thoughtful but I still love you dearly even if I didn't have a cent in the bank.

I would appreciate if you would send me any photos of the house, boats, yourselves, etc. I sure like to get them even if they are old. Just think I've been away from home nearly eight months and it seems like eight years. I know how you must feel too but never mind, we'll be together before too long.

Oh yes, I was going to send some money home this month and have the order in but the mail clerk has been saving them until we get in a place where we can send them out. I may carry this letter around for awhile but sometime it'll get mailed.

You certainly has a time of it when yu were in Maine but I am glad to hear that youcould get away for awhile. I know how it ust have relaxed both of you and if only you could do that more often. When I get home, we'll have to forget about business and everything and have aa nice trip.

My pen is really flowing smoothly even though it haven't used it for quite awhile and my watch is in A-1 condition - really runs good.

I'm glad you're sending me some tea bags for I like them much better than coffee. But because I need something hot and have nothing but this soluble coffee, I drink it - in fact quite a little lately. If I have plenty of sugar and no cream I can drink coffee fairly well now. But it'll never take the place of mil. You wondered why with all the cows that I couldn't get milk and the answer was the army doesn't like to risk it for these cows haven't been test for tuberculosis. (Idon;t know if that is spelled right). I certainly wouldn't mind having a cup of that good English teas which I got there.

There is one fellow with us who is from St. Paul, Minn and when we were in Luxemburg, he ran across some people who had relatives in that city. So through him they established contact and they we certainly were happy to hear from each other.

Would you please have Mr. Swain change my address on the Herald for it is stil going to my first address in England and is taking so long to get to me.

Please keep up your chin and let us pray together that the war will be voer soon. I love you so and think so much of you. With all my love, Harold.

P.S. Here are a few more pictures I took while in Luxemburg. I have a film undeveloped on which there is a good picture of me, I hope. We'll see if only I can get them developed..

#December 18, 1944 (somewhere in Germany)

Dearest Mother and Dad,

I certainly am glad that I am at last able to write a couple of letters to you for I know how you must be worrying when I don't write. Yesterday I wrote quite a long letter and will try to write something in this one.

Yesterday, I went back to the rear for awhile and while there, the mail clerk came in and so was able to get my money order which I gave him quite awhile ago. So I'll be sending it in this letter and also a clipping which I got from Stars and Stripes. What a job to get the article though for every paper I'd pick up would have everything cut out so I was out of luck. But I spotted my E company mess sergeant and through him was able to get the article. Oh yes, I received a small first class package sent by you and when I opened it here was a nice box of nuts. That certainly was nice of you and all of us enjoyed it very much. Boy, for while, I rushed around there trying to get all my mail straighten out. I had all the runners mail and money orders so I sure had a pile of stuff.

In the letter written Nov. 27, you included a list of readings from selected parts of the Bible and I was indeed glad to get it. But to tell the truth, I received a list about two weeks before that which Miss Grant sent me. The only difference is that hers was a special form printed right on the V-mail. She certainly has been very kind to me and I really appreciate everything she does for me.

You've been wondering if I have enough money for myself and I can tell you that I might just as well send home every cent I have for there is nothing to spend money on under these circumstances. The only possible way to lose money is by gambling but because I don't, I might just as well send home everything. I did keep fifty francs just in case but I've gone through nearly the whole month and haven't spent a cent. Just think, it is nearly Christmas in fact one more week till them. I sure hope we won't spend that go glorious day on the front but what must be must be. Remember, I'm not the only one who is going

through this – thousands of men. Just imagine how small our sufferings are compared to those of Christ. We certainly can't complain when we stop to think of His sufferings.

I'm very thankful the weather hasn't been too cold for it would make it very miserable if it were! There is plenty of mud as you've been reading about in the papers and I'm very thankful I have overshoes for at least my feet are still dry. Some are getting trench foot because of cold wet feet and I understand it is very painful. Some men are so reckless and just don't care but I want to go home the way I came. I have read in the paper where you are having quite a little snow and I know how you love it. I used to like snow very much but under these circumstances, I just pray it doesn't snow too much. We had a couple of inches two weeks ago but it hasn't been too bad. Being so far north and with so little snow really surprises me but I believe it's due to the Gulf Stream.

Just a couple more days till the shortest day of the year and then the days will begin to lengthen. I remember how I used to like it when spring was coming for then the days would be longer and then we kids could play after supper. It grows dark about four and gets light at eight so you can see it's a long night. Means more guards. Give me summer under those conditions. But when I'm at home, I can stand any season.

Pretty soon I'll try and get a couple of letters off to Miss Martin, Em, Mrs. Hendrie, etc. but all I can do is get one off to you once in awhile for my time is limited.

Praise the Lord and trust in Him. He has been keeping me and I know if it be His will that I'll get home soon. Please keep up your chin and keep looking young both of you. I am so proud of my young looking mother and a handsome looking father. Everyone thinks Mum looks so young and handsome looking father. Mum looks so young, and Dad look a real executive. Boy, my chest nearly burst for I swell up with pride. With all my love and devotion, Harold

#December 24, 1944 (somewhere in Germany)

Dearest Mother and Dad,

Here it is Christmas eve and I'm in a much better place than before and am finally washed up a little - the first time in about twenty-two days. So this Christmas is a real treat. Christmas over here does not seem like it as at home, but we have a job to do and can't stop for any celebrations.

The last time I wrote you was six days ago and I know it must seem like years. But I know you understand that I write whenever possible. As you can see from the stationery, I'm writing on, I've received one box and believe another to be with the mail clerk. And I also got both the halves of the camera case and both at once so now I'm all set with my camera. I sure am proud of that case and I love you so much for going to all the trouble of hunting one up for me. The same day as the case arrived, I received a box of f Moir's candy from either Grandma or Aunt Sue from St. John (New Brunswick). I must find out who sent it and send a thank you note. It was wonderful of her to do it. Yesterday was the first time though that I received a Xmas package from you and was glad it didn't come before this for I was in a foxhole and couldn't do much. So many fellows have been getting them just when it was the worst time but I've really been lucky and haven't gotten many except small packages. This Xmas package that I got yesterday was full of canned food and a can of nice brownies which weren't dried out at all. You sure did wrap them. And then there was a box of those coated nuts that I liked so well down at Spartanburg. You know what I mean, I believe. It really was an ideal box and I like it much better than too much candy. The fellows call it a "sensible" box for some people send such foolish things - like the woman who sent her son a stripped necktie for Xmas. But please, if you send more canned food, don't

put tongue in it for I just don't like it. Please send me a box of canned food if at all possible though.

Since I last wrote, I received a few letters from you and other people. With your letters, that means I am up to date – Dec. 5 – except for two letters I suppose those will be coming along sometime. Miss Keany has written to me again and she told me about her experiences in St. Malo. I certainly like to hear from her. And Evie wrote the same day. Then yesterday, I received a letter from Grandma, the first in a time, and I sure enjoyed reading it. Well now, I guess I've told you about my letters so now had better continue, I know this must be boring but maybe you'd like to know who I've heard from.

I have sent you an article about our division fighting which I clipped from Stars and Stripes and sent it in my last letter. Now you won't be kept in suspense as you were in the hedgerows and now we know just what I'm doing and where. I'm including another article I clipped out of the paper the following day and am sending it in this letter. They are sure letting out a lot more news of our division than they were for awhile. The article mentions us fighting in a forest (HURTGEN) and I can tell you it's no fun fighting in a woods. It certainly is a shame to see such beautiful forests destroyed and I know they'll never look the same again. The country looks so much like New Hampshire and has a mixture of soft and hardwoods but the tops of most have been blow off. As a result they'll never grow right again. I can't see why the Germans went to destroy their countryside but if they want it, they'll get it. Oh, if only they'd give up it would be a glorious day.

I was very much surprised to hear that you sent me my sleeping bag. I believe I understood it that way, didn't I? If you did send it, I really didn't have any intention of you sending it. I have now got a G.I.sleeping bag and that is sufficient. I didn't know my letter would sound as though I were requesting it. But it doesn't matter much for if I don't need it, I'll just send it back.

I'm glad to have you criticize for I don't like to do anything wrong. If you find something wrong, let me know and I'll try and be more careful. Sometimes though I just don't stop to think when I should. I sure used to get mad, though, when you used to criticize me when I was at home.

It hardly seems possible I've been in this army for two Xmas'es - two not very pleasant holidays. But I guess it's just God's will that it should be so. Since I wrote you that last letter, I have more to praise Him about and thank Him. We were being shelled and one landed not too far away. Two men beside me were quite badly hit but I didn't even have a scratch. I really believe He's protecting me for there are other incidents that show this to be true. Pray to Him every night and thank Him. Before I go to bed, I must read the chapter of the Testament which you'll read the same day. I have been keeping these up to date and have been reading them faithfully. It is a wonderful idea and I hope that they put out some more of these for it makes us feel closer together. Nothing though will take the place of being together.

We have plenty of Xmas trees around here and all the units which aren't fighting - I should say up on line - are having a little tree and are putting up what decorations they can find. Some of these houses have some ornaments and so the trees have a real Christmas look. When I say houses, I mean those that are standing. So many are really on the ground-level. You at home should feel very fortunate indeed to have a nice warm house. Boy, the fellows around here would like to trade places with all these strikers that they're reading about and let them get a taste of the front-line fighting. I'm afraid they'd be more willing to work for less money.

I will be thinking of you tomorrow even more than other days and hope you have a pleasant holiday. Please keep up your chin and may God bless you both and keep you. With all my love and affection, Harold

#December 28, 1944. Somewhere in Belgium

Dearest Mother and Dad,

At last, I've had a chance to write again. I believe the last time was Christmas eve.. The day after Xmas I received a letter from Miss Martin and a letter and Xmas card from you so that card was really only one day late. I understand the division post office is saving most of our packages until we get to a place where we can enjoy them. I'm really sorry that I slipped up on Miss Martin's letter but once in awhile things like that happen. The next letter I send, though, will be to her.

Just before I began this letter, I washed and boy do I feel nice and clean. I washed for Xmas and that was a real treat in itself. It really didn't seem like Xmas though and we had K rations for breakfast and dinner. But when supper came around, the captain who was with us decided he'd be different and went to a nearby quartermaster depot and got white bread and a box of 10 in 1 rations. There is enough food in this one box to feed 10 men thus it got its name. It really was good and this officer prepared the whole meal and gave us bacon, corn, canned roast beef, bread, butter, jam, coffee, cream and sugar. So we had a good item and it was much better than K rations. Yesterday, though, we got our turkey which we were unable to have for some of the battalion was still up on line. I was fortunate and was in the rear echelon for Xmas. Sometime, I might be able to tell you about what happened in this last three days since Xmas and I can tell you a lot happened.

I went to get a drink from my canteen a couple days ago and when I tried to drink nothing came out. It was frozen solid and I mean solid! So the only thing to do was start up a fire and thaw it out. And then I went into my bag to get some ink and that was frozen. The cooks sure love this weather for everything liquid freezes if left outside for awhile. Thank goodness, though, it hasn't done much snowing. We were on line quite awhile and the sun never shone but as soon as we got off, here the sun shines as bright as could be and very beautiful days and nice clear nights. That seems to always be the way things work.

I got hold of a good slide rule while I was in Germany and I bet it would bring about fifteen dollars back in the states. I sure wish I were back home where I could use one. And then I got a bunch of stamps which I'll send home the first opportunity I have. It is too bad I don't have a large truck following me wherever I go for I know I could have it full in a short time. I've got to go through all my pockets now for I have an awful lot of junk. Just the same as ever - always collecting junk. I certainly haven't changed much and everyone says so. They can't see how a fellow in the army can stay the same for it changes so many fellows. Guess I just have lots of will power or something.

Once in awhile lately, I've been picking up a can from the kitchen. It is evaporated milk but I still drink it and it isn't bad. Not like good fresh cow's milk but next o the best. It sure will seem good again to get home and then be able to eat anything or anything I want. All of us can appreciate home a million times more.

You certainly seem very curious about what I'm sending you for Xmas and now I'll tell you. I hope it got to you all right. It is a little division insignia pin which a company in Attleboro, Mass. manufacturer. I sent home a patch to show you what our patch looks like and this pin will be an exact duplicate of that with 83<sup>rd</sup> division marked on the top and there is a pin attached by a chain which has a star in the middle. Maybe you won't like it but I thought it was quite nice.

You asked me if you should send a package to Henry Swett and I say no for I didn't go into too much detail. What I meant to say was his wife sends him packages but he just doesn't seem to get any. In fact, the first one he received was about a month ago - first since he came overseas. But now he's been getting them steadily and has had many more than me.

I notice the Protestant chaplain is around now so I suppose we'll be having a service. I sure will be glad to have a service for I really feel as though I have something to be thankful for. He has been so good and kind to me.

I think in just a few minutes that I'll go up to the company and see if I had any mail. And then maybe I'll be able to get some turkey which they are serving tonight. I sure hope I can get some.

I don't know what the matter is with me but I can't seem to write much. Guess I'm just not in the right mood. I've missed some sleep lately but am now making up for it. I really have a lot of things to keep me warm while I sleep - a sleeping bag and three blankets so I really stay warm.

May the Lord bless you wonderful parents and you feel so near to me at all times. Never think for a second that I ever let you out of my mind. The Lord has been so merciful to me - in fact you too - and I am glad I have such Christian parents. It certainly makes me feel better to know that. Keep up your chin and I know everything will turn out all right. With all my love, Harold

#December 30, 1944. Somewhere in Belgium

Dearest Mother and Dad,

I must start your letter for the day is getting old and here I haven't even started. Yesterday afternoon, the mail clerk handed me a letter from you dated Dec. 20 which came in nine days. That's the fastest for a good long time and I certainly wish it would keep up that way. Maybe when all these Xmas packages are gotten rid of, the mail will begin to come a little more regular.

I may tell you in this letter some of the things which I mentioned in some of the others but it's so hard to remember just I've said before. The last of November we were alerted and told to get ready to move. This was in Luxemburg and the rumors were flying fast and thick. I could laugh at them all for I knew just where we were going before hand for I was in the C.P. when the official order came in. I wouldn't tell anyone but one of the rumors had it that we were going to Aachen. This one was correct but the rumor that took the cake had it that our regiment was going back to the States and sell war bonds. How those fantastic rumors get started I don't know but some near as crazy go sailing around once in awhile. I have just gotten now so I don't believe a thing until it happens, even if the rumor does sound plausible. We were alerted about a month before this and were planning to go down near Metz and help out a division under Patton. But this went under for some reason and the next thing, we went to Mondorf le Bain where we really had it nice - hotels and beds. The officers had it a little nicer than us, though, for they had an elevator in their hotel, maid service, and clean sheets all the time. I bet some of these never had such a good time until they joined the Army and I bet I come from a better family than some. Just the same, it'll be much easier for the enlisted man - I'm not enlisted but a draftee and called by that name - to adjust himself to civilian life for we can take orders. But think of those officers who are so used to giving orders. I'm afraid they're going to have a much worse time than us. Well, now I'm getting off the subject. It was here at Mondorf that we had our Xmas dinner and I sure was glad to be there rather than on line. After this second alert though we were supposed to pull out the next day and they kept putting it off and off until three

days had passed and then we were off. It is strange, for the route we took up here was re-taken by the Germans in the counter -offensive. Guess the Germans just wouldn't push until they knew the 83<sup>rd</sup> was out of the area. Ha! But I can tell you our division has got a good reputation in combat. I understand that this division was looked down on when in the States for they were just no good. But as the old saying goes, a good garrison soldier doesn't make a good combat soldier.

We moved up to Germany and immediately replaced a division which had pushed up to the edge of the Hurtgen forest. And from there we pushed as far as the Roer River. Just before Christmas, a few of us and a captain (Thurmond) went on ka quartering party back near Aachen for when relieved the troops were suppose to retire to this place and wait until further notice. I told you about spending Christmas in the rear near Aachen. But I found out later that the men who were still on the front at Christmas had a tree with all kinds of decorations. A few minutes before we left, I heard the major in our battalion give an order to detail three men to cut down a tree and decorate it. When I heard that, I laughed so hard. So at least these men had a little Xmas spirit in their midst. But I really didn't care for I can't enjoy this season until I get back home.

We - the quartering party - were back in Aachen for three days before they arrived so we had a good chance to look around. The center of the city was entirely destroyed but the outskirt, were pretty well intact except every house had broken windows and everything within the house has been strewn all over the place. There were some beautiful houses and this reminded me more of home than any place because very house was of a different design and not like the French who all live in a square box! Those types of houses would bring a good price if back in the states for most had beautiful insides and outsides. What war can do to a city! I really think Germany is more like home than any other place with its board highways and large parks, trolley cars, etc. We hadn't seen any civilians for quite awhile and when we came back to the rear areas, we saw German girls. But woe is me, no one can speak to them because of this order Gen. Ike gave to his troops. Anyone caught even talking to a German can be fined sixty five dollars - no chicken feed. I didn't want to speak with the girls anyway. For one thing, I can't speak their language and then I would rather wait until I get home. When the troops moved back to where we were, they got situated and were pretty well set up when the order came through for us to move to where we are now. Five hours, the troops were in that area! That gives you an idea how fast the army can move sometimes. And then we were moved down here in the middle of the night.

I stopped writing in order to see if I got any mail and much to my delight, I received a letter from you dated Nov. 24 and a Christmas card from Miss Mitchell and last of all, I got a package which was sent from S.S. Peirce in which there was a fruit cake. I believe you sent it. When I saw it was a fruit cake, I said, boy, oh, boy. But when I opened it I found it was smaller than the package looked and then to top it all, it had a nice large hole in the middle. I had a fairly good piece and I think it was wonderful of you to send it. I'm only kidding when I criticize so don't take me seriously.

I'm a different looking person now for I'm as clean as a cat - or is a cat clean? Yesterday I got around to washing my body and then putting on all new clothes. Boy, I'm looking like a million dollars! Everyone couldn't get over me having all new things for I had every thing brand new new - even shoes. But I've been hoarding them for quite a long time. It sure feels good to have clean clothes on and I'll sure appreciate clean things when I get home. Sure different from the way I was dressed when on line.

I have four films now which I hope to have developed when I can get a chance. There are pictures of me when I was almost as black as a nigger from dirt. But then I have a couple with me dressed up so when I send them home, you can contrast them. I shave sort

of become an unofficial photographs for I've been taking pictures of all the companies and all kinds of battalion pictures. I don't mind doing it for they will be good to have after the war.

I forgot to mention that I finally talked my supply sergeant into giving me a sweater which they were issuing. When I tried it on and much to my disgust, I found it way too big and it hung on me like a sack so now I suppose I had better see if I can get it exchanged. I do have my troubles sometimes with clothing and its sizes.

I'm in an area in which I'm fairly safe so please don't worry. I never know what will happen but I just my faith in God. I know He'll take care of me. I don't know which is worse, the agony which you on the home front go through or the troubles we have ducking shells. Oh, I do wish I could go home and speak to you. But the war will be over before too long, I hope, and then we can see each other again. Please keep up your chin. With all my love, Harold.

#January 6, 1945 Somewhere in Belgium

Dear Mother and Dad,

I haven't written in such a long time - about a week - and I know it must seem like years. Yesterday though, I received quite a little mail and I can tell you I was well pleased. And I got a requested package the same time and wasn't that a welcome package. Rations hadn't been brought up that day and so I was quite hungry and then to have a nice package come! That was like an angel from heaven. In it, there were four films, gum drops, gum, life savers, and a couple of kinds of candy. There were four letters from you - Dec. 7 and 21, Nov. 24 and 29, a letter from Em, one from Alice Shedd, a Christmas card from Miss Grant, and a church paper and calendar from Mrs. Hendrie. So you can see I got quite a few letters to bolster my morale.

Things have been happening so fast and furious that I just haven't had time to write. I realize that you know that I write whenever possible. By the way, I'm going to get after you for not sending me more photos than you do. I sure wish you'd send me a few for if Em can send me as many as she has - four of her house in this last one - I can't see why you can't. Please send me some of anything, please!! I saw a few Kodacolor prints today and I wish you'd send me those minicolor prints which I have in the bottom drawer in that nice large cream photo album with a red cover, I believe. Those were made from those color slides. I do wish you'd have a couple good color photos as well as black and white of yourselves and have them made into mini nicolor prints. Do it even if it takes a couple of months. I wish you'd send me a few nice color prints for of all the pictures you're taken, surely there are some good ones.

There was one town we stopped at a couple of days ago and what a pathetic scene. The cattle and all animals were slowly dying of the cold. They wandered around aimlessly and couldn't find anything to eat so I brought them some straw which was in a barn. The town had been evacuated and the town was in ruins for the Germans had set fire to the town. Cold is certainly a terrible thing and I never realized how lucky I was when at home with a good fire in the furnace. I certainly will be able to appreciate home when I return. A cute little scene I saw though was a little calf in this one town which was only a couple weeks old. It certainly was frisky and didn't it have a swell time jumping around in the snow. But I'm afraid that it'll die for all the cows are dry and the other, I believe, died.

I'm glad to hear that you received those pins. They aren't such a wonderful present but I couldn't find anything better. But I know you'll like it nevertheless. One of the fellows was sort of a salesman for these pins and was able to get orders for \$120 worth of pin. He sent for the pins the same time as I and he hasn't received them yet. Boy, I hope he gets

them for he'll be out a couple month's pay if he doesn't get them I could have ordered them through him but what was the sense for his were being returned here - a matter of some 30000 miles - and the company is in Attleboro - so close to home. So there really wasn't any sense to that at all and so sent mine separately and had them send it to you.

January 7

I didn't have a chance to finish the letter yesterday so see if I can today. I got quite a scare this morning when I felt for my pen and found none! I looked everywhere and it was useless for it just wasn't anywhere to be found Then I thought of my bed roll where it could have fallen while I slept and sure enough, it was there. I sure gave a sigh of relief not because the pen is so valuable but because they are hard to get around here and because you gave it to me on my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Yesterday afternoon, an awful bunch of mail came in but I could not get to my mail clerk so don't know if I have any or not. I should say though that I received one letter from you dated Dec. 13 and it came to me in an unusual way. Battalion headquarters mail clerk was sorting his mail and came across a bunch which was really intended for E. company but somehow got mixed up with his. So he let me go through it and there was the one letter which was very welcome. I suppose I could get my mail a little sooner if I had it addressed to headquarters but for some reason I might have to return to my company. One never knows, does one?

I forgot to tell you about us having turkey for New Year's. Boy, that means that within a month and a half, we've had three meals of turkey. No wonder there is such a shortage of them back in the States. But I could only enjoy the Thanksgiving meal because just when we were about to have a meal the othr two times we moved. And so we ate them a couple of days late. I fact, on Xmas, the cooks had the turkey on to cook when the order came through to move so that spoiled them a little. Oh well, life is like that at times. And New Year's Day, the same thing happened.

You asked me in one letter what relation the people are to whom you are sending these pictures. I'll list them and then you'll have them.

Alexa - mother	Schaub - wife
Greene - wife	Surface - wife
Stasi - returned to himself	
Swett - wife	Daniels - wife
Nelen - mother	

With Alexa would you send them C.,O.D. for he isn't here right now for he went to the hospital with piles. And Nelen would you pay the cost and send them to his mother nevertheless. Nothing struck me harder than that. I believe you understand but it seemed to be the will of God. And those enlarged pictures with negatives will be sent to Bryant's wife. By the way, when you send any more photos would you keep them about 2 1/4 x 3 1/4, please?

I'll be sending home more money this week for this new allotment begins this month. What a mess though for we got paid in German marks for the payroll was made up while we were in Germany and then we moved here to Belgium. I sure will be glad to use that foreign money against American money. A mark is worth ten cents, so much different from what we have been used to. And then to top it all, we must have our money orders censored by the company commander which is a headache to all concerned. They say too much money is being sent home - more than the total amount being paid out Some money really has been looted and so they're trying to stop this.

I have got more to say but I'll leave this for another letter because I'm afraid this letter won't get mailed for a few days. I sure wish I could get back to the Signal Corps back at division headquarters for I've got over a hundred pictures which I want developed. But until things cool down and we aren't on the move, I'll have to be satisfied keeping them with me.

Would you please tell Mrs. Hendrie that I owe her a letter from Germany but it has been quite impossible to answer. Sometime, maybe, I'll be able to tell you just what is going on. I guess I've just an old pessimist but the war just seems as though it's going to go on and on. Guess it's just the mood I'm in at present. You know how once in awhile I get terribly disgusted with everything.

In the next letter, I'll try and answer some of the questions you've asked me but won't do it in this letter for it'll turn out to be a book rather than a letter.

Please keep up your chin and trust in God for He has been so kind to us. Remember you're only one family in hundreds of thousands to be broken up and many are much worse off than us.

I love you so terribly much and wish I could get home soon to see you but we must wait until after the war. With all my love and affection. mHarold

#January 11, 1945. Somewhere in Belgium

Dearest Mother and Dad,

It's time I got busy again and wrote another letter for my letters are few and far between nowadays. But as little as I write, I actually write more often than anyone else and nobody can figure out how I can write such a long letter. I don't know why, but I always end up writing a much longer letter than most.

I have been receiving a little mail lately and will try and tell you what I got. First, I forgot to tell you about receiving Simms Bros. package on Dec. 31 and thank Miss Martin very much for she made an excellent selection. She certainly is a wonderful person and I think quite a lot of her! A couple days ago some first class packages came in and among them was two with teabags from you and a small package from Aunt Gert with an ocarina and a couple packages of chewing gum. For letters, I had a Xmas card from Miss Martin, some religious literature from both Miss Ring and Mr. Marsell. (Miss Ring was head of the Helping Hand, a group of women who met in the Braintree Baptist Church and Mr. Marsell was minister of the Braintree Baptist Church at that time)

But last night I hit the jackpot for I received two letters from Dad written ten days apart. You sure are improving Dad and I am so please to hear from you so often. Please keep it up if you can! And I also got another Christmas card sent by you. Those two cards were sent within two days of each other and yet the one mailed two days earlier got to me the day after Christmas. I sure wish the mail situation clears up soon so I can hear from you in about a week.

I am enclosing another clipping taken from a Stars and Stripes dated Jan 8 in which our division has been mentioned. Up to now you haven't known. I suppose just what the 83<sup>rd</sup> has been doing since it left Germany but now you can see. I'm glad our division isn't on the secret list now for then you have no idea where I am. But this way, you can trace my route all around. I sure have been doing some traveling lately and I sure hate to move. Guess I'm the home type! When I get home, I'm not going to move all around the way some get pleasure out of doing but will stay right by the fireplace during the winter.

I was just thinkig about your sending these films or I should say photos to the different fellows and I'd suggest you send them C.O.D. for it'll save trouble on all sides. Add a little more to the price, though, for the camera costs money. Business man, eh? Don't

forget to not charge Stasi C.O.D. for his are being sent here and I can collect from him. But he's is the only one. And with Nelen's, please pay the price for I don't want to charge his mother under the circumstances.

On one of our moves forward, we at last ended up in the place we thought we should go. The crazy house!! We actually stayed in one two days and the likes of it I never saw before. Such crazy actions but I guess some of us do such crazy things at times. Everyone declared we were at last at home and when you hear the expression, "I'll be going to the crazy house soon" I can say I actually was there (residing).

One of the fellows was hunting for me the other day and when I finally caught up to me he handed me a large book of crossword puzzles! I have tried a few but they have slipped up on some words for I haven't bothered with any since I left the States - eight months ago. But I keep at them and are working them out slowly. Once in awhile I try the puzzles in different papers the boys receive and have a little enjoyment out of it. But I will say that there aren't too many around here who can beat me at them for most haven't had as much education as I.

I must tell you about the tea which you sent. There are only a very few around here who like it so I gave them some bags and we each brewed up a cup. I can tell you I really enjoyed it much better than any coffee. Everyone is saying "Blimey, old chop" and "have a spot of tay." and "how's my English friend" but we have a good laugh over it. I'm surprised at the few who like it though for I thought more than that like tea. And to top it all, I found two cans of canned heat and so now I'll be able to have hot water whenever I want. A good stroke of luck!

I believe I told you about the army sending each company so many books each month and this month I got hold of a couple and am now reading them. One is the story of how the Associated Press began up to the present and the story of Babbitt by Sinclair Lewis. I read part of the latter story in school but never the whole thing. Guess I've read more popular books since I've been in the army than I ever have.

The other evening, my E. company kitchen gave me the offer of a lifetime. All the french fries I could eat! But alas, my stomach was a little upset and I couldn't eat many. Usually we're given about three or four pieces of potato and that's all but I sure hated to miss that offer. Whenever I got up to the company, the cooks sure are swell to me and give me almost everything I want. Some different from headquarters cooks. They sure are selfish and stingy. I guess eating so many Christmas packages that the fellows have received upset my stomach so I couldn't eat much.

In a few minutes after I finish this letter, I believe I'll wash my feet and change socks. I'm careful with my feet because they can sure cause an awful lot of trouble. So many men have trench foot and that's one thing I don't want to get. I've been through it all this far and want to continue and come out all right.

I'm glad your faith in God is high and I know things will turn out all right for He is with us. I'm also glad you are keeping on the go for that takes your mind off me once in awhile, maybe not entirely but at least a little.

Never falter in faith and please keep smiling o I'll be home soon again. With all my love and affection, Harold

P.S. Would you please send me a package of candy, cookies, gum, etc.

#January 14, 1945 Somewhere in Belgium

Dearest Mother and Dad,

It's time that I got busy writing again for I've been lax in these last couple of days. The day I wrote that last letter - two days ago - I received two Christmas cards, one from

the Sheldons and one from Mrs. Hendire. But yesterday, I hit the jackpot and wasn't I mad. I received twelve packages all in the same day and I'll have to tell you who they are from. Marjorie and the Richardsons each sent me a nice package. Tell Mrs. Richardson she makes very good cookies and I enjoyed them very much. Guess I'll have to get busy soon and send a thank you note to each person. Then there was a box of stationery and also a small box which came the same day. Two crossword puzzles from you and a manicure set. And the sleeping bag! I'm sorry to know that you went to all that trouble wrapping it but I really did not want it. So I'm sending it right back. I also got a package with that French box in it with candies and candy. The people around here speak French so all isn't lost Also a packaged box sent from Schraff's which was very nice and a box of chocolates from Al and Em. Boy, what a bunch of them and I had an idea this would happen. The same thing happened back Dinard when I received six packages. I forgot to tell you. I also received a the "Yank" Magazine and two Sunday School Times and two letters from you - one dated Dec. 14 and the other Dec. 24 written in Montreal. When someone told me I had about a dozen packages I thought he was kidding but I soon found out differently. There wasn't too much food, thank goodness, or I probably would have had to throw away some. But not a speck was thrown away and I've still got a lot saved so I can eat it today. Everyone had plenty to eat, though, and even had jam which Marjorie sent.

In this letter, I'm enclosing a money order for \$55 which you can put away for me. I sure have quite a little money now and am quite proud of all I have. But I really have you both to thank for all I have. I'm glad to know that those pins reached you for now I can throw away the money order stub.

This morning I woke up just in time for breakfast. We have been having hot meals for a few days now and it really tastes good. They had French toast and cereal and it sure tasted good for some reason. I was so hungry in fact that I went back for seconds and ate all of that. Guess I'm just an old chow hound. Now, I'll leave this letter for awhile for "dinner is now being served." Well, here's that man again and will continue my letter. The dinner wasn't so good but I will say yesterday, it was really good. It was port chops and I haven't had for so long that I enjoyed them. Guess I'll just eat streak and port chops when I get home. I'd even like lamb chops now which you used to have so often before rationing. And the day before yesterday, we had chicken which tasted pretty good. So all in all, we're getting fed very well. .

The mail clerk is just leaving to get some mail and I just hope and pray he doesn't bring me back any more than one package!

I understand from the way you talk about the metatarsal arch that you're having a case of fallen aches. Is that right in plain language? Why don't you tell me in plain language? It seems as though you've had more trouble with yourself than when I was home but I guess it's just my imagination.

I've just been out taking pictures of different scenes around here today for it's fine out today. It sure is much nicer than having snow all the time. I'm sure glad the weather isn't as mean as it is at home for so far we haven't had any sub-zero yet and I sure hope we don't have any. Just think, in a couple more months, spring will be here again and I will have been here a whole year.

I just left for a few minutes again in order to go up and get some coffee and doughnuts from a Red Cross Clubmobile which just came to our battalion a short while ago. I will give those girls credit for they're doing a good job and left home just so they could serve us.

At present and for a couple of days we have been having a rest which was sure welcomed. It sure will be wonderful to have this war over and then we could all have a nice

long rest. I'm really not as anxious to get home as just to have it over with. But I guess I'm too much of a realist.

I sure am glad you were able to get to Montreal and have good flying weather. With all the thousands of places, I've seen since I've been over here and yet have never been in one. I'm sure going to take a flying trip someplace when I get home. I know it was much nicer being there than home for it would not be much of a Xmas with just the two of you there alone.

I see another fellow bringing in several packages which are all for him so the division A.P.O. must have a good many of them. So I'm not the only one to get them in bunches.

Gee, I can't seem to find much to write about this time but usually I have quite a little. In this letter, all I've been doing is raving on and on but not like Lillian. She certainly is an utter fool and I sure hope I never get a wife like her.

I'll be writing to Grandma in a short time so tell her when you write to her. It seems as though I've got so many letters to answer I don't know where to start but I will manage soon to get them written.

Please keep up your chin and I know how brave you both are behaving. Keep it up and things will come out all right. With all my love, Harold.

P.S. Please send me a package of candy, gun, etc. for the last one was good.

#January 20, 1945 (somewhere in Belgium)

Dearest Mother and Dad,

I haven't written for so long that I've nearly forgotten how to write. I wish I could write regularly instead of so irregularly but as long as I'm on the front lines, it's quite impossible. I haven't received much mail recently but I'll tell you what the letters were Christmas cards from the Sheldons and Hendries. A letter from you dated Jan. 2 and one from Dad dated Jan. 2 and a package of candy from Mrs. Bolton! (Don't know who this is). I can't understand why I received a package from her and yet haven't had a letter of any sort. Maybe a letter got lost in the mail. Anyway, I'll write and thank her. And yesterday I received a Christmas card from the Duttons. I also got a Christmas card from someone whom I don't know and believe I got it by mistake. It was addressed to Pvt Harold Simms and gave an A.P.O. something, like what I had when I first got to England but not exactly. Anyway, it was sent to me. It was sent by the Muellers and postmarked Framingham, Mo. Do you know them? I don't believe so.

Already I have made use of the French book which you sent. The other day, I came across this boy who was eighteen and he spoke very good English. I thought maybe he was a German spy but later found out he belonged to the Belgian underground and had had some military training in an American Camp back in the center of Belgium. He spoke very good English and claimed he learned it there. But he was stuck on a few words so I brought out my book and he found the words. There are some French sentences in the end of the book so he turned there and wanted me to pronounce after him. I did for a minute and then jumped ahead and read some on my own. He seemed so surprised and said my pronunciation was excellent. I've had quite a few tell me the same thing. I mean civilians, and I'll certainly give Miss Keany all the credit in the world. She certainly is a good teacher and knew how to pronounce words correctly. Not with an awful American or English accent.

I have to laugh at a great many fellows for they're always talking about speaking American. I tell them they're taught English grammar in school instead of American and they have to agree.

I left to eat dinner and in the meantime the mail came in and I got five packages, four from you and one from Lillian. And I got quite a few "Yank" magazines and some Sunday School Times. I sure got packages by the hundreds. Well anyway, I'm in a little better position than before and I can enjoy the packages. I have opened the packages and you certainly are good at that for what an assortment! When I saw that eight hour cream, I couldn't figure out what that was for but finally found out it's for the hair. I thought it might be beauty cream! Lots of the fellows have been getting all kinds of things such as talcum powder, hair tonic and other things that are just useless. I'm sure glad you have enough sense not to send such things!

I got the manicure scissors, Vicks and almost all the other things. I've requested, so don't worry about me getting them.

I cut out another article out of the paper recently - can't remember the date - and am sending it home. Almost every day our division is mentioned but it is only about a line and not worth bothering about. You must have quite a few articles now about this division. I was just looking at a map a few minutes ago and I sure have done some traveling since I arrived in Liverpool. I sure hate to move and am just like Dad - the home type.

We're all excited for tomorrow we're going to take showers. Imagine that! None of us have had any for so long that we don't know what it's like. Maybe I'll wash away. I have washed my body quite often but it hasn't been a shower or bath. I sure will be able to appreciate home when I get back, especially a bed and a bathroom. Just the same, I've fared pretty well and don't mind this life for I'm pretty used to it.

What terrible weather lately. It's always snowing and I had to walk a couple of miles in a blizzard a couple of days ago and was I glad to get inside. Thank goodness we can at least get into a warm room. Every house in these countries seems to have a stove in each room and that's fine for us. If these homes had steam heat, I'm afraid we'd freeze for the pipes would break from the cold. Thank goodness, the temperature doesn't go under zero the way it does at home or I'm afraid a great many more boys would go back to the hospital with trench foot. This is perfect country for skiing and actually found a good pair near Aachen but couldn't carry them with me. I sure can collect more junk and after each operation, I have to clean my pocket for they are just bulging with this junk.

I am anxious to get the photos that Dad mentioned sending of the boats and would appreciate pictures of you both. Won't you try and have some taken? Why I've sent more pictures home than you have to me! I'm trying to get these films now that are exposed developed.

Just think, January is nearly over and by the time you get this, February will be here no doubt. Time certainly passes and soon summer will be here again. So many fellows disillusion their loved ones and not tell them anything but the pleasant part of this terrible war. But I tell you the straight facts for I know you'd rather and feel better even if it isn't too pleasant. Honestly, I'm very well and can still enjoy myself and laugh and am still my own self. I'm not trying to fool you either.

God be with you both and may He bless such wonderful parents. I love you so dearly and hope to be back in a short time. Keep up your chin! With all love and affection, Harold

#January 22, 1945. Somewhere in Belgium  
Dearest Mother and Dad,

Boy, am I getting the packages lately for just after I wrote my last letter to you, I received four packages. One had your writing kit in it but I'm sorry to say it was a little too large for my bag. So I would appreciate it if you'd send me another one with the dimensions approximately 6 or 6 ½ by 11 or 11 ½. I know I should have given you the dimensions in the

first place but you tried the best you could. And another box of stationary arrived and I certainly hope no more for awhile for I have plenty. I'm not writing so often now because we're on the front lines more. So it isn't disappearing as quickly. Also two more Christmas packages came from you. I won't try and describe them for I just broke them down and put all the candy in one pile, cookies in another, etc. I've got enough stuff to open up a candy store!!

And then to top it all, yesterday, I received six boxes so I sure am having my fill of food. Everyone is getting a couple of packages here and there but nothing like what I'm getting. I just hope there are letters today instead of packages. One of the fellows commented that no wonder his mail isn't coming through now. It's because all my packages are cluttering up the mail!! I certainly got a great laugh out of that statement. Yesterday these six packages were three from you - two Xmas and a box of Fanny Farmers chocolates, one from Mrs. Dutton sent from the church, and one from Mrs. Newell. Then I got three letters yesterday too, two from Betty and a nice long letter from Miss Martin. She sent me a cute poem about the navy inspector. Probably you read it.

Yesterday, which was Sunday, I went to church which was held in a small theater but wasn't it cold for most of the windows were out. But I don't mind the cold too much and enjoyed the church very much. But I didn't like this chaplain's sermon - the major - as well as the other - the captain. This man is an excellent singer but doesn't seem to have the spiritual feeling that the other has. To tell the truth, we, the enlisted men, are very disappointed in the major chaplain for he caters too much to the officers and will hardly look at us other than to conduct services. But the other - the captain - is just the other way and really is a very spiritual man and thinks an awful lot of each individual man.

And after church, we had dinner. And guess what! Creamed chicken and apple pie! I would have enjoyed yours much more but here these are novelties. It certainly was a much better meal than I've had for quite awhile. Oh, wouldn't I like to have some you home cooked foods!. Lately we've been changing so often from K rations, to C rations and then to B rations - garrison rations. And as a result, my stomach isn't quite normal at times. Everyone is having the same trouble and it's all right if one kind of ration is eaten. I feel all right now though but I'm being careful not to eat too much candy for I don't want to get sick.

As I'm writing, one of the fellows is brewing a cup of tay and is he being ridiculed. Some can't see why he likes that or wants it but they don't' bother me. I've used up quite a few of the bags and have given all those who like tea some bags - these men are few and scarce. Guess I'll make some after I finish this. Talking about beverage, the American Red Cross girls came in the clubmobile yesterday afternoon and served us coffee and doughnuts. It wasn't bad - I don't mean the girls - but not like our doughnuts. Dad, you've got a pretty good cook as a wife. I don't think you went wrong marrying her! Miss Martin told me that you both look so much beer after having that rest in Montreal. I'm so glad you went for you can't stay home all the time.

And then last night, we had pie made by civilians with coffee and it wasn't bad at all. You see we are living in a priest's home at present (Izier, Belgium) and he's so kind to us. He does all kinds of things for us and it's certainly nice to be near civilians again. This priest couldn't speak a bit of English before the Americans came but now he really can speak quite a little. Since D-day, these people in Europe have certainly learned quite a little English for we are everywhere.

This priest has a very pretty cat and looks just like Fluffy except this one is gray and white. I isn't very common over here to see Angora cats. I even miss the cat and suppose he's as lazy as ever. Talking about sleep, do you sleep very much now, Dad? Boy, with all

the boys over here and in the Pacific I don't see how the States can be the same. I see that ration points have been put on some food again. They sure can't make up their minds back there.

I can't seem to concentrate on writing tonight for the bunch of fellows are playing poker and are making all kinds of noise. Guess I'll go to bed in a short while and get a good night's sleep. Had better take advantage of this little rest for I have had only a couple hours sleep some nights.

I certainly will be glad to get those pictures you're sending and hope there are some pictures of each of you. I certainly am proud of both of you and love to show off such young parents!

Please don't worry too much and keep as young looking as you can. May God bless such wonderful parents as you. With all my love, Harold

#January 25, 1945. Somewhere in Belgium

Dearest Mother and Dad,

I should have written yesterday but so much has been going on these last couple of days that I just did not have time. First, I'll tell you about some of the letters I've gotten recently and then tell about my epeirecess lately. I received a Christmas card from a Mrs. Campbell and I couldn't figure at first who it was. It turned out to be Miss Welsh - high school principal's secretary. Remember her? Tell you about some of the letters I've gotten Campbell and I couldn't figure out at first who it was. It turned out to be Miss Welsh - high school principal's secretary. Remember her? It certainly was nice of her to think of me. And the same day, I got the package from the Heaps with the flashlight in it. I can tell you it was welcome and I am sure proud of it for no one can equal it for brilliance. I never had such a bright flashlight and it's much better than any the other fellows have. I must write and thank them in a couple of days. Warren sent me a pretty Xmas card with a picture of his ship on it. And the last letter came from Mrs. Daiute. It was a Christmas card with quite a long note enclosed. They certainly are fine people and I'm glad you like them so much.

Yesterday I had a busy day for was away from the unit all day. I brought my five films - an equivalent of 175 photos - to a large town near here and will get them back in a few days. I'm sure glad to get them done for I hated to carry them all around for fear I'd lose them. I'm anxious to get them back for I know you'd like to get a few pictures of me. I like to nearly froze before we got there for the weather was cold and to top it all, we took a lot longer for it snowed the night before and so we had to take a detour. I was able to get permission from the colonel to get them developed for there are pictures he is anxious to get himself. It was nice to see civilization again., I mean a large city, and enjoyed just watching the people. There certainly re some nice looking women there and they seem to be able to put makeup on so it looks very natural - almost nicer than even at home. We got there just before noon so after getting the pictures (rolls ) taken care of, we decided to get something to eat. We went the whole length of the place and couldn't find a place that had anything but drinks in the restaurant. Guess food is pretty scarce around there. I noticed in the store that I took the films that a man took portraits and the camera he used was just the same as you have at home - a Leica. And the work is excellent even though such a small camera is used. If I had been cleaned up and had a nice looking clothes on, I would have had my picture taken but I wouldn't because of that. While there, I saw a buzz bomb which came overhead so low that it could easily be seen. But it flew off and that was the last ever saw of it. I wanted to buy you some sort of present but, my oh my, weren't thing expensive even though there was plenty of clothing and little trinkets, no food. So I wouldn't get anything

because of that. Boy, If I ever get a car, I'll buy a sedan for I've had all I want of an open jeep and I mean it's pretty cold riding these days.

By the way, the boy who sent for the division insignia pins finally got them. Did I tell you one of the runners sent for \$120 worth of pins just about the same time as I. He gathered names from headquarters company and those pins were so popular that everyone wanted one. I was able to get one of his extra pins and many have seen it in E. company when I go to my company so I gave them the address. Guess I'll send this one to Em for she has been so nice to me and has written so often. Please don't say a word to her for I want to surprise her. Oh yes, yesterday I received a letter from you written just after you got back from Montreal.

A few days ago, I found a filling had fallen out of a tooth so I decided it was time I saw my friend, the dentist. I always dread going but finally was able to go today for Regiment where the dentist is. He didn't hurt much and it seem as though my teeth seem to get getting harder for it used to nearly kill me. So now I'm fixed up for awhile. I sure go to the dentist often but I want all my teeth when I return.

I stopped writing for a few minutes because the priest brought in a nice marble cake and coffee which his own sister made. He is so kind to us and almost every night, he brings us in something to eat. His sister does all the house work for him and she does quite a little cooking for us when we give her some of the things (ingredients). Some of these people are so kind to us American and I can tell you most of us appreciate it for it's more like home. But nothing in the world will ever take the place of home. Have you ever noticed the sampler Em has I believe which says, "Of all the roads both east and west, the one that leads to home is best." I've always remember that saying for some reason.

My desire before I leave Europe is to visit Paris. There are a few from our battalion who go to Paris once in awhile and they say it's a beautiful place. Well, sometime I might get there. Did I ever about John Ellis? He's a clerk in headquarter company here at battalion and everyone says I act and look quite a little like him. I've even been mistaken for him! He's a very ice fellow and I really like him. He's lucky and was chosen to go to gay Paree so eh said He'd bring me back a souvenir. I wish prices were so I could buy you something such as this good lace but there's no sense in paying such outrageous prices. I'd think they'd sell more and make a larger profit if only prices were lower.

This isn't much of a letter for I want to be sure to get one written tonight so have written in great haste.

May God bless such wonderful parents and trust in Him always. Please keep up your chin and I'll say good night with a big hug and many kisses. With all my love, Harold.

January 27, 1945 (somewhere in Belgium)

Dearest Mother and Dad,

It's time to get busy again and write another letter. Yesterday not a single thing came for me but today I received quite a few things but not what I like to get most - a letter from either of you. But Em, sent me a pretty Christmas card and the company which sent you those pins sent me another pin to see if I could drum up trade. So now I have two more pins and will send one to Em and one to Mrs. Newell for she is my "church mother." I really didn't expect to get another pin but did send a little extra money there to make sure. And then two packages came for me, one from Aunt Frances with a few things to eat and a package from Alice Shedd. Mrs. Hendrie also sent me some Church calendars and papers. I never knew for sure about Arthur Foster but had a suspicion when you said you took Mrs. Foster's place as president because of the circumstances. It certainly is too bad! The mail is coming through so terrible that the last letter I had from you was the fourth of January.

Soon this month will be over and Spring will be here. But best of all, we get paid next Thursday and I hope \$50 will be sent this month as class E (bonds) instead of the usual \$10 you've been getting.

I've got a couple of little souvenirs today but didn't have enough money to get anything very expensive. Maybe you can use an iron and press the handkerchief for it is slightly wrinkled. But don't touch the flags for they might spoil. And I've got a little pin which I'll send in a letter soon. Guess I'll soon send the slide rule I have but am trying to figure out how to wrap it.

Last night, the priest came in and served us a cake which had quite fancy icing on it. A large V in the middle and U.S.A. around it and was really good. Nice to taste something home made though. Then after that, I got out some cross word puzzles and two of us began to work on them. We got quite far with them and it reminds me so much of the way you and I used to work together. I never was of much help but I could work out a little.

Guess I'm just not in the mood for writing or I can't seem to go on. I must be tired! So I'll say good night and may God bless such wonderful people. With all my love, Harold

#Letter written January 30, 1945. no location

Dearest Mother,

I'm sending Grandma's letter to you because I believe letters going to Canada are strictly censored but those going to the U.S. are not quite so. Please forward this to her and if you like may read the letter. You told me about one of letters being all cut to pieces and I don't want that to happen again.

I'll be writing a letter to you soon so will save the news till then. With all my love,  
Harold

P.S. What a pair you are - you and Dad. Dad in his letter said he was going to Montreal for your sake and you say only for his sake. I'm glad you're thinking of each other but why not get together and plan things. Ha!

#January 30, 1945. Somewhere in Belgium

Dearest Mother and Dad,

I don't expect to finish this letter tonight but at least it'll be started. These last couple of days I have gotten a few letters but thank goodness no more packages for awhile. Mrs. Villeneuve wrote and said she's getting a few more letters from Fred so she seems to be in better spirits. Mrs. Newell told me in a letter today that you haven't had an mail from me for a month but I'm glad you have a last heard from me. If only the mail would go through the way it is written and then you wouldn't be without mail for so long. In these rest periods when we're not doing anything and each day is the same, it is so hard to say anything so I don't expect this to be too long. Mrs. Newell said that Mr. Newell gave his seventh blood donation and he was asked to give it in some boy's name so he gave it in my honor. I thought that was so wonderful and almost brought tears to my eyes. Mrs. Newell certainly seems to think quite little of me. Some different from the way it was a few years ago. As you say, kids can certainly cause more trouble!

Today, I received two letters from you and these were the first ones I've had since the one dated Jan. 2. These were dated January 9 and 17.

January 31.

I didn't get very far writing yesterday but I'm going to try and finish it today. Did I ever tell you about everything freezing? Why, even my ink was frozen and I had to thaw it out before I could do a thing. One of the fellows had some eggs and I'll be darned if they didn't freeze solid and fast. Some mornings we get tomato juice but there is so much ice in it

that I actually heat up the juice so it'll thaw out. And then it's still cold. I certainly like juice and one day at my company, I drank four great big glasses full. Cold weather certainly causes an awful lot of trouble and I'll be so glad when warm weather comes. But it won't be too long before Spring is upon us again. Today is pay day again and I really don't know how much I'll get for it depends on if they take out \$50 which I requested them to send you. One time, I asked the company clerk who takes care of all our finances when my war bond was canceled and he said something about my records being mixed up so my bond was canceled. I got so disgusted that I'll never take out war bonds through the army for they take too long to get to you. So if you want to, put some of my money into bonds. And once in awhile, would you please tell me how much I have in my bank account No one ever knows how much it is for your in-coming are not censored and I don't mention finance to anyone. I certainly swell up with pride when I hear how much I have but I know it's due to such wonderful and generous parents. I certainly have been sending home plenty of money but so is everyone else for it is very rare we ever have a chance to send it unless in a place like Paris or some big city.

One of the runners just came back from delivering a message to his company and in he walked with a raincoat which he got from his supply sergeant. At first we didn't know whether it was a walking raincoat or a person inside for the coat is so large, it reaches way down to the ground and is over his hands - by about three inches. He's only a small fellow and in he walks with the largest size raincoat the army puts out! Back in the States we had to have so much of this and that but over here we just take what we want and nothing is said. Quite a few things such as a pack, etc. I wouldn't take and I haven't worn a pack since I entered combat.

The day before yesterday, we were all excited about going to see a movie which was to be shown in the afternoon. It is so rare an event that I like to go whenever I can. So off we started to the theater! When the projector began we saw no unforeseen circumstances but within fifteen minutes off went the current and we were left right in the middle of an exciting news reel. So back we went to our house and started to moan and groan. But that night we saw "Caught in a Harem" with Bud Abbott and Lou Costell and it certainly was funny. We'd much rather have that type of a picture than a serious one or war picture. I was one of the lucky persons to sit down and many stood. Only the elite sit!! Ha! Thank goodness though the current didn't go off this time and we actually saw the whole reel. The only trouble with these G.I. movies is that it takes three reels to make up a complete show and as a result reels have to be changed. It's so much nicer to have one continuous movie such as at home. But I shouldn't complain for we were fortunate in seeing the film.

Guess I might as well send home the French book. Too many of these "ferners" trying to learn English and as a result, I can't get a word in edgewise or ask questions. They do all the talking. Oh well, guess I don't want to learn it anyway! But seriously some don't give me much chance to learn with all their questions and then when I find someone willing to teach me more, we move out! Bah! Demoralizing!

Yesterday some of the fellows decided to take a German pistol apart so five of them began the delicate operation. They said it certainly was easy to take apart and then they began to put it together. Such a time I never heard for there was more cursing going on. Well, finally they got it together and lo and behold, they were too expert and had one piece left over. Then there was more scratching of heads but after about an hour it was together and worked once again. Sort of reminds me the time I took my rifle apart so easily and what a time trying to get it together. Then to top it all, I had one piece left over so one of the fellows had to come to my rescue.

I'm enclosing a couple of clippings which I got from army papers. One tells about the 83<sup>rd</sup> and is quite old for I've had forgotten to send it to you. Then I'm enclosing a one mark note which we got paid with last month. And the other article I'm enclosing should give you quite a laugh in a serious way if you understand what I mean. Imagine, they are only sending 18 years olders overseas now and the army policy is changing. I was only eighteen but still was sent overseas and hundreds of others were in my fix also. Oh well, at the French say, c'est la guerre! (It's the war).

I've been learning a few card games lately so when I get home, I'll teach them to you and Betty and we can play the way we used to. We certainly used to have enjoyable times at night. Mum, you and I seem to get getting closer to each other the older I get. You mean so much to me. I don't mean Dad, that I don't think of you for I love you very much but Mum used to spank me and discipline me and that was reason for me not thinking so much of her. But I never gave it a thought and have always loved her so much. Pretty nice wife, eh? And you, Mum, have got a good husband even though he does make you wait fifteen years to get some things.

By the way, I want you to add another address to the list you have for films (pictures which I sent). I hope it isn't too much work for you and if it's too much forget about it. I'll take care of it when I get home. This fellow is an H company runner and at the time I sent the addresses to you, he was not around. The address is Mrs. K. S. Dunn, 1328 James Ave., St. Paul, Minnesota and this is his sister. Thanks so much for trying to do this these boys. They really appreciate it.

I've been rambling on and on and haven't said anything so will close. Please keep up your chin and trust in the good Lord. May He bless you both. With all my love, Harold

#February 2, 1945. Somewhere in Belgium

Dearest Mother and Dad,

It's time I get busy again and write for I not only have a little to say but want to send you a couple of little items. Just after I wrote to you last, the mail came in and here were two letters from you dated January 4 and 6 and a letter from Eric. Then yesterday in came a Fanny Farmers box of chocolates from you which went like hotcakes. But I can tell you I had my share of the box for not many can get ahead of me! And something that I've been waiting for so long - That is the picture of the boats and of Miss Martin and Miss Mitchell - I don't like her last name at all, too hard to spell. (WIGELIUS) Why did someone, probably she, piece holes in her eyes? I thought those pictures were wonderful but now I wish you'd send me some of yourselves for you've only sent me one set since. I've been over here, Em send a letter too, so now I have two of hers to answer. The mail is so irregular that two letters mailed a month apart can get here at the same time.

Probably this month you've noticed again that you've only received \$10 which I assume you received. For some reason they didn't take the money out as I requested but it's all right. This month I won't be sending any money for I've used it all up. This is the first time since I've been over here that I've spent much. You might laugh when I tell you what I've bought but I think it's pretty nice. It's a real good German camera which one of the fellows got hold of. I believe it's worth well over one hundred dollars but I bought it for forty. Guess I'll try and send it through the mail alter and I just hope and pray it'll get to you. I don't want two cameras so will send this new one home. And then I paid for the films which I had developed lately and will enclose some pictures in this letter. Also I paid a little for a couple of good linen hankies which John Ellis brought back from Paris. The developing which was done here is pretty good but the printing was terrible as you'll notice when you

see the prints. Oh well, it's better than nothing and soon I'll try and get the films sent home.

Last night we saw a very long motion picture which was called "Rhapsody in Blue" which was the life of George Gershwin. It was very long, nearly twice as long as the regular, but it wasn't boring except for one thing. He composed the type of music called "the blues" and I hate that. I would have enjoyed it if there had been more semi-classics played. I wonder if this picture showed back in the States yet or is it a new film?

I never thought I'd ever get the films I had developed for they told us to come back the next day and it kept up that way for a few days. But now I'm happy and as contented as a cow! Just washing a few minutes ago and am really a chicish type of person.

I wish you'd put most of money in the bank rather than have too much in bonds. There is so much red tape to go through to get the money back that I'd rather have it at my disposal. I don't feel as though I'm unpatriotic not buying too many bonds for I'm helping over here.

I can't seem to think very well tonight so am closing soon. The one letter you wrote to me in which you spoke about religion certainly affected me and I'm so happy we both feel the same. Oh, wouldn't I like to get home for awhile and then I'd be so happy. I love you both so very much and you men more to me than anything else in the world

God has been so wonderful to our family and I pray often, in fact every night. May He bless such wonderful people and keep you safe. With all my love, Harold  
P.S. May on these handkerchiefs you could tat a pretty border to add to it?

#Letter written February 3, 1945 (no location)

Dearest Mother and Dad,

I am enclosing a paper published by our division which will tell you about the fighting here in the Ardennes sector. No mail as yet today but do hope some new letters come in from you as I'm anxious to hear how the colored pictures turned out. Not much in them, mostly scenery. Have you been doing any thing about those negatives I sent home? Just do the best you can do but if it's too much work forget about it. And I'll leave it to you whether to let me collect the money here or send it C.O.D.

I love you both so very much and may God bless you every minute of the day and night. With all my love, Harold

P.S. I'll write again when I have a chance for I know how you feel.

#February 4, 1945 (somewhere in Belgium)

Dearest Mother and Dad,

I have just come back from church and am now waiting for dinner so will get a little note written. The chaplain was very good this morning and preached how wonder the Bible is and how everyone should read it. I overheard two fellows talking just after one of his sermons and they both exclaimed how they'd like to have him as their minister back home. He is indeed a good speaker and when he says something he puts a spiritual feeling into his meaning. It's so hard to describe just what I mean. As Henry Swett, who goes all the time with me to church, and I were walking to where we stay, our battalion executive officer, Major Allen greeted us and began to talk. He said he was ashamed of himself for not having been to church since he's been overseas and went on to explain that he hates to hear preachers hem and haw and not explain themselves and in fact gave them up in disgust but now he is going all the time for this preacher strikes him as perfect. Oh well, some try their biggest at giving sermons but we all haven't the talent. Anyway, all I mean to say is that I went to church.

We got hold of a Reader's Digest yesterday so last night as I was looking through I came across a test to see how good your vocabulary is. So two of us decided to try it and what words! I have heard of all of them but didn't know all their meanings. Anyway it turned out that I ended with eight right while he had only five. And he's nearly 35 and should know many more words than I. I sure wish I had your vocabulary though, Mum.

Yesterday I went for the mail but it didn't come in at the usual time so the mail clerk told me to come back after supper. So I pranced back after supper and there was one letter from you dated Jan. 11, 1945. In it, you told me about getting the color films back and how good they turned out. I'm so glad they turned out and I'll try now and tell you what each was of. #1 and 2 were of a country road near Canach (Kanach), Luxemburg and in one is an old man leading a horse which is pulling a wagon, #3 is just as you described it and I just wanted to show how beautiful the country was then. Way, way off in the distance is Germany. #4 and 5 are just scenes, #6 was supposed to show vapor streaks left by planes, #7 & 8 are vapor left behind by planes which flew so frequently overhead. I believe if the films were projected large enough you'd see planes at the beginning of the vapor trail, #9 is more plane vapor. #13 is the house in which we stayed at Canach, Luxemburg. I could spell it Kanach for the Germans changed a great many towns. One they changed from Bous to Buss. By the way, can you see a large manure pile at the extreme left hand corner of the house. Every house in that town was like that. #14 is not vivid in color because it was taken on a very dull day. #15 is of a buzz bomb or I should say the trail left behind by one. They are one of the hardest things to take a picture of because the vapor disappears so quickly. I just happened to be Johnny on the spot and was rewarded with a picture. I have a reason for taking all pictures and after finding out those turned out so well, I believe I'll try some more color pictures. #16 is a field full of tanks which have camouflage nets over them. Look closely and you'll see them #19 isn't of me but one of the other runners.

I want to thank you and so do all the rest, for getting those films printed and I think you're doing a good job and I wish you'd thank Mr. Robbins in my name for doing all he is. Before the war, those places would have been glad to get such an order. Now I have 85 more negatives to have printed but it won't be half the trouble for I want every printable negative printed. I hope you'll be able to get them done without too much trouble. All these fellows certainly appreciate you doing all this for them.

I'm enclosing another linen hankie which was purchased in an elite store in Paris. I buy only the best for my parents! And I'll enclose a few more pictures. As I said, these were printed very poorly and the negatives are very good. These aren't scratched up at all except for about four negatives and I'll designate them.

Soon I guess I'll go down and see if any new mail has come in. I hope so far I haven't had late news from you at all. I can't seem to think of much to say today even though there seems to be something which I want to say but can't remember.

I forgot to tell you that in one package I got the bulk film which you sent me and now they're all put into spools. I now have fifteen films so am quite well taken care of. After getting such good color pictures, I don't mind having you send me more Kodachrome so if you can get one, send it but don't put yourself out.

Keep up your chin and may God bless you both. I have to hear from you, Dad, so whenever you can write, I'd rather appreciate it., With all my love, Harold

#February 15, 1945 (somewhere in Belgium)

Dearest Mother and Dad,

Received a letter of Dad's written Jan. 6 yesterday and also a very nice letter from Grandma dated the 13<sup>th</sup> of Jan. Dad you really must think a lot of me writing as much as

you do and I can tell you I appreciate it very much. In the letter you said something about Drew Pearson telling about the army losing nearly one million packages in this breakthrough. A good many fellows here are missing quite a few packages but I've been lucky and am pretty sure I got most of them. I have been thinking about sending this camera home that I have but am rather skeptical as there is quite a little thieving in the mails. There always has to be a few people who have to take advantage of the war and if some of these fellows could get hold of people like that, they would beat the living daylight out of them. Why people when they're put in a responsible position can't be honest!

Last night I just happened to think how lost we'd be if the word "if" weren't ever used. I believe I hear that word used more than any other such as "if only I were home," etc. There is one fellow here who uses the word "if" so frequently we're sick of hearing him speak. When he plays cards he says "if only I had one more card" and it goes on that way. All I can say "If I were home right now, I'd be the happiest person in all the world."

Last night, in came the priest for his evening visit and in his hands he had some things to eat. He served us some awfully strong wine but I couldn't even drink a little because it was too strong. And we also had some good apple fritters or whatever they are called. They were sliced apples fried in some kind of fat or something like that. Mum, probably you know more about that than I would. They really were good and I will say his sister is an excellent cook. It has been so nice staying here!

Lately, I've been reading or trying to read the life story about P.T. Barnum in order to see if there was anything about him being a trustee of Tufts College and him giving his elephant Jumbo to the college, but there wasn't a thing about it. It was interesting though to read about Jenny Lind and Tom Thumb and some of his other celebrities.

And then another book which I've read lately is a story by Bob Hope about his travels to the European Theater. He certainly is a comical writer when he wants to but a couple of paragraphs in the beginning are quite serious and then I can see just what he's like.

I'll enclose a couple more pictures in this letter and will do this in every letter until I dispose of them. You'll probably be very disappointed with many pictures but I will say the negatives are very good and have been developed better than in many places.

Guess I'll close now as there isn't too much to say. Sometimes it seems as though I'm just in the right mood and can write four sheets.

Keep up your chin for the war may end soon. Let us pray to God that it may be so soon. May He bless both of you and keep you always. With all my love. Harold

#February 8, 1945. No location

Dearest Mother and Dad,,

These last couple of days, there has been late mail coming in with a mixture of old ones and I'll be darned if I didn't get an old one dated January 15. The latest I've had from you is Jan., 17 and the mail lately has been coming in dated the 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. Oh well, it'll be coming in sooner or later. I've been checking up and have found I've received every letter except two. One way back in October, and #86. Two days ago, all the Boston Herald's for about two months which Mr. Swain (neighbor two doors down on the same side of our street) sent to me came all at once for he is still sending them to my old address and it takes so long to forward. Would you please tell him my new address so it'll take less time?

There is something now I'd like you to send unless you find that Miss Martin is sending it. And that is a wallet. Mine is starting to come apart but not bad as yet so I'd better notify you in plenty of time. Miss Martin, when she wrote to thank me for the pin,

mentioned about having a wallet made for me with my division insignia on it. So would you check on it, please? I must have something to put all my money in, you know!

Yesterday, I saw a funny one happen. Some boys had a dog which was very meek but whenever a poker is brought near him even though it is gold, it gets vicious. I never saw the likes of it. And they had the darn thing crawling up and down ladders. The dog, though, must have been burnt when young.

A few days ago, I brought a few scarfs and sweaters down to the company which were made by the Red cross. It had one each one where it was made and they certainly come from all parts of the country. Was I surprised, though, to find a scarf made in Weymouth, Mass. Nearly home! Maybe some of the things you have knit have found their way to our division. The scarfs were the longest I ever saw and were nearly seven feet long. And the sweaters were turtle neck and I believe pretty warm. I don't need a sweater, though, for I was able to get hold of an American factory made sweater.

I'm enclosing in this letter, a few more pictures. And a couple of German bells which I forgot to send home.

I'm enclosing in this letter, a few more pictures. And a couple of German bells which I forgot to send home.

Guess I'll close now for I can't seem to think of anything more to say. God is so kind to us and may He bless you. Keep up your chin and keep busy for your own sake, please! With all my love, Harold

#February 11, 1945, No location

Dear Mun and Dad,

I should have written yesterday but I just couldn't seem to bring myself around to writing. So I'll try and get it done this beautiful Sunday morning. As yet, I haven't heard anything about church services but if there isn't any, I'll hold my own private little service. Lately, I've been reading more of the Testament and I've found it very interesting even though I have to read parts over.

I don't remember but did I tell you I received a letter from you dated Jan. 3 and one from Em the same day - Feb. 9 (must be Jan. 9). And yesterday I received a letter from Mrs. Villeneuve and a cute valentine from Ruby. Mrs. Villeneuve claimed that Fred is safe and has plenty to do as he is going to school and learning French and algebra. But he is so homesick, she said. I'm so thankful, though. I never got homesick though I do miss you so very much. I wish I could get a couple of late letters from you for the last one was dated Jan. 17. But I suppose some will be coming in soon.

I never remember you telling me if you every received those pictures of St. Malo and Dinard which were bought there. I sent a small package of those pictures with coins and stamps from Luxemburg just after my birthday. I never heard whether it got home so would you please let me know? I suppose it never did get there! But all in all, I've been fortunate for almost all my packages have gotten home. Henry Swett sent a package home way back in August and it never got there. Wonder where it went! I've got two more packages to send and just hope it gets there. One is the camera and the other is the film - negatives.

I'm getting low on toothpaste so would you please send me some in a package. If I can get something that really cleans and polishes teeth I'd appreciate it. Maybe you can ask Dr. Blanchard. I've really got everything I need so cannot think of anything to request. I have to laugh, the fellows kid me about the bag in which I carry all my junk and they tell me I ought to start a store. But one thing, I never have to borrow anything from anyone which is far different from most of the. But I hate to depend on anyone else. Oh yes, I just

thought of something to request. It's a roll of scotch tape which I use once in awhile especially for loading this bulk film.

The funniest incident I've seen lately was in the priest's home. He used to come in every night and talk with us awhile. Once in awhile he'd speak to Henry Swett who has the most southern accent around here and at first I had an awful job understanding him. One night the priest told him he'd better not eat much for he was too large! What a statement I will say he is large for he weighs 180 lbs and is only 5 foot 2. So you understand what I mean. And then Swett pipes up in his strong accent and said, "that's my big weakness!" Of course, the priest didn't understand and then tried to carry on a conversation with him. Swett got so red in the face and yellowed when he talked. Meanwhile all of us were nearly splitting our sides laughing. Swett certainly hates to talk to any of these foreigners.

I have finally found out why that \$50 isn't being taken out each month. The company clerk who takes care of all this finance lost the slip on which I said I wanted the allotment increased. Quite a few fellows found their allotments the same after they had requested a change. So the clerk must have lost a whole bunch. Very unusual for this clerk. The first sergeant called me to the company a couple days ago and told me the clerk remembered I wanted a change but forgot because he lost the slip. So the first sergeant has taken care of all the details and next month \$50 will come out. I hope!! But don't be surprised if it doesn't come out.

Guess I'm nearly out of news except to say that we're entitled to wear three combat stars on the European Theater of Operations (E.T.O.) pin. Our division has been one of the first divisions to land after D day so if you ever hear someone say their son has more than that on his pin, he's a fibber. Probably we'll get more but the army won't release any yet. Boy, when I get home, I'll be able to strut around with all kinds of ribbons. But really, I don't care about ribbons or anything, only that I get home. I forgot to say that each star represents a major operation.

After I finish this letter, I'll send you a division newspaper and you can read some things which you probably never knew before.

This is all for now. May God bless such wonderful parents and keep you safe. I love you so daily and hope to be home soon. With all my love and affection, Harold

P.S. Please send me a package of candy, cookies, nuts, etc. I'd appreciate them very much. Did I ever tell you I'm in the second battalion, 330<sup>th</sup> Infantry? I always say E. Company but never mentioned battalion. According to Infantry organization, A, B, C, and D companies are in the first battalion, E, F, G, H, companies in the second, and I, K, L, M companies in the third. There is no such thing as J company.

#February 12, 1945 (no location)

Dearest Mother and Dad,

I feel so much happier now that I've had some late mail from you instead of all this old stuff. Yesterday after I wrote, the mail clerk surprised me by handing me letters, #1, #2, #3, and #4 and a nice valentine from the Qualeys (I went to school with Jimmy Qualey). That was so thoughtful of them! And then today in came two more #5 and 6 so you can see the mail is coming through much better than before. But will it last? I think when I go with out mail for five or six days that that is terrible but imagine having to wait three weeks as you did. But I know by the time you receive this letter you'll have most of those I sent. I usually write every other day now but once in awhile it is three days and sometimes every day. But I never forget to write whenever possible as you've found out.

I was just reading over #6 letter and have found a few questions you want answered. By the way, I think it a good idea to start with No. 1 again rather than continue in the

hundreds. I think I have such smart and clever parents!! All the fellows think it's such a good idea to number them for then I can always tell whether any are missing and what ones. Did I tell you, out of all the letters only two never came. I think that's splendid but as yet 97 and 100 haven't arrived but I expect them any day now.

I believe I told you that the church package got to me safely and I'll get a letter off to Mrs. Dutton as soon as possible. But I won't use one of your days to write one to her for I can squeeze in a letter to her soon!! You did an excellent job of sending boxes and everyone commented on such varied boxes. (I believe I told you I received all I requested) what a bunch of "T's") including the Vicks, candles, etc. And I received the comb and nail file which I use quite often. So many packages came in at once but I believe you sent two home made fruit cakes and I can tell you it didn't last. They sure were crazy about your fruit cakes for they are so heavy and not these puffed up kind with lots of air. My darling aunt (Lillian) sent me a fruit cake but I won't give her the credit for I imagine Eric was the one who wanted to send it. Very soon, though, I must write and thank them for being so thoughtful. And the queer thing is that even as late as it was sent - in Nov. - it came as quickly as those sent a month before. That's the army for you. I must have forgotten to tell you the cross word puzzle books also came.

I see by last night's paper that you're having more snow and I'll say you're having an extremely severe winter. But we've been lucky over here for the temperature has seldom been below fifteen and even at that it isn't noticeable for it's a drier cold than at home. For awhile it was snowing all the time but about a week ago it all disappeared and the weather has been just like spring. Some natives told us that spring comes early every year so maybe there'll be no more snow. Imagine, the army tried to get everyone fitted with white snow suits and warm clothes and then the snow disappeared and it grew quite warm. I suppose better late than never! All of us lately have been hearing from home about how our clothes are not warm enough for cold weather but it really isn't so in my case. I'm not just trying to make you feel better but am telling the truth. I believe it is better to tell you the bad as well as the good as you have found out. So many try to deceive those at home but that isn't my policy for I know you'll worry whether I tell you a thing or not.

Almost every night possible I have a good cup of tea and I don't mean "colored mater" like Mrs. Dutton. But good strong cup of tea. Dad certainly is English for he spells colored, "coloured" don't you, Pop! I'd better not call you my old man for you blasted me out Mr. Richardson one time for calling you that. Pretty good, blasting out a person who can make you stand on your head if he wants to. Ha! By the way, I forgot (tell you) about receiving a very important letter yesterday from none other than Dad! You're doing such an excellent job and I appreciate it so much. I'm really honored to think that you'll write to me when you won't write to anyone else. You don't leave it entirely up to Mum. Getting back to the tea, once in a very long time the kitchen serves tea instead of coffee and then I go back for seconds. There are so few who will take tea that there is plenty left over. They don't know what is good for them, do they? I'm getting so now I can't drink coffee at all. Guess it's because the kitchen makes such poor "coffee" as one of the runners calls it. We don't like to be called runners though for it makes us sound lowly but rather "messengers." Nicer, don't you think?

Boy, I'm in the writing mood tonight for it feels as though I'm just getting started. BLut we'll see how far I get.

Yesterday, I wrote and told you I hadn't heard we were having church services but one thing I will say about the army, they want their men to have the chaplains whenever possible. The time was at two o'clock and I thought just as I was going in that it was only 9 at home and you'd probably be in Sunday School. Just think, we worshiped together at the

same time. We held the services in a barn and as the chaplain pointed out it was as humble as Christ being born in a manger. But no matter whether in a barn or the finest church standing, God still hears us and listens with open heart. The chaplain this Sunday was the major who I've talk about before. He did give a good sermon this week but not as good as the other. The two men cannot compare, it seems. This chaplain, Chaplain Webster, is a wonderful speaker, all right, but would be a good debater or scientific speaker. The other, Chaplain Blich, seems to have more spiritual feeling. To vary the program, a boy from the third battalion came with the chaplain and sang hymns for us while he strummed a guitar. It was quite nice and then the chaplain and he sang a couple of duets. They are both excellent singers with trained voices and it sounded so pretty. There was a record attendance, more than I've seen in quite awhile.

Then at four o'clock, I had supper and nice fried chicken. Yesterday morning, the E company mess sergeant invited both Henry Swett and me to dine with them. We usually eat with headquarters since we're always here but this was a special occasion when they served chicken! Everything tasted so good and we even had fresh potatoes. So often it's this dehydrated stuff. Which isn't what it is cracked up to be for it just doesn't taste the same. The same way with powdered eggs and milk. Nothing like the original, all right. When I get home, I'm going to eat fresh eggs, a dozen times a day with plenty of cold cow's milk. Yum, yum! I guess I've sure changed for there was one time you couldn't make me eat eggs. But as I grow older, I change.

This morning I decided I'd go to the dentist for I knew I have a couple of cavities and I wanted this tended to before they got too bad. I haven't had very much trouble considering but more than when at home. When I appeared the dentist flew off the handle and said I come every two weeks and gave me a lecture. But I let him rave for awhile and then told him I have poor teeth and didn't want to lose if at all possible and said I spent lots of money at home to have them fixed. He finally calmed down and then looked at my teeth. Much to my surprise, my teeth weren't quite as bad off as I thought and it wasn't because he wanted to get rid of me. He refilled two fillings which were very old and found two new cavities near the gums. I asked him how my wisdom teeth were and he checked them. Then said that my lower right one wasn't growing in as it should and exclaimed that if it ever gave me any trouble to have it x-rayed back at division. Anyway, before I left he said he was very sorry for having acted the way he did for he realized that I don't want to loose any teeth. So then I left and all was forgotten, so now in order to keep my teeth better, I'll try and brush them more than before. But as you no doubt realize, I can't always brush them. In Germany, water was so scarce that I couldn't always brush them but I'll say that my teeth are much better than before for the drill doesn't hurt me half as much as it used to. Please don't worry about them though for they are all taken care of now and I'll try and brush them every day.

Then this afternoon, I decided to take a chance and send home the camera rather than carry it around and maybe loose it. All I can say is that I hope it'll get home but there is a possibility it won't. I'm a pessimist, I guess. I certainly wrapped it up good and it shouldn't break. And because I think so much of the I'm sending it first class and am registering it. Even if it is lost, money isn't anything but I think it is worthwhile trying to get it home. Now all that is left is to send the films home but the army is getting so strict that I don't know if I can. Guess too many fellows are taking advantage of the mails and are always breaking the rules so now they're cracking down on everything. No matter what goes on, there are always a few who take advantage of the situation.

I'm enclosing a few more pictures which takes care of the photos I have. Some of the negatives were never printed so you'll have to wait until you get the negatives but all those of me were printed.

I never sent Mrs. Newell or Mrs. Hendrie anything so when I write, I'll send Mrs. Newell the insignia pin and Mrs. Hendrie a handkerchief like what I sent to you - from Paris.

Well, here I am on my sixth page and I'm not doing bad but it still will be the last page. So many of the fellows when they write have to use lines or will start in one corner and end up in the other. But I've gotten so used to writing without lines that I think I do fairly well. But you, Mum, still can write straighter than I.

If I want to get this censored in time to get out tomorrow, I had better finish up soon. Oh, I forgot to mention that I was so pleased to get those pictures which you sent and was especially of those of you or I should say one But, Dad, where is a picture of You? You're important to me. Also. Mum, in that picture you look to much like a schoolmarm in the face for it's puckered up and your lines look queer. Maybe I'm particular but as yet I haven't had a real good one of you yet. But I think you look so stylish and those clothes of yours are exquisite. But that hat! I still don't see it nor could any of the fellows. I'm sorry that Betty wasn't looking at the camera but it is a good picture of her. Guess you're just not a natural born photographer like me. Conceited, ain't I. But I don't care how the pictures are as long as I get some.

Please keep up your chin and put your faith in God as I know you are doing. May He bless such wonderful parents. Good night and now I'll close with a big hug and kiss. Guess I'm just too sentimental. With all my love, Harold  
P.S. Quite a novel. Eh?

#February 14, 1945. No location  
Dearest Mother and Dad,

Here it is Valentine's day and I want to say that you are my only Valentine! Last evening in came one lone letter which was sent by Miss Arnold, the old hen. Do you remember how I loved her, oh yes! She spoke so well of Ruby but was that only for my benefit. Ruby doesn't get along or didn't once. She claimed that Ruby gave her the address but apparently she copied it wrong or mistook the O for an E. Anyway it was sent to the wrong division. It was all marked up and I guess it went all over creation. It was dated November 4 so you can see what a miss sent letter must go through.

And this evening I received two more of your letters #98 and 99 so almost all your letters have come to me up to the 5<sup>th</sup> of Feb. I certainly love to hear from you.  
(cont.) February 15.

I couldn't seem to do much writing for some reason so read a book instead. It was entitled "Four Years in Paradise" by Osa Johnson and was quite a thrilling book. Now I'm on a book about science and the war and am finding that quite interesting.

Just for the fun of it, would you please do me a favor? Do you remember the picture of the collaborator in St. Malo. I wish you'd send it to "Life Magazine" and ask them if they can use it. I have a reason for doing this and I'll let you know what it is all about. Just send a normal print and see what happens.

The day before yesterday I saw a movie in the same barn as the church services and it was fine until someone sang in the film and then the acoustics were terrible. It was only a second rate picture but it was quite comical and everyone laughed all though the picture. Dad, do you like films (motion pictures) more than when I was at home?

Boy, am I stylish now and so handsome for now I have all new clothes on. Conceited! I was lucky enough to get up to my company before all the clothes were gone so the supply sergeant fitted me up. And I even have a new field jacket. It's much different than the one I had when home on furlough for it's a new type - so much heavier and much different. This one has four pockets so that means I can carry around more junk. Quite an asset!

Today, a medical doctor (captain) approached me and asked if I had a camera to sell. Apparently someone mentioned that I had two so he tried. But I told him one is on its way home and the other I wouldn't sell. He certainly seemed quite disappointed for he wanted one so badly. There were plenty of German cameras floating around at one time but I guess most were sent home. All I'm hoping is that this one I just sent gets home alright. Would you mentioned receiving the camera when and if you do in three for four letter for some letters take so long getting here and I want to know as soon as possible.

I'm not in the same mood as when I wrote that six sheet letter so will close now. I love you with all my heart and try not to get sick or hurt yourselves. Keep up your chin. With all my love, Harold  
P.S. Please send me a package of candy, cookies, nuts, etc.

#February 17, 1945. No location  
Dearest Mother and Dad,

After I wrote the last letter, in came quite a few which I must answer as soon as possible. It seems as though just when I catch up on my writing in come a dozen more to answer. The last back letter of yours came in so now I'm almost up to date. Miss Keany wrote a letter Feb. 7 and came to me in eight days so the mail system is so much better than for quite awhile. I do hope the mail is coming through to you as well as to us. She writes such an interesting letter and writes a real long one - sort of like Miss Martin. I complimented her on the good French she taught us as all the French people claimed I could speak quite well. She claimed if I get her a raise in pay - as she shows my letter to all the teachers and the principal - she'll give me part of it. I don't know why she thinks my letter so interesting but she shows them to all. Sort of like you, Dad! And your valentine came one day after the 14<sup>th</sup> so at least it wasn't a month late as it happened on my birthday. Mr. Marsell wrote me a very nice letter and I was so glad to hear from him. I must answer soon for I haven't written him in so long. And Charlie McNulty sent a letter in which he told me some of the town news. Quite a few fellows have been home on furlough and he was telling me about them. Oh, how I'd love to get home even for a few days!! Guess that's all of them.

I was so glad to get that picture of Dad and Mary Lou in their "cows breakfast" in your last letter. You mentioned to me about taking color pictures and claimed you told me about it in of your letters but I never got the letter. I never remember hearing you tell me about that. I would appreciate it if you would tell me again about some of the color pictures you've taken after that "blank" film you took. I hope that taught you a lesson.

Yesterday afternoon, the chaplain came again and we had a nice outdoor service. I always like to have a service outside for it seems to bring me even closer to God than the largest church in the world. The day was so beautiful and warm that it seemed so nice to be able to be outside the way we were. I suppose tomorrow we'll have another service and I do so hate to miss any services.

I took a few color pictures yesterday but haven't finished the film yet. At last, we can have our films developed for a special service officer comes here and collects all the film and has it done by the army. I haven't seen any of the results as yet but believe they do a fairly

good job. Guess I'll see if I can get the Kodachrome film done there for I can't send it though the mails unless it is developed and censored.

My camera came back to me for I needed to include a new slip of paper in it. This rule came through just as I mailed it so it had to be returned. I wasn't able to send it registered because they claimed I hadn't packed it well enough. Anyway, it went first class and it cost \$1.50 just to send it. But I'll be worth it if only the camera gets home.

Guess I'll close to see if this can get out in the early mail tomorrow morning. Good night and may God bless you wonderful people. With all my love, Harold

#February 19, 1945. No location.

Dearest Mother and Dad,

I must get busy again and write for I know you are always anxious to hear from me. Yesterday, there was very little mail but I did get two v-mails - dehydrated letters as some call them - and they were from Betty and Mrs. Hendrie. Then tonight all I received was an old letter from you so the mail isn't going through as well as it was for a few days.

I was going to request some ink in this letter but PX rations came in today which we buy and among the items was ink so I jumped at the chance. This foreign ink isn't much good for it dries up so quickly and doesn't flow smoothly. But now I have some good old American ink and it's so much better. And I also bought a mirror as I broke the other one I had. We, Swett and I, also got candy, cookies and tomato juice so we had quite a store of food because this morning we also got some regular PX rations which is free and we get cigarettes, candy, and gum. But thank goodness I don't smoke and don't have to carry them around.

Sunday, we had church services in the barn and had Chaplain Blitch as the preacher. It was so nice to hear him and he had an extra large congregation. But the battalion was having problems so in order get out of them, they all came. I sort of got aggravated when one of the runners said he wasn't going because he'd been to the service two days before in the field. And then another said he'd go to church if he finished writing a letter. Imagine putting something like that (church) after such trivial things of life! I know it's none of my business whether a person goes to church but it goes get me mad when they say such things. I have persuaded most of the runners to go who never used to and now they're more regular than those who used to go on and off. Out of the 8 runners, 7 of us are Protestant and quite often all of us attend church.

At present, I'm trying to read three books at one time. Quite a feat if I can do it! But, naturally, not at the same time but read one for awhile and then another. One book has to do with mathematics which tells about quite a few things in algebra, geometry, etc. but quite a bit I know about. There are very, very few I know of who had even algebra so when they look at the book, they can't make heads nor tails out of it. One chapter pertains to "googols" which are numbers which had 100 zeros after it. It was too much for me, though, for such huge figures are way beyond me. And one book has to do with the life of Christ and is almost an exact duplicate of the Bible but in modern language and makes quite an interesting book. Maybe I'm too modern for I don't believe the Bible is best in such obsolete English that has gone out of existence. And the other book has to do with modern science and is quite interesting.

As I'm writing, some of the people are commenting how fast I write when I get going. I guess I do speed along and it's a wonder I write as plainly as I do and that isn't too plain. But I've seen some take nearly an hour to write what I can do in a few minutes. All I have to be is in the right mood and I'm a flash with a crash! Ha! I still can't get over writing that 6 sheet letter which I wrote last week.

Yesterday we had the surprise of our lives for guess what was given to us! It was Coca Cola and was the first one I've had since leaving the States. Each man had one bottle or was supposed to but some of the runners were left out because their company doesn't care what happens to them. I will say our company does take care of us and gives us rations, clothes, etc. while some runners go without.

Saturday night, just before I wrote, I went and saw an Abbott and Costello picture which I believe I told you about. But while I was there most of the fellows went over to a nearby town and saw Mickey Rooney in person. He was at our division for awhile but I didn't care to see him for he seems too conceited in my opinion. I will say we are having more entertainment than we used to for the fellows really need some sort of change.

The stamps are coming in good – the ones I use to send mail home – and I appreciate it so much for it saves me the trouble of ordering them through the mail clerk. And then it isn't always certain we'll get them. Keep them coming just the way you have and it'll be all right. And I have enough stationery for awhile but I'm going to let you know when I run low far enough ahead so I won't be out the way I was for awhile.

I'm enclosing a pin which I purchased when I visited Liege, Belgium. It is quite a place and is so much like home only there is a food shortage. I also obtain those souvenirs of Belgium, (a handkerchief) there also. I hope you like these little things but they really aren't much. I never told you but those two hankies from Paris cost \$3.00 each so I hope they are of fairly good material. Oh, the prices are so high over here and it certainly will be good to get back and use that foreign currency - American money. It's difficult to get used to these francs, marks, etc. and we always have to think in terms of dollars and cents in order to get the true value.

We had an excellent supper last night, one of the best yet and had steak, french fries, cake and even milk! This milk is powdered and doesn't taste as good as fresh milk so the cooks put in a little vanilla flavoring in it and it tasted pretty good. I certainly would love to have a good glass of fresh cool milk now. But with all I can drink when I get home.

It's getting late now and time for bed so I'd better close now. Keep up your chin and pray that the war will end soon so we can all get home. Good night! I love you so dearly! With all my love, Harold

P.S. Please send me a package of candy, cookies, gum, etc. for I'd enjoy it very much.

#February 22, 1945. No location.

Dearest Mother and Dad,

Here it Washington's birthday and I never gave it a thought until someone mentioned that today was a holiday. I suppose the kids are having a swell time on their vacation! Boy, I sure wish that were home in school again!

The first thing I did this morning was to get a haircut for the last time was way back in the priest's home. So you can see I really needed one quite badly. My hair grows so fast and I get so aggravated but after seeing some who are bald, I feel glad I have some.

Yesterday afternoon, a red cross clubmobile came and served the whole battalion coffee and doughnuts. So, of course, I had to go and eat. Yesterday was such a perfect day that I took my camera along and took one color picture of the girls handing out the coffee and doughnuts. I have a color y in the camera as you have guess and I hope this film will turn out as well as the last. With each clubmobile is a large register book in which those who wish can sign their names. It is run by states instead of alphabetical so that a person can see who comes from his State. I decided to see if anyone was from close to home as there is a place to put the hometown too. As I was going down the list, I couldn't seem to see anyone from Braintree. But there, the ver last name was from Braintree and wasn't I

surprised. I'm pretty sure he is in this division for the date beside his name was yesterday and the girls told me they haven't been to any other division. His name is James Collier so if possible would you please find out who he is and where is, if at all possible.

Last night we had a movie but I can't remember the name of it. I really didn't think much of it for I couldn't follow the story nor could anyone else. Anyway, the army was thoughtful enough to give us a movie even if it wasn't the best.

I'm enclosing a picture of a man dressed in a hood and field jacket. This is to show you what the new field jacket I'm wearing looks like. pretty stylish, eh? Notice four pockets in it which be jammed full of junk. So far, I've keep them free of most junk but I suppose as time goes by, I'll have them sticking out straight because they're so full! Ha!

I don't believe I ever told you about being issued a six month's overseas stripe. It's a little bar (gold color) which is worn on the left sleeve. But in a couple more months we'll be able to wear another one. Boy, won't I have more things on my sleeve and chest. But I hate to think of having to wear only one stripe, private first class, for it looks so lonesome! But my job calls for only that rank so I'll have to be contented. All the runners but one are pfc's. And I don't believe he'll ever be made one because he acquired venereal disease back in France. He is perfectly all right now, though, due to penicillin. The army won't tolerate this sort of thing and so having this disease is like a black eye. I have no pity though for he brought it upon himself. Being a pfc isn't so wonder but it is nice to be able to get \$5 per month extra because of that.

You remember the combat infantry badge and that it's worth ten dollars more er month, don't you? Well, one nice thing about it is even if I should return to the States, I'll still receive it and until I'm discharged. Just think, a pfc back in the States gets only \$54 while I'm getting \$74.80. But to tell the truth, I'd do without the extra money, gladly.

Now for the pictures you're having printed. I want you to cancel the prints for Kenneth Johnson and in his place please send it to Mrs. Kenneth S. Dunn, 1328 James Ave., St. Paul 5, Minn. This is William Gilbert's sister and he is an H company runner who joined us about three months ago. If the prints are on their way forget about the whole thing but if not just re-direct it. Johnson' hasn't been hurt but I'm canceling his film. Sometime soon, I'll explain why. Gosh, I'm getting you sort of confused on this film deal but the next one is going to be very simple. For all prints (negatives) are to be made and there are only four people to whom I want you to send prints to. When I send the film, I'll enclose the addresses and later tell you in a letter also.

The fellows are basking the sun while I'm writing. And there are a couple playing horse shoes and there is keen competition going on. I tried to pitch horseshoes but am not so good for it's been so long since I last played. But just give me a little time and I know I'll get better.

There is one more thing I'm enclosing and that's a picture of the new sleeping bags we've been issued. That is the reason why I didn't want the sleeping bag you sent me. When I requested the one at home I didn't have anything but blankets but after getting the army sleeping bag, I didn't want two. I, of course, the one you sent me is much better and I would hate to have anything happened to it as I plan to use it when Dad and I go hunting sometime. Won't we go, Dad? You and I can have a lot of fun together. And now that I'm getting older, we can understand each other better. I think so much of you, Dad, and I'll never forgive myself for thinking what I did of you. Now I'm glad I know the truth.

I mentioned in my last letter about getting some ink but it turned out to French Parker ink. Guess they must have added water to make it go further for it's so light. But it really isn't as good as American ink - in fact nothing except German cameras can compare

to good ole U.S. products. So would you please, if you can wrap it up well, send me a bottle of ink such as what you use.

I told you about putting color film in the camera and tod ay was so beautiful I took a few of the fellows and the family we are staying with. There are four girls and two boys and the parents. They'll be interesting to look at after the war. There is so much to tell but won't be able to until after the war. For some reason, I can remember almost all the things we've done since in France and can get within a few days when I guess the date. I can remember a good many things that most can't so it'll be so much easier to tell you all about everything.

Dad, what have I been hearing about the back door not being shoveled out! Guess you must miss me when it comes to doing the work around home!

Everyone has commented on my flashlight and said how bright it is. None of them have seen such a bright one for mine is so much better than the rest. Boy, am I proud of that flashlight and the Heaps were so kind to send it as they did. We certainly have got some nice neighbors!

A couple of days ago, I dropped a little note off to Don Hunter, Sam Harris, on old friend who went through basic and came overseas with me, and Richard Nelson. I'm sure you remember Dick. Do hope I hear from them. Max Haber, the Jewish fellow in my company is now a buck sergeant and he really deserves it. He has worked so hard! But I wouldn't trade my job for his or anyone else's for anything until I went back to division headquarters. They can have all the sergeant's ratings they want but I'm content to be a pfc and stay here. We have a very fine first sergeant now as the other was wounded awhile ago. And the new company commander is swell, too. They really take care of their runners as I told you in a recent letter.

Gosh, this has turned out to be a book with nothing in it. I have been in the best of health ll winter and honestly, I haven't had a cold at all, much better than many! I'm so proud of two such wonderful parents and I'm so thankful you have a few brains to think with. Some parents don't. May God bless you. With all my love, Harold

P.S. I get a kick out of the fellows for they swear they can't figure out how I can write so much. They write one sheet.

February 25, 1945. Somewhere in Germany

Dearest Mother and Dad,

I must get busy again and write to you for I've let my writing go for three days now. Mail came in yesterday which was dated around Feb. 15 but as yet the mail clerk hasn't sent me mine. All the fellows have been telling me that the people at home haven't heard from us for nearly one month but I do hope you haven't had to wait that long for I've been writing every other day as regular as can be. I never forget either of you for a moment. I certainly wish, though, that the mail would go through better for it makes us worry both here and at home. I know how you must feel f when I don't hear from you every so often, I begin to worry.

As you can see from the top of the sheet, we're back here again and no doubt you have a good idea why. But please don't worry too much, please, for it isn't as bad as it could be. Just trust in the good Lord and everything will be all right.

Las evening I got the biggest scare that I've had since being overseas. Imagine what I felt like when my camera disappeared and I couldn't find it anywhere. I looked high and low for nearly two hours and finally give it up in disgust. I was tired and my memory was so very poor that I couldn't remember where I had it last. Anyway, I went to bed and after being asleep only a couple of hours, I had to go to the company with some equipment. To

make a long story short, as I passed the radio sergeant, who happened to be up late, he stopped me and asked if what he had in his hand was mine. What a pleasant surprise when I looked and found it was my camera. I was so happy I could have danced a jig. I'll certainly try and be more careful for I do so want to have a picture record as all the places I go to. I believe I told you I received letter #8, but as yet am missing #7. And in this one you told me about the color film, I believe, coming loose on the spool and as a result can't rewind it. Don't feel badly about it, though, for I did the very same thing yesterday when I finished the color film. I had in the camera. So all I did was wait until it got dark and then rewound it by hand. But you can only do it in the dark, naturally.

The place which we just came from is still a secret so can't tell you for awhile. But I will tell you about the people and how nice they were to us. In fact, when we left, they actually cried for quite a time. We, the runners, were sleeping in the barn or hayloft so the family invited us in every day and we wrote and talked even though I can't speak the language at all. Somehow we'd communicate through motion of hands mostly. I'm getting to be as bad as an Italian. They had four girls ranging from 21 down to 15 and two younger boys. There was one very pretty girl and you can see the family when I get this color film printed (developed). I certainly hated to leave for they made us so welcome and gave us all the apples we wanted and every couple of nights gave us good pie and coffee or cocoa which we furnished. That really has been about the best we've ever been treated so if those pictures turn out, I'll have to send them a copy as I have their address. That makes two I've gotten since I've been overseas for the priest gave me his address and wants me to write.

Today, I washed and shaved what little beard I have to - cat's fuzz is what Dad called it. Everyone laughs but I hate to be dirty and they say I should look like a combat soldier. But if I have a chance to have a good wash, I'm not going to turn it down. Guess I've changed a lot for I sure hated the sight of water when I was younger.

Tonight, this pen is writing very poor but believe it's this terrible foreign ink which I'm using. It dries up so quickly that I can't seem to get a steady flow. I believe I told you in my last better that I wanted some American ink sent to me if you think you can wrap it up well enough. I certainly have had good satisfaction with this pen and have found that it'll hold 30 drops of ink - quite a little. I certainly hate to lose it as you gave it to me a few years ago as a birthday present.

Guess in a few minutes I'll crawl into my sleeping bag and see if I can get a good night's sleep. These sleeping bags are quite warm and have served the purpose very well.

I just don't seem to be in the mood tonight so will end this very shortly. The older I get the more lucky I feel to have such wonderful parents. I don't think any son in the world could wish for any nicer. And may God bless you. And keep you. And now I'll say good night with a big hug and a kiss. With all my love, Harold

P.S. Please send me a package of candy, gum, cookies, etc.

#February 28, 1945. Somewhere in Germany

Dearest Mother and Dad,

Here it is the last of February and Spring is approaching very rapidly. Time certainly passes so very fast. And being the last of the month, it is pay day. Again this month you'll only get ten dollars for I was paid 2550 francs which is equal to about 60 dollars. But the first sergeant claims that next month you'll get \$50 for sure. So let's hope it'll be sent next month. Because I bought so much last month such as the camera, film development, souvenirs, etc., I couldn't send any money home last month and owed ten dollars this month - first time I've ever borrowed much. But now I'm all settled and am sending home \$34 and believe I'll keep about ten dollars just in case anything turns

up. Guess what the fellows are doing as I'm writing? They're gambling as they do each pay day. But it isn't long before one man has all the money and the rest are broke. One of the runners has been saying each month that he'd never gamble again but he's playing tonight. Some people never learn! And I'm so glad I don't gamble. Since I've been in the army, I can say that I'm sure that I have saved more than most men. Enough "I's" isn't there? And tonight I sent the negatives of those pictures I sent you recently but I can't be sure the base censor will let them pass even though they were passed here. Some queer things are happening these days with packages so don't know what'll happen. I believe I told you the package with the camera in it is on its way and recently I got the bill on the postage - first class. It came to 70 francs which is equal to \$1.50 - an awful price for such a small package. I get so confused at times when I work with these francs.

Now I must tell you about the letters I've been getting. I hit the jackpot today and received two from you #9 and #2, one from Dad, one from Miss Martin, and a letter, church papers and Herald from Mrs. Hendrie. Yours and Dad's were each dated February 21 - your last but Miss Martin's was dated January 27 so you see how the mail is coming through. Before I forget it., would you please tell Mr. Marsell that I'll write him a letter in a couple of days but I just haven't been writing to anyone as I have been too busy and then I have not been in the mood lately. And I'll truthfully say, I haven't sent a thank you note for the Church box but truly I'll get one off shortly.

You asked me in your last letter about that one sentence I put in a letter in which I mentioned Arthur Foster and then crossed it out. But I really didn't mean to do it and wrote the sentence absent mindedly. His death came as a surprise to me and what I really meant to say was that Francis Nelen was killed Dec. 5 as he and I were going to the company with a message. It certainly wasn't a very pleasant Christmas for his family. I felt so badly when it happened but I know that God will take care of his soul!

I was so pleased to hear that the Beards were able to get to Braintree as you liked them so much. I wish I could have seen them but maybe after the war we'll see them again.

I had to laugh for every letter I received today had pictures enclosed. But I was so glad to get them for I don't often get many. Mrs. Hendrie sent me a picture of themselves which is horrible. She looks like a witch!. Please don't tell them so but I know you won't as you have some sense. The way the sun casts shadows across her face and her hair stands out. I hope she sends me a nice one of her for she's such a wonderful person. And Miss Martin sent me two of her on a horse (hoss) as she says. Ha! And dad sent me nice ones of the yard. Brr! To see that snow makes me feel so cold when we over here are having such mild weather. And so little snow for all we had was some between Jan. 1 and Jan. 20. When I saw those pictures you sent me the first thing I noticed was the Leica camera slung over your shoulder. You might not use these pictures but I think they're excellent and you know how fussy I am about your pictures. Your laugh seems so naturally and in other words those picture look so natural. Dad, you certainly don't look natural with a snow shovel for it wasn't too often that you used to shovel. I'll be so glad to get back and be able to shovel again for you! Mrs. Richardson looks just like herself even if she is looking down and I wish you'd ask Betty if she'd send me some of herself if she has any late ones.

Today a couple of us decided we'd have a few French fries but what to do for grease or fat! So I went up to the kitchen to find out if they'd give me some but they didn't have any. So I heard that the medics - aid men - had butchered a hog so I rushed

up there and they were able to give me quite a little lard. So what a meal of french fries. Bill Schaub who was helping me donned a little hat and apron which he found and began to cook. He looked so cut I took a picture of him peeling a potato and I do hope it turns out.

Today, I saw the queerest sight and funniest I've seen in quite awhile. A tank came rolling down the road and there tied on the top was a live large hog squealing for all he was worth. Those armored fellows really believe in carrying their fresh food with them. And there were plenty of American soldiers riding all around on bicycles and motorcycles and even horses. So they were having a grand holiday and there was more noise going on.

I nearly forgot to tell you that we had a church service yesterday for on Sunday it was impossible. The army believes in letting the men have services whenever the circumstances warrant it. One thinks I'm so glad to hear is that the commanding general of the army we're in is so religious and prays so very often. There was a meeting of all army chaplains at which he spoke and he told them to inspire the men with the word of God. I really was so pleased to hear it for I believe a leader is a better leader if he is instilled with the spirit of God.

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Yesterday, we each received a bottle of Coca-Cola which is such a rarity over here. This is the second time so the army is improving. And we were issued seven bars of chocolate candy, cigarettes, matches, soap, etc. so yesterday was a busy day.

But today - tonight - we had the pleasure of devouring a piece of roast chicken - poor things - with all the fixings. It certainly tasted so good for they are so scarce. We'd been having such excellent meals since the old mess sergeant was gotten rid of and a new one put in his place. It certainly makes a difference.

This is getting quite long so will finish on this sheet. The fellows say I must tell about every move I make in the day including going to the latrine but I only laugh. I actually believe they are jealous because they can write very little.

Pray often and I know everything will be all right. Let's pray the war will be very soon so we can return home. May God bless both of you and keep you. With all the love in the world, Harold.

#March 4, 1945. Somewhere in Germany  
Dearest Mum and Dad,

I meant to get a letter written to you last evening but I was so tired that I went to bed and am writing this afternoon. This morning we had church services in one place that we never did before and that was in a locker room adjoining a shower. He said that maybe in the future we'll be able to have services in a church for most are Protestant. For so long it was all Catholic but I believe most of these people are Lutheran.

I believe it is possible to tell you now where I was when I wrote my letters without any heading. It was in Holland near a town of St. Geertruid which is between Maastricht (spelled something like that) and Aachen. We staged there two weeks and we had such an enjoyable time just doing what we wanted - writing, reading, etc. I am enclosing a picture of the four girls in the house we stayed. They are a little older now than that picture shows and the best looking is the one on the extreme right although she doesn't look like much in the photo. After being there I can truthfully say I've been in every possible country and here with the exception of Northern Ireland and Scotland - I'm not including Italy and

down there. I've been England, Wales, France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany so it's been quite an assortment.

This morning I received two letters, one from you #11 (Feb. 16) and a long letter from Em. You thought I was in Germany when I was in Holland but now you know for sure in which country I am. I'm almost positive that you knew of our exact whereabouts as the secret has now been lifted. But I can't write as yet and tell you unless I have a newspaper with some word about it in the paper.

I ought to have quite a pictorial travelogue when I finish for my camera is being sued fast and furious these days. I was so fortunate to be able to have it with me and I'm so thankful that I didn't lose it. I certainly keep the within sight at all time s and always right with me wherever I go.

Today, we had an excellent meal of road pork, potatoes, peas and carrots, bread and jam, peaches, and a choice between milk and tea. The milk is powdered milk which isn't much good to drink as is but these cooks put vanilla flavoring in it and so it doesn't taste too bad. What I did was first take milk and then would go back after and take tea. When I came back I told him I'd like some tea - the mess sergeant is the "him" - so he filled my cup up and when I took a sip it turned out to be coffee. The mess sergeant and I had a friendly argument to whether it was tea or coffee and he said it was tea. Anyway to make a long story short, the cooks had made one kettle of tea and the other tea, supposedly, but somehow coffee got mixed up and one kettle of coffee was made. And I would have to strike the wrong pot! It is strange that seven eights of the men like coffee but I like tea!

I was so sorry to hear about Uncle Heaton (AUNT GERTRUDE SIMMS BINNS HUSBAND) but I guess the good Lord just wanted it that way. I know how much you must love Lillian for she's like a radio that is on for 24 hours of the day. One nice thing about a radio though is you can at least turn it off when you get sick of listening to it.

This will be al for now but when I'm in a real good mood, I can write four and five sheets so readily - just like you, some long, others short. God be with you. With all my love, Harold.

#March 7, 1945. Somewhere in Germany (Probably we were in Neuss, across the river from Cologne [Koln])

Dearest Mother and Dad,

Yesterday was such a busy day that I really didn't have time at all to even think of writing a letter. I finally decided to have my tooth x-rayed so that it can be pulled out I's my lower right wisdom tooth and as a matter of fact, I wouldn't care if all my wisdom teeth were out for they're absolutely no good.

I started out from here at 9:30 a.m. and was gone all day - getting back at 5:30 p.m. There are so many channels to go through that it's really a joke at times. First I went to the said station here at battalion, then from there went to a collecting station. From there to a rear station and finally to an evacuation hospital which is a portable hospital where I had the tooth x-rayed. The dentist was so young that I was actually surprised but he was probably just out of school and with a captain's commission. The machine was just about like Dr. Blanchard's and it didn't take so very long. I was hoping he'd pull it right there but he couldn't and wouldn't because he said my unit dentist must do that.

An ambulance had taken us to the hospital - two of us, a lieutenant and I went for x-rays - so the vehicle was supposed to wait. But when we went to find the ambulance it was gone. So here we were stuck there all night unless another one from our division happened to come in. But the lieutenant and I wanted to get back so we hitched a ride all the way back to here. We made good time for one jeep was coming almost all the way.

So this morning I brought the x-ray to the dentist and he told me as soon as the tooth began to ache to come in and have it pulled. I certainly wish I could have all my wisdom teeth pulled though as they are no good. So now it's just a matter of time.

This evening I feel so wonderful for I had a bath today!! I thought I was at home while I was in the tub for that was the last place I had a bath since leaving the States. We have running water and electricity where we are now so it makes it pretty nice. But the gas wasn't on so I couldn't heat up water by a heater. But I filled up about five large pots with water and heated them on the stove. Boy, it was so wonderful to just soak in the water and make believe I am back home! There are showers across the street but I wouldn't go there for there is nothing like a good bath tub. My, but aren't I spruced up! Ha! I pressed my pants and shirt awhile ago and don't I look snazzy. Nothing like a combat soldier. The iron has to be heated on a stove so it isn't as easy as an electric one. It certainly was much easier for me to press pants than some of the fellows as I have at least tried it at home while they let their wives or mothers do them. You used to make me press mine once in awhile and it certainly came in handy. And my shirt has nice creases in it. Oh, boy, my clothes look swell!

I'm enclosing a money order in this letter for \$34. Boy, the money is piling up and I wish you'd keep the amount in the bank equal to that in bonds - maturity value - by not putting it all in bonds. I'm so lucky to have such wonderful parent who do the kind things they do for me. I'm certainly glad you received those handkerchiefs and other thing I sent you. But now I hope you get the camera and negative soon. The letter I sent nearly two weeks ago so they won't be home for awhile. I have a whole mess of clipping. I've been saving these last few days from Stars and stripes about our division. So I'll send them home, a few at a time. But the one I'll put in this letter reveals the whereabouts of the division instead of all the secrecy such as when we were in Holland.

The day before yesterday we bought a bunch of PX rations which the company was selling. We (Swett and I) were able to get orange juice, canned, pretzel sticks, coca cola, 2 bars of candy, cookies and a couple of other small items which I forgot. I told you about getting ink a couple of weeks ago and how it turned out to be French ink which isn't much good. It made me mad this time for just the time I didn't order ink, in came American ink and I was out of luck. Oh well, you're sending me ink so I'll have some sometime. This is American that I'm using now and it's so much better than the foreign stuff.

We had a movie a couple nights ago but much to my disgust it was one I'd seen before so I didn't go. The army really is doing more for us and giving us more than they were for a good long time.

No mail these late three or four days but that isn't unusual or strange. Don Hunter wrote to me recently and I forgot to mention him to you. I wonder if he's in this army for the letter didn't take long to get to him. I hope I hear from those other two I wrote to recently. At last a letter is on its way to Mr. Marsell. It's sort of late for a thank you note but better late than never. I really try my best at answering but once in awhile I slip. I even slip up on your writing at times for I should write more often than I do But I write more often than many and mine are so much longer. Two sides of one sheet is average for most and here I average nearly two sides of three sheets.

We have a radio where we are but it only has one station - German. The Nazis were a clever bunch and give people only radios which had one station in it so they'd be sure and listen only to the German propaganda, so what's the use of this radio. I'd like to have the one at home now but guess it wouldn't work as the current in all these countries over here have 220 volts. I wonder why they have such high voltage when we do very nicely with our 110 voltage.

Good night and may God bless you both. I love you so truly. I'll write soon again.  
With all my lovem,Harold

#March 12, 1945. Somewhere in Germany (DESTRUCTION OF JULICH) AND REST AREA IN VALKENBURG, HOLLAND, NEAR MAASTRICHT.

Dear Mother and Dad,

It has been three or four days now since I've written but I have a good excuse. I went to a rest camp back in Holland and stayed there two days. Everything came up so suddenly that I didn't have time to get a letter off to you before I left. The orders came through at 1:30 p.m. that so many men were to go to this rest center. I never had the least thoughts of going but the first sergeant called us and said that one of us runners - Swett or I were going. But neither of us wanted to go yet he said one had to go so we argued for awhile as to who wasn't going. Finally I gave in and said I'd go as the first sergeant was thoughtful enough to think of his runners. I will say that E. company thinks more of us than the other companies do of their runners.

Anyway, the next morning the group of us started out and went to Valkenburg, Holland which is very close to Maastricht. I believe it was a tourist center before the war because there must have been nearly twenty-five hotels in such a small town. We had a nice hotel and it was a nice large dining hall with all kinds of linen and silverware, just like at home. In the afternoon I saw a movie and that night, I went to a G.I. show. To tell the truth, it was the best show I've seen since I've been in the army. There were all professional musicians in the band and singers and comedians were also. I couldn't get over how wonderful this one big Italian sang. He really was extra ordinary. But when I first saw him come out on the stage and his huge figure, I decided that he was either a baritone or bass. Much to my surprise he was a high tenor! Isn't that the way it goes?

That night I slept until 11:30 the next morning which was Sunday. I haven't done that since I was home on furlough last April. They had some good meals there and we ate heartily. All day Sunday I just hung around and read so the trip was anything wonderful. I could have had just as good a time right where I am for I sleep in a bed every night, have running water, electricity and even a radio.

I was able to get some American ink while there so you needn't send any yourself. But its probably on the way to me now. I do hope the wallet gets to me soon for it's coming part more and more as I found out when I opened it back in the hotel. I was able to get a couple of little souvenirs - two pairs of little wooden shoes and a couple of bills and coins of Holland. Guess I'll have to hold onto the shoes for awhile because I understand no more packages can be sent out for awhile. The reason is that too many are sending loot home which won't be tolerated with here in the army. A good many will get themselves into trouble if they do loot these German homes. I believe I was lucky to get those films and camera off before all this came about. Gee, but some don't have any sense at all when I hear of some trying to send home fur coats and all kinds of silverware. We who stand for democracy should not plunder and loot for that is Hitler's trait and we stand for right. I believe in being stern all right but not take everything.

This afternoon before I left, I received three letters and all were from you. They were #14, 15, 16 so now I've received all but three letters in all the time I've been overseas. Two letters were in October and November and #7 never came for some reason. I certainly hate not to get all letters but I've been fortunate to get all I have, especially packages. And today, I received all the mail saved up for three days. But even at that I didn't get much for there were Sunday School Times and the Heralds. But I did get letters from both Miss Craig and Warren. I haven't heard from him for so long and am glad to hear from him

again. He's now a seaman first class as probably she told you and his address is from San Francisco. I can't understand why he hasn't heard from me for I wrote. But the letter will probably look like some that used to come to the yard before he gets it.

I am so glad you like those pictures and I will say I'm rather proud of them as you are for very few have a record of their travels. I took a few pictures when I was really dressed up when I went to the rest center. I had pressed clothes, shined shoes, and a new type overseas blouse - not like what I had when home. But nevertheless look very good. The size fitted me just perfect so I hope I can have those films developed soon. I have hopes before three or four months to be able to go to Paris for a couple of days and then my ambition will be fulfilled. Since I'm over here, I'd like to see what Miss Keany used to teach us about Paris. Little did I ever realize that I might get a chance to go there when I were in those French classes.

Today we were issued a new European Theater of Operations pin with three combat stars so guess I'll send it home soon as I'll probably be able to get hold of another one. I'll have quite a collection when I get home all right. I have so many clippings and other odds and ends that I really don't know where to start but will send home a couple things in each letter.

I'm fickle as a woman it seems for this is the last time I'll be telling about the pictures and those to whom I want them sent. I wish you'd send Stasi's pictures first class and I believe it would be better to address it to me. Daniel's, Swett's, Surface's, Alexa's, Schaub's, and green's will be sent to their homes and I'll collect on this end unless something happen Mentioning about alexa going to the hospital but he's back. And I told you to send Johnson' pictures to Gilbert but now I want them switched and forget that you've ever heard of a person by that name - Gilbert. I'll also collect this end for Johnson and also Bryant if those enlargements are made. This is my last and final will and I want this to be carried out instead of the others. Now do you see how I change my mind so rapidly. I believe that he won't come back to us for he went to the hospital with nasal meningitis and Johnson returned to us. I do hope you hear from Nelen's mother and I know you'll send some pictures gladly. I though so much of him and of all the people I've met in my whole 19 year life, he was the finest. But that's the way God wanted it to be.

When those prisoners were freed in Luzon, my mind for some reason wondered if Dr. Sawyer was among the bunch. So many times I thought of him and it's so good to hear of his release. His wife has certainly gone through a terrible ordeal but she has been rewarded and he is about to be returned to her. Strange things do happen in war.

I can't see how Don Hunter can possibly have four stars. I believe it was just rumor for rumor said that we were getting five stars. But it turned out to be officially three. If he landed on the continent after July 25, he only gets two. The dates are from D-day to July 25 is one star, 25 July to Sept. 15 two stars, Sept. 15 up to a date unknown as the third. We have no idea when the new star begins but I'm almost sure I'll have four.

I am so glad that you can have the dining room furniture for that has been your ambition for quite awhile. I certainly wish I were home to see it but maybe you can use my large photoflood lights and take a few and send them to me. The bulbs are down in the dark room and the rest is in the closet if I remember rightly. I seem to be so absent minded at times around here and can't keep hold of a pair of gloves to save my soul. I did manage to keep a pair through all the cold weather and now it really doesn't make much difference as the weather has been quite spring-like.

I always had the idea that Aachen was destroyed but I found that Julich is much much worse. I ever dreamed so much destruction could be wrought but after seeing it myself, I now know its very possible.

I was reading how the Cologne cathedral was still intact and had escaped extreme damage. Sometimes things like that happen and it certainly is strange how and why that happens. Because it's such a magnificent building I'm glad it did escape.

I began to tell you about the Roer River and Julich and got side tracked after we left Holland we came forward and one day after the river crossing, we helped one division push. You'll find all about it in the 83<sup>rd</sup> Spearhead." And then pushed up to the Rhine. Never in my life have I ever seen such flat country for it's about like the top of a table.

I'm enclosing a couple of pictures taken from the paper. The one showing the bridge is the one we walked across to help in the push. Now there is a permanent, more stable bridge. And the one of the railroad ties and rails just hanging., I've got a picture of it with my Kodak. In fact, I have one of the bridges also but that's in color.

Guess this little letter has turned into a volume but I don't want to use up all my news as I won't have much of a letter next time. Good night and may God bless such wonderful parents. With all my love, Harold

P.S. I made a mistake in my new address. It's is Hq. Co., 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. 330<sup>th</sup> Inv., A.P.O. 83 Inf. NY.

P.S. I made a mistake in my new address. It is: Hq. Co., 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn., 330<sup>th</sup> Infantry, A.P.O. 83, c/o Postmaster, New York.

#March 15, 1945. Somewhere in Germany CAPTURED GERMAN OFFICERS & ENLISTED MEN. IN NEUSS, GERMAN, FROM IZIER THROUGH TO LIEGE, BELGIUM TO ROER RIVER.

Dearest Mother and Dad,

Last night I started to write a letter to you but it seemed as though I just couldn't think. So I left it until morning. Within the last two days plenty of mail has been coming in but none from you. I don't like too much mail to come in at once for it means more answering. It seems as though I get down to where I only have to answer two or three letters and within two days have to answer eight or nine. Discouraging, ain't it? That fool Sammy Bowen wrote me another letter with about two words in it but I don't believe I'll waste my time answering. Miss Arnold wrote again and said she graduated from Tufts and all her family also so she was interested to hear about me going there. I also received letters from Mrs. Newell, Mrs. Villeneuve, and Em. Mrs. Newell sent me three photos , two of the kids, and I was so pleased for I haven't seen them for so long. Ruby certainly is getting better looking all the time. Well, so much for that.

Yesterday, each man got two bottles of Coca-Cola so that makes about the fourth time within a month. I understand a new plan has opened in Brussels which manufactures Cokes so that is why we get them more frequently now. Maybe in the future we'll be getting more things as more places begin manufacturing here on the continent. But to import it would take up too much valuable space.

I see by yesterday's paper that a whole shipment of mail - Dec. 4 through 14 has just arrived here. The ship had engine trouble and every other kind of thing happened - thus causing such a delay. Maybe I'll have some mail on that ship.

Now that the 14 day limit is up, I believe I can tell you more details after we left the priest's home. We came to Holland to begin the drive across the Roer River but because of the dam being blow up and lots of rain, it couldn't be done for awhile. So as a result, we stayed there nearly two weeks. Then we moved up the day after a bridgehead was established and began to push. I never since I've been over here seen such air activity by the Germans. They were determined to blow out the bridge which they established and there was more ack-ack and machine guns fired for two days than in the whole time I've

been over here. They even used the jet-propelled planes but to no avail. Then came the race and it turned out that this division hit the Rhine first as you'll read in the "Spearhead." That's a pretty good little paper and tells more than I'd ever be allowed in any letter. As you know, I'm in the 330<sup>th</sup> regiment. But you've probably read about the 329 and 331<sup>st</sup> regiment and I just want to explain that there are three regiments in a division and those are them that I just named.

One day about two weeks ago, we were getting prisoners left and right - everything from regular army to this pitch fork army. In one bunch, we caught a whole bunch of officers dressed as neat and pretty as could be. I took a couple of pictures and then in contrast took pictures of the enlisted men who were shabby and so unlike the officers. The Germans certainly are good at showing distinction between the officers and men. But there are times in our army that the colonel in this battalion couldn't be told from an enlisted man because he dresses like us when we're pushing. Of course, there are more reasons for this too.

Another package is on the way for the ban has been lifted. But now the censorship of packages is very strict because of loot. This time it's a couple pairs of wooden shoes which I bought at the rest center and post cards of Liege, Belgium, where I went to have my films developed. That city was the buzz-bomb center. And post cards of Izier, Belgium where we stayed in the priest's house. I certainly have sent a bunch of packages home but not as many as some. What I am anxious to hear now is that you have gotten the camera and films. I suppose because I want them to get home, they won't. But I sure would hate to lose either.

Today is such a fine day. I believe I'll take some photos of some of the fellows. I'd like to get one of the first sergeant for he really has been well to me. All the pictures of myself lately have been taken with only my O.D. clothes on. I took all my other clothes off as it's getting much warmer.

Guess I'll enclose a couple more clippings for I have a whole envelop just jam full. I am enclosing a cartoon also for it is just like the army to do something of this sort. And here's an article about E company. This lieutenant Agostinelle comes from Rumford, Maine so I asked him if he knew Tom Fredericks. The name sounded familiar, he said, but he couldn't place him. I knew from hearing him talk that he came from New England for there is only one section of the country which speaks like the New Englanders. And there's an article about the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion medics. I know almost everyone so it makes it that much more interesting to me.

There are a couple of fellows leaving this battalion to go home on 30 day furloughs. Boy, wouldn't I love to be in their places. But the war has to be won first and then maybe we can go home if we don't end up in the Pacific. Anyway I hope we don't go there.

Guess this will be all for now. Keep up your chin and just trust in God. With all my love, Harold.

#March 15, 1945. Somewhere in Germany

Dear Mother and Dad,

I must write you again today as I received three letters from you, #17, #18, and 19. I notice you mail three at a time and as a result, they all get here at the same time. So now I'm right up to date and don't have to wait for back ones. Also, I received that very beautiful Easter card from you. Offhand, I don't know when Easter is. And a request package came in with canned food, candy, gum, etc. - a very fine assortment. I can brag about what good packages you pack and so sensible compared to many. And the last letter was from Sam

Harris one of the fellows with whom I went through basic training. He is a company bugler but not attached to battalion as I.

I'll tell you more about the camera and what I want done with it if possible. If the minor repairs can be done, it would be a good camera for for you to use if the Leica is too omplex. You give yourself too little credit because it really wasn't your fault the end wouldn't re-roll for that has happened to me before. The camera is called a Voigtlander Bessa with a compur rapid with an f3.5 lens. There is something wrong with the cocking lever spring for it won't cock. I believe it's broken but, of course, that's only a guess. The whole camera needs to be cleaned and the coupled range finder needs re-adjusting to get it lined up with the camera. And the last is to have the leather on the back glued back on. It isn't as much as it sounds and if it is hard to get it done, you might just as well forget about it. Maybe you could show it to Mr. Robbins and get his opinion of i. He certainly has been so kind to us and I wish you'd thank him for me personally. He has done more to further my interest in photography over here than anyone but indirect ways especially after seeing his color sides.

When those films get home, if possible, there will be six sets made this time - for Stasi, Swett, Surface, Johnson, Greene, and Schaub, not as many as before. But really, if it is too much trouble forget it. If I had known what we were getting into this time, I never would have let you. You have been so swell to all us fellows. And we really appreciate it so much.

So many things happened when it came to these last films that I doubt if there were more than 34. I gave some of the fellows individual photos. I believe I told you about taking pictures of the companies as a favor for a fellow who is writing a book about this battalion. Anyway, in the end, we had an argument about who was to have the negatives. He claimed he paid for the film but how could he if you sent all but two films which I bought with my own money. He didn't realize it was my time and my camera! In the end, I gave him the negatives of all the groups - the companies - which didn't mean a thing to me. I got all the negatives I wanted so the bargain was all right with me. But that incident has taught me not to bother with anyone again. If you can't get so many sets made from this last set, please have two made, - one for you and one for me - and I'll let the fellows have those for now until a whole set is made. I do hope that when you send those pictures to Stasi, you'll sent them first class. But probably by the time you get this letter, they'll be on their way. If you wish you can send them to me and I'll give them to Stasi.

I have been trying to send some sort of little gift to each person who has been so kind to me and written me faithfully - Mrs. Newell, an 83rd pin like yours which got to her by this time, I hope, Mrs. Hendire, the handkerchief, and Em, the pin. These people plus Miss Martin seem to appreciate it so much that I feel well rewarded by their earnest thanks.

Boy, if I were home and could vote I'd vote against Mr. Diffe {DUFFY?} all right. Maybe I wouldn't be over here now if he had only let me get into the V-12 program. But may it'll be for the best for if I get out of this mess without a scratch, I'll have gained in worldly knowledge. But it's the idea behind him that I don't like and probably if you had known him personally, much more could have been done in deferment.

Yesterday, (last night) we saw a film entitled "Barbary Coast Gent" with Wallace Berry and a couple more I don't remember. He is such a good actor and I really enjoyed this picture. Ask Mr. Richardson if he has seen this movie for he's such an ardent fan of Wallace Berry. Talking about Mr. Richardson reminds me of the fact that every once in awhile when I go over to the company kitchen, I get treated rough just like he used to do. There is one cook who comes from Groton, Mass. and isn't he strong - like an ox and Mr. Richardson. He

sometimes grabs me and he can get me into any position by twisting my hand or leg. I can't get away from Mr. Richardson. His ghost is here and is haunting me! Ha!

I am enclosing a few more clippings but no doubt you've seen them all in the local papers. One March 3, news about this division was released and I'm so glad you now know where I am. We certainly got a bunch of write-ups this time and as you say, it's about time. This is one red-hot division and we always seem to be in the middle of everything.

I was so glad you heard from Mrs. Nelen and received the card but it really was just negligence on my part not telling you that he was Catholic. But despite his religion, I thought so much of him. We are not brought up like Dad - not having anything to do with those outside one's own religion. Everyone liked Francis so well but he took to me for some reason and I'd do anything for him. So many would cut your throat if they could but he was so different.

Boy, with all this new dining room furniture and all the new gadgets, it'll look snazzy. If possible, I wish you could take a photo of the furniture and the table all set with the new silver. I asked you one time to send me those 2 1/4 x 3 1/4 color reprints of the cat, house, etc. but I never heard that you'd done it. They are in the bottom drawer of the dresser and in a photo album - old cover with manila pages. I wish you'd send me all those please and I do hope you'll have some color prints made like those of the furniture if the pictures turn out. I hope you understand what I mean.

Your gave me a hint as to where I could find that James Collier so I went up and asked the Cannon company liaison section - the observer - if there was a man in their company by that name. And there was. He was a switchboard operator at one time but is now on the gun. It isn't canning company but cannon company.

You mentioned reading about Lt. Robert Packer. He is E company commander but is now a captain. I think he's a pretty swell fellow but some think he is too bossy. They just don't know how to take him. I'm enclosing a little article about him, which you might get a kick out of. And I'm sending a Holland one guilder note which I got when in Holland. I think it is quite nice looking.

This isn't much of a letter for all I'm doing is answering most of your questions. But I suppose it's better than nothing. By the way, I'm enclosing a little note which I want you to give to Peggy at Alves. I want to thank her for being so kind to you and me.

Good night with all my deepest love. I think you are two wonderful parents and I know you can't be beat. With all my love, Harold.

P.S. Please send me a package of candy, gum cookies, etc. for I'd appreciate it very much.

#March 17, 1945. Somewhere in Germany

Dearest Mother and Dad,

Guess it's time again to write. I don't like to let your letters wait too long for I know and realize how anxious you are to hear from me just as I am from you.

Yesterday I received a letter from Eric but instead of a letter guess what it was. - a Christmas card. Anyway it got here in time for next year. In my last letter, I told you about that old shipment of mail arriving with letters dated in December and that was one of the shipments. That is all I had but some are getting back mail by the dozens and even Christmas packages. One fellow has been waiting for an identification bracelet which never came. But it did appear in this batch of mail and he was mighty thankful. There really hasn't been much mail to speak of for a few days.

Yesterday, I decided to take an inventory of all the film I had for it seemed as though I've been lugging around more film than everything else. I'll say I've got a pile of

film and I don't want you to send me any more until further notice. I have four rolls of color - one exposed - and 14 rolls of black and white - one exposed - making a total of 18. Don't you think I have enough? I always say it's better to have too many than too few. And with those filters, it really takes up the space but I don't mind carry it for no one in battalion on the front lines have photos of all the places we've been.

Tomorrow afternoon, Lily Pons is coming to the division area and I certainly hope to see her. (I DID SEE HER) Only three men from each company will be allowed to go -about 10 miles distance by trucks - and the notice about it said "it is advised that only "ardent" music lovers be allowed to go. I really hope to go but don't know if the first sergeant will grant my request. I will tell you all about it if I go in my next letter. Mickey Rooney is the only other star who has visited the division even though there are so many touring the front - to within 20 miles of it. Really not close. Guess we're an outcast bunch!

Here's a little poem which I found in one of the papers.

Sitting in my G.I. bed  
My G.I. hat upon my head  
My G.I. pants, my G.I. shoes  
Everything free, nothing to lose  
G.I. razor, G.I. comb  
G.I. wish that I were home.

Pretty cute don't you think? But I certainly wish I were home and so do ten million more men.

It seems as though on this last campaign we did more walking and as a matter of fact, it was more than ever before. We walked all over creation trying to make contact with the enemy but they were retreating so fast we couldn't catch them. The "march to St. Malo" as we call it was long but not quite equal to all that we did recently. We started to walk to St. Malo about five miles from the other side of Dol which you'll find on any good map. But while walking through this town, the newly liberated people handed us glasses of everything from champagne to cognac and wine. The fellows drank so much that most were so drunk that they were staggering. So the colonel issued an order not to drink but it kept on almost all the way to the outskirts of St. Malo where we became serious again and began the siege. All in all, all this combat hasn't been deadly serious for at times, there are funny parts to it. Even if I had to walk to Berlin and back again to the coast, I'd do it if it were possible.

Today, one of the fellows got a little package in which there was a piece of birthday cake of his three year old nephew. But you can imagine the mess it was in - all mildewed. Probably if you ever attempted to send me a cake other than fruit cake, it would be useless as you said. Tonight I finished up of the welcome package of yours by eating the canned chicken. We all enjoyed it so very much and there wasn't even as much as a speck left. That's how much we enjoyed it.

We do get pretty good meals and everyday some kind of pie is served, which is wonderful under the conditions but none of the cooking is as good as yours - especially pies. Em said you're still keeping up on you cooking in expectation of my large appetite when I get back. But I really haven't got any bigger appetite than when I was at home And I'm still and old fuss budget - still don't like creamed vegetables or anything creamed. Boy, vegetables are popular among the bunch especially carrots. I bet there weren't more than a dozen helpings and it was gone. But I don't mind eating them at all - far different from when I was little! Eh? They have this canned spinach too which the fellows don't like and I won't touch that. Only you can fix it the way I like - in nice butter. It's probably hard doing without so much but the English and all the occupied countries did with a lot less than you,

so here really there isn't too much room for complaints. But who ever heard of a satisfied person.

Tonight I had some good ole tea. There's nothing like it except a good glass of milk. I, one time, thought I liked coffee better but I guess the English is showing up in me. The Red Cross girls were here today with their clubmobile and served coffee and doughnuts. But by the time I got there, there was only doughnuts left so I got them. Then I brewed up a cup of tay and had tea and doughnuts. Sort of a queer combination, in sound maybe, but not in fact. It really tasted O.K.

It appears that I've become official speller for the runners section now because more and more they're depending on me for spelling. I don't profess to be such a good speller but am much better than any of the others. I will say it's very rare they stick me. Though. It seems as though spellers are made for so many are so poor at it.

Last night we had a G.I. show across the street but instead of going, I washed my socks and underwear and pressed my shirt and pants and field jacket. I was as content as a cat for I just wasn't in the mood for shows. I want to stay was neat and clean as possible while I can. I certainly am not always clean as that one picture shows (Guess I'm trying to hurry too much because I'm making more mistakes tonight).

I was reading a queer incident about a teacher and one of his former pupils. The teacher is now a ward boy in a hospital taking care of bed pans. And the pupil is a technical sergeant - next to highest - and had a job which really required brains. It certainly is ironical the way this army works. Their motto is "the man in his right place" but I believe they try to put the man every place but where he belongs. Oh well, this war can't last forever so I won't have to put up with this too much longer, I hope.

I told you about there being four girls in the family where we stayed in Holland. But they had boy friends who came to see them every night even though we were around. Maybe to show that the girls were taken and not for U.S. Army personnel! Ha! But it must have been quite embarrassing for them to try to make love. One evening I stumbled upon two of them saying good night and having a kissing good time. Boy, didn't I feel like too cents when they stopped and said hello to me. I bet those boys friends were glad we left for now they won't have to put up with us.

I'm enclosing a couple more things. The cartoon of Gilbert trying to send home a package is typical of what we have to go through now in order to send one home. And I want to save the map for it tells an awful lot in few words. In separate envelopes I'm enclosing a "Spearhead" and a "Warweek" published by Stars and Stripes. It give an account of the whole offensive since D-day.

This will be all for now so I'll say good night. May God bless you two wonderful people. You mean everything to me. With all my love, Harold

#March 17, 1944. Somewhere in Germany (short note)

Dear Mother and Dad,

Here is another paper I'm sending called "Warwick" published by "Stars and Stripes." I want to save this paper because it gives a good account with ut too many words just what has happened from D-day up to present. It is much more interesting to me because I've been in everything except the first 20 days after D-day. This division really has seen everything and has at times been really spread all around. When this battalion stayed in St. Malo after capturing the place, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion went to Tours with Regimental headquarters while the 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion went to Brest, France. Division Headquarters was at Rennes while the 329<sup>th</sup> was way past Tours near Orleans. And I couldn't say where 331<sup>st</sup> was. But at that time, we were certainly split up.

I bet you have a pile of clippings now after saving all those in the Boston papers. I'll have some scrap book. With all my lovem Harold

#March 17, 1944. Somewhere in German (another short note)

Dear Mother and Dad,

Here's another "Spearhead." which you probably will enjoy. It tells more news than I could possibly think of or say. This is a pretty nice little paper and is much better than some division papers. I've seen. This paper was published shortly after we came to the continent but not printed but mimeographed.

I just wrote a long letter tonight so you'll get all the latest scandal in it. Boy, don't the fellows kid me about writing a "novel" as they call my letters. Some write every day but only write on two sides of one sheet. Guess my long letters make up for the day I skip. With all my love, Harold

#March 19, 1945. Somewhere in Germany

Dearest Mother and Dad,

Just received a little mail a short time ago but there was none from you. I did get an "Upper Room" from Mrs. Hendrie and some church calendars. Also a nice letter from Miss Grant and a "thinking of you" card from the Misses Parsons. I do wish you'd thank them please, for doing this thoughtful act.

This afternoon I took a good shower as I didn't want to bother with heating water for the bath tub. I enjoyed the shower, though, and am good and clean now. I certainly hate to stay dirty when I can keep clean. It is almost impossible to believe that we can have all the comforts of home - radio, electricity and showers. Yet a couple of shells go whizzing over our heads once in awhile. As the old saying goes, we're so close but yet seem so far. This is the most perfect setup we've had in all the time we've been on the continent. But the thing that spoils this "Eden" for most is this non-fraternization order. All the fellows can do is look and maybe soon that'll cost money. Ha! But the absence of women doesn't bother me as you know and I'm perfectly content just to hang around and read or write.

Today is a most beautiful day for taking pictures. I took a couple of different things but there really isn't too much to take of lately. It seems as though when I have the film, there are no subjects but when I don't, there are more pictures I want to take.

I mentioned in my letter about hoping to go to the Lily Pons show. Well, I did get to go after all. But in the process I missed my dinner because I forgot to eat early as the trucks were leaving at 12 noon. But I enjoyed the show so much that it made up for the lost dinner. Lily Pons was simply magnificent and her husband - I can't spell the name much less pronounce it - led the orchestra. This orchestra was made up of men from the first army and ninth and they really were splendid musicians. Most selections played and sung were some classical so it wasn't real deep - boring stuff. Did you ever hear of Theodore Paxton? He played two or three selections on the piano as a soloist. I'll name a couple of the songs she sang - Ave Maria, selection from Rigoletto, and Summertime by George Gershwin. There were more but I don't remember. The orchestra played "Rhapsody in Blue" by George Gershwin and it was magnificent. I'm using such flowery words to describe whole ninth army so you can imagine how many were there. It was just jammed but we were lucky to get within 100 feet of the stage. At that distance, I really couldn't see her very plainly but she is beautiful. She wore a pink dress with a necklace and bright red gloves and a little beret looking hat which fitted on the back of her head. I was sorry she never spoke though for all the rest of the celebrities spoke. So now I can say I saw a star - the first one over here. I missed Mickey Rooney but I'm not so fond of him.

I've been meaning in several letters to tell you about some of the propaganda the Germans fed their civilians when we - the Americans - crossed the Roer. The newspapers all had headlines which stated: "Americans pushed back across Roer." Imagine that and here we took the place where this paper was published two days after that statement. I've often wondered what the Germans must think of their leaders when all their statements turn out to be wrong. Guess they believe everything, though. I really believe that re-educating these people is going to be a bigger job than we think. It's going to be a tremendous undertaking and I believe the only way is to educate them spiritually. To have a since belief in God is a blessing to any person.

There was a fellow here who just for today acted as runner for H company. He has been overseas 4 years in the Canadian army. But I really have no sympathy for he didn't have to join that army. He's the adventurous type and always on the go so he's happy anyway. He's an ardent tea lover! That's all the beverage they had in that army. Even while I'm writing, I'm sipping on tea! This kitchen where I eat has started to give us our choice of coffee or vanilla flavored powdered milk. I bet you can't guess which I take. Milk seems to be the favorite drink, though, so now it a regular drink on our menu. Powered milk tastes queer naturally but a little vanilla flavoring makes it pretty good.

This isn't much of a letter but I can't always write three and four and even more sheets as I have been doing. Guess I'm just not in the mood.

I pray to God so often that the war will be over and I hope it's on the closing phase. May God bless you both and keep you safe. With all my love, Harold

#March 20, 1944. Somewhere in Germany  
Dearest Mum and Dad,

I wrote a letter but I know you won't mind hearing from me again. I just feel like writing this evening. I received only one letter but much to my delight, it was from you - #21. I have just been checking and I found that ever since you started on number one again, the letters have been coming in order. And now I've received up to #21 without one missing. So I believe getting all of this Christmas mail out of the way has helped considerably.

When I read about you receiving a package, I was hoping it would be the camera. Gee, but I've sent so many packages home hat I, myself, can't keep track of them. I estimate I've sent ten packages home so you can see it's quite a bunch. I'll be so glad though to hear that you've received that camera and negatives for they mean more to me than most of the others.

I certainly was surprised to hear that Dad and James Collier's father worked together at Lawley's. Some strange things do happen in this world. And meeting his sister at Red Cross was certainly a coincidence too. I tried to get back to Cannon company today when the cannon company liaison section attached to this battalion went back to get mail. But I missed them by five minutes, else I would have seen him today. Oh well, I'll get back soon and have a talk with him. It certainly is queer how all this came about.

I had to laugh when I read about Mrs. Hendrie showing off her one year service stripes like the cartoon. I'm enclosing two stripes in this letter. The nice looking one is put on a dress blouse while the canvas one is placed on the field jacket which is exposed to weather. You too can now show off. And I'm also enclosing the E.T.O. ribbon with three stars on it. I have another one which I got hold of so I'd rather send one to you and let you wear it if you wish. At least at home it's worthwhile wearing these things, but who over here will see them if we wear them. Surely the Germans won't give up any sooner if they us wearing three stars. But maybe it's worth a try. Ha! I am surprised, though, how few divisions have been on the continent long enough to deserve three stars. I understand that

this division is one of the oldest fighting divisions on the western front. And I believe it's true.

At long last, I've finally got something I've been trying to get for months. It's a pair of combat shoes which are regular army shoes only with a strip of leather about four inches wide sewn onto the top to form sort of a legging. This type is so much easier to handle as those old type canvas leggings are clumsy when in a hurry. My size, 9D, never seem to come in this combat style until today. So now I'm happy. And I know my supply sergeant is glad that I got them too for I've been bothering him for three or four months. But not enough to really bother him. All I did was ask if any new shoes came in. I have to smile at one of the runners. He takes an 8½ E and he'll wear any size at all. He's now wearing 9½ EE and believe he'd even wear a 10. I can't see that for it would or will ruin his feet in time. But it's useless to tell him anything for he just doesn't know any better. His name is Kenneth Johnson. All the others get so mad at him at times because he's quite ignorant and can't get anything through his head. He likes this army so well, he plans to stay after the war. I know I can't see it but it's up to him if he wants to remain. But I blame his parents for his character. His father's a drunkard and his mother just doesn't care. Oh, I'm so glad to have such wonderful parents who brought me up right and not just let me grow wild like a weed. Parents certainly have a great influence on their children!

The morning I went to hear Lily Pons was Sunday so I went to church and what a crowd. The major chaplain had something different that day by having a little orchestra play with the congregation while hymns were being sung - sort of like we used to have in Sunday School. It really pepped up the singing and everyone sang loudly and heartily. This chaplain seems to concentrate his sermons on the place of religion in the reconstruction in the post war world. It's a good topic all right for it will be an awful problem as I have been saying in my other letters.

Today, there was a U.S.O. show in the area so most of the fellows went. But one man from each company had to stay here so I did as I went to the Lily Pons show and Henry Swett didn't. When they came back they told me how good it was. There was a blonde in this show, in fact two women, and when she sang, she sort of made love to Swett because he was in the front row. And did he blush. They say he turned all colors of the rainbow for he's so bashful. Stasi told me he'd go to the Pacific if this blonde was waiting for him over there - she was so beautiful. But no woman can lure me to the Pacific!

This afternoon, I had a complete change of clothing so now I have all clean clothes. Instead of carrying clothes around in our duffle bags, what they do is give us a complete change of clothing each week., In other words, we have no extra clothes but what we have on and these are changed every so often. It's a good way in a lot of ways. But oh, ain't I proud of these shoes. Guess I'll have to have my picture taken with them on. Ha!! I'm like dad when he got his new pocket watch!

Talking about pictures, I had about a dozen pictures taken of me today with my clothes pressed and the combat infantry man's badge which I borrowed from one of the fellows. I have more pictures of myself lately and now all I have to do is have them developed. It might take a long time but it takes a long time for everything these days. I know I told you about John Ellis here in battalion. So often I've been mistaken for him when people don't know either one too well. Do you remember how that driver boy looked so much like me! Anyway, Ellis is on this film with me and also Schaub - one of the runners. He's 36 and as spry as a fly. Not like Swett who is 35 and so lifeless most of the time.

We got one more bottle of Coca-Cola today and more rations - both the type we buy and free ones so you can see we are really getting a bunch of rations lately. I was able to buy a pair of fingernail clippers, not scissors, like what you have at home. So between the

scissors and these clippers I should be able to keep my nails in good shape. Since I've been over here, I don't seem to bother picking at my nails though most have done more so because they're more nervous. I always do opposite of everyone back in school.

Tonight I've surprised myself at writing so much after just writing yesterday. I just have the urge and I let the words fly. But, I guess there isn't much in this letter. And I know it won't be boring to you though for I'm like you. Anything you write I enjoy reading very much.

I do hope Mr. Marsell hears from Colin [SON] soon and God grant that he wss spared. I know how you must feel about me but he must be going through much more than I. May God grant ththat this war will be over soon and all of us can go home. May He bless you both. With all my love, Harold

#March 22, 1945. No location listed

Dear Mum and Dad,

No mail lately but I expect some in a couple of days. I have to laugh how all the fellows tell me I shake the table. I know I do really get in the swing of things and I move my hand so fast, I create quite a movement. Boy, I expect to sometime burn a hole in he stationery if I go too much faster. Ha!

Guess what we saw a couple of days ago. It was a Woolworth's store right in Germany but it didn't have windows left! It looks just like those familiar stores in the State. Boy, there are surprises for us at each step. And all through Germany we've seen Esso gas signs and more of the common types back in the States such as Texaco, etc.

I just came back from a movie which started at 6 o'clock but I really don't remember what the name was. Barbara Standwyck was in it and George Brent. It would have been a perfect picture but for some reason it was run too fast and could not be slowed down. It really was comical hearing people talk like Donald Duck but we couldn't understand it at all so I left. It is too bad for we were in a nice movie house which isn't always handy.

Here it is after seven o'clock and still light. A noticeable change can be seen now in the length of the days. Today was such a warm and beautiful that it really made me feel so happy. I took a couple of pictures but now I want to get the Kodachrome and black and white developed. Guess it'll be better to wait for the end of the war for those films will never come back until it's over because it takes so long. Bat at least I have the exposures even if it isn't developed.

I wrote to Don Hunter today and hope to hear from him again. I write to service men to bolster up their morale, I'll have you know. I figured out that I write to five men. But I really do have an awful bunch of people writing to me. At present, I owe six letters and it seems as though I no sooner get caught up than a bunch more come in.

The fellows just chased me off the table because they want to play poker. So now I'm writing on the floor! I really don't think much of gambling and I've always taken Dad's last advise "Don't Gamble." I know I send home more money than some and regularly too. Johnson has saved up about \$500 after being in this army two years and I know I've saved more than that in lest time. Every time I read how much I have saved up I swell up with pride - not only because of the money but because of such good parents. A couple of men have been telling me that they hope to have two thousand when they get home. I laugh to myself but have never told anyone how much I have. I can truthfully say, it's none of their business.

We have the personnel officer's jeep driver staying with us runners all the time because he likes us. He comes from Kingsport, Tennessee and really doesn't have a southern accent. But the strange thing about his city which is really quite large is that

there is no Catholic church - something rare. I always thought every town had at least one church but this has only Protestant churches. He says this is typical all through the South and I told him it's far different from our section of the country. As I said recently, all the runners but one is Protestant. But I will say that the two religions really get along good under all conditions.

William Schaub just bought a camera a few days ago but what a thing. It is an obsolete type and is a glass slide camera. But I'm afraid he's out of luck because there is no holder for the slides. These slides are plain glass coated with sensitized material. I'm sure you've seen them. But everyone now has some sort of camera - mostly box cameras which aren't as easy to carry and as versatile. There is one fellow here in battalion who knows all about cameras, so he thinks, and I disagree on everything he says. I don't agree with him but I will say, I've taken better pictures than he. By the way, I have an Agfacolor film which one of the fellows found and gave me. Do you remember someone telling us about it and how it was a film of the future. This film has been used in Europe for quite awhile but never was used in the States for some reason. Would you please send me a Leica cartridge such as you sent so I can rewind some film? You got these cartridges or spools from Peggy. And can you find out what 15/10 degree Din is when converted to Weston scale. We in the States use Weston and G.E. film ratings while Din is used here. Everything seems so different between the two places. I wonder if you could write to Agfa Company and find out the normal exposures for this film. Then, if you get an answer, send it to me. I might find some more film (Agfacolor) so will want to know the correct exposure.

The trees are just coming out so spring is in full swing now. I noticed quite a few birds lately but no robins. I wonder if they have any over here.

The supply sergeant called me in one day for advice on how to develop films. He had a dark room and all the equipment but for some reason the prints didn't look right after being developed. Anyway, I advised him as best I could and he did get better results. But the funniest part is he developed a film in German developer and what a mess! The film turned out perfectly black so he believed there was something really wrong with the solution. But the pay off was when he developed four rolls, one after the other, in the same solution without trying to make it better and so as a result, they all turned out black! What a funny bunch sometimes.

I'm really making an awful lot of mistakes this evening but I'm quite tired. Nevertheless, I want to get a letter off to you. I know it isn't the best I've written but at least it's something.

Good night, dear parents. May God bless you both and may we be re-united soon again. With all my love, Harold

#March 24, 1945. No location listed

Dear Mum and Dad,

Last night I received a couple of letters and a package but when I went through it first, there was no letter from you. I was sort of disappointed but when I saw one of our letters stuck between two letters, I almost danced for joy. It was #23 so now I'm waiting for the one written just before this in which you told me about getting the films from Mr. Robbins. The package was most welcome for just shortly before I was wishing for a package of some sort. I also received another letter from Em and I will say she is so faithful writing and doesn't expect an answer to every single one. It seems as though I haven't had one from Miss Martin for quite awhile but maybe that's my imagination. And Mrs. Nelen wrote so I'll answer that soon. The Qualeys sent me an Easter card with Jimmy's address so I'll try and write him. No mail today!

I was so pleased to hear that at last you've gotten all the pictures back and am now sending them out. We're all so anxious to see them for it has been so long since I sent them home. But now I just am wondering and waiting for those new negatives to get home because all the pictures of the fellows are on them. Lately, I've been having more pictures taken of me than all the rest put together. I've had so few that I decided to get a few more. Guess I'm just conceited.

This bright sunshiny morning I had my hair cut because it has been about a month since it was last cut. So you can imagine how long it was. I sure feel like a skinned cat now but know I must look better. I have to laugh at Johnson because he thinks his hair is just right and it sticks up almost straight and looks like a mop. Stasi got so sick of looking at it, that he gave him the money to get a decent haircut but all he had done was get a trim. His hair forms a natural visor over his eyes the way it sticks out in front so he'll never have any troubles from the sun getting in his eyes! I had one of the medics do it for he's pretty good at cutting hair. Guess now that warm weather is here unless it changes very suddenly, most will be getting shorter haircuts. I know mine is cut so it's just long enough to comb and that's all.

Yesterday afternoon I got shot! Not by any weapon but by those cursed injection needles of the medics. I always dread them as much as I used to dread the dentist. Back in the States my arms used to get so sore but over here we can't escape them. Some had three shots yesterday all at once while others had two and one and some none. I was fortunate and had only one which prevents lockjaw (tetanus). But Surface wasn't so fortunate and they gave him the works - gave him all three. This morning he could hardly move either arms they were so sore and he had a terrific headache. I really felt sorry for him. This time for some reason my arm didn't get sore but I'm not crying over that fact.

Do you remember how I used to hate to sweep up at the boat yard, Dad? Anyway, I haven't escaped it since I've been a runner for I still have to sweep up the officers' quarters everyday. Maybe, I shouldn't say this but the officers I don't believe are as clean as the enlisted men. I still don't like to sweep up any better than before but now have to do it without a gripe. At home, I could gripe and didn't I. But I truthfully don't believe I'll be as bad as I was before.

Some more lucky fellows are going home soon so more and more are getting a chance. But have no fear, I don't expect to go home until after the war is over. So much is happening in the news lately that it makes me feel much surer of a sooner victory. It certainly will be a glorious day and one in which we all should pray to 'God sincerely. I know a good many will be getting drunk in celebration of the end of the war but I don't think it's the time nor the place.

I think I've done more walking just to get mail than in training. Every day I go to the company nearly a dozen times to see if the mail has come in. It certainly keeps up my morale to get mail often. I was just thinking, do you save all the letters I send you? I bet if you do you have an awful bunch of them and I know that letters can really weight. If I save about five or six of your letters, it really weights quite a little.

By the way, I think it would be best to forget about having those pictures printed except for ourselves. For one thing, it is much too hard to get them printed. And secondly, I don't think a great many of them appreciate what you're doing for them and all the time you've spent. There are four out of eight of us who really appreciate it but the rest are the opposite. Anyway, I think it best to forget all about them until after the war.

I'm sending another "Spearhead" in a separate envelope and it'll give you in more detail all about the Lily Pons show. I think it's a nice little paper and I believe you can get much more actual facts about the operations of our regiment. Remember when it speaks

about the 330<sup>th</sup> regiment I've been in that all the time end wherever they have gone I've been there.

I just took out my wallet to get a couple of stamps and what a mess of junk I've collected in it. Money from nearly every country, money order blanks, stamps, papers, etc. almost as much junk as a woman's hand bag. You women certainly carry a suitcase full of junk around especially if you had one like Lillian's - about three feet long.

I forgot to tell you what was in the package from you. There were those candy coated nuts - the kind I like so well, fig bars, cashew nuts and a couple of canned foods. It really tasted good and came at just the right time.

I don't know what the matter is with me but I just can't seem to write an interesting letter this last week. I'm just not in the mood, I guess.

I really think I'm the luckiest fellow in the world not only in having the best parents but because God has been with me all the way through. And I have a fairly good job at that, but oh, I'll be glad to get back and really work hard.

Keep up your chin and may God bless you and keep you both. With all my love.,  
Harold

#March 27, 1945. No location listed

Dear Mum and Dad,

There was no mail today from the company but the mail clerk here at battalion handed me a little first class package. I really expected something and all the rest watched on so interested as I opened it. What a surprise - a tube of toothpaste! The fellows had a great laugh over it and I was slightly disappointed but I really need it since the other is nearly gone. Yesterday I received your missed letter #22 in which you told me all about the film you're having done. I think you're so wonderful to do all that for us. I see that you have received the new address and I'll probably be getting mail through battalion soon. It's so much quicker, by one day at times. And I'm always so anxious to hear from you. Also yesterday I received Miss Martin's package which was sent only a month ago - pretty quick. She sent me my favorite - raspberry jam which came in good condition and crackers as well as kisses (candy, of course) and some other candy. I really had a feast and really enjoyed it after not having good homemade jam for so long. Of course, I had crackers on jelly. She is so kind to me and I really appreciate it I also hear from George St. Andre- a high school friend - and Evie. Boy, am I behind on my correspondence now - only nine letters behind - but I'll try and get them sent off soon.

Spring really is here now because the flowers and trees are nearly in full bloom. I'll have to use up this black and white film and then put in color because of all the beauty of apple and peach blossoms. This is the most wonderful time of season and it sort of makes me homesick. And all the farmers are plowing and getting their gardens ready. Even the little back yard victory gardens are being started and every time I see a small garden, I think of Dad and his. I bet you miss me, Dad, when you want to dig up the garden. But I know you miss me regardless. I hope you have.

Yesterday a long list came down for those who deserve the good conduct medal and my name was among the bunch. A soldier deserves this ribbon is given after one year of service without any black marks against him. So now I have one more ribbon to add to my collection. I shined up my combat stars on the E.T.O. ribbon. And don't they glitter! Everyone comments on how they show up. But the only reason I wear it is to keep from losing it.

Sunday was Palm Sunday and there were quite a few there at church. We had the captain chaplain and he is always so interesting. I do so enjoy going to church and won't

mind having services more often. Quite often I read the Bible and am trying to get more detail out of it so am taking more time to read. At times, the reading is so difficult as maybe you've found Bt you're so smart maybe it doesn't bother you. I know I have two smart parents, so much cleverer than many., I really am proud of you both and I'd introduce you proudly to anyone.

The reason why I wanted you to send that picture to "Life" magazine is because if that picture is used, I'll be put on a preferred list and may get more pictures into the magazine. I know a fellow pretty well in the company and he did quite a lot of photography before the war. So he knows what he's talking about. He knows a good many big shots in New York City so he's quite an influential person. Well, it remains to be seen what will come of the photograph.

This morning, I decided to build a fire in the stove so got all the necessary stuff together. I was really going to get a rip-roaring fire going - so I thought. Anyway, I spent nearly a half hour trying to get it going and to no avail. I gave it up in disgust and left it, then came back later. There was a large fire blazing away and it turned out the fire had caught after I left. What a way to start a fire.

More cokes and rations yesterday. So we are really getting a pile of stuff. I'm so glad I don't smoke because I would have no place to. Can't seem to think of anything tonight but at least this letter is better than nothing. God be with you. With all my love, Harold

#March 31, 1945. Somewhere in Germany.

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here it is the last of the month but don't expect to get paid just yet under the circumstances. Tomorrow is Easter and I do hope we'll have church for it certainly is a wonderful day for the Christians. I went to church Thursday but there was no services Friday. It is really is time I get busy again and write because the last time was four days ago. I do like to write as often for I know how you feel. We have one fellow who writes approximately one letter per month and I bet you're glad I'm not like that. But I think too much of my parents to be like.

I have received a couple of letters lately - #24 from you and one from Dad. I certainly appreciate you writing, Dad, instead of letting Mum do all the work. And a package came yesterday from you with figs, chicken, coated nuts, etc. I forgot to tell you, I believe, that Miss Martin also sent me a package and it took just one month to get there. Yours was dated Feb.17 so you can see the mail really is coming through better now. I wonder how your end is doing now.

You wanted to know where I got all those stamps and as a matter of fact, I'll try and answer all your questions. Those stamps were all strewn around a room in Aachen so rather than have them thrown out, I picked them up and sent them just before we began the attack in the bulge in Belgium. And that slide rule came from the same place, I believe, but am not sure because an officer gave it to me. I saw the most beautiful drawing set but for one thing one of the other men had it and for another thing, we can't send home so called loot. Men are getting court-martialed for sending home things so we have to be so very careful. Those three in that one picture you mentioned is Francis Nelen, William Schaub, and John Alexa. On this last roll of film I sent home or I should say three rolls, I didn't tell what each picture was because I was in too much of a hurry to get it sent out. But never mind having extra prints made this time for we'll have them made up after the war.

I have been watching out for Don Hunter's outfit and believe it or not, I was within five miles of him for sure. I was so close and yet so far. It certainly is too bad I couldn't get to see him. And I believe I'm quite close to Sam Harris who went through basic training

with me. I must try and get back and see James Collier, if possible, but as yet haven't been to.

The picture of those Dutch girls was taken in front of their house. The father had a little money, I believe, because he was the local blacksmith - always busy from morn till night. But they are strict on Sunday and no one does a bit of work. Talking about that makes me think that there is less Catholic churches now and suppose there will be less and less soon! These people were named Janssen, (pronounced Johnson) and the other girl's name is Mia (Me-ah)

I forgot to tell you about the German film and the others. You want to know what the others are. The real good looking pictures are bought (those of Luxemburg) and the one of two soldiers is one that got by mistake into the prints I had made in Luxemburg. The church at Kanach is one I took and one of the best I've taken yet.

It seems as though the Germans now have a new official flag - these are all white. Very house is flying a white flag because they surrender. They are so meek and mild now but they were quite a cocky bunch when they were winning. The countryside is really nice and in my next letter, I'll tell more about this. But I'm quite limited on my time and these sheets will be all for now.

I asked you to send me all those minicolor prints I have upstairs in the bottom drawer. They are of the house, inside and out, and of the cat. I never did hear that you'd sent them to me so now I'll ask you to send them.

I do hope we'll be able to have church tomorrow because It's such a wonderful day. I'll be thinking of you tomorrow just as much as always, in fact more. The war is going so well now there are hopes of it being over soon. All we an do is pray to the good Lord.

Please keep up your chin and hope it'll be over soon. May God bless you both and keep you. With all my love, Harold

#April 2, 1945. Somewhere in Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

My mail has been coming through fairly well by way of headquarters. I'm so glad I had it changed because there has been no mail from the company as yet. I enjoy getting all the mail but yours is the only one I really want badly. Yesterday, I received #20 so it's taking much less time to get there than before. But #25 is missing so now I have a back one to look forward to. I'm beginning to worry now because I haven't heard that you're received the camera and films yet. Guess I'm just rushing it for it hasn't been much more than a month and a week and I believe first class often takes nearly two months.

Well, we did get paid after all but it wasn't until yesterday morning. We were supposed to get paid the last day of March but Swett and I were so far from the company that we couldn't get there. So I expect to be paid double next month because I never thought we'd get paid. But sure enough, our company commander thought of us. He rushed up yesterday morning and paid us off quickly. I got nearly \$25 but expected much less. So I checked up and found out they are sending only \$40 to you. What I meant to do was have the present allotment of \$10 raised to \$50 thus increasing it \$40. But apparently the clerk misunderstood and he just made it \$40. Swett increased his present allotment #25 the same time as I and he now has \$25 sent home. Oh well, I'm having much more sent home than before and I expect to send home about \$20 as soon as this money order is made out. So much for the money situation but I wills ay I'm saving up more and more all the time. Not like Johnson who lost his month's pay last night playing cards. That's like throwing it away!

Talking about Johnson, last night I came into the room to get into bed and he was very busy writing a letter. But wasn't I surprised and almost shocked when I found or saw him writing on mourning paper. The white sheet of paper had a large border of black around it! I can't figure him out but that would be the last type of paper I'd use. And he has plenty of stationery too. Oh well, I guess I'll just never figure out some men in this army.

Mail just came in this minute and there as the missing letter with the pictures in it. I hate to miss any letters. I'm so sorry that I made that mistake on William Schaub's address. He isn't here just now, probably gone to the company. But either address will do. Don't feel too badly about the color pictures because I know you're doing the best you can. After the war, I'll have to make some black and whites from them and see if they will be any better. I think you've been doing a wonderful job especially without any help. I don't know, but it seems as though the more I get into photography, the more interested I become. I still am thinking seriously of it being my profession but the future will bring forth the solution. I believe I notice more beauty in common things than many. This certainly is a most perfect world that our God has created.

Oh, I now have a ticket in my wallet on the Berlin express. That is actually true and I got hold of it at a railroad station. I'm afraid, though, that the trains will be delayed awhile. Ha! Being in the station made me sort of homesick and reminded me of South Station only a much smaller scale. I certainly wish I could purchase a ticket for Boston even if I could be home only a few days.

I haven't forgotten your birthday but I do wish I could send you something. But it isn't like being back in the States where you can get so many articles. But I'll be thinking of you and I pray I'll be home for next year. I've been away for nearly a year and it really seems like ages. But what must be must be.

I just read in the paper about Congress thinking about giving the soldiers who draw French money more. Over here it's (the franc) worth 2 cents but at home it's worth only one so as a result we are paying twice as much for merchandise in France than we should. So now they propose to give us all the back pay. But to me it seems as though they're just giving us the money because when we send money home it'll be the original money based on the franc worth 2 cents. I hope you understand what I mean. This exchange in currency is certainly a nuisance and I'll be so glad to start using the dollar again.

I began this letter this afternoon but was interrupted by a fellow who wanted me to show him how to use a Leica camera. He found it and wanted to know if it was any good. I'll say it is! A Nazi officer had left it behind in a deserted house and he'd found it. Anyway, he wanted me to go along up with him to the place and look over some more equipment left behind by this officer. When I got there, I got so excited for there in front of me was all kinds of accessories for the Leica. I really was having a wonderful time looking at everything. He took what he wanted and told me I could have the rest which I grabbed. But he could kick himself because he let someone pick up another Leica and that really was too bad throwing away something that valuable. I wish you'd find out the value of a couple of items. I'll name because I want to see if I have something worthwhile. No use carrying it around unless it's worthwhile. I have what is called a Leica Motor - maybe Mr. Robbins could tell you what it's for because I don't believe I could tell you in writing. I'll try thought - it's a spring attachment on the bottom and after a picture is taken, this spring brings the next picture automatically in place. You'll see a picture of it in the manual. And I have an Elmar f = 9 cm. 1:4. Maybe you'll be able to find out about that somewhere. Don't go to too much trouble though, please. And then I have a couple more things but I don't know what to call them. I even have gotten hold of a tripod (metal).

It seems as though I have now become the official cameraman for this battalion headquarters. Every time a person gets hold of a camera, they come and ask me what I think of it. I even appraise them and they often sell them at the price I quote. Ha! Businessman! I don't profess to know everything but I know much more than many. By the way, would you check up on this lens please - Hektor  $f = 2.8$  cm. 1:63 - and let me know what you find out about the rest.

I have been quite impressed by the German farms - so much more clean than all the other countries. The cows were so clean and the stables just immaculate. The whole countryside is so pleasant to look at and with all the open spaces, the Germans still have to make war in order to get more land. The country really impresses me and is much more like home. The nicest little farms you ever saw and each with a red tile roof. With spring coming too and leaves just appearing, I think of home.

If possible would you please see if you can get hold of some dental floss. I believe you can get it at any drugstore and is sort of like string used to get bits of food out between teeth. Sometimes I get so aggravated because I can't get food out between my teeth so have to use some which one of the fellows has with him.

So many flowers are starting to bloom and some are familiar and some not. It seems as though I can appreciate nature so much but many can't enjoy nature the way I do. In the window of the house we're staying in, there is such large begonias and tulips. And in so many houses, there are red lilies blooming in all the windows. They really do grow so many nice flowers.

Yesterday morning, we had fresh eggs for breakfast. I suppose a storehouse full of them were found and each kitchen issued so many boxes. But there were so few men who wanted breakfast because we didn't get to bed until very late and they were tired. I had to miss a meal though for no telling what might happen. There were so many eggs left over that I ended up having five eggs. After not having them too often, I certainly can enjoy them so much. So much different than what it used to be, eh!

I'm enclosing a little card which I made into a Mother's Day card. It isn't much but might express how I feel. I'm mailing it a little early but the mail might become poor again and take nearly a month.

I saw the funniest thing a couple days ago. Three horses were having the greatest time playing with each other by biting each others legs. They certainly pranced around and we all had fun watching.

We stopped in one town and after a few minutes there, we saw three deer wandering across a nearby field. This species is so much smaller and they're speedy little things. A couple of fellows decided to hunt them, and went off. The next thing we heard about 20 shots, one after the other, and in a short time they appeared with all three. One deer was shot at nearly 700 yards but the others were so much closer. I felt so sorry, though, because these deer were thrown away because the kitchen could not be bothered with them. It's a shame to kill them and let them lay.

Just got mail from the company and had a letter and an Easter card from Mrs. Newell and a Boston Herald.

I found some more bulk film so I wish you'd send me a few more extra spools. I now have 25 rolls and guess this is plenty. Boy, that is a bunch and each has 36 exposures. You needn't bother to send any more for quite awhile.

Guess this will be all for now. May god bless you both. With all my love, Harold

ENCLOSED CARD

On this Mother's Day, I'm thinking of you

My dearest Mother, dearest true,  
She gave me life and guided me right  
So that I may hold God high in my sight.  
She gave me her deepest love and guided me straight,  
So that I know of no such word as "hate."  
She looked after me though sickness and all  
She taught me health so I might grow tall.  
For all this, I can never repay  
But will say to you Mother, I think of you every day.  
I love you so dearly, honestly I do,  
It's a genuine love, genuine true!

#### NOTE WITH THE POEM

Here is a little card which isn't the best but better than nothing. I composed that poem. It might not be the best but it expresses what I want to say but you can understand, I believe.  
With love, Harold

#April 5, 1945' Somewhere in Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

A letter came from you, #27, dated March 26 so that made real good time. Yesterday also, I received another package from Miss Martin in which was the wallet. It really is very nice and so thoughtful of her to have it made. It is the envy of all the fellows and they think it's pretty "swell" as Mrs. Richardson says. I was so glad to get those photos you enclosed. Boy, there was some snow there this winter. Mrs. Hendrie also sent me a couple of pictures so I'm getting quite a collection. Miss Grant sent me a load of religious material which looks quite interesting and she also sent a nice letter.

The most pitiful sight I've ever seen is all these newly liberated slave labor men wandering around without anything to eat. The Germans certainly starved them and they certainly look like starved people. There are all kinds and the French seem to have been treated better than the rest. But the Russians were really treated like a bunch of cattle. I certainly consider myself lucky after seeing them and all you people at home really are fortunate even though you don't get everything you want. These poor unfortunates just wander around wherever they think they can get something to eat - usually where the Americans are. Just today there was one fellow who had gotten hold of a large tin can and when one of the soldiers went to empty the leftovers in the garbage, he begged us to give it to him. He really seemed to enjoy that mess but I know that I'd never eat it. Each man has some sort of identification designating his country. The Russian - OST on the coat, Pole, LP, and the French had a particular type of uniform so they were fairly well treated. There were even a great many Italians. It makes my heart feel so sad when I see all this in a so called "civilized world." But can we be civilized without God's help? I hope we can teach the Germans more of a truth for Jesus Christ and the Father. At times, I'm almost afraid of the future - not of myself but of the world and chaos.

In my last letter I told you about getting a couple of camera parts but forgot to tell you that I also have a Nazi flag with a large swastika which I'll try and send home soon. One fellow sent home a flag so big that I bet it would cover the whole side of our house. All good Germans had flags so they are quite plentiful. I believe I forgot to tell you that I also have a tripod which this Nazi officer left behind. But it won't fit my camera because these foreign countries have a screw too big for the American cameras. But there is an attachment which will make it smaller and thus make it fit. I certainly would like to get home and try these things. But I'd rather get home to see you naturally.

Each month there are a bunch of magazines given to each company and this month I was able to get hold of a "Popular Photograph" magazine. I sure do enjoy reading it. But I think the magazine I enjoy most of all is one that is sent to Shirley surface. It is the Reader's Digest. And I read it forward and backward. I really believe it's about the best we have out.

As I'm writing, I can hear someone playing an accordion in the other room. It has been going steady all day long and beginning to drive most of us crazy. Greene is playing it and he can't play at all. It is just a mess of discordant notes but if you were here we'd enjoy it so much. These Germans certainly had a bunch of instruments. They are good, all right, but we have no place to carry them.

Mail should be coming in soon and I hope to hear that you've finally received my camera and film. It takes time and I suppose I'm trying to rush things

It is strange how liquor affects each person so different. I've seen every runner drunk except Swett and some act the fool out. I just can't believe in it and don't think much of those who do. But I know I'll find them - those who drink to excess - all over. Last night, William Schaub was certainly feeling happy but was very amiable. Now if all were like that, it wouldn't be too bad. But some get so quarrelsome and hard to get along with. I had to laugh at Schaub. He was playing a little harp which we found so he'd be in practice when he goes to heaven - as he said. So few can tell but that harp is out of tune. They swear it isn't but I'm afraid I've obtained a sharper ear for music than many. Schaub told me when he was sober that his wife wrote and told him she'd heard from you. She plans to send a check so I don't know how things will turn out if you're sending them C.O.D. Anyway I know you'll straighten things out. The fellows want me to thank you for all your trouble and I know they really appreciate it.

This is short but I guess I'm just not in the mood. May God bless you both. With all my love, Harold

P.S. Thank Miss Martin for the billfold and I'll write to her soon Tell Em to send mail to my new address, please.

#April 7, 1945. Somewhere in Germany

Dear Mother and Dad,

Yesterday afternoon I received a real long letter from you dated March 28, #25. So that is only about a week old. And I also received one from Mrs. Hendrie with an excellent picture of them both.

I could kick myself for getting you so confused about those pictures. I guess I underestimated your intelligence and should have known you'd be able to take care of things. If I had known at the time, I never would have said to let me collect but in one of your letters you told me that I could collect but then you changed your mind. Please forgive me and I hope you don't have to go to too much work. Francis Nelen's, William Schaub's, and Rudolph Stasi's pictures have been taken care of and that takes care of three. Gilbert has returned to us now so I can collect from him if you wish but do as you wish if you have a set made for him. Daniels has heard from his wife and she said the pictures are on the way. The same with Swett. But he, Swett, wants to know what you wrote about him because his wife claimed you said we used to this and that together. Oh, if only had let you take care of it. But thank goodness, it's almost over and then you can take a rest.

And to top all my troubles, I had 700 francs taken from me. How it ever happened I don't know but just two days ago, I had two 500 franc notes and four one hundred franc notes. Now I have one 500 franc note and two 100 franc notes. So it was divided exactly in half. I was lucky whoever took it didn't take it all. It was worth about \$15 (700 francs) but I have been fortunate. I never lost any more since I've been in the army. There are always a

certain few you can't trust and they're the ones who make things miserable. I know no runner took them for I know them too well. I certainly am glad I didn't get paid in full this month or much more might have disappeared. Just think of those fellows, though, who lose all their money gambling. They are really throwing it away. I felt bad about losing it at first but it's gone and there's nothing I can do about it. Don't feel too bad about it though. If the camera was gone that would be different. It's right beside me and I hardly let it out of my sight.

April 9.

Here it is two days after and so much has been happening in these couple of days that I absolutely haven't had time. You know I try to write as often as possible. Today I received another letter #29 which told me all about your having the two rooms re-finished. Dad, you're certainly having a lot done. I won't know the house when I get home. I was so glad to hear that you've gotten my camera a last. You close the camera by pressing the two latches together below the lens on the cover. Don't close it by pulling the hinges or you'll bend the range finder head. But I bet you did that because I did until I learned. I had two letters - one from Miss Martin which she told me all about her measles. How come you didn't tell me anything about it? And Betty sent those pictures and a nice letter. I couldn't seem to figure out that sketch of the cobbler's bench so finally had to have one of the fellows tell me as he knew. I certainly can't see why people want to have anything like that around unless our house is furnished with antiques. Guess I'm just queer!

Last night, the fellows were cooking some ham which they found and we certainly had a good meal. But the room got so smoky they it ran us out. Just like Dad when he used to fry his fish. Do you still do it? For some reason, I began to feel miserable after that and couldn't seem to catch my breath because of all my coughing. After going to the medics and getting some cough syrup, I felt much better. Boy, that smoke must have been worse than I thought.

By the way, Harrison Greene informed me that his wife has received the photos so I've now got his money. And I've collected from Stasi. As soon as possible, I'll try and send home a money order and then you can take your money out of that.

These people over here are great for having large fluffy comforters on their beds. We don't have any at home but maybe you used to. Lately, it has been very rare I've used my sleeping bag because we've been sleeping in beds. Pretty fortunate! I'll have to try and describe the house we stayed in for about three days - the place where I began this letter. It was a six room house but smaller than ours. The furniture was really nice - almost as nice as a good many homes back in the States. This man (owner) must have been a great hunter because all over the walls were deer's horns and all kinds of photos of animals. They had a piano and I've finally learned all of "Bells of St. Mary's" completely - something which I couldn't do at home. I just picked it up. I'm sort of sorry I never took piano lessons now but it's too late now. I wanted to take trumpet. But I can be thankful because it was due to the trumpet that I became a bugler and got this job. I wouldn't trade my job for anything.

The bathroom in the house was large and we always had hot water because of a steam heat furnace quite unusual for over here. Did I tell you I thought of home when I washed in front of such a nice large mirror. It was a beautiful house, all right and so many are like that throughout Germany. I was so disappointed when I saw the German super highway and saw it was only a four lane highway. Why, ours are six and that is very common. But over here most are narrower than Walnut Street and two vehicles can just get by. We really have a good system of highways compared to these countries.

I haven't taken off one layer of clothes yet so still have the same as I described in Luxemburg minus an overcoat and overshoes. But, oh, doesn't my clothes weigh an awful

lot. It must weight ten pounds but I'm getting so used to it. I have my pockets stuffed with everything I need except toilet article and stationery which I keep in a separate bag. Then I have a bed roll which consists of a shelter half - which when put together with another person forms a tent - a blanket, and a sleeping bag. Inside this roll, I'm carrying all that camera equipment I found so it really weighs up.

I had better close shortly and get a little sleep as it's getting late. I know this is a very poor letter but I'm tired and just can't seem to think. Schaub brags about his wife not missing a day writing but I can brag about my mother writing the longest letters. Your letters written every couple of days make up for those you miss and your letter is much longer than his wife's two. I'm so pleased to hear from you Dad and please write once in awhile.

Good night, dear parents. May God bless you and keep you. It may not be long before Germany falls and I get home. Just let us put our trust in God. With all my love, Harold.

#April 11, 1945. Somewhere in Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

As yet there hasn't been any mail since I last wrote but I can't expect to get a letter from you every day although I wouldn't mind. But I'd perfectly satisfied having you write as often as you do and put so much in a letter.

Just as I began this letter, in came the fellow who owns that Leica and he was having all kinds of troubles - sort of like you, Mum. He had taken up the entire spool and took out the film without rewinding. Afterward, he realized his mistake so next time he'll be more careful - like me when I made some double exposures on my first camera, the Agfa. One learns by making mistakes, doesn't one? So anyway, I put another film in it so I hope he's more careful. That fellow can get hold of more cameras than any one man because he has had all sizes. I hope those thing I have got (camera lens) are worth something for it is no use lugging them around for nothing.

I am beginning to collect the money from the fellows but am getting into something now. We just had our money collected (Belgian francs) and are now going to exchange it to German marks. It is going to be some fun when it comes to collecting debts. But it won't be too difficult in fact really easier with the marks. They are worth 10 cents while the franc is worth 21/4 cents. I do have my financial troubles. As yet, I haven't sent home a money order but hope to before too long. I figure I now have about \$30 so that will be enough for one money order. I turned in an English pound which I have been carrying with me ever since I was in England. I kept it by mistake when we exchanged it into French francs and decided to keep it as a souvenir. But after all this time, the pound has worn pretty thin and beginning to tear. I have an American dollar still but it is made of such good paper that it'll never wear out.

Henry Swett rushed up to me a couple of days ago and was all excited because he'd found some film which he thought was my size. It did look like 35 mm so I opened it and what did I find but dental x-ray film. He certainly was disappointed but I really have enough film for awhile. I know it was dental x-ray film because after going back and having my tooth x-rayed. As yet, I haven't had any trouble with the tooth and hope I don't until after this operation. We are jumping around like jack rabbits and I just wouldn't have time to go back to the dentist.

It was well over a month and a half since we hit the Rhine as the first division. As you know, we pushed into Neuss and remained there for about fifteen days. I shouldn't say right in the city but in that large bend in the river up above Neuss. Nothing was damaged in this section and so lived the "life of Reilly." The power house was within several hundred

yards of the river and yet the current was always on and the water also. That really was the nicest place I've ever been and so hated to leave. After that, we went back into Holland for a short time - you can tell when I was there for I didn't put any country in my heading. The people in that part of Holland didn't think much of the Americans and English and preferred the Germans! From there we started off again and are helping to finish the war shortly - we hope!

William Schaub sent home a package when we were in Izier, Belgium at the priest's home and his wife received it the other day - but not as he had sent it. His wife claimed the powder had been replaced by flour and the perfume by cleaning fluid. Boy, some people in this army certainly will stoop low when they pull a trick like that. So much fraud goes on within the (army) mail system that it is not funny at all. That is why I'm so anxious to hear that you received the negatives. I was certainly glad to hear that you received the camera because many times they have been taken out by someone and sent home empty. It used to be that we had to put on the outside what the items were but now a list of articles are kept separate and kept on file back at division. So now the packages have nothing to reveal the contents - a much safer way, I hope!

Today I saw the biggest slide rule I've ever seen in my life. It was all of two feet and had an ever scale imaginable on it. That certainly would bring some money back home but I'm afraid it couldn't be gotten through the mail. And I saw some nice large drawing sets but of course, I couldn't have them.

I suppose you've noticed two men have been censoring my letters - Captain Thurmond, headquarter's company commander (S-1). Those in parenthesis stand for personnel officer. There is an S- which is personnel, S-2 intelligence office, S-3 operations officers, and S-4 supply officer. This Captain Thurmond is a very nice man and I know all think very highly of him. I never will forget the joke he always tells about Stasi. Stasi one day was told to report to the captain and he walked into a room to ask. He yelled, "Where is that buy Thermite" and just then the captain stepped into the room. He had heard Stasi say that and has laughed about it ever since.

And the other man who censors our letter is Lt. Dun Laney. He is communications officer here in battalion and is a pretty nice fellow. There are lots of favorites and graft that go along with the army but after awhile you get used to it. I used to get so aggravated if things weren't done just right but I'm getting quite used to all the inefficiency.

It seems as though the further we go the more cameras that are found and it's getting now that everyone has one. But my old trusty Kodak 35 will do me. I know how it acts and behaves so I wouldn't trade it for a better camera if I could. I believe when I get home, I could get some good pictures with the Leica as soon as I get to know it but you must be familiar with all of its actions - just like a car. For so long, I had one of the few cameras and as a result have had pictures all the way (from St. Malo).

I must try and get a letter off to Mrs. Nelen soon but it is so difficult to write with things moving so fast. I have slipped terribly lately except on your mail. But I am not worrying for I know most will understand the circumstances.

The American soldier certainly is keen upon having cars so they go to all the trouble of fixing them up and then they are taken away. So many cars over here are made in the States and have often come across other American made equipment. Imagine having our own stuff used against us.

The news is beginning to look very encouraging and I just pray to God that it'll be over with soon. I hear the mail clerks were given orders to get their mail now so I hope I'll hear from you. In my next letter, I'll tell you but won't wait - will try and get this letter off

now. Gee, but it has been so hard to write a descent letter lately because of the situation but I am doing the best I can.

Let's pray together to God and may He bless such wonderful parents. Good night, my darlings. With all my love, Harod

#April 13, 1945. Somewhere in Germany postmarked April 17, received at home on April 27.

Dear Mum and Dad,

I am wondering if I dated my last couple of letters right or back in March. Sometimes I do things so unconsciously and then cannot remember a thing. Yesterday I received a letter #30 dated ajril 3 and was glad you have received the E.T.O. ribbon. But as yet there is no word of you receiving the fil.s

We received the word today of the death of Roosevelt. It was certainly shocking after him only being in about three months of his 4<sup>th</sup> term. So now it's Truman and I just hope he'll be a good man. It really is too bad it had to happen but God wanted it that way.

You never told me about what happened to the possibilities of our street name being changed. I certainly hope it is never changed because after all these years it seems to have a tradition. I'd like to have ben there when you both gave your opinion of it before the selectmen. Maybe there is some hidden talent in the family - political speech making. Guess I just don't know everything about my parents. They're pretty clever, I think!

Today I've really been in a writing mood and wrote to five people. So now all I have to answer is five - five too many even yet. Lately I've had very few letters from people other than you. But I suppose they will all come in at once and then I'll be right back where I started. I do have my trouble don't' I?

Do you remember that man from whom we bought that Leica telling us about the new color film which would appear in the U.S. market after the war? It is Agfacolor and is used quite often over here in Europe. I was able to get hold of a whole roll of this color film - 36 exposures - so I'll try and use it up. Gosh, but I now have so many black and white films I don't know what to do with it all. Must be at least fifty rolls I was able to pick up. A fellow in headquarters is carrying some for me as I cannot carry much. He at least has a vehicle to put his junk on. Film (120 and 620 size) are really plentiful. I just gave ten away as if it was nothing. And to think you folks at home have so little. These Germans really had a stock of them all right. I ought to send you some film to take some pictures. Sort of like the soldier who knit a sweater for his girl and the one who sent a package of food to the folks back home. Please don't send me any more unless it's Kodachrome. I have been trying to use up some of the color film but the weather hasn't been quite nice enough - cloudy quite often.

The happiest bunch of men I've seen so far have been the English and Americans we have re-captured (liberated). I have only seen English myself but there have been quite a few American captured. Just think quite a few English were pilots shot down on the first day of war. They claim if it wasn't for the Red Cross packages, they would have never pulled through. They certainly were thin and treated very mean. I often think about Fred Villeneuve and wonder what condition he'll be in when he returns. I'd rather take my chances where I am than be a prisoner and be entirely out of the war. I had to laugh, this one fellow was talking to an Englishman until the Englishman said he had to leave and have his afternoon tea! This fellow claimed he was sure now he must be a true Englishman because of his tea. Just tonight we had tea for supper and it really tasted good. I can't figure out how these Germans can drink that ersatz coffee. It is so bitter and I hate it. What cigarettes they have too. I never smelled such a stink. I often noticed that smell whenever

we moved into a room where Germans had just been. And it wasn't until recently that I found out how that smell was made - by those cigarettes.

I certainly would like to see what the two rooms will look like when they are completely furnished. There is going to be a great change in the old house when I get home. Maybe I won't know the place.

I hope to be able to do the work that Alves does over here for my own private use. It certainly would be so much better and so much faster. It would seem like old times if I could only do it.

Guess this will be all as I want to get to bed. Good night, dear parents. May God bless you and keep you until I return and even after. With all my love, Harold

P.S. Please send me a package of candy, cookies, nuts, etc. as I would enjoy them very much.

#April 18, 1945. Somewhere in Germany.

Dear Mum and Dad,

I haven't written for four days so had better get busy. There just hasn't been time or else I write very two days usually. Just think, tomorrow is your birthday and this time last year I was home Oh, how I wish I were there for this birthday. Very shortly I will be entitled to wear another stripe denoting overseas service of one year. It is not as long as many but seems so long to me at times. But the war may be over shortly, we hope.

This morning I received a first class letter from you which contained the article about the Braintree basketball team. It certainly took a long time and I still maintain that air mail is faster than either V-mail or first class. Maybe it's just me but my letters have been coming through in good order. I also received a letter from Em in which she enclosed some crossword puzzles. I enjoy doing them and have most of them worked out - as far as I can. Miss Martin also sent me a nice long letter. And all the church papers and Heralds from Mrs. Hendire have been coming through fine. It is strange that late mail has been coming through but I have not had any from you since April 2. I can't understand it but I suppose the letters will appear before long.

At last, I met James Collier as I was quite close to cannon company yesterday. He was pleased to see me and we talked about different things for awhile. I don't remember just what about but about Braintree. He seems to be a fairly nice fellow and has a carefree way about him. He told me where he used to work, about high school, etc. He claims he hasn't written for a long time and can't seem to think of anything to say. He certainly must worry his mother but I'd rather write often so you won't worry. No man is so busy over there that they can't get a line off at least once every two weeks. But some are just lazy to bother. Oh well, let them do what they want but I don't want to worry my parents too much.

I'm enclosing a little card I found which by coincidence is fitting for Mother's Day. I sent a card a few days ago and I do hope you received it. I can't be there but I'll do the next best thing.

I have collected money from a couple of fellows for the pictures but most are completely broke so I'll collect on payday. I have money with me but I don't believe I'll send any home this month - next month I will, though. I told you about losing \$15 but am almost sure it was taken. I don't know how because the wallet is always with me. Even though I did lose it I believe I can make it up. I won't say how now but if I can, I'll let you know. I hate to lose a cent because I want a good sized next egg in the bank for rainy days which are bound to come. You are doing so much for me, both of you, and I don't know how to thank you. So few fellows are looking toward the future and gamble away a hundred dollars

as if it were nothing. But I'm afraid when this war gets over and people get back to normal, there is going to be a depression. I guess reading so much American history has made me conscience of the future. But again, It's probably due to my wonderful parents I'm so glad yo have good old common sense after seeing how many act. Guess I'm just to serious as a good many tell me - you should live and spend while you can.

My trust old camera is always with me and I just finished up another roll of film. That makes three rolls of black and white and one of color which I've taken since February 1<sup>st</sup>. So I'm getting plenty of pictures. I would like to get one roll developed particularly because I had quite a few of me taken. I'm not conceited but because I know how you'd like to have some pictures. I found some more Alves equipment so may be able to enlarge. I hope I can get things in order so everything will work. We now have all kinds of paper and even a tank like what I used to sue Remember? I asked in two letters if you'd send me those Kodachrome pictures printed on paper - Minicolor they're called. I wish you'd send them to me. The pictures of the house - inside and out, the cat, etc. are in the bottom drawer of the dresser. I really would like to get them.

You know what you can do. After all the rooms are fixed up - both dining and living room - take some color pictures such as I have taken and have prints made. I would love to see what the rooms look like in color now. You could vary the exposure and one print of each room should turnout. Even if you use up a whole roll it would be worthwhile. I'd never let Alves handle the Kodachrome as they send it third class to the factory and s returned the same way. It is terribly slow as you have found out and it would be better to send it airmail direct as I used to. Goodness, you with all your exposure meters and equipment and me with nothing. Just the same, I still get better color pictures then you. You should be ashamed of yourself. But don't me so much credit as a good photographer. Lately everyone seems to have a box camera at least and those with more complicated cameras come running for me to tell them how to use it. I bet more than fifty people have asked me so I try to explain it as best I can. Most can understand but I usually give them set rules. Cameras range from Leicas to \$1.00 cameras so there is a great variety. I've even had officers ask me. I certainly enjoy this work the more I fool with it and hope to buy things for my Leica when I get home. I asked you to price two things I've got (Leica motor and lens) so that'll start my collection.

I have been photographing prisoners as they come in. This particular day, in came a female nurse with some men and wasn't she arrogant. She was nice looking all right and I suppose thought she was privilege character because she was woman. But she was treated as a prisoner. I had the greatest fun trying to take a picture of her and so did all the fellows. She just wouldn't let anyone take picture of her. If she saw me try, she'd turn her head. Anyway, it ended up that all us photographers surrounded her and whichever way she turned she'd be facing a camera. Ha, we fooled her all right! Her nose was always sticking up in the air so I hope her arrogance shows up in the picture. I forgot to tell you that I found two boxes of bulk film - now making a total of three rolls of bulk and 15 regular spools. But never mind sending any spools now as I have enough film to last for awhile.

Gee, I feel as though I could write a whole dictionary today so I hope to write at least five sheets to make up for lost time.

It is strange how differently equipped the S.S. and the regular army are. The S.S. I suppose because it's Hitler's favorite has all kinds of nice food and equipment while the other hasn't half of that. We came across an S.S. supply house and in there were all kinds of instruments such as trumpets, drums, violins, etc. But what got me mad was the way the Americans went in and just destroyed everything. All those things could have been saved and given to the Red Cross or something. There were a good many kinds of photographic

paper and photographic supplies and all the paper had been opened and exposed. Why, when an American doesn't know what he is doing, does he have to destroy. Maybe someone else can use the supplies. There were also plenty of phonographs with records and most were destroyed. One of the soldiers was searching an S.S. prisoner and out he came with a nice movie and still camera. Two from one prisoner was rare but goes to show that anything can happen. I'm not the type that likes to run and search a prisoner and go snooping around to see what I can find. I'd rather come back with my hands than lose it from a booby trap. American I find too nose-y and not an exception - they want to know what and where everything is.

I have to laugh at one of the Jewish fellows we have in headquarters. He is strictly orthodox and won't eat any part of a pig. But with all these K rations having part of some sort in each he goes hungry most of the time. The breakfast has ground ham and eggs, dinner has cheese with little bits of bacon, and supper has beef and port loaf. Some rations have just plain cheese without bacon so when we find each dinner unit open we know he has been trying to find some plain cheese. I'm glad our religion isn't as strict as the other two for I believe as long as a man does good he can eat what he wants when he wants. We don't have the formalities as the others do and I still believe God looks at us as quickly as them.

I wish you'd have negatives made from those pictures of Lt. Col. Norris alone and with Col. Foster. Gilbert had prints made from one of the prints I have him of himself and it turned out very well. If you do have them made would you please send me a couple prints of each. I didn't send the negative of these home but gave them to the fellow I had the argument with about the negatives. If it is too much trouble, don't do it though.

I want you to send me some of those woolen socks you bought me when I was home on furlough. I hope you remember what I mean. I don't always have enough so would like a few more. Maybe in each package you could tuck in a pair. Please send me a package of candy, gum, cookies etc. as I would like it very much.

Just a few minutes ago, I was walking along with John Ellis, a clerk here in headquarters. I've told you about him before, I believe. As we were walking, quite a few asked us if we were brothers because we look so much alike. I have been mistaken for him quite often and they say we act and look alike I had a couple of pictures taken with him so when they are developed, you can see for yourself. It is strange how two fellows of no relation can look so much alike.

A few days ago, we had more German food. The smell made me hungry and seemed so tempting but when I tasted it, I spit it out. They certainly have terrible food and it will never compare to ours - I'm talking about the soldier's food. I can't see how these people in these countries can exist and stay as healthy as they are. All I ever see them eat is dark bread, a little bit of meat once in awhile, and ersatz coffee. What a diet. Even now you people at home have so much compared to these over here. It certainly will be nice for you when you can go down to the store and buy whenever you want.

I had some Heinie chocolate yesterday and I will say that is really good - almost better than ours. I don't like the real sweet chocolate as well as the bittersweet so guess I'm just plain queer. I'm always just opposite most of the time. If the majority likes one thing, I like the other

The more I have travelled, the more I'm beginning to agree with you Dad. You always hated the beaches and would rather go to the mountains and nature. I am appreciating nature more and more and would enjoy having a vacation in the mountains near a lake. I'm really anxious to go on the vacation to Newfoundland as you promised, Dad and I do hope we can go there after the war. I'll be able to take loads and loads of color pictures of our travels with my Leica. I sounds so idealist and just hope we can do it.

It seems as though I've been rambling on and on and not said a thing. I did get my five pages written to make up for last time after all.

I was so sorry to hear you couldn't be in church Easter and hope you are feeling better. Keep up your chin and have faith in God. The war can't last too much longer. With all my love, Harold.

P.S. Please keep sending stamps once in awhile.

Enclosed in the letter is a German postcard. In the front, I wrote "To Mother, my best girl."

Back: To the dearest and best mother in all the world.

#April 21, 1945. Somewhere in Germany

Dear Mother and Dad,

It is time for me to write again because yesterday it was impossible for me to write. Yesterday, someone handed me a letter from you dated April 13 so I was really surprised and pleased getting such a late date. But now I have to wait for three back letters and I hope in those I'll hear of you receiving the films. It's beginning to look as though it isn't going to get there. What really made me pleased were those pictures you enclosed. Of all the snapshots you've sent me, these are the best - really excellent and I almost howled with joy. Who did the printing? If Alves did it, it was an excellent job. I certainly appreciate you sending them. Some of the fellows complimented my dear mother as to how young she looks. I'm glad you've kept up your appearance for I want to come back to a real young looking mother. But Dad - do you know what they said about you. You look too old for Mum with your almost white hair. But they think you are quite distinguished looking and remind them of a big executive or a politician. I sure am proud of you both!!

I also received a letter from Don Hunter and a nice long one from Miss Keany. I got a kick out of Don's letter when I opened it because he had folded the paper so small, and being in such a long envelope made it appear funny. I also got a package from you with the scotch tape and traveler's ink included. You also sent two rolls of film and it was thoughtful of you but please don't send any more as I have plenty now. I just finished another roll and now have color in the camera so as I go along I can put a few general scenes in color to show how beautiful Germany really is.

Yesterday was the first place and time I've ever seen a regular movie house projector which uses 35 mm. film. They certainly are large and too complicated for me. Just imagine the expense to running them because these two that I saw were in a sort of small wayward hotel. It was here that we had a church service yesterday - the first one in almost a month. I enjoyed it thoroughly - especially since we had Chaplain Blich - the captain - giving the sermon.

After being in a concentration camp, I can say I had slept in almost every place. It was only a small camp and had a machine shop and a tall fence which had electricity running through it at one time. This slave labor certainly didn't have a pleasant time living under these circumstances. And now that they are freed, they are so happy. Everyone, when he sees an American, gives him a big smile and waves as he passes. But just the same, it is going to be a problem to readjust the whole of Europe and try to please everyone.

I'm enclosing an article which I found in yesterday's "Stars and Stripes" but because I couldn't obtain a copy for myself I did the next best thing and copied it by hand. Probably by this time you know by the papers where we are.

Just this minute as I was writing, in came the mail and I received two things from you - a letter dated April 11 and a box of cookies such as you've sent before. Now I know that you're being informed as to the whereabouts of this division and have been able to keep

pretty good track of it. I know it makes you feel so much better when you \know what goes on.

I was just putting my pictures - those sent from home - in order and find I now have 52 pictures and I know more are on the way. I'm not complaining but bragging because not many have as many photos I had cellulose windows in my other billfold which can be detached - sort of like a little book. So I now keep it with my new billfold. Am I proud of that fancy one Miss Martin sent me. It certainly was thoughtful and all the fellows wouldn't mind having one too.

Talking about photos reminds me to tell you that as yet Stasi's pictures haven't come. But I suppose it takes time just as it's taking for those negatives to get home. I do hope they come for they were such a good set! This mail situation is queer at times just like the army itself and I know I'll never understand either.

A man in my company who knew I was interested in cameras told me about him finding a box which he didn't pay much attention to. But he decided to open it and there in plain view was a Leica with all the accessories. He certainly was lucky and has sent it home. I believe an S. S. trooper was carrying this so it was all right to send that home. What a bunch of films we're finding now - at least five thousand rolls in the battalion because our troops came across a film factory that manufactured 120 size. So now everyone has a camera, mostly 120 size but I'm content with my 35 mm. It takes such a small picture that one of my rolls is equal to four and a half times as much as the larger size.

This article I'm enclosing is certainly true and will you have Miss Martin type it up? I bet you have quite a bunch of things I have sent home. The article tells about using German vehicles and I'll tell the world I'm well acquainted because four of us runners rode in one along with a sergeant (Miller) who drove. At times, I thought the thing would break down but it keep running due to some miracle. I sure would hate to have to push it all the way. Some very strange and funny things have happened in this operation but can't tell them as yet. We passed over a super highway once and I was certainly disappointed as it was only a four lane highway. Their super roads over here are just standard back in Mass.

Guess this will be all for now so I'll close. Keep your chin up and let's pray to God that this mess will be over with soon. With all my love, Harold.

#### ENCLOSURE:

The Rag Tag Circus - They Make History

By Ernest Leiser

With the 83<sup>rd</sup> Inf. Div. Across the Elbe Apr. 14 (delayed)

Gen. Simpson himself sent down to find out how they ever did it.

This rag-tag travelling circus that rod and fought over more than 200 miles of Germany in some ten days keeping up with the best of American armor just didn't belong in the books of modern warfare.

It was impossible but the 83<sup>rd</sup> Inf. Div. Did it. From the time they were relieved from the bridgehead they had secured across the Elbe and held the bridgehead on the far side, they had not only kept up with the armor - they outstripped it.

They sued all kinds of transport you can name - Tanks, T.D.'s, trucks and jeeps, all bursting at the seams with G.I. passengers, and then added to that were German cars, trucks, fire engines, bicycles, and even wheelbarrows.

#### THEY FOUND PLENTY

Except for a day or so they had absolutely no attached trucks to haul their fast freight so they made do with whatever they could find along the road, and they found

plenty. Strange things happened in that ten day blitz - things that could only have happened to this "Coxey's' Army."

The other day as they were rolling along a little German sedan was weaving in and out of the column passing vehicles. No one would have noticed it - there wasn't anything unusual in this convoy about a German vehicle if the driver hadn't keep honking his horn imperiously.

Pfc. David Webster, a signal company man from Terre Haute, Ind., took a second look at the car and saw that the guy inside had on a German uniform with red collar patches. The 83<sup>rd</sup> had captured a German general who was going east in even a greater hurry than they were.

#### OVERTOOK CONVOY

In another case, the column overtook a German convoy consisting of a colonel and his staff, traveling the same way on the same road. Up with the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn of the 321 Inf. Regt. Fighting their first real battle since they took off, the men were still reminiscing between ducking shells at the perimeter of the Elbe bridgehead. They were bitter about some of the thing they saw.

S/Sgt. Dean Derry of Bristol Tenn, described the British and American prisoners they had freed in their sweep, about how they had cried when the 83<sup>rd</sup> came along and how the German guards had previously beaten the civilian who so much as offered them a glass of water in their death march across Germany.

Sgt. George McKane, of Augusta, Ky., told of taking 37 pistols, a shotgun and a rifle from some German Army doctors who insisted they had a right to carry them. Pfc. John Shuford, of Mario, N.C. told of his capture of 2 boys, one 9 years old, and another 11, wearing a full Wehrmacht uniform in a trench by the roadside.

#April 23, 1945. Somewhere in Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Yesterday I received two letters - one from Mum dated April 11 and one from Dad the same day. So all the back mail is coming in quite good now. As you have noticed, I'm including negatives which I told you about. They were poorly developed - one roll - but the others came out fairly well. But as you get each group of negatives I want each printed for you, but before I want them soaked in hypo and washed thoroughly as I didn't have time to do that. Don't forget now. All three those I'll be sending home until I let you know. I want three (3) prints of each I believe - one for you and one for the fellow whose picture I have, none for me. One roll was really scratched up and if it is too noticeable could you have them retouched and reprinted. This won't be in large orders and will come at intervals. I hope you understand so just do the best you can. Do not have Alves do it, please. The first group of prints is of William Schaub and John Ellis, next William Schaub alone, me alone, Ellis and me together. And the next film is Lily Pons - not very good, scene at Neuss, me alone, me alone. I'm sending all those of myself first as I know you'd love to get them. If they can be retouched to make them look better have it done no matter what the cost. Take money out of my money orders and them then done.

For the first time since I've been overseas, I saw some wooden houses. Without paint for so long, they didn't look well at all and the stone and brick houses look so much nicer. There really aren't very many hardwood forest in Germany and most are softwood such as pine and spruce. The forest are really well kept so much more than back home - and each has a forester who takes care of the thinning out, road upkeep, etc. They really have some beautiful woods and whenever they cut down an old tree, a new little tree is put in its place.

Yesterday we were able to have church again and for the first time since I've been overseas we had it in a little church. It was such a small church and so many fellows wanted to go that a good many had to stand. It was the oddest seating plan and was in the shape of an L with the pulpit in the middle. I believe the Catholics have most churches, standard and is much nicer plan. The chaplain certainly gave a good sermon, maybe cause there were so many people attending and because it was a good place for acoustics

The fellow who owns the Leica finally finished The films and guess what happened. Exactly what happened to you once - the film didn't get caught at the beginning and so didn't get caught at the beginning and so didn't roll. When I re-rolled it, I only had to wind for a couple of inches and it was back. It really is a shame a fellow has to have a nice Leica and not know a single thing about photography. I tell him if he can't use it. I'd trade him a box camera for it as the box would be much easier to use. Boy, I'd like to have a nice Leica all right but still my little old Kodak does a pretty good job.

When that first roll didn't turn out it made me awfully made but I hope you can get something out of it. Now don't forget to have them well washed because I couldn't do very much washing under the circumstances. It would be fun to try and print but with no electricity, it is quite impossible. We used a tank so it made things much easier but because the developer was too warm was the reason why the film didn't turn out.

Just think, payday is just a short way off and nearly the end of the month. Time certainly is passing and so I'll have been overseas one year. I will be thinking of you on Mother's day and just pray I'll be home for it next year.

Guess this will be all for now as I can't think a a thing to say. May God bless you and keep you my dear parents. I think so much of you both and think you've been so kind. But what pleased me most were those pictures of yourselves. With all my love, Harold.  
P.S. Please send me a package of candy, cookies gum, nuts, etc. as I'd like it very much.

#April 24, 1945. Somewhere in Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

At last yesterday afternoon, I received those pictures that were for Stasi. They certainly came out well but I could tell Alves even before looking at the back. I believe when I get home that will be the place where I'll have all my work done. When you get these new negatives those send back about a month and a half ago - just have a set made for yourself and if it isn't too much trouble for Henry Swett. The rest don't appreciate what we've done for them so the heck with them all! And with these few I'm sending home in letter, please make prints for you and send to me - only those that I specify though. They'll be pcitur5s of people - no scenes. And have a print of all made for use - you at home. Maybe I'm getting you all confused but at least you won't have to get in a mix-up again. If everyone you send pictures again, send them C.O.D. Stasi go this pictures as I told you before but the question was, would the censor let it go back home. He really was worried but the captain let it go through. The censors are so strict at times.

I just filled out a money order blank for \$30 so I suppose I'll be sending home the order in a few days. I hate to be carrying around much money as you never know what'll go on. I still have a little bit left but we'll wait until payday which is only a short ways off. Boy, I'm accumulating a bunch of wealth, ain't I? Everything free in the army - I've found a home here. Oh, year! I'll be so glad to get out that I'll have to frame my discharge.

I forgot to tell you that I sent eight negatives to Em which she'll turn over to you. And when I write to Betty and Mrs. Hendrie, I'll ask them to do the same. In that way, you'll get them much quicker. But don't forget to have them washed well as I didn't have the facilities to wash out the hypo. The negatives are liable to fade if it isn't done.

Yesterday afternoon we had a special treat and got all new clothing. Battalion had been trying to get clean things for us for a long time but operations were moving so fast that they just didn't have the time. So now, I'm really dressed up with all new clothing. I even had to sew a division patch on - the first one I've ever worn. Some of headquarters were mad because they got only clean clothing - not new like I have - but they weren't one of the first as I was. I've found out that in this army it's first come first serve.

Do you remember me telling you about getting a little cut from shrapnel way back in July? The medics finally got around to giving me the award as if ever a notice comes saying I was wounded, disregard it. Truthfully, I have not been touched since then and hope to continue so. I can only thank God that He brought me through safely. I'm really not too anxious to get the award but if I'll mean points in getting out, I might as well have it.

Lately, I've been feeling like a German myself because of eating all the Heinie food. Some of it is good but some is terrible and I wouldn't trade food for anything. I still really don't have too much of an appetite - not like the way it was back in basic training. You should see our summer underwear - it is German military (brand new) but they are made of fabric almost like silk with laced ends. Those sissies! What won't happen next!

I tried out that telephoto lens which fits on a Leica and which I have been carrying around with the rest of the equipment. The lens works good and from the same distance, I can get a picture which is twice as close as with an ordinary lens. In other words, it looks as though I had moved twice as close to the object but really have stayed in the same place.

Stasi sent a roll of film to the army photographic unit to have pictures developed which he took with camera - one I sent home - way back in Izier at the priest's home. The priest is in some scenes and some of us so we'd like them back but they've been gone for over two months and no sign of them yet. Sort of like me worrying about those that are on their way home.

I'll enclose a couple more photos. The one of the fellow alone is named Deadrick Poe, Captain Thurmond's jeep driver, next is Swett and Poe, and next is Poe and Me. In the other is Schaub, me, a medic (Sgt. Lyons) and Ellis together on the balcony. Give me time and I'll get them all home.

The news looks good and I pray that it'll end soon. With all my love, Harold

#April 25, 1945. Somewhere in Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

These last couple of days I've felt like writing to you and I know you won't object at all. It is strange how each of us at times can write such a long letter and then again there are times when we can hardly write two sheets. I'm so please you like my letters and find them interesting although at times I wonder.

Today, I received two letters from you, #32 and #36 so now I am up to date as far as the latter number. The mail has been coming through so much better since all this Christmas rush stopped. And Em sent another letter dated April 17 with more crossword puzzles she really is swell to me and doesn't wait for me to answer every single one of her letters. If only they were all like that, it would be fine. And I also got the church calendar and paper from Mrs. Hendire which she sends so faithfully. I see that there was a part of my letter to Mr. Marsell in it. The only things I don't like about it is that it sounds too formal. But I hate to write to him as informally as I do to you.

The writing kit that you sent me is being used and wasn't thrown away. As I'm writing, Schaub has got it out and writing to his wife. He has a bigger bag to keep it in so rather than throw it away, I gave it to him. He writes to his wife everyday and even though I write every other day usually, I always say more than he.

It is such a beautiful day that I couldn't resist the temptation of going out and taking a few more colored pictures. It hasn't been decent enough since I put that film in to take good pictures so today was my opportunity. I have one of myself in color so must try and get more. Whenever anyone asks me to take a picture of them in color, I tell them that I can only take pictures of colored people with colored film. They don't understand at first and seem puzzled but afterward realize that I don't want to use my color film on them. They mean nothing to me so why should I bother. If I took a picture of everyone who asks me to, I wouldn't have any for myself. I never will forget the time Johnson got mad at me for not taking lots of pictures of him and because I wouldn't let him have the camera to use. I should say I would not. He certainly couldn't have many brains to figure it out. I believe now you're beginning to see what type of fellow he is and why I don't care for him. He means all right but always sticks his neck in other people's business. Guess it isn't his fault though for I still maintain that parents are the sole factors of the child's bring-up. How lucky I was to have such parents. The more I see, the more I'm glad I live the type of life I do even if a couple here have said I live a panty-waist's life because I don't smoke, drink, swear, etc. How wrong they are as to the ideas of life. Well, after this war, I'll go my way and they'll go theirs and we'll never see one another again. You remember me telling about John Ellis, the fellow who looks so much like me, don't you? He has taken quite a fancy to me and I think quite a lot of him although not like Nelen. He swears he's coming up to my town and visit me after the war. He is more of my own class and I would enjoy seeing him after. His father is an engineer having to do with metallurgy and his family has traveled North and South America.

Getting back to pictures, there is a lake (pond) quite close so I took a shot of that. There are more soldiers in boats out fishing but what a way to fish. They are using hand grenades and blowing the fish to the surface. Anyway it is working and they're getting quite a few. But what noises while this goes on. Guess we'll be having fish tomorrow. I wonder if it is Friday for we have very little conception of time at times. Yesterday we had fresh liver and after not having it for so long, I really enjoyed it. Boy, didn't I hate liver about the time I broke my arm. I certainly can and will appreciate more things when I get home

Another picture which I took was of three geese with their young. I never realized the babies were yellow until recently. What I don't know about a farm but I'm learning. Those birds really hissed at me and made more fuss but I did manage to get one of them with the young following behind. Many fellows don't see much sense in shots like that but I find nature so beautiful that I want different picture of it. This is the reason why you needn't both about more prints if those negatives ever get home (and it doesn't look that way). As I said before, only Swett really appreciates them even if they aren't pictures of himself. So when you have prints made for yourself, may you can have them done for him also. I'm just hoping the film gets home though. When you have these negatives printed, have all printed. I wonder if you had all printed for yourself out of the last bunch. If you didn't, we will get that done when I get home.

I forgot to tell you that Grandma wrote me a very nice letter which I received a couple days ago. But what made me feel badly was she told me about having a good cry when she saw me so dirty in that one picture. She shouldn't carry on like that because I'd much rather be in that condition than be wounded - by all means. I think so much of her too and hope to visit her and the folks when I get home.

I mentioned in my letter yesterday that I might get my wound medal which I was supposed to get way back in July. They might inform you - the government, I mean - but don't worry as it happened so very long ago. And up to the present, I've been as well if not better than I've ever been. I've never had a single cold all winter even though I have been

exposed to all kinds of weather and have rarely been sick. The only place I didn't feel well was in the Bulge in Belgium where I had a stomach ache and diarea (diarrhea). I don't even know how to spell it. But I'm not bad at spelling compared to most for they can't spell the simplest words.

I was just re-reading about you telling me that Colin (minister's son) is safe at last. He really has been in God's hands and when we realize what he has been through we can just thank God that He returned him safely. Many would call it a miracle but God is behind all wonderful and fascinating doings. He has been so kind to me and has protected me through all.

A couple of Germans came running up to one of the officers the other day and pleaded with him to let them move back to the rear. They said that the Russians were coming and were they trembling. They also said they weren't afraid for themselves but what the Russians might do to their children. Anyway, the pleading didn't get them very far as the officer told them they brought it upon themselves and they were to stay put. It was all right when Germany was pushing the Russians back and committing all kinds of atrocities but as soon as the tables are turned, they are scared. I have no sympathy for these people because they should have thought of all this when they began war. They really have a dreadful fear of the Russians and would much rather have the British and Americans come in - because we're too soft compared to the others.

Every time liquor is found, I dread it because I know what will happen. Almost the whole bunch will be drunk and raise havoc with everything. Drunkardness is a very common thing in the army and I suppose I look down on it too much. But my Christian up bringing makes me hate to see a man drink - especially to excess. Out of the runners, only Swett and I don't drink although when he was young, Swett used to be a habitual drunkard. He broke himself of the habit and never drank since except for a glass or two.

Gilbert only weights 130 now but at one time he weighted 180 and had a real beer belly like Mr. Reinhardt. He used to drink a lot but I will say that around here he holds it and still has some common sense even though he feels happy. But I still like him best next to Swett and wouldn't mind seeing him after the war. He worked at the International Harvester in St. Paul as a draftsman and he interests me when he tells me about his old work. After this war, I'll have to decide what I want to be and I'll weight everything. Maybe I don't want to be an engineer as I hate physics and that is essential in that work. Oh well, he future will tell me what I want to be.

Every time we move into an area, the runners' room turns into a gambling den. What a bunch. But as yet, I've never gotten into one and never will. All I do is tend my own business and let them carry on. Let them do as they want but I don't want to ever humiliate myself or my parents.

Last night I saw a move with Edward G. Robinson in it and enjoyed it although it was nothing exception. Tomorrow the doughnut girls will be here (Red Cross girls).

Keep up your chin and just pray often to God that it'll be over soon. With all my love.  
Harold

ADDED TO THE LETTER.

I'm including a few more negatives. There are three pictures of me on one group and the middle one is blurred. These were taken 2 days ago and are the latest and there is one of me taken by the self-timer as I was sitting in the window with the sun on me. The group of two is of Lily Pons away off. They aren't so good but better than nothing. The other group of three is of Surface asleep on the couch, Stasi washing, and Schaub, Johnson and Stasi at far end of room. These and ones of me in this group were taken the the Leica and turned

out pretty well. Don't forget to have them washed - every single negative for that hasn't been done yet. Don't forget now!

#April 26, 1945. Somewhere in Germany

.Dear Mum and Dad,

Mail just came in a few minutes ago and I had a letter from you dated April 19 - your birthday. That is pretty quick time and it is nice to get it so quickly. I forgot to tell you, I believe, that I received a letter from Dad about a week ago.

The other day, I just had to get a haircut because the last one I had was one way back in Holland - about the last of last month. That poor fellow really had to work on my hair and I really got my money's worth. He took nearly an hour to do it but it looked good after he finished. I told him to cut it so it was just barely long enough to comb as it is too hard to begin coming if the hair is cut hear short. He claimed that my hair was almost too thick to cut as I wanted. So many barbers have commented on the same and I'll attribute to my mother. I really get aggravated with my hair at times but is much better to have too much than too little. We kid Schaub about his hair growing thin and in time he'll be complete bald.

. I didn't get this letter finished last night but will try and finish it today. Before I forget it, I wish you'd straighten Aunt Frances out as to my address. She addressed Grandma's letter and certainly made a mess of it. It send headquarters company 2nd brigade with the rest right but didn't have c/o PM, N.Y. It still got here in record time but I like to see things done right.

Yesterday was such a fine day that I had to take some more pictures and did get one of myself in color beside a flowering fruit tree. I ought to have one more taken as I have so few of me in color. I know you'd be glad to get them. Maybe I'll try some Agfacolor next time and see how good it is. Thanks for telling me what the 15/10 din is and now I'll be able to use the film. I wish these countries over here would use Weston or G.E. and then I'd understand.

I was reading a copy of "Popular Photography" yesterday and just happened to wonder if I'm still getting it at home. I hope so and am wondering if you ever got those books (magazines) - 4 times a year, I believe - that I continued before I left home. You don't tell me much about it so I don't know a thing.

I have been getting so many pictures lately that I need another photo folder to keep them in. I wish you could find me some sort of thing to keep some in but it must be small enough to carry. I certainly specify things but there is no sense to you sending it and then not fining it what I want. I received those four color pictures yesterday and everyone thinks they are just fine. Color certainly adds to a photo all right. Don't forget to make some color pictures of the dining room and living room and then have pictures made of them like what you just sent me. It would be done through Alves

Three of the runners made a sail boat yesterday from an old derelict and they had a swell time sailing down the lake. But it wasn't made so you could tack and always come into the wind so they had to row back to the other end. Several times I thought they'd fallen overboard but they never did. What a waste of time to me and they really worked hard. But have the Army ask them to do a little work and they make an awful fuss. Like me when I was small, I used to grumble if you asked me to do something but I could go out and work hard building a hut and have lots of fun. Humans certainly are queer beings all right as I have found.

Yesterday the Red Cross girls came and served us coffee and doughnuts. That coffee was so strong that it nearly burnt me to pieces and I gave it away in disgust. I still like tea

with just sugar, no cream, and the stronger the better. This canned milk makes things taste terrible so I've gotten so I only use sugar. But without sugar, you might as well give me castor oil. I had to laugh because all the cameras were clicking and pointed in the direction of the girls. We certainly have a bunch of photographers in this battalion now.

I'm enclosing a few more negatives. The first group of three is of me at Neuss, next is a few who went to the rest camp with me and he is at the entrance to the hotel in which we stayed, and finally is another one of me at the rest center. The next group is most of the woman prisoner with a couple of officers next to her in the end one. The last group is just pictorial scenes of hills.

The other day we saw this convoy of pure white vehicles coming toward us and some were excitedly thinking they might be the Russians. They even had pure white clothing on so I was curious too. When they did get close enough, I solved the mystery for they were Geneva Red Cross trucks from Switzerland carrying supplies to our Allied P.O.W.s. What they were doing was passing through out lines and the Germans to deliver the goods. I just hope the prisoners get it and the Germans don't take it all from them.

I want to tell you about some of things that have happened. After we left Holland, we came up to the Rhine and crossed at Wesel. From there we moved inland and went to Hamm and up to Ahlen. It was here we had an odd thing happen. Early in the morning the town was taken and that night a long German train full of supplies and troops began to pass through heading east. It took our troops so much by surprise that they didn't know what to do at first. But the air corps came and really put an end to it. Some strange things have happened all along such as Nazis walking to a town we had just taken. Then we moved on to Lippstadt and it was near here that we stayed for about four days and also it was here that I got all the camera equipment. Then to Paderborn, up to Hameln, then over to Seesen and Goslar. Finally to Halberstadt and etc. Boy this last place had hardly a building left standing because the place was bombed extensively. What a mess bombs can do and I'm so thankful that I have never been bombed.

While I was looking at the Photographic magazine, I decided I'd like you to send the picture of the collaborator and the one of the religious cross to that magazine. I'd like to see if I could have some of my photos printed. I'll enclose a note which you can include but don't mention my address. I don't know what'll happen but we can see.

There is so little to say that I believe I'll close now. God bless you and keep you, dear parents. I think so much of you and will be so glad to get back home. With all my love, Harold.

P.S. Please send me a package of candy, cookies, gum, nuts, etc. as I would enjoy them very much.

#April 29 1945. Somewhere in Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here it is time for me to write again. Guess I have been slipping as I wrote quite a long letter for about four or five days in a row – quite unusual, eh? Yesterday, I received a nice package from you with scotch tape, candy, peanut butter, and lobster. You certainly do pack a good box and everyone wishes their folks would send such an assortment. I get so many more packages than most and it seems as though they arrive when I really can use them. Maybe once in awhile you could include a handkerchief or two in each box. I have some but as with socks I'd like a few extra. I hope you received the letter in which I want you to send a pair of socks in each letter. You sent me a package so I am sending one home to you, an even trade, eh? I told you about that perfume, I believe, and said I wouldn't send it because I didn't believe some were much good. But Daniels, to whose wife you sent some

pictures, gave me three little tiny bottles with stuff that I call a pleasant odor. That was given to me by him in return for what you did. So yesterday I wrapped it up in that wooden box in which you sent me those cookies. It certainly was well wrapped so I just hope it gets home without breaking. In so many cases, all that gets home is the odor all over the box. Just through curiosity, I wish you could find out how much each of those bottles are worth, if they ever get home. It is Lucien Lelong perfume and comes from Paris. By the way, Mrs. Daniels received her pictures and was supposed to send a note to you. Maybe by this time you have received it. But Mrs. Surface is a mystery and he has never heard that she has gotten them.

I believe very shortly I'll send home another box with a different type of perfume, and another box in which I'll put a Nazi flag, Today I got my purple heart which I was supposed to get way back in July but never got. Because I had let it go for so long, I wouldn't have been able to get it unless the date was stepped up. So I believe on official records it was supposed to happen a couple weeks ago. For goodness sake, if you get word from the Government, please don't worry as I'm perfectly well. Please! I know you have enough sense to know that I don't like to deceive you and [I] tell the truth. Guess I'll be sending that home shortly.

Two nights ago, I saw a movie entitled "Marriage is a Private Affair" with Lana Turner. It was supposed to take place in Boston and the people were suppose to be Bostonians. But never in my life did I ever hear a native speak as they did. Those who played in the picture sounded like Californians or something. I praise myself as to the fact that whenever I hear a Bostonian speak, I can pick him out. Almost every time I'm right and have found quite a few fellows from around our way but none from Braintree. Because the cast didn't speak right, it spoiled the picture! Anyway it was a crazy picture and didn't make much sense. As a rule, though, we do see god films but I was disappointed with this one. Oh, for good old Boston again and it's accent!

The mail just came in so I had to leave this letter for a minute. No mail for me today but Stasi finally got those pictures back which we took back in Izier with that camera I sent home. I was sorry they turned out blurred but I warned him that I didn't think he could take a picture with it until the camera was repaired. But he insisted and the enclosed are the result. To hold the camera with only y one hand and use the other to release the cocking lever was an awful job and turned out to be impossible to hold steady. But the camera must be good as the picture of the church shows. That was put on a rest and I gave it a time exposure. So now I know that when repaired, it'll be worth keeping. One of the fellows n headquarters has a German book in which every camera is listed and priced. I looked that camera up and found it was worth almost a hundred dollars. Quite a bargain! The other picture I'm enclosing is one which I sent to you but that fellow with whom I had that argument with gave it to me. His wife had a negative made from a print and this is what turned out. Not very good! He has no idea of what good photography is and thinks it's wonderful. He and I are good friends now but I'll never let him do as he did to me before. The other picture of a mess lines - feeding the men - which this fellow gave me and it stinks! To be blunt, Oh, what a job that photo place did where he had those printed, even worse than Alves.

Yesterday afternoon, the sun broke out of the rain clouds all of a sudden and made such a pretty picture that I just wanted a color picture. I rushed out with the camera and had it already but found I had to turn it to the next picture. Wasn't I mad when I found out that there were no more pictures on the roll! I gave it up in disgust and have just put in a new roll of film. Anyway, I am getting pictures all along.

One of the runners just came in and was just listening to the radio. Fifteen minutes was devoted to telling just about this division and from the way he talked, we were really praised very highly. I wonder if it was broadcast back in the States. We certainly are one red hot outfit and lately are getting plenty of publicity. For so long we were never heard of but now it is different. And yesterday I heard about two of our officers in the regiment on the radio and each told different things about this division. Boy, oh boy, what a bunch of publicity.

I've started to read a new book which is called "The Republic" by Charles Beard and is about U. S. History. I decided I know so little about my own country that I'd enjoy it as the book is written informally. Nobody around here wanted to read it and it always seems as though I enjoy reading books most don't like. Guess I'm just odd and do things opposite as usual! Ha! Boy, with the little education I've had I can use such verbose language that very few can understand me. At times, I say things without thinking and use a large word which I used to use at home very frequently. I certainly will be glad to get back to a bunch with whom I can speak without being accused of trying to show off and use such large words. I'm proud of my mother when it comes to a vocabulary and would like to have one such as she does!

I got the money order now but because I have so much in the envelope I'll wait until the next letter. I'll also enclose a few more negatives which I want to get home as soon as possible.

Today, being Sunday, I went to church which was held in the little local church. It is such a beautiful day and seems to be a tribute to God. Usually, the chaplain's driver plays a portable organ at the services but today, he played the organ in the church. It was a large old foot pedal one and seemed just like home when the music was played. It really was beautiful but what spoiled the whole thing was when we sang there were a couple of fellows near me who sang flat. I was surprised it bothered me so much but it did. Guess my ear is too particular and sensitive to music. The chaplain gave a good sermon and I really enjoyed it this week. He talked about what Christianity was based on and told about Martin Luther starting the Reformation right near here. He also told about a plaque which is in the next town (church) and is a very famous in Germany. I don't remember what it is but I want to see it if possible.

Yesterday I went and took a shower which I needed. The water was so hot I couldn't stand under it but much better than having it cold. Everyone seemed to be here because this was the only place for miles around. Whenever there are showers available, the army tries to get us there if possible. We were lucky going in a covered truck as it rained yesterday and many arrived drenched – they hardly needed a shower. So often I'm lucky in ways like that.

Gilbert got a package from his sister last evening and when he opened it, I was surprised because of all the candy she was able to send. I wonder where she got it all as candy is scarce at home. She sent him a camera and I kidded him because it is the type we used to win by punching a board. It is very cheaply made and she sent no film so he was pretty disgusted. He claims he'll keep his box camera which he has had and will get rid of this one. Talking about getting rid of cameras, reminds me to tell you about this fellow and his Leica. Someone offered him two hundred dollars each so he decided he'd sell. He was going to sell his wide angle lens but included it when he sold it. Guess I can buy one when I get home but at least I have a telephoto lens. His camera took a good picture but because he didn't know the first thing about photography, I was glad to see it fall into someone's hands who knows what it is all about. It is no use letting an inexperienced person have a nice camera as he won't appreciate it at all.

Guess this is developing into a book instead of a letter and often I wonder how in the world I write such a long one - so does everyone else wonder too.

God be with you wonderful people and keep you. I love you so much and look forward so eagerly to the day I'll return. With all my love, Harold

#April 30, 1945. Somewhere in Germany.

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here is a newspaper which you like so well but is now coming out under the new name of the division - "Thunderbolt." Every place the 303th is mentioned, I'm right there. It gives a real vivid picture of what has happened - so much more than I could have told you. There is quite an article about the 330<sup>th</sup> fighting in the Harz Mountains and I'll tell you were glad to get out of there. Those hills are no fun fighting in. Did you ever hear of the Harz Mountain canaries? We have only been pushing, since the Rhine a little more than a month and because everything went so quickly it seems as though it has been 4 months. Today is pay day so will have to have a money order made shortly as well as sent this one home next time I send a letter.

I'll see if I can write another long letter tomorrow as I know you like to get them. With all my love, Harold.

#May 1, 1945. Somewhere in Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here it is the first day of May and spring is well under way. Just think, in twelve days, I will have left for overseas exactly one year so I'll be entitled to two overseas stripes. Mother's day is just a short time away and I want to tell you that I have a surprise for you on that day. I won't say what it is because this letter might arrive home before that day. So I'll wait and tell you later. I hope you like it and all my love goes with it so very much.

Yesterday very, very little mail came in and I didn't expect anything. But I did get a package of Fanny Farmer's chocolates from you. The box was really beaten up and I had vision of smashed candy but it wasn't as bad as it looked. The chocolates were really good - everyone's favorite - and they really travelled down everyone's stomach very fast. Anyway, I still have some left for today and I will give them out later.

Guess I'll send home another package of perfume with a different type. At first swore I never would send any but I was able to get hold of a nice type. I'd like you to have some. If you think you have too much you could give some to Miss Martin. It is up to you though. I enjoy doing things for you!!

Yesterday, we got paid and I got the usual amount of \$28.40 since the \$40 allotment started last month. I'll enclose the \$30 money order in this letter and have given \$50 more to the mail clerk for another order. Now, don't forget to take out \$65 for the pictures as there were 10 sets of prints made including Nelen's. I have about \$13 left in my wallet and after I collect for one more set of pictures and something else, I'll have about \$50 more, I hope! High finances this month! One fellow in the company has sent home over \$1,000 which he got from selling different things he picked up. I just don't believe in that and would rather go without the money than charge exorbitant prices. On these pictures, I have been charging the same as Mrs. Schaub paid minus a half a mark (5 cents) in order to make it even. I have been charging 67 marks which is equal to \$6.70 (a mark is worth 10 cents). I have been figuring out that this month with the \$40 allotment, I'll be getting or rather sending home \$167. Quite a bit, eh? Gilbert has paid for those that his sister will be getting but whenever you do anything like that again, send it C.O.D. and it'll be much simpler.

I have reason to believe Don Hunter is close to me again because the day I went to take a shower, I saw a truck with his outfit's number on it. I certainly wish I could get to see him because I liked him very much. And it isn't very often that I get to see someone from Braintree.

Last night I saw another movie and this time I really enjoyed it. The movie was "The Thin Man Returns Home" with William Powell and Myrna Loy - a mystery. There were lots of laughter and still plenty of plot, nothing exceptional though. I took a soft chair out in the barn where we had it and ate candy while the movie showed - just like at home. The candy wasn't what you sent me but what we bought through the company such as they do once in awhile. I had three packages of Necco Wafers, 7 peppermint patties, three cigars which I gave away, fruit juice, biscuits and gum so I really have a bunch of junk. I'm glad I don't get much candy because it never was very good for me but at least now it doesn't affect my face like it used to. Candy really is too rich for me.

I wrote a letter to Betty yesterday and included some negatives in her's so she'll probably give them to you as soon as she gets them. I also enclosed some in Mrs. Hendrie's and when I write to Miss Martin, I'll do the same. I have sent more than half of what I had so I believe this is the best way. Not only in speed but in case one letter gets lost I won't lose them all as I might have done with the other negatives. I just hope the others get home.

Yesterday we all got paid but H company didn't pay until late. Surface was in the movies when he was supposed to get paid so a man went down and announced that Shirley Surface was wanted at the C.P. (Command Post). Some fellows yelled out "She isn't here now." Boy, when Surface came out, his face was red and I will still maintain that his first name is for a girl really. I would be very careful how I named a child.

I believe I told you about one of the runners, Sam Raguso, going to the hospital way back the last of October with a rupture. He traveled all over and went back to England for the operation. Just think he was gone six months and just returned to this outfit. Boy, I'd hate to leave because it is so hard to get back to the unit and meanwhile you are thrown around in these replacement depots. By the way, did Joe Trott ever tell you what he was doing. I wonder if he is in the armored infantry or the regular armored.

I don't believe I told you about receiving those colored pictures that you sent - minicolor prints. Everyone almost marveled at them because of the wonderful color. They are beautiful all right and they all think you have a nice house and nicely arranged. I hope you take some as the house will look with the new furniture because I'd be crazy to see what it looks like. Black and white cannot show what a house really looks like.

I told you about sending two pictures to Popular Photography, 540 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 11, Ill. I don't remember if I enclosed the technical data but to make sure I sent it in the letter. Enclose it in the note you wrote to the place but don't include my address. I would like to see a couple of my photos in the magazine if possible.

I must tell you about Greene and his wife. His wife expected money last month and he gambled so much that he ended up losing \$75. I can't see a man staying in if he is going to lose that much. His wife never knew the truth and I know for sure she'll never find out he had a case of venereal disease. How some husbands try to deceive their wives and folks. But I like to be truthful with you as I know it makes you feel better.

Guess this will be all for now. I can't write a real long letter everyday but try hard. Keep up your chin and just trust in God. He has been so good to us. May He bless you both and keep you. With all my love, Harold

P.S. Please send me a box of candy, cookies, gum, nuts, etc.

#May 1, 1945. Somewhere in Germany  
Dear Mum and Dad,

I wrote to you today, but must write to you again. I will have the honor or pleasure of going to the French Riviera tomorrow. Gee, I was lucky because out of the whole company - nearly 200 - another fellow and I were chosen to go on pass - one to the Riviera and the other to England (London). So we had to draw again and I got the Riviera and he the other. Boy, am I excited and I'll have to be sure and take some color film with me. When the captain called me down, I thought maybe I had done something wrong, like when I was called to the office in school. But he had the pleasure of telling me I was picked to go - by drawing numbers. I'll be sure and write from down there as we will stay there for one week plus traveling time.

I'm happy tonight not only because of my good fortune, but because I received the letter in which you told me about getting the film - negatives. I certainly worried about it for quite awhile. You were telling me about writing a pessimistic type of letter a couple days ago when it came to the film. I haven't received it yet so I won't pay any attention to it. I'm really glad it got home because I want to have a complete record of things. I canceled the \$50 money order today because I want enough money. I would rather have too much than too little but know I'll never use it all.

I'm enclosing an article that I want you to figure out for me. What I want to know is whether that "sole-surviving child" could refer to an only child or must the other children in the family all be killed before this will apply. I wish it would apply to me for I certainly would ask to be transferred. See if you can find out for me even if you have to write directly to the war department. I never had any brothers so couldn't have them killed.

This is just a note to let you know I'm going. I'll be thinking of you and will give a little prayer that God has taken care of me so I can go there and maybe back to the States in time. With all my love, Haarold

#May 6, 1945. Nice, France. using American Red Cross stationery Envelope was slit and opened by censor and re-sealed.

Here I am in Nice as I said (French Riviera) and am at the large Red Cross building. This place is the most idealistic I've ever seen and although I only got here this morning early. I'm really fascinated.

When I was told I had been picked to come here, I was terribly surprised and the odd thing is that there were only three of us from one battalion - nearly 1,200 men. This is the first time I've ever been so lucky. I used to hear so much of the place but never dreamed I'd ever get here. What surprises the future can hold!

We started out by truck, 55 of us from the division (almost twenty thousand men) and went the whole way back almost to Belgium. What a miserable drive as it was so cold and didn't know whether to rain or shine. I didn't mind the rain as much as the thought so getting all my new clothes dirty.

I was quite surprised to find the distance we had traveled since we pushed off and had thought it nearly half that distance. Guess we must have nearly flown! We went down the super-highway for quite awhile and it really was a pleasure not jouncing all around. But it was such a temptation for the driver to speed that he was arrested by an M.P. but allowed to continue after giving his name, etc. The Germans did a good job of blowing up the bridges but our engineers outdid them and restored them quickly.

I was certainly glad when the train got here because I spent two miserable nights sleeping sitting up, and also almost two days. We were fortunate though and got a good coach, one of the best on the train. It was so cold and miserable when we left but when we

got off this morning, I nearly roasted , it is so warm. We went through a good many large cities and after will tell you about them.

The thing that gets me most of all around here is the way the women dress and make themselves up. Maybe most men think it is beautiful but I think it's absolutely absurd the way they do. Every woman whether 16 or 80 has dyed hair - usually the most unnatural color possible like bright red or a real bleached blonde. The old women even dress like 16 years old. Do you remember that old woman we saw at the "Iron Kettle" and how she was dressed. Well, all of them around here are like that. And the skirts! I swear they are nearly six inches above the knees and look awful. Guess I am too modest but still like the American girls best.

The first thing we did when we got here was change to all clean and new clothes which the quartermaster gave us. And then we ate in this huge cafeteria. What joints around here. As I said, before it is an enlisted man's paradise because the officers are not allowed in this town, we do not salute those few who are in town, and we can do anything we want and dress as we please. It just doesn't seem like the army.

Because today is Sunday, the big department stores are not open but plan to go shopping shortly and see if I can get something nice for you. Prices seem to be a little more reasonable because the army has tried to keep them down because of us.

I'm going to try and have a picture taken of myself shortly with my fancy jacket (blouse) with all the ribbons and fixings. I have taken a few black and white but want to sue some color because of the perfect weather.

It seems I have so much to tell that I really don't know where to begin. But believe this will be all for now as I'm really tired and want to get some sleep. I'll try and write to you tomorrow. Things have really been happening since I left and I just pray that it will be over shortly. Things really are looking good now. I'm always thinking of you, my dear parents and I continue to pray for you. With all my love, Harold

#May 7, 1945 (Nice, France)

Dear Mum and Dad,

Just an hour ago, I heard the report that the war is over. It certainly is wonderful if it is true but I have learned not to believe everything I hear. Gee, but it would be wonderful if it could only be so.

After I wrote to you yesterday, I just wandered all around and looked at all the sights - even the women because they make themselves such a spectacle and at times I burst out laughing just as I pass. I know it is impolite but I just can't hold it back. What a bunch! I went to the PX to get some things but found out I had to have a special card which I could get at a certain hotel. I went there and they sent me off somewhere else and that kept up until I had walked a good two miles. Anyway, I finally did get the rations and just as I came out the door, Ia couple of children asked me for some candy. So I gave them each a little piece of hard candy and that was the signal. Kids came running from all directions to me but I soon got out of there in a hurry. And all the way up to he hotel people kept eyeing me and my goods until I felt like an escaped convict. Every so often, one will slip up to me and ask if I wanted to see my camera. They said "you can get another one easily." What a bunch - they seem to think the American is very wealthy. Naturally, I turned it down but anyone can sell anything, he doesn't want. They tell me the French have so much money but with nothing to spend it on.

Last night I went to the Red cross again and stumbled on a play which was presented in the large theater. The actors and actresses were really good and I was held in suspense for quite awhile The Red Cross has given us everything conceivable we need and

I'll give them all the credit in the world. Everyone is so nice to us in Nice such as the waitresses in the restaurant we eat at. It is a self-serving type with trays but as soon as we get to the end and are ready to go to a table, a girl grabs it, carries it to the table, and places it very nicely on the table. They work hard and since each meal last three.x. hours, they really must be tired at the end of a day. There is every branch of the service here and even have a few navy boys. They certainly look out of place and act much worse than any soldier ever thought of.

I was planning to get up about seven this morning and rent a bicycle. The city is so large and I'd like to see it all if possible before I return which is one week from the time we arrive - yesterday in my case. But last night, I felt so tired I decided to shop today and sleep longer. I didn't hear a sound until nearly eleven so I am glad I did sleep. Tomorrow I guess I'll get a bike but have to get it early as they rent like wildfire. After lunch I went out and meandered around looking in the store windows but did not find very much I'd like to have. Like Dad, huh? I did stop in at a photographer and had my picture taken. They do good work and I just hope I get them before returning. The proofs are suppose to be ready tomorrow and the finished work Thursday so that will be plenty of time. I know you would love to get them so I'll have three 5 x 7 photos made and you can give one to Grandma and the other to Em or anyone you like. I'll leave that up to you.

Mother's day is very shortly and I know by now you won't get this letter in time so I'll tell you what I'm sending and how come. I decided to send you a gardenias corsage because you could wear them and show off whereas cut flowers would remain in the house and no one would see them. Way back in February, the P.X. offered us the chance to send home flowers on Mother's Day so many of us took advantage of it. So you can see that your telling me about Donald Hunter's mother getting those from him had no effect on me as I had had them ordered way before that. I love you so much and hope that will express some of my thoughts to such a dear mother. Don't you think you have a pretty nice wife, Dad? I know you have got the best in all the world. Think of that perfume that I'm sending you as a mother's day gift. Today I priced that perfume to see if it was any good. The girl knew all about it at one of the stores and told me there is very little of it left because the Germans took it all. She claimed it was very good. A little bottle of "Indiscreet" sold for about 10 dollars, "Elle" which I'm sending alter at 8, and "N" at a little better than 15 dollars. So you can see it must be pretty good stuff and all they are selling here is eau de cologne of that make - Lucien Lelong Perfume.

Those films that you recently received - those we were worried about - were all cut up because I gave the rest to that fellow. The censor had nothing to do with it so don't worry. This fellow I mentioned had the nerve to ask me to develop 50 rolls of film which he had taken, here at Nice. After him being that way, I refused flatly so he tackled the other fellow from battalion headquarters and he refused too. I don't mind doing favors but this dope goes to extremes. Maybe it isn't his fault he is that way because a good many people believe his mind is going astray. I believe it too because now he is sketching scenes and people and what a job. A five year old could do as well and here he is nearly 38. I won't be getting any mail for a couple of weeks and dread to think how many letters I'll have to answer. But I would like to get letters from you. Oh well, I'll get them all when I return.

I forgot to tell you I had my blouse pressed today as the Red Cross has a place where all sewing and pressing is done free. The girl did a good job so I really look snazzy now. I would like to keep this blouse and even like it better than the one I wore home on furlough. You'll see it in the group of negatives I sent home in different letters.

This will be all for now and will try and get a letter off to Miss Martin shortly. Boy, this time I'll really have something to tell Miss Keany and I know she'll have a lot to say.

God grant that the war is over and I know it'll be a joyous day at home. But please don't forget the Pacific and think I'm coming home right away. With all my love, Harold

In another note attached:  
Dearest Mother and Dad,

At last the word came through officially that the war is really over. It is so wonderful but almost unbelievable. I can't take the end as most can by going out and getting drunk and having a good time. All I feel like doing is to fall on my knees and just thank God that he carried me through safely. And if it be His will bring me safely home. We Americans have still another important job ahead and that is to lick the Japs. Whether I go is a thing of the future but we know for a fact that men will be needed. I guess I'm just a pessimist but it is quite possible that I and many more will go.

The French are going wild with joy and the Americans are all drunk. I am wondering how you took the news. Mother, dear, I bet you actually cried even though you never cried in front of me. All we can do is thank our God on bended knees. I love you so dearly. With all my love., Harold

#May 10, 1945 (Nice, France) Censor's stamp on envelope face saying "passed by examiner, Base 1161 Army."

I have let two days slip by without writing and I know I should be ashamed of myself. But there has been too much excitement going on these last two days. The French were drunk with joy and never did I see such a bunch. Old and young skipping down the streets holding hands, people with costumes on, and they finally ended up with a large parade. Roosevelt could not have created more letters because the FF1 marched, the FFF, RFT, and all the initials imaginable. The parade really wasn't too well organized but it was fun to watch. But the most stirring scene was to see the U.S. M.P.s come marching down with their white leggings and belts just sparkling. What gets me most of all is the way these people are idolizing Stalin. Just a few years ago, he was a "devil" and now all of a sudden an "angel." It is hard to say what might happen after the war but let's hope we can keep peace with them. Isn't it ironic that Roosevelt died such a short time before peace. Schaub's brother wrote a letter to him expressing the same attitude as you. After a man is gone, you can see mostly his worthy points.

I told you about having a portrait taken and was supposed to come back the next day to look at the proofs. But the war ended and the stores have stayed closed for two days and today makes three because it is Ascension Day to the Catholics. I hope tomorrow the stores will be open because maybe I can pick out the best one and have it finished before I return Monday afternoon. If not the Red Cross will take care of it for me. They certainly are nice to us soldiers. These blamed Frenchmen are all alike. This photo store was to open Tuesday for an hour so some of us could see our proofs. Well, they didn't open so on Wednesday the same thing was to happen. It certainly gets me mad when they say one thing and do another. Guess I never understand these French or foreigners because when I had films developed in Luxemburg and Liege, they kept putting me off.

Last night, I spoke with the hotel manager for awhile. He could speak English very well as most can around here. He told me all about pre-war France and the way the women used to dye their hair each night to match their dress. Many used to wear gold, silver, pink. Blue, violet, and all kinds of weird combinations like blue and gold, red and blonde. Gosh, I could hardly believe it. Women certainly are fools over here. There is a petite girl who is real blonde and who works in the hotel as a supervisor. I was quite curious to know if she was a true blonde so I asked the manager and he said yes. But her hair was spoiled because

she dyed it black when she was working for the underground in Paris. But she is unusual and has almost peroxide blonde color hair.

Yesterday, not very much exciting happened except the parade so I just took it easy. But today I got up at seven and rented a bicycle again. This time, I had a master sergeant with me who incidentally comes from Revere. He used to be a chemical engineer before his army career and graduated from Northeastern. He went to Tufts at first but had to leave because he was forced to by the Dean. I came down on the train with him as he is from our division headquarters. We went everywhere imaginable and I used up one roll of color film and have now started on Agfacolor. There was so little haze today but usually there is quite a bit up until after noon. Then the sun is in the wrong direction. I was full of pep and went up and down those hills fine but he was worn out after the first hill. But ha, we fooled everyone and on one of the steep hills we grabbed hold of a very slow moving truck. Simple, eh? We traveled east as far as we could until an M.P. said we could go not farther. We had hit Monaco and because it was a neutral country we couldn't enter. I would liked to have seen Monte Carlo but at least I was within a couple miles of it.

After our little ride, I could hardly walk to dinner. I was so stiff. And did rear hurt!. So after thle meal came to the hotel and decided to rest for awhile. Anyway, I slept though for about 2½ hours and thenc oulld hardly arouse myself. So I'll get ta good night sleep tonight ad I will be fine.

I have a very pretty scarf made of rayon with a map of France sewed on which the hotel manager gave me and said the army had stocked up on these and each man got one. It is very pretty and I know you'll like the scarf. I have looked in almost every single window to find something which you might like. I seemed to know what I wanted but couldn't say it in words. At least yesterday, I found what I wanted but because the stores were closed but will go tomorrow. If it isn't too expensive, I'll buy it Curious? It is a broach of gold mounted with alternate crystal and gold color stones. I can't remember just what type the last is but it has a name as emerald although I know it isn't that. Well we'll see what will happen.

For some reason, I'm wondering if I forgot to enclose something in a letter which I said I had sent. Anyway, notify me and I'll let you know. I started to send the money order home up in Germany but didn't because I might need money here. But I have almost as much as when I started so am sending it in this letter, also a couple of souvenirs and a ticket on the Berlin Express which our division rode. My wallet is so jammed with junk that I want to get it cleaned out because it will go out of shape easily, I'm afraid.

There was a young woman in the hotel lounge room for awhile so I tried out my French on her and didn't succeed very well. So I wrote a long sheet and she said it was nearly perfect so I haven't forgotten how to write or read but I can't speak or understand especially if they go very fast. I was disgusted so went out and tried it on some children and to my amazement found they understood me. And I always maintained children are hard to speak to because if the accent is too great, they don't understand. Maybe the girl though I was trying to flirt!

I have so much more to tell but want to get this off as quickly as possible. I'm having a wonderful time and I hope it'll pep you up.

May God bless you wonderful parents and keep you safely. With all my love, Harold

#May 12, 1945 (Nice, France) censored same as last letter.

Dear Mum and Dad,

As I wrote the date, I just happened to think that it was just one year ago that I boarded the ship which was to take me into an unknown future. It seems so long ago but besides many fellows I feel so humble because they have been overseas two and three years.

We are all wondering now what will happen next - if we remain here or go to the Pacific. There is no thought of home for awhile as I have hardly enough points to get home. But if I should stay as army of occupation, I won't mind it terribly but I dread the Pacific deal and everyone assures me we'll lick them shortly but guess I am just an old pessimist! So much has happened since I left that I'll be glad to return which is only two days off.

Nice is a nice place alright but the only thing is that it takes too much money. I've been going pretty easy and have spent \$15 but many I have spoken to have used up over \$100 especially on drinks and women. In the last letter, I wrote to you, I enclosed a \$30 money order so will enclose another one for \$30 shortly which will square us with those pictures. I wish you'd keep the money but guess it is no use pleading as you'll put it into the bank in my name anyway. What is the use of talking to you women!

I just mailed two small packages with different things inside and hope you like them all. I sent them first class so they should arrive within two months. I'll name them so you'll know what to expect. There are two broaches - one is plastic with flowers on it and would go very well with a dark dress, the other is white with a gold rim and two gold sea horses in the white center. They are both very beautiful and please use them and not put them on display in the house. Then I bought a pure linen handkerchief with real lace edging and it is really beautiful especially the edge. I also sent two little souvenir books of the city which give a true picture of the lace except for the "Jardin Albert 1me" which was fortified but the Germans dug it up. And the Jetée in the water has been destroyed by the Germans. Lastly, I sent those three photos of myself which I promised and it has turned out the man was clever enough to pick out the best proof and have it made because for three days, he was closed. Everyone tells me they are perfect and look so much like me although some think I look slightly older in the picture than I really do. I am quite pleased with their work and hope you'll enjoy them too. Some of the boys got cheaper ones but they'll never compare to these at all. I really shouldn't tell you what I paid but will. It was \$10 for the three but the cheaper ones weren't worth two cents in my opinion. Over in these countries we really have to pay but it is so rare that I don't mind. If anyone else would like a picture of me which I doubt, you can have negative made and prints also. I know you'll be so much more pleased then with those we had done at Filenes. These were not retouched at all and you'll see I have the "Simms smile" as you say.

Last night I swelled up with pride but will have to tell the story so you'll understand. I went to the Red Cross to see what was going on and found a small French class in session - a French professor who spoke English was teaching the Americans the principles of French. So I sat in and just after, he asked each of us in turn to say certain words. When it came to me, I went through them like a house afire. He looked at me and said I had had French before and must have been taught by a Frenchman because I had a very good accent. He really complimented me and said I spoke almost like a Frenchman. Anyway, I gave Miss Keany all the credit and really swelled up with pride because she had been such an excellent teacher. He said I'd know how to speak French fluently in a very short time if I'd apply myself and I would if only I stayed in France. Miss Keany certainly has been an excellent teacher and I'll give her all the credit in the world. I wrote and told her all about Nice and I know she'll be so delighted.

I forgot to tell you that the Red Cross girls have a wrapping counter so I took the stuff down and they did all the work for me. The base censor was right there so there is no more censoring at all and hope it gets home safely. The Red Cross certainly has a great many facilities for us and I have used them all. In those photos of Nice, you'll see the Red Cross building which is called the Casino Mediteranee or something like that and is a pure

white place and so huge. Why our house would fit in one corner of one room - that's how large it is. It was a gambling place once and was built by an American.

Today I weighted myself to see if I had put on any and am now 165 lbs. So I have only gained 10 lbs. since I've been in this army and I bet I can get into my clothes at home. I hope I can get into the green suit because I really liked it very much. Most fellows have gained so much that my 10 pounds extra seems a trifle. Have either one of you gained or lost at all?

Thursday night after I wrote to you, I went to the waterfront for a little stroll. Am I glad I did because they (the French) had a large display of fireworks to celebrate victory. I don't believe I ever saw such sky rockets in my life for they were perfectly beautiful with it's many colors. I tried to take a picture in color and doubt very much if it'll come out. The last time I saw a real display was when Braintree had its tercentenary and that was quite awhile ago (1940).

Every time I see an old lady dressed up with all the rouge and powder and lipstick and even dyed hair, I think of Grandma. She certain would look a sight this way and she is so much more sensible. I guess these women think they are 16 for the rest of their lives and try to hide their age. But nothing in the world will help and it makes these old people look absurd. What I get the greatest kick out of is these French poodles strutting around. They are odd looking the way they are trimmed and look so much like a clown. Some man was telling me that a thorough bred brings nearly \$500 so I guess they must be valuable even if they are funny to look at.

The policemen of the city are like toy men on a little raised platform the way they do things so mechanically as though they were robots. They all stand at attention as long as they are on and twirl around to direct traffic. It is so different compared to the slouchy way they do in Boston and I'd like to see them try what these men do.

Today a fellow from the 329 regiment and I went strolling around and went into the old section of the city where the streets are no more than 10 feet wide. We just walked all over and ended up in a large market area where everything was being sold. Both of us bought a pound of cherries - 1/2 kilogram in France - and had a great time going along spitting the seeds in all directions. We sat under a large tree and continued to eat and when we did leave, the place was black with the pits of cherries. It might seem like a lot of cherries but we finished them in short order and felt like getting more. But it was beginning to get near dinner time so we forgot it. They had a nice meal of steak, french fries, lettuce, dessert, and even tea! He and I just wondered around all day and at sunset sat on the beach. I couldn't help but think of home when I saw the huge expanse of water and the waves washing against the beach. Oh well, I hope to return soon. Guess I make you feel good talking this way but I don't want you to have your hopes set too high on having me return soon.

Each night I have seen and done something different. One night I saw a good play, another night a musical concert, another a movie. So I have had a great variation and really have enjoyed my stay here. Monday we return - two days from now - and as I said, I'll be glad to get able and see what goes on.

I do hope you'll like those photos I sent. I didn't get a frame because it might break on the way but you can get one at home. I think so much of you both and would like to do much more for you. Mum, I hope you got those flowers - gardinea corsage - for Mother's Day. It is tomorrow and Ill be thinking of you. May God bless you both and keep you. With all my love, Harold.

P.S. Send more stamps as I'm getting low. I'm not getting low on stationery yet but will let you know far enough ahead.

#May 14, 1945 (Nice France) no censor or no apparent censor.

Dear Mum and Dad,

I am here at the Red Cross so decided to get one last letter off to you before I leave this afternoon. In many ways, I'm anxious to return and find out what is going on. At least one consolation is if we should go to the Pacific at least I'll get home for a month or more. But I'm not going to talk about that until it happens for I believe we have a very chance of remaining here as occupation but of course I don't know.

I forgot to tell you that in the portrait I am sending home, you will notice that I'm wearing an overseas type of blouse with all my ribbons - they don't show up too well because they are out of focus but the top one is the combat infantryman's badge. Then the three ribbons, one beside the other are the purple heart, good conduct, and the E.T.O. ribbon with the expert rifleman's badge beneath. Quite a chest full, eh? Much more than when I was home on leave. And on my right sleeve are two overseas stripes and the division patch which I understand is now to have a supplementary stripe with a thunderbolt. I understand we are due at least one more campaign star and maybe two more. So if it is five, we'll receive one large silver star which represent five bronze ones. But it looks like so much more to have five, eh? And the division will be getting a little arrowhead for the E.T.O. ribbon which denotes the crossing of a major river or a beach landing. In this case it'll be because of us crossing the Elbe. We've all been figuring up our points so laboriously and I find I have nearly 65, 20 less than the required amount but so many in our division have a lot less than I. Just think most of the rifle men came in to us after leaving the States Jan. 1945 because we had so many casualties in the "Bulge." I've taken so many replacements to the company since we began that I've lost track and couldn't begin to count. It is a shame they all had to go and out of E company, we only had three original men left on line - including the cooks, us runners, supply sergeant, etc.

I was looking through the Red Cross register today to see if there was anyone from Braintree and sure enough there was one from E. Braintree. His name is Arthur H. Herrman and lives at 304 Hayward St. but I don't know him. He was down here in the winter. With all these fellows down here, I'd think I'd run into someone I know but no such luck. Guess I'm getting out of here just in time because the number of men is going to increase from 4,000 per week to 20,000 because the war is over. I bet it'll be so crowded shortly that you wouldn't be able to walk. I did run into the 1<sup>st</sup> sgt. of H company whom I know very well and was surprised because he came down after us by plane. Some style and here we had to go by train. He heard the news that the war was over while flying over the Alps. Sometime, maybe, I'll get my wish and fly just once!

I certainly have had an enjoyable time here and would like to remain for a lot longer. The only thing I mind is the real hot sun and these last couple of days have been scorches. And just think, back home you had snow. Dad, I hope it didn't hurt our garden because I know how much pride you take in it.

I suppose when I return I'll find plenty of mail and then I'll have to get caught up on writing again. I should have written Miss Martin while here but was too lazy to write to anyone except you. Maybe it's combat exhaustion, eh? It really isn't that but when I'm in the mood I can really write.

This will be all for now and I just hope you get those pictures very shortly and don't have to wait too long. Keep trusting in the Lord and all will be all right. May He bless you two most wonderful parents. I think so much of you both. With all my love, Harold

#May 18, 1945 (Bad Harzburg, Germany) still censoring the letters - 5 days after the end of the war. Still censored.

Dearest Mum and Dad,

Well, here I am back at the company again and I'm glad that trip is over now. As Dad used to say, you just can't get any rest on a train. I was surprised to see all the wild flowers growing along the way and two were familiar to me. There were all kinds of columbine and pretty poppies. Here they grow wild and at home you'd almost give anything to have some. On the way down, we took a truck as far as Aachen and from there too a train. It went to Maastricht, Leige, Luxemburg, Metz, Nancy, Dijon, Lyon, Marseille, and then to Nice (stopping at Cannes for officers).

This really isn't going to be much of a letter but I'll try to write a note so you'll know I returned. I am quite tired from the ride and will sleep shortly.

There was plenty of mail waiting for me and wasn't I happy. I had seven from you so now I'm up to date, up to 8 May. I really feel ashamed of myself to think that I haven't written to Miss Martin before this but I really have been trying to do too much. And at Nice, I was always on the go. So I must get a letter off to her immediately.

The fellows don't seem to be too happy because they don't know here they are going. But I'll probably be in the Pacific and then we'll have to start in all over again. Only the Lord knows what will happen and I'll have to put myself in His care. That is all.

Since the war is over, we can now tell which town we're in and you'll find this place near Goslar. We fought very close to here in the Hartz Mountains as you'll probably remember.

Guess this will be all for now because I want to go to sleep. Just keep up you chin and trust in the good Lord who brought me through this one war safely. With all my love, Harold

#May 19, 1945, Goslar, Germany.

Dear Mum and Dad,

I must write a decent letter to you today because I wrote such a short one yesterday. After I wrote that yesterday afternoon, I lay down and fell asleep almost immediately. And then last night I slept all night. Like you, Dad! Always sleeping. I need a rest now to rest up from the rest. Understand?

After I wrote the letter to you from the Red Cross at Nice, I took one more stroll down the Promenade des Anglais which you'll see in those pictures I'm sending. I listed what I was sending you but neglected to tell you about sending the white scarf also. I mentioned it in one of your letters but didn't say much. The outline of France has been outlined by red stitches and the names of the country and bordering countries are in red. So it is red, white and blue. In a great many ways, I don't know what the use is of me sending you much because you don't use them. But use what is practical and above all use the perfume if it ever gets home. A girl down there told me that a drop on a piece of material will last for a very long time so it must be good stuff.

We ate supper early and then got ready because the train was to pull out at 6:30 p.m. The hotel supervisor cried when we left and I suppose she goes through that every time a new group arrives. I became quite acquainted with the four girls in the hotel - one was supervisor, another the information girl, and the other two did anything and everything to help the soldiers. I found out that these four represent four different nationalities. Parisian French, Belgian, Russian, and Italian. All could speak English and I got a great kick when they told me that they could understand me better than many American they have heard - and they have heard plenty. I don't use slang and speak so

clearly so they told me. It is due to you, Mother dear because I speak just like you. I certainly am proud to have parents who are not toughies and who speak English as it should be spoken.

Of the four girls, I was most impressed by the Russian for she was a very cultured person and has traveled the world over. She learned English in China, of all places, from an English professor. It was very interesting to hear her tell about all her travels, especially Japan. She can't see how Japan can last after we concentrate on her. She was so interesting but had to leave to do some shopping. They told me she can speak a total of ten languages so she must be a born linguist.

The Italian girl whose name was Nina cried as I told you before when we left. It was her birthday that day so she gave everyone of us a nice carnation just before we left. Why I'll have you know the French girl kissed me on both cheeks when I left. They all seemed to enjoy talking to me and I learned a great deal.

I just left and had supper which was not very large. But nevertheless I was full when I finished. We had all the ice cream we could eat with chocolate cake! The cooks made it in a nearby ice cream factory with powdered milk. And I will say it was excellent and so very rich. Much more than many at home. I suppose by now most places are selling a very cheap grade. War certainly has changed our way of living but I suppose when it is all over we'll get back to pre-war standards. They had ice cream once before while I was down in France. Always the way, isn't it?

Now the order has come down that there will be no more censoring of mail so all we'll do is seal them ourselves. It seems so strange sealing them after all this time. It used to be that the poor mail clerk spent half a day sealing envelopes after the officers had censored the letters. My pen seems to be writing so much better now and seems to be back to normal. I made it write badly by putting this foreign ink in it. But now I have plenty of good ole American ink. Talking about pens, I was asked if I'd sell my pen while down in Nice and of course refused. You gave this pen to me almost five birthdays ago and I don't want to get rid of it. And my camera! The Frenchmen wanted to buy my camera and I was approached several times. One went as high as \$300 but I still wasn't interested. For cigarettes you could get anything and the French would buy them for \$12 a carton. But I bet with things the way they are in the States, that they'd pay that price too. But to me they aren't worth a cent!

I drank more Coca-Colas down there and had several a day. So I have had my fill for awhile. I understand now, we have to pay for all our rations and will have to pay for lost clothing. Not like it was in combat! They are getting more strict and we can see changes (definite one) which have resulted from the end. The M.P.s are really getting mean and if you so much as have one button un-buttoned, they'll turn you in. It'll be so good when I can be discharged but it'll probably be quite a while off.

Today I sent home a little booklet which division has just distributed and I know you'll be very interested. It tells all about the division since its activation in 1942 up to the present. It is in brief form but very nice. And what I get a kick out of is the little cartoons on each page. This artist certainly is good and he drew the pictures of Gen. Macon on the first page. I also sent Miss Martin a letter in which I enclosed some negatives for you. I haven't written her for so long that I wrote a long one to make up for what I missed. I just couldn't seem to get around to doing much writing while there in Nice. I feel ashamed of myself when I don't write but as long as I write you often, I don't care very much.

We came back as far as Aachen by train and the trucks were waiting even though they weren't sure when we would get in. We were late as it was! We got in so late in the afternoon that the trucks took us to a camp in Holland - about five miles - where those in

transient were staying. It was in a large monastery and all we saw were young priests all over. The next morning we started off about ten and everything went fine until after we crossed the Rhine. Then we got lost and got on the super highway in the wrong place. Parts of it have been blown and we got in at that part. We must have wandered for about two hours and finally got on the highway at Dortmund and then we sped along. What a ride and the trucks went 40 miles in 50 miles so you can see we nearly flew. We stayed on the highway until almost Hanover and then cut south to the city (town) where we were. As we were going along, there in the distance were dark clouds and lightning. So we knew it might rain. Boy, we flew then over narrow roads. But alas it was to no avail for we got caught about five miles from our destination. And in that distance we were soaked because it rained so hard. I rarely ever saw it our so hard and this storm had large hail stones mixed in. It felt as though someone was hitting us with a hammer they hurt so. That night, I stayed at regimental headquarters and then the next morning I got back to battalion at last.

Everyone has been commenting lately that I'm getting gray haired and I know it is getting grayer all the time. Even before I came in the army I had a few white hairs but now it is getting worse. So I guess I'm just following Dad because I believe you said he began to turn gray quite young. Anyway, I'm not letting it worry me at all.

I was wondering before I returned if I'd find all my equipment when I did get back. Much to my surprise the fellows took care of everything and the only thing I lost was my carbine rifle. But all my personal things were there and the perfume too. So shortly, I'll be sending you another box of perfume. So often the fellows look out only for themselves and forget about everyone else. Sometimes I get so aggravated with the bunch but all in all they're pretty good.

I suppose you notice now that we can tell where we are - the exact town. The censorship certainly has been greatly lifted and is so different than before. We are in a small town a few miles outside of Goslar but if I mentioned the town you'd never find it on the map.

I don't believe I ever told you about these Negroes in these European countries. I mean our American darkies. I never saw anything like it but when you see them strolling down the street with a pretty white girl, it makes you disgusted. I never saw anything like it in my life and a good many of these foreign gals, English, French, Belgian, etc. - seem to like them. It is quite a common sight but I know back home it is not like that. I suppose you can't blame the Negroes for they aren't suppressed now. Well, as long as they don't bother me, it is all right. And I've seen and heard about white women having colored babies. Censorship in England was strict about this Negro deal but I'll not tell you about it now.

Since I've been on furlough, the kitchen now has five new men who are not Americans but Czechs. We're sort of adopted them because they

They have no home and no parent and now they do all the the K.P. work. They are all fine looking boys and so very clean. They have civilian clothes but usually wear our army clothes which we gave them They certainly are happy now and so contented.

You wanted to know about the wound I got. Probably you noticed the date was last month but it really happened way back in Normandy. A piece of shrapnel just scraped me and the medics classed it as a contusion of the right hip. That is a bruise and was more like a scrape on the knee which I used to get when I fell. But it got infected and I had to have it treated a few times. I believe I was more scared than anything else.

I've just been going through your letters to see if there is anything you want to know. I wish you'd send me a container to hold my toothbrush as the one I have is cracked.

What a bunch of letters not by envelopes but by weight and number of pages. If you have saved all my letters and I've written as much as you, there must be a couple of tons. Ha!

Yesterday I received a very nice letter from Mr. Marsell and one from Kenneth Smith who is in Framingham, Mass. in a hospital. He didn't have much to say so there really is no news from him. It is too bad he is taking things so hard because that isn't the way to act. Well, since I've been down there, I have ten letters to answer so it seems as though I'll never catch up.

I'm so glad you're keeping yourself so busy because it does keep your mind off of me. You certainly have been keeping up a brave chin and I think you have been wonderful about the whole thing. Thanks very much.

The first sergeant just came up and had me sign my score card on which are the discharge points. When he asked me if it was right, I said no because the score came to 64 because the card had me down as a total of 30 months in the army. I hope it hasn't been that long but at times I often wonder. I might as well be honest because it'll be checked up later. So tomorrow I'll see if it is right.

Marjorie sent me a couple pictures of herself and they are so much better than the one she sent before. That one looked as though she had a wad of tobacco in her mouth. She said she was 16 last month so that means that Betty will be 16 in Oct. and Ruby was 15 in March. But I wonder if that is right because I thought Ruby was 16 in March. Maybe Marjorie is just joking with me, but now that I think of it, Ruby may be only 14, Betty 15 in March and Marjorie 16. Which is right? I can't seem to keep track of their ages. But at least I can remember my own age, I hope!

Boy, what a bunch of new stuff you have in the house now and I'll hardly recognize it when I get home. But I'm so happy for you because you always took such pride in the home. Dad, since I have left you have done so many things and have really made the house very nice from the description Mum gives. She certainly is proud of it now and I believe you are too!

Dad mentioned before I left for overseas that he might build a little sailboat but never knew if he was going ahead on it. It probably won't be ours and he'll sell it. Eh? Dad! We could certainly have an enjoyable time if we have one.

To have pictures made at Alves is a mistake as you have found out. Remember, on these films I'm sending through with the letters, don't forget to have them thoroughly washed. Taylor's gets rid of the scratches somehow and makes the pictures so much better. Now if only I can send home those undeveloped colored films so you can have them developed. But I don't know what goes on yet.

God has been so kind to us and we must not forget about Him in times of peace. May He bless you both and keep you. With all my love, Harold

P.S. I didn't write a letter but a novel! I certainly made up for lost time.

#May 21, 1945 (Goslar, Germany)

Dear Mother and Dad,

I have been trying to write all day but couldn't because I had no pen. Last night I went to the company and the captain censored the box of perfume which I am sending. He used my pen and he forgot to give it to me. So I left without thinking. This morning I went back to get it when I discovered it gone but he wasn't there and no one knew where it was so I just had to wait. I have been trying to write all day but could not because of no pen. And I hate to use pencil. At last, I got it this evening so here I am writing.

I received a letter from you dated May 12, one from Warren Scott, and from Mrs. Hendrie. I am so glad you received those flowers and I knew darned well you'd have a good

cry over it. I ordered them so long ago and hope it was a gardenia corsage as I ordered. As I said, I got a long letter from Warren and he told me quite a few places where he has been. The censorship was lifted some in the navy and even at that he had a couple of lines cut out. Here's what he said, "On 18-19 March, we were in on the strike at Kyushie on the southern tip of the Japanese mainland. At one stage we were closer than - - - - miles to Japan and that is pretty near - - - -. Yet the 5<sup>th</sup> fleet was right on the ball that day and - - - - - Jap planes attacked us but we shot them down." So apparently there were things they could not say about that operation. And Mrs. Hendrie said she gave you those negatives. So by now you ought to have quite a bunch of negatives.

If you ever have prints made be sure and send them C.O.D. because things are too fluid around here and we don't know how long we'll be together. As a matter of fact, that fellow for whom you're having those enlargements and negatives made is going home shortly because his mother is very sick and he is having all kinds of trouble with his 15 farms, etc. And there are all kinds of going on but it won't affect most of us for awhile yet, I hope!

I wish you would check up with the Agfa company and see if they could process Agfacolor for me. Tell them I'm overseas in Germany and found some of that film and have used some, Now the only thing is to see if they can do it. I certainly hope so because a good many of my Nice pictures were taken in Agfacolor. I took a total of three rolls down there – black and whit, Kodachrome, and Agfacolor. Sko I have quite a variety. I sen my black and white fil back to division to this master sergeant whom I met down there. He has all the equipment to develop and enlarge. So he told me to send it back and he'd do it. So now it is just a matter of time before I get it back. I have three rolls of Kodachrome which I'd like to get processed and am now trying to find out if I can either send it direct to Kodak or send it home underdeveloped .they have relaxed censorship now as I have said and all they are on the lookout for now is loot! So maybe I can send the rolls of film home soon. I hope so because I want to see what they come out like,

Not only are they still strict about sending home loot but now the army is clamping down on sending money home. There has been too much sent home - more than what is paid to the soldiers. Take one of the fellows for instance- he found a bunch of pistols (German) and after selling them he had over \$1000. It is men like that they are after. I tried to send home \$30 yesterday but couldn't unless I explained where I got the extra two dollars from and then an officer has to sign. In other words, a man can't send home more than what is actually paid him each month unless he has a good excuse. In my case, I draw \$28 per month so I ended up making out an order for \$25. So shortly It'll be on its way. I have more to send but will wait awhile. It certainly is a nuisance when I can't even send home my money. But a few men spoil it for the rest of us as it is in so many cases.

At last, I have gotten the picture business straightened out because Mrs. Surface finally acknowledged the fact that she received the pictures. It is very seldom I ever see him write to her and it is just as rare for him to get letters. It doesn't seem as though they care for each other very much because they were married while he was in the army. So he knows no home married life. It certainly is strange. And John Alexa paid me for the pictures yesterday. I wasn't able to see him before this because I went to the Riviera. So now everything is all set. The best thing is not to have any more mass production and only get for ourselves.

A couple of days ago, I sent of a letter to Aunt Sue as you told me. I'm so sorry it happened that way but I just didn't know. Anyway, everything is all right now.

You mentioned about Mr. Painten offering to do my films for me and how you went and got my paper. Even if it is that old it doesn't matter in a good many cases so the best

thing to do would be to give it all to him. It was very nice of him to offer but I'm afraid he won't find the negatives the best he has seen. We did them in such a crude manner and the first roll didn't turn out too well. But something ought to come out.

Since I left to go to France, our unit certainly has been doing a bit of moving around and every so often has to move. When I came back, I found them in Bad Harzburg but the next day we had to move out because division has made that a rest camp. So now we are stuck way out in the "wood" although we are in a very nice house. I am sending the "83<sup>rd</sup> Thunderbolt" paper home so you'll see what is going on better than I could explain it. And you can see why we had to move out of Bad Harzburg and why we hated to. The companies are certainly spread out and to go to all of them is a total distance of 40 miles. So our one battalion is really spread out.

Since we came overseas as a division, we have been in the 9<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> armies. Not many knew we were in the 15<sup>th</sup> but we were for four days just before we moved up to Luxemburg. I found this out from the master sgt. who knew everything that went on. He is a good man to know, eh?

One of the fellows, the captain's jeep driver, has now got a movie camera and is taking all kinds of pictures. But I'm still satisfied with my sill one. When I attach that Leica motor to the camera, I'll have almost a movie camera because I could take 3 or 4 pictures a second. Good for launchings.

I am also sending a booklet about the 'Riviera' in a separate envelope.

May God bless you both and just keep up your chin until I get back home. With all my love; Harold

#May 22, 1945 (Goslar, Germany)

Dearest Mum and Dad,

This morning I received a long letter from Dad. When I opened it and found out how long it was, I was pleased, Dad. You are getting like Mum and I and are writing longer ones. You told me so much I didn't know and I hope Mr. Painten can fix my negatives up good. He was so thoughtful doing that for us but I hope he doesn't expect too much out of those negatives. They were developed under adverse conditions and the first roll we did get pretty well scratched up. It was a shame the first roll didn't turn out too well but I believe a few pictures will turn out. And this afternoon I also got one which Mum sent dated May 10. So now I am up to date as far as May 12. The mail seems to be coming through so much better lately and I hope it continues. I wish a couple of my packages would get here because I'd like to have some food to eat at night (evenings). While the rest are usually playing cards I write letters and can do it even with all the noise and arguing. I have learned to write under all conditions and it has been very rare I have written a short letter even if I do say so myself. Only when I have been feeling tired or miserable have I written what I call short and that is average for the majority of fellows.

Yesterday, I told you about going to my company to get my pen back. I went to the company kitchen to see the fellows and while there one paid me nearly twenty dollars. I sold him a pistol which I had gotten hold of and didn't want. That is the one and only thing I ever sold and that is the last. He was to pay me last pay day as he didn't have any money before that. But so much happened last pay day and I was trying to get ready for my furlough. So this was the way in which I made up the fifteen dollars I lost and not by developing as you had thought. If I find out we are to stay here as occupation, I want you to send me some developing equipment. But as I said before, things are to fluid and I don't want you to send my more packages for awhile until I let you know.

I have fifty more dollars in my wallet so I'll try and get it home shortly. There really is no need to keep very much because I never expect to go any other furlough for a long, long time. Each year an enlisted man is entitled to fifteen days furlough so I have still eight days left. But the bad thing about the whole affair is if the man doesn't or can't take the furlough in that year, it is canceled. The officers are different and their furloughs are collective and keep adding up. So we seem to be more out of luck than they.

We have some good officers and some bad but the colonel is a man hard to beat. He is a very well educated man and is an old army officer so probably he'll say in after the war. But a good many old army men have had enough and are ready to get into civilian life as soon as possible. One of the captains at battalion is so reckless and because of him, we have had a few casualties in the runners sections. He wasn't the cause of Francis Nelen's death but caused some fellows to be wounded by sending them out on a wild goose chase. He is like a kid at times and the other officers have to put him in his place. So often, he'll take advantage of his rank and have things done for him! Then there is another who is two-faced. To your face, he tells you how good you are but behind your back it is a different story. I believe I have found out where Nelen was buried. It was at Henri-Chapelle, Belgium, a few miles from Aachen. I saw this in Life magazine and it said men killed in the Hurtgen Forest were buried there. So if ever possible, I'd like to go there and see for myself.

Next to you, Em has been the most faithful right along and she averages three letters to my one. I really think it is so nice of her to do that for me. Usually they wait until I answer before they write. But in her case, it is different and she writes just the same. At times, I just barely have time enough to write to you much less write to everyone else. I can't seem to get caught up on my correspondence because as soon as I write three or four letters, the same number pop in again. But I'll have to see if I can get those nine answered shortly before any more come in. I forgot to tell you that I heard from Mrs. Nelen again but she had no real news for me. And Francis' sister wrote me and asked me a few questions which I will try and answer. She is married and doesn't live with her parents.

I figured my points out while down on the Riviera and told you wrong. I have only 49 points because I thought we'd be given credit for the combat star announced for the battle of the Bulge. And they took off one point because of those three weeks I had at home when I was first inducted. Even with points as low as I have, the runners average 48 to 49. Why a good many new men in the rifle companies have only 30: And some much less!! All the men over 100 points have left for the States from this division and you can guess how many there are. Very few! Now those with 85 or more are getting ready to go and then there are very few. I believe we'll be losing our fist sgt. of E company because he has exactly 85. He has one child and has been in the States a good long time. So that is why. At present, I wish I had three children and then I'd have 85 even. But I am afraid it isn't so. Well, as I said before, there are a good many much less than me - I seem to be almost in the middle. Maybe it'll end up that this point system will be thrown out the window as soon as the high men are separated and all treated equally. Who knows what this crazy and fickle army will be doing next. I'll never figure it out in a hundred years!

This division is now sending what is called an I and E officer from each battalion to Paris shortly. I & E stands for "information and education" and they'll be going to school for awhile. So maybe, that has some significance. Let's hope so. These men will have to do with education programs so I'll have to figure out what course I want to take if we do remain here. I may take a course in photography to see how I like it. I may even take up that when I get back to the states. Who knows! I have been advised by all to take up whatever I really like. What do you think, Dad? I know you did what you wanted in other words go into shipbuilding. Well, we'll see what will happen in the future.

When we returned from the furlough, the train stopped at a little town called Merrey to have dinner. When I finished, I spied some railroad guns across the tracks which the Germans had left behind in their retreat. What big things and all took up two cars to carry it. I understand they are 380 mm. - Germany's biggest - so I took a few pictures with Agfacolor. By the way, Agfa is in Binghamton, N.Y., I believe, or something like that. Anyway, you can find out and from someone then find out about if I can get the Agfacolor developed - 35 mm.

I hope you get those negatives from Betty and Em and Miss Martin, Ask for them. I don't believe I sent any to Mrs. Newell but you could check up on it. In this letter, I am including the last of the four rolls so now you have then all. I think that is the best way to get them home rather than send it in bulk as I did before. What do you think? I have some more stamps so in my next letter will begin to send a few home at a time. I should have quite a bunch when I get back. But the U.S. publishes stamps so fast that I could never keep up with them.

I heard over the radio today that the first army has left for the Pacific via the U.S. So it is a good thing we aren't in that army. We may go but it won't be as soon as a good many units. I just pray that Japan won't last too much longer. But there are signs that we may not go too quickly and may stay here so let us just hope for the best.

Em said that she thought it was beyond you taking pictures of the living and dining room but why? All you have to do is get out of my reflectors and photoflood lights and arrange it until and have an even lighting. Set up the camera on the tripod in the center as close to the wall as possible. Now all you have to do is use the exposure meter and there you have it. Surely you have enough brains to figure that out. You are afraid of the Leica, that is all because it seems too complicated although not if you once understand it. Since film is so scarce especially the larger sizes, why don't you use the Leica more often and use the basic exposure F16 at 1/25 if the film rating is 25 and f16 at 1/50 if the film rating is 50. It is so simple, eh? If you have the film developed at a good place - other than Alves - the finished pictures will turn out perfectly and will look like a large size pictures. Please try it and see what you can do. With black and white exposures don't have to be so fussy as with color. I wish I could send you some unexposed film but not as yet!

When I was down at Nice amid all the victory celebration, I went for a walk along the waterfront. And there came familiar French boats shooting lots of ack-ack in the air. There were three sub-chaser just like you built so it probably was turned over to the French. These people certainly have a bunch of our equipment. The French army sent men to Nice on furlough. The same as the U.S. did but we could hardly tell the difference. If they did not wear a navy blue overseas cap, we couldn't tell the difference. And of course, we have different ribbons from them. I have heard we might get a victory ribbon of black and white so if true, I'll have four ribbons, Whew, what a bunch of ribbons, et?

All the rotation furloughs back home have been canceled and only one man was allowed to go this month out of 10 men. He has been wounded three times and comes from my company. He was in line for first sgt. if the present one goes home but now I wonder who will be next. Guess because things are so fluid, they are temporarily suspending the furloughs but I hope they begin again if we stay for I shouldn't be too far down the list. There are very few men other than the kitchen who are left in the company. I'd like to see Swett get home in particular because he is taking things harder than I.

I told you we were near Goslar but to be more exact, I should say Salzgitter. This town might be too small to see on your map but I believe it is north of Goslar. Our one battalion is establishing military governments in about 20 to 25 towns. So you can see that we cover a long distance. Why, to make a run to all the companies by jeep is almost 50

miles long! When we move into a town we take over the best houses entirely and the civilians move out of them. I actually believe some fellows have lived in better houses lately than they ever did in their life. There are some beautiful houses all right. Swett and I have a room together now as there are two beds in the room. It is very nice and makes me think of home. As I always said, there is no place like home. I'm so glad I never got homesick for it can be mean at times, I understand. Maybe because I put myself in God's hands is the reason. Who knows!

It is strange but up until I left at the Elbe River, the weather was cold and raining. Then while I was at Nice it was very beautiful all the time and warm! But I no sooner came back than it clouded up and rained and grew cold. Guess I'm bad luck. We've had some chilly days but it hasn't been cold enough to harm the crops. Everything is growing fine right now and I believe the two season - her and there - are just about the same.

I forgot to tell you that the civilians now get newspapers which the American Army prints. I can't read it but one page has been devoted to the atrocities and pictures of the scene. I hope they drive these scenes into the people's heads just to show what really was going on.

I haven't heard form Mrs. Villeneuve for quite some time so don't know if Fred was freed in the Russian drive. The Nazis usually took them out of the camps and made them march for miles to get ahead of the advance. We picked up some English who had been marched all the way from Poland and then halfway back to Berlin until we overran them and recaptured them. It really was brutal the way they were treated. If a man couldn't keep up, he was shot in cold blood right then and there. I read where Hitler gave orders near the end to kill all POW.s but the order was not carried out. We can thank God that nothing as inhuman as this happened although he did do some terrible things. I hope no mad man ever does what he did in my lifetime.

From now on we pay for our PX rations because we are not in combat now. I don't mind though because I won't be buying any cigarettes unless I get them for Swett. He smokes so much that seven packs a week will never do. I'm certainly glad I never have bothered to smoke.

Some of the fellows yesterday went on the tour of the large Herman Goering Works very near here. They made steel and what a massive place. I've seen it on the way to E company and I understand there is quite a few acres under ground. The Germans certainly were ingenious the way they planned out things.

One of the boys from communications section is going to Paris with the lieutenant. Because he knew I had a dress blouse which I used to go to Nice and hadn't turned it in, he asked if I'd loan it to him. So I did because he is a pretty good fellow - much better than a good many.

Gee, but I set a record in this letter and wrote the longest I ever have. But all I have done is rambled on and on and I don't know that it is very interesting. But it's a letter nevertheless.

As you have said, God has been so kind t us and just because I'm not in danger is no reason to forget Him. May He bless you both. I think so much of you both and you have done so much for me in all ways. With all my love, Harold

#May 25, 1945 (Saltzgitter, Germany).

Dearest Mother and Dad,

It is time to get busy again and write. Just think, one year ago I landed on English soil and doesn't it seem so long ago. But after seeing so many with three years overseas, it doesn't seem so long. I received a letter from you yesterday dated May 15 so the mail seems

to be coming through faster than many times. As a matter of fact, there have been letters coming in in six days. I hope no more people write for awhile so I can get caught up on it all. This morning I did get a letter from Mrs. Newell though.

One of the sergeants came around this morning and took everyone's names who is interested in these correspondence courses. So I gave him my name and will later see what I want to take up. It sounds as though we might stay for awhile but you know this army well enough to know that we can move around so quickly that we wouldn't know what happened to us. These courses are a good thing and many seem to be quite interesting. But what got me was when Johnson asked what a correspondence course was. He had never heard of anything like it before! What a guy and I don't believe he wants to better himself at all. Oh well, it is his business.

The newspapers have listed four divisions which are on the way to the Pacific via U.S. and I see that they are very new divisions. So if they take the newest first and work down the line, it'll be a long time before we are called. I understand in the whole E.T.O., we were about the 15th division to enter combat. But whether they work things that way or not is to be seen. All we can do is put all our trust in God and pray for the best.

Yesterday, the company collected all helmets and are going to have the division patch painted on with the name and grade underneath. I have seen some and don't they look fancy! But the name isn't such a good idea. I don't like everyone knowing my name and have found out the less who know my name, the better off I am. It certainly will look good when everyone has it done and it'll look very uniform.

I have to laugh when the runners talk about saving money. I've never told a single one because it is none of their business but some brag if they have a thousand saved up. And Johnson has saved \$225 and thinks it is wonderful. How disillusioned he is about the truth of things! Of course, I have only you people to thank for the large bank account and am trying to save all I can. It might come in handy sometime.

When I mail this letter, I'll be mailing another booklet which the division has issued. This one is very nice and I know you'll want it because on one side is a large map showing just where we have been while on the other side has a detailed history of the division. I am sending it first class because it weighs too much so probably will be slower in getting to you. What a bunch of stuff I have sent home. I should have a large scrap book when it is all arranged. "Beaucoup souvenirs," as they say in France. Yesterday, I also sent home a victory issue of Yank magazine which I believe you'll find interesting.

Yesterday, I talked to my supply sergeant into giving me a new combat infantryman's badge. I never had one since I sent that one home and if I had kept it, I would have lost it anyway. So now I'm strutting around with a badge on and an E.T.O. ribbon with four stars. The four stars haven't been authorized yet but I still wear it. Stars and stripes say we are entitled to five so if that is true, we'll get 10 more points and a large silver star denoting five campaigns. The C.P. took all the runners names yesterday with the nearest relative and the date we entered the division. So we are wondering if it is for these certificates which I told you about before. These certificates tell that we did our work well, etc.

The intelligence officer has his new camera stuck in everyone's face now taking pictures of everything. What a nice reflex camera he has now. A reflex type is like Betty's - you look into a large sized glass. I believe some civilian gave it to him and I know I wouldn't mind having it at all. The camera I sent home ought to be in good condition when I get home after having it fixed up. Thanks so very much. You do so much for me and I cannot do anything in return. The days haven't been very fine for picture taking lately so haven't

taken one since I came back from France. I hope the master sergeant gets those pictured done for me before too long. I want you to see them as soon as possible.

The water in this village is not good to drink at all because they say there are typhus germs in it. If that is true, it is a wonder the people never suffered. Anyway, I never fool with it and use only water the kitchen supplies. It certainly isn't like home conditions, I mean. But as I said before, I am very impressed by the beauty of the countryside.

There have been many baseball games going on nowadays between the companies. I would go to them if possible and even participate but all the runners must stay around in case we are needed. Oh, don't I hope we stay here and can have a decent life as we are doing now. Today, I slept late and missed breakfast because I was so tired. We stand guard sometimes but it isn't bad at all compared to other times. We are usually one to two hours very other night.

Yesterday, I began to write a letter to you but just couldn't get far at all. Guess I was just too tired because today, I can do much better. I had to laugh at one of the fellows from headquarters. He saw me writing and said I wrote the fastest he ever saw. But I told him my pen has to keep up with the mind or I can't write a decent letter. May, that is the secret to my success, eh?

I brought a movie man up to E company yesterday morning so they could have a show. He showed "National Velvet," a late picture, but I couldn't wait and had to get back. But last night, I saw a good movie near here. It was put on for units of the second armored division but we sort of sneaked in. It was a mystery but I can't remember the name. They had a short subject at the beginning and it was all about Massachusetts of all places. It showed Marblehead in particular and didn't it make me feel awfully homesick to see such familiar surroundings - typical New England.

Schaub and I got hold of a trumpet and have been taking turns blowing on it for the past two days. I haven't forgotten much except have lost my lip. But Schaub really hasn't had the training I have and he was stuck on a song with four flats. For some reason, I sailed through that with very few mistakes. So it goes to show that you don't forget so easily. We are certainly enjoying ourselves with it and play bugle calls also. Just in fun, not for the company! This is the oddest trumpet I ever saw because instead of push valves such as I have, they are little keys which are pressed like a piano. A French horn has keys like these. And with this instrument, it is held sideways.

I am enclosing a few stamps which I picked up and a two franc note which was all I brought back from France. I will say that the girls look so much nicer there than down in Nice. You can't appreciate sensible girls until you see those clowns, as I call them.

The man who owns the house in which we are staying has a little victory garden in his backyard - defeat garden would be better. And it looks just like yours, Dad, and with no vegetables that I'm not familiar with. He is growing potatoes which are very scarce in these countries. Every single house has a little garden so maybe they were compelled to by the German government to help ease the good shortage. This man's wife has washed our clothes and pressed them so we have regular laundry service now. Ha!

Guess this will be all because I want to go now and get a haircut which I need badly. Keep up your chin as you have in the past and just face the future bravely. May He bless you and keep you safe. With all my love, Harold

#May 27, 1945 (Salzgitter, Germany)  
Dearest Mum and Dad,

I received a letter from you dated May 17, so now have all your letters up to #50. So it shows that the mail is coming through more evenly. It used to jump around so that I

never knew what was going on. I haven't got the mail from the company but suppose I'll have plenty. I have finally only five letters to answer instead of ten so it is time for five more to come in. That seems to be the way it works.

I'm enclosing a couple of pictures which given to me recently so will get them home before I forget them. I hope Mr. Painten isn't too disgusted with the negatives because they are so overdeveloped. But we had such crude equipment and I wanted to get them developed and sent home. Anyway, they aren't so bad that they aren't printable. If only there wasn't a shortage of paper. Taylor's could get them done soon. I am anxious to see how these latest come out so be sure and let me know. Now if only I can get those colored pictures home, I'd be all set. I haven't heard from that fellow at division headquarters about my pictures but it hasn't been too long. I certainly hope they come out good even though I have no pictures of myself. They are on the other two which are colored. I'm not like the Jew who gave me the one of four sitting on a bench (one I'm enclosing). He is third from left. I never saw so many pictures of one person. Almost every picture I've seen that he has is of himself - quite conceited, eh? I'd rather get the scenes with a scattered one of me. I just hope you get the portraits which I had taken in Nice because they came out so well.

What a mess I'm having with shoes now. There is a civilian who is dyeing the army shoes brown so we all turned them in and are having them done. Then I tried to get some leggings for my other shoes which have no leather tops like those in the picture I'm enclosing. The supply sergeant didn't have any leggings so he gave me an old pair of combat shoes. I cut off the leather tops and will have them sewed onto my regular type shoes. It is confusing if not amusing, eh? So I have turned in two pairs, one to be dyed, the other to be sewn and dyed. So I did manage to get another pair to wear around here. But today I found out I could wear an 8E very easily and it feels just like the 9D I'm wearing. So I really don't have such a big hoof. And my nose isn't getting any bigger, either, Dad!! You'll see when you get the portrait. I still don't call my feet big when I see fellows wearing 12s and 13s!

I went to the theater tonight to see if there was a movie but found they only had a swing band. That isn't for me so I left in a hurry. I'd rather write to you than hear that awful noise that many make. Guess I just don't appreciate good music! I'm just glad I did because today is my day for writing. I believe. Or is it? Every once in awhile I take a writing spree and write long letter three days in a row. So far, I seem to be champion for lengthy letters. And you rank highest with yours. Schaub brags about all the letters he gets from his wife - one written every day. But yours written every other day outstrips him both in length and weight. It is too bad I couldn't have saved your letters and then turn it in for salvage. They would weight so much I'd get a good price. Ha!

I brought back a French, German, English dictionary which I bought in Nice. And it is the most popular book in the runner's section. Everyone comes running to me when they want to know a German word. If I had only thought I could have brought back one for each but just didn't stop to think. I was skeptical about getting things because they cost so much and didn't think the fellows would want to pay so much. But they all would have paid a good price for anything. What a bunch. They gripe about such high prices and say they wouldn't pay it and then they get mad because I didn't bring back anything.

Today I went to the company and got the PX ration cards which we must have now. So get so much of each thing each week and everything is regulated now. And we have to pay. Before, we were given everything for nothing. But now we have items to choose from instead of us being handed anything. And I had to get that 2 foot slide rule because my supply sergeant has no more space to carry it. He said everyone wanted it for some reason but of course wouldn't give it up. He lost a magnifying glass which belonged on it but that doesn't really hurt it - only gave a little more accurate answer.

You say Joe Trott is in the 75<sup>th</sup> Division. That is a purely infantry and is very new to combat. The first time they were committed was in the Ardennes in January. The 83rd was with them for a couple of days because we were taking over some of their positions. It is too bad I didn't know then or I might have looked him up. He is now in the 9<sup>th</sup> army and pushed behind us but I hear that they aren't very good. You can't beat this division because they have proven themselves and rank very high in the fighting divisions. I am proud to be in such a good outfit. The Stars and Stripes said we are due five stars now as I told you before and the critical number is to be changed. Probably higher. I'll have 59 if these campaigns are true so will be closer to the number. We get a star for each of the following: Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland, and Central Europe.

There hasn't been many packages come in lately and can't understand where yours are. But I read in tonight's paper that a large shipment has arrived in the E.T.O. so they'll probably be here soon. Every once in awhile a boat is turned back because of some sort of trouble and mail is detained. It happened to much of the Xmas mail. But the airmail is coming through very well now.

I had quite a few pictures of me taken today because I have so few. I got the Nazi flag out which I'll be sending home sometime and had my picture taken with that. And I am with a dog in one and in all sorts of positions in others. But the photographer was in worse position than I. That is the reason I have such a broad grin in most of them. I couldn't help but laugh at the way some try to take pictures. Guess it is better to smile than look mad. Now if only I can get them developed. I know you'll be pleased with them because I have so few informal pictures. Don't forget, with those prints I sent with letters, I want prints made equal to the number of men in the picture plus two more - one for you and one for me. In other words, if there are two in the picture have four made. I know you understand. I only want this done in pictures of soldiers - not scenes or Germans. I know how I appreciate fellows giving me prints of myself such as the one I'm enclosing. So I would like to do the same for them.

Our first sergeant called up today to find out when we joined the division and where. So now I'm curious to know what goes on. Just Swett and I were asked. And I'm still wondering why they took our nearest relatives' names and date we entered service. All the runners were asked that. So maybe shortly I will be able to tell you what goes on. I wouldn't be surprised if we move because this is British sector. Rumors are flying high and wide but the best one is that's we'll go to Southern Germany. I have heard people say it who should know.

The \$25 money order which I sent to be made out hasn't come back. Swett sent one in nearly a month ago and it hasn't come back. Guess three is plenty of checking going on with this money situation. I will have \$50 when I collect a little more plus a payday in a couple of days so suppose I'll have to do some tall explaining if I want to send any home. What a bunch!

I went to church this morning in one of the local churches. Sort of like home. This will be all and I know this is a terrible letter - so boring it seems. May God bless you. With all my love, Harold

#May 29, 1945 (Salzgitter, Germany)

Dear Mum and Dad,

This evening I received a letter from you dated May 22 xso that is fairly good time. But yesterday mail came in dated May 23 which came in 5 days - pretty good time. It seems as though the mail is going through so very slowly to you. I heard from Donald this morning and he is about thirty miles from me in Einbeck. But I can't get to him because I'm

only a pfc and can't get away. If I were only an officer I could do anything I like. I have now only got two people to answer, Mrs. Newell and Mr. Marsell so I'm really getting caught up.

Before I forget it, I'm sending a money order for \$25 which I told you I was getting. I hope I don't forget to enclose it as I did the last one but by now you should have received it. My bank account is really growing thanks to you! When I say you, I mean both in ll cases.

I got back those two pairs of shoes which were dyed and they really look sleek. We got some polish through the PX so I've really made them shine. After being dressed ragged for so long, I like to look halfway decent for a change. I know they all feel that way. I just pressed a brand new shirt today and it really turned out good. We have been getting all kinds of new clothing lately in order to give us the allotted amount. When we were fighting things were so different and we hardly had anything. Now we have two of everything so if one get dirty, we can have the other cleaned.

As I told you once before, this is British sector so we expect at any time to move. When this come, don't be worried if I don't write because I write as often as possible. I believe it will be southern Germany for awhile, at least until the army gets everything straightened out. Then I just hope I remain there. Oh well, all we can do is wait and see.

We have been getting all kinds of PX rations also both free and bought - so I'm wells stocked up for awhile. Just this afternoon, I was given a can of fruit juice, can of peanuts, cigars, candy, gums, shoe polish, soap and other things I can't remember. So I'm enjoying this kind of life now after the other.

I have just been on guard for an hour which isn't bad at all and now will try and finish this before I go to bed.

It is definite now that we'll be getting two more campaign stars now so that'll raise my points to 59. And there has been talk of all the runners getting a bronze star for efficiency in combat. I doubt if this is true but if so would give me 5 more points. Guess I'm just point crazy but I want to get out of here as quickly as possible and begin my life and live the way I want.

Today I got a package sent out with odds and ends in it. There is a Nazi flag, purple heart, coins, newspapers, booklets, etc. I sent it first class and will probably cost quite a penny. But that is the best way to send it. I bet I've sent over 20 packages since I've been over here and know you have quite a closet full. Some have sent so few that I feel as though the censor must be tired of seeing my name. But this is all for quite awhile because I have nothing left except those films.

My favorite perfume of Lucien LeLong is the type "N." See if you like that best of all or something else. I am so glad I was able to get hold of some because I know how you like good perfume. Do you remember me buying you some good perfume two Christmases ago? I thought it was terrible when I paid nearly 5 dollars an ounce but this is much more expensive, isn't it?

Dad, Miss Martin and Mum and lots of others are telling me about the boat you are building. It sounds like a super-duper one but I bet I'll be sold before I ever get a glimpse of it. But see if you can't keep hold of it because we could have a grand time after the war just the three of us sailing around. It sounds wonderful, don't you think?

Are Coca Colas hard to get now? We had some more in this ration but of course, it doesn't drain off the U.S. supply because it is made right over here. We certainly have been getting more things than we used to. I suppose factories are beginning to produce now.

Today, I've been working very hard trying to get all my equipment straightened out. I made a clean sweep of my duffle bag and threw out things which I hated to. But it isn't like when I was at home and could save all my precious junk! Oh, didn't you hate me having all

that worthless junk around? Now I have everything straightened out and there is about half what I had before I began. Ha!

Last night I went over and saw a movie which is put on for the second armored division in a large theater they have. We and they are mixed together but sort of resent each other. We are not allowed to go to see the movies but we always manage to sneak in somehow. I believe they resent the fact that we outstripped them and got much more publicity than they. A tankner always seems to think he is so much more superior than an infantryman. But where would he be without us?

We got back the helmet liners and they have the division patch, name and grade in bold paint. My name seems to be rubbing off slowly in some strange way. I wonder why! I still maintain that the less who know my name, the better off I am. It looks good to see each man has the 83<sup>rd</sup> patch on but I still say the patch is too morbid looking. Some tell me that a narrow strip is to be added shortly with a thunderbolt above. There are some pretty patches and down in Nice I saw all kinds.

If you haven't already done so, you ought to buy a detailed map of Germany because if I move, I want you to know where I am. Only on good maps are some of the smaller towns such as where we are now.

The doughnut girls were here yesterday but a different bunch came. I had the usual coffee and doughnuts and then headed for the register book. I found two from E. Braintree this time. They were brothers and because I lost the slip on which I had their names, I'll try to tell you their names as best I can. Their last name was Barnes and I believe one was Arthur. They must be together was their names were side by side. I'm sure they aren't in the division, though. That is four persons I've found in the Red Cross registers.

I suppose you might as well keep sending packages. Even if I do go to the Pacific it'll follow me. So why don't you take a chance and send some? I don't believe I'll be leaving for quite awhile. That is just my opinion but of course, not even the army knows.

Every time I begin to write to you, I make up a list of all things, I want to a\say because as I'm writing I often forget what I want to say. Maybe doing it this way is foolish but I know I write a much longer letter this way.

So often, when I see flowers, I try to identify them and can do it in most cases! It is because I worked with you so much. Mum, and have gotten to know a flower when I see it. So few can do this it seems but all it is is little experience.

Yesterday, I and two other buglers were sent back to regiment to find which one was best for the Memorial Day services tomorrow. A major and Lt. Colonel were the judges while we played taps and they decided all three were good. But one fellow was to play in the band tomorrow so they picked him because he'd be right there. I don't mind, though, because my lip isn't what it should be. I haven't touched a trumpet for over a year so my lip is pretty well shot.

Guess I had better get to bed now because I am on C.P. duty tomorrow. The runners take turns staying all day at the C.P. and does all the errands, sort of like an errand boy. I really will be glad when I can get out of this army because I haven't learned a thing sweeping rooms and doing errands!

Good night dear parents and may God bless you both. With all my love, Harold  
P.S. I had this extra envelope so am using it to get rid of it. But please send me a few more stamps.

#Father's Day card Postmarked June 1, 1945 (no location)

This seems to be the only card I could find that is halfway suitable. This is a combination Father's and birthay card. You are the bett dad a son could ask for and I am

sorry I never realized the truth of things before I did. I hope you will be spry a good many more birthdays. Em said you are spry and so full of mischief so I know you are still the same. It is some much better to have an active father than some I have seen. I think a great deal of you. Your loving son, Harold

#June 1, 1945 (Saltzgitter, Germany).

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here it is June and a year ago I was in England. I joined the 83<sup>rd</sup> on June 4, two days before D-day and some who came overseas with me joined the 30<sup>th</sup> and landed on D-day. So I really got a much better break than many and came in when there was an opening. When replacements came to us in France, they all came as rifleman. So I really have no room to complain. But I hate to go to the Pacific and hope I stay here for a long time before I go. Once, I was worried about this theater of operations and now it is the other. Oh, won't it be a blessed day when it is all over.

I never told you much about the company itself. We started out with Capt. Graves but he was a nervous wreck in a short time and then we had a new captain (don't know his name) for two week. He was wounded at St. Malo so the executive officer took over and in one day he was a nervous case. Then Captain (left blank) came to us and took charge until the Hurtgen Forest where he was wounded. Within 24 hours we had three company commanders - the one I just mentioned, the executive officer who was wounded almost immediately and Capt. Packer who has been our captain ever since. So you can see the huge turnover in just one position (company commander). We had the same first sgt. up to the Hurtgen and many were glad to see him go. He was so rough and tough when the going was easy but he was almost a coward when it got tough. We had a new one and he has been with us ever since. I like him so well and think he can't be beat. His name is Sgt. Nordoff.

Yesterday I received a letter dated May 25 so it came in pretty good time. Now if only the mail would speed up on your end it would be just fine. I'm glad at last that those pictures are finally straightened out and I'll never get you into such a mess again. Guess I'll take pictures for my own benefit now because all the fellows have cameras of their own. Gilbert and I took each others picture the other day under the Nazi flag so I'll try and get them developed as soon as possible. I still haven't heard from the master sergeant back at division about the film I sent him but I suppose he has been busy cleaning up work.

I saw a joke one day which said the Russians are fighting for their lives, the English for their homes, and the Americans for souvenirs. And how true. We are the biggest bunch of souvenir collectors I ever saw and what I've sent home is small compared to some fellows. Did you ever price that Leica motor and lens which I asked. If they can be bought reasonable back home, there is no sense in my bothering to lug them around. All I have now are those camera parts and some stamps.

A quartering party has left recently and is going to southern Germany (Austria?) to prepare for us moving down there. The British are moving in this sector so we are going down to our own sector. If rumors have it right, we'll be in a large town a few miles north of Vienna but of course rumors are usually not right. But I know we'll be in Austria near Czechoslovakia from good sources. I'm glad it is in that direction rather than down to the coast to a P.O.E. Probably down there we'll be all broken up into three groups - those going home, those going to the Pacific, and those remaining as occupation.

Yesterday we got paid the usual money and I got the usual amount \$28.60. But at present I have \$78 in my wallet so will have to send some home. It is such a nuisance trying to get money home that I'd almost rather keep it. What a bunch.

I'll be enclosing more stamps and will send a few in each letter. Guess when I get home I'll have to start on stamps again and will buy a more modern stamp album. The one Eric gave me only went up to 1935 and a good many new stamps have been made since then. I have been sending quite a few since I've been over here. We "liberate" all kinds of things like that.

They had Memorial Day services at regiment two days ago but I couldn't go because I was at the C.P. acting as runner. The fellows who went said it was very nice. I got a schedule from one of them so will send it to you before long.

All the tables in the house are all decorated up because Greene went out and picked the large bouquets and doesn't the room smell nice. I certainly like flowers because it seems to cheer things up.

Mum, I never realized you lost so much weight over worrying about me. You shouldn't be running your health over me. I know how you love me but just trust in the good Lord. I'm glad you're up again. No one told me about you so they probably didn't want me to worry.

I believe I'll go to the movies this afternoon because there is a pretty good picture playing. I really haven't told you a thing in this letter but have just been rambling on about nothing.

I think so much of you both and can hardly wait before I return home. Army life is made for some but not for me. God bless you, dear parents. With all my love., Harold

#June 2, 1945, Salzgitter, Germany (no envelope)

Dear Mum and Dad,

I am starting this letter but don't expect to get too far because I have to go on guard shortly. There is very little mail coming in now but I did get a letter from Em with more crossword puzzles. Gilbert helps me quite often but I still know more words than he. We have also tried the vocabulary in "Reader's Digest" together and I have always beaten him. Boy! Those words are really difficult and know very few. But Mum, I know you'd know then all because I never knew a person who had a bigger fling of worlds. I certainly am proud of you both and am glad you know something and can use your head. Why some children know much more than the parents but I don't.

Yesterday I received a letter from you #52. I really can't remember if I wrote yesterday so in parts I may repeat myself. So now I've received all letters up to #53 and waiting anxiously for the next one. I hope Dad will be able to get some kind of work because I know how he hates to loaf. Right, Dad? Don Hunter had nothing to do with sending you that corsage because I had had it ordered one month before you told me about him. So please, don't feel that way. At first it was difficult for me to make up my mind as what to send you. But rather than send a bouquet of flowers I sent the corsage so you could show it off instead of keeping it in the house where very few would see. I want people to know that I think of my mother very highly.

The perfume I'm sending is the real Lucien Lelong perfume so I hope it arrives safely. All together I sent six small bottles and two large ones so you ought to have plenty. I understand a drop last a very long time. I never put any perfume on your letter unless someone did by accident. There was so much floating around that it was over everyone and everything. Some of the fellows did put some on and it remained on the letters. Before the new ruling came out about three months ago, there was much looting of packages by mail personnel. But now it is so different and the chances are very slim. It used to be that we would put the name of the articles outside the package but now we turn in a list on a separate paper. So now the packages go through without revealing its contents.

I wish you would save this envelope because it is so unusual. I guess the postal authorities must have run short of six cent airmails the way we have been using them. Very few send them (letters) any other way because even though they claim not, first class and even V-mail is much slower by almost a week a good many times. I'm enclosing a few more stamps so that will add to the collection. I also sent some to Em and she'll turn them over to you as with the negatives. Have you ever gotten the negatives from Betty? And I sent a set to Miss Martin and I believe another to Em but am not sure. I'll have to tell you how I happened to get hold of these. The owner of the house in which we are living now and for the past two weeks used to come in every morning to tidy up the place and get the cigarette butts which were left in the ash trays. That was alright with all of us until some of our PX rations such as candy, gum, cigarettes, etc. and even small articles of clothing began to disappear. We suspected him but could not prove anything until Gilbert caught him red-handed. Then we kicked him out. We were all plenty mad so in order to have him pay for my share, I took some of the stamps in payment. He seems to have quite a collect but I didn't take too many even though it might seem so. These Germans aren't going to outsmart us Americans, I'll have you know. This is a long drawn out story but to understand, I had to tell you everything.

The English have almost completed taking over this sector so we are ready to move. We expect it in about ten days. Some of the Americans seem to be getting along very well with them. But there are some who despise them and call them no good. But all who I have talked to, Americans, I mean, who have fought close to the British say they are good fighters and will give them credit. But I've notice that those who hate them the most are Italian fellows. And to me, they are cowards and will stab anyone in the back the way they did to Ethiopia. But they joined the wrong side and it serves them right to have their country in such a plight.

I believe I told you I have been in Hameln. It is on the Weser River and is the home of the Pied Piper. And I have been in the Harz Mts. As I have said which is noted for it imaginary witches and were wolves. There is Bad Harzburg there is a tramway like up in the White Mts. and was running for the benefit of the soldiers. But I never got a chance to go. This tramway was old when the one in New Hampshire was new. When I get home and hear of places I have been It'll mean more than just a name as it has in the past. When a person has been there it takes on a different meaning.

Continued. 7 a.m., June 3

I forgot today was Sunday and that breakfast was at 8 instead of seven as usual. So I will see if I can get some of this letter written in this time. I've been waking up almost each morning by myself so I must have enough sleep. When I haven't had enough ,it is terribly hard to arouse me.

Yesterday some maps came in put out by the XIX Corps of which we were a part of ever since the Roer crossing. It tells about three divisions in particular, 29, 30, 83 and 2 armored divisions. This shows more on a large scale what was going on and I suppose if Army put one out, it would show it larger yet.

I know you'd like to get it and am trying to find some cardboard so I can mail it in rather than bend it.

It is going to be a beautiful day so it looks but I've seen days when it [started] clear and rained all day long. Yesterday was nice too so I took some pictures of the Herman Goring steel plant in the distance – the largest Germany had. What a huge territory it covers. I also took a picture of Lt. Col. Norris sitting in a jeep as he was posing for someone else. And I took a picture of Colonel Foster near his touring car as he was coming out of the

C.P. This was un-posed but action. What a car and the regimental and division insignias show up as big as life on the front fender.

The full colonel pulled a surprise inspection on the company and of all places had to come here. Well, thank goodness, we cleaned up the place before hand or else!! But I had to laugh at Schaub. He was downstairs lying down but not asleep. When he heard the lieutenant yell attention, Schaub paid no attention because he thought one of us was joking with him. But when he saw Col. Foster, his face turned all colors and he flew up. Nothing was said, thank goodness. And just a second before he popped into our room I got Swett up who was sound asleep. Anyway, the only thing wrong was that Swett didn't have his bed made and Greene hadn't hung up his clothes. But what excitement for awhile and wasn't my stomach beating fast.

I have only Mr. Marsell to answer so must get a letter written. He and his wife have certainly gone through a very trying time and nothing could have pulled Kolin short of God Himself. It really doesn't seem miraculous at all when we put our entire faith in Him.

I saw another movie yesterday afternoon, one which I saw back in Braintree. It was called "Best Foot Forward": with Lucille Ball and isn't she a redhead. I like redheads, maybe because they remind me of you, Mother dear. Lately I've seen more movies than all totaled since I've been over here.

I tried to print a few negatives but for some reason can't seem to get it the way I want. I was using another fellow's equipment. This German stuff must be old because very little comes out much good. I have seen very few decent prints but good developing. If only I knew I was to stay here, I'd have you send me some equipment which I know Peggy could scrape up. Did you ever give her the note I sent? Or did I get things mixed up and forget to enclose it? We have relied on her quite a bit lately.

I need a new wristwatch band and I have heard of a German who makes them near here for 15 cents and they are done excellently – no cheap job. So I'll have to hunt him up and get it done. This German watch certainly has been working good and has never stopped for a second.

Yesterday morning we had all the fresh eggs we could eat and did it taste good. After not having fresh eggs for quite a time, they taste fine. I always get up for breakfast while some like to sleep that time away. But when they heard there was fresh eggs, all jumped out of bed and almost ran for the kitchen, but was too late for a good many.

Well, it is almost eight so I'll close now and get some breakfast. I ran this letter a little longer than I expected

. May God bless you and keep both of you. With all my love, Harold

#June 4, 1945. Salzgitter, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

I just fell like writing tonight so had better while I'm in the mood. I know you won't mind at all. A letter came today #54 dated May 28 and from the way you talk, the mail seems to be going through so very slow. I wonder myself why my Nice letters were censored. It seems as though the nearer the front lines, the more lenient they are aer. After all this fighting, the officers seem to be treating us so much better than when in the states and aren't as strict. Most of th officers dread to go to the Pacific too because they've had enough After all they are human I suppose.

So Joe Trott is in the Ruhr district. I caught ou spelling it wrong. Check up on Ruhr, I'm almost sure you spelled it Rhur. Anyway, I knew he was in that section because after the Nazis were trapped in this district, the 75<sup>th</sup> and other divisions mopped up while some of us pushed on toward Berlin.

You want a little more information about the purple heart and the bronze combat stars. I believe I told you all about them in letters before this but will repeat. I received the P.H. at La Barre, Normandy, France (July 17, 1944) for a "contusion: of the right hip. I believe that is how you spell it and means scrape or bruise.

According to the "Thunderbolt" which I'll be sending, I am entitled to five combat stars. So now I am wearing five which just barely fit on. I'd much rather wear that than one silver star because this way it looks like more. Ha! There isn't very much news in the division paper lately because we haven't been doing anything but I know you'll enjoy looking anyway.

I finally went down to a village near here and had a man make a new wrist watch band. He made it with good leather in two hours and charge me only 15 cents. If I have it done in Nice as I wanted to at first, they would have charged me all out and the leather would have been no good. The band runs around the wrist entirely and the watch itself is set on top. Like this (diagram). That will give you the idea and it is a clever way. One day, I finally go the back off and there plenty of jewels in it so I got a bargain when I took that from a prisoner way back in St. Malo.

I notice one habit the Germans have, all I mean, is to shake hands when they meet. Every time they see each other, it is shake hands. And the French go in for kissing on both cheeks. It seems as though each nation has a different custom when greeting. We in the States seem so formal after seeing these people in these countries.

Schaub seems to be getting all kinds of packages lately and with all the ones that you and Em have sent, I haven't had one in so long. They should be getting to me before too long. At least I hope so. Talking about food, we've been having some fairly good meals lately and have had steak. It tastes fine but oh, isn't it tough.

A couple days ago I picked some tight rose buds and brought them in the house. They are in water now and are almost full. The room really smells so nice when you first come in. I have five kinds and maybe you could tell what they are. One is a real yellow, a pale pink, red and yellow, medium red, and a deeper red but not as deep as pale scarlet. There is something about the aroma that almost enhances me. Maybe I am talking foolishness it seems so nice after the battlefields. What stench in Normandy when we first entered combat about 5 miles south of Carentan. Dead cows had been laying by the roadside and what an odor. It was awful until we got used to it and then we didn't mind. Well, all of this is over and I'm none the worse due to our God bringing me through safely.

Today I got a new pay book which isn't used for paying us within our own outfit but if we get separated and want to get paid, somewhere else. It tells what allotments are taken out insurance, etc. I have been carrying an old pay book, but all my allotments, etc have been changed.

Yesterday I helped John Ellis out, the one who they say looks something like me. I did some printing for him on a report which had to be turned into regiment. The lieutenant saw it and thought it was done so well that he wanted me to help interview the men in headquarters co. and fill out a form on each man. It had to do with education and occupations so it really was difficult to answer in parts. We had a separate sheet on which were about 50 subjects which are to be taught in the battalion. And each man had to pick out three. What other schooling would you like? Actual education? What jobs you had before the war. What job after the war? Etc. I said I'd like to attend a college in the E.T.O. because there was one question about that. I still would not mind taking up an extended photography course while I'm waiting to go either to the C.B.I. or home.

Things are happening around here and we aren't moving for awhile. It is rumored we're in the 3<sup>rd</sup> army now so I don't know what they means. But I certainly hope we stay in

the E.T.O. for a long time - until after the Jap war. Guess I'm just unpatriotic by not wanting to go there.

There really isn't much to say right now so will close now. Good night dear parents. May God bless you and keep you safely. With all my love, Harold

P.S. Please send me candy ,cookies, gum, nuts, etc. as I'd like them very much.

#June 6, 1945, Salzgitter, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Today is a holiday because of the invasion of France so we didn't have breakfast until 8 this morning instead of seven. It certainly is a day to remember and I was in Wales one year ago today. So much has happened since then and I have done much traveling. .

The mail is coming through very poorly now but probably will get better soon. I had an old letter from Miss Grant come yesterday along with some literature which she has sent before. She has been quite nice to me, in fact all who write to me steadily are nice. By the way, would you send me some more stationery as what I have is getting quite low. But please send me only the smaller box by first class and not the larger one. Last time, you sent one of each and I had so much paper I had to throw out other things in order to carry it. I know I'll have enough left if you send it first class right away. Take the chance and keep sending packages because it is possible I may remain here. Who knows? And I wish you would buy one each of the Roosevelt stamps that are coming out soon. Guess I'll revive my stamp collection and you'll see why after all the stamps get to you. I'll have quite a collection after this is all over.

Did you ever tell Mr. Painten about having a Leica now? I wonder if he still has his Argus or has gotten another. Please find out and give me all details. I was looking through a book which had all the German cameras in it. According to that, the camera I have (you have now) is worth about \$125 so it must be pretty good. Have you heard anything about it yet?

Today I made a little money pressing clothes and standing an hour's guard. In all, I made \$5.50 so that is pretty good. I made a money order out today for \$28 so now I have nearly \$50 left. But I believe I'll keep hold of it for awhile just in case something comes up. I was looking over my bank account in one letter you wrote - I read your letters over about 20 times - and am mighty proud of it, thanks to you. You have been so generous, especially Dad. Maybe before I get out, I'll be able to hit \$5,000 which would be quite a start. I realize I'm so fortunate and you don't have to tell me. Johnson has about \$300 saved and thinks he has a mint. I saw in the Herald that Mass. plans to give each veteran \$500 to \$1000 and the U.S. government is trying to get up some bonus bill. So that will add up, eh? By the way, how much do I draw on the money in the bank. This letter seems to be more questioning than telling anything. But there is so little to say tonight for some reason. Usually I can scrape up something to say when no one else can. They certainly are puzzled as to what I write and they'll never find out because my letters are personal.

The weather has been very strange today and has been raining and cleaning all day long. I really have been taking very few pictures lately because things of interest are too far to walk. So I'll wait until I get into the new area. We were to move yesterday but was called off for some reason and now we'll go in a couple of days. So if you don't hear for a couple of days, don't be surprised.

Guess I'll close this letter because of two things Firstly, I have nothing to say and secondly it is beginning to dark and we have no electricity tonight because of the electrical storm we had today. It just pelted for awhile.

Keep up your chin and pray often not only for me but the thousands of others who are in my fix. May God bless you my dear parents. With all my love, Harold

#June 8, 1945, Salzgitter, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here it is time to write again and with nothing to write about. Anyway I'll try my best and see if I can say something.

The mail has stopped completely now and none is coming in. The division A.P.O. has moved to the new area where we will be going shortly so then we'll get it all. The mail has been coming through so well lately and now this happens. If we had only moved June 4 as we were supposed to but the trucks were late getting here. I understand we will be within 50 miles of Regensburg which is southeast of Nurnenberg. So maybe I'll have a chance to see the blue Danube.

There have been a good many places I've seen that I never expected to so nothing surprises me now. I\* believe we'll be moving in the next couple of days so then I'll get all the letters. I was talking to a couple of the truck drivers who are to take us there and they said they were in the 1st army but now in the 3<sup>rd</sup>. They belong to ack-ack (anti-aircraft) unit and have been through Africa, Sicily, etc. so most have over 100 points. They expect to be discharged shortly but were taken out of the first army. So that means, I hope, that we aren't in that army and as a result will stay in Europe much longer. Anyway, he (the driver) said that all old outfits are being put in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and that is where we're going. So the situation looks so much better. But, of course, anything can happen.

I am wondering if you ever got those things I sent from Nice. I hope you get them, especially the photos. If more than three people would like pictures maybe you could have a negative made. If you do this, would you please send me a small print to see if it made up any better than White's. That picture might look good in the larger size but is too artificial in the smaller. Probably no one will want a print so don't do it just for me. Keep taking pictures once in awhile of yourselves and the neighbors and everything. If there is no 620 film, try to use the Leica. The trouble is that you're afraid of it. There is a general rule for fine days. With a film speed of 24, expose 1/25 sec. at f12.7, or f16 and film speed of 50, expose 1'50 sec. at f12.9 (greater than sign) or f16. Simple! I wish you would try it and not let it scare you. How about it, Dad? You're not going to let a little camera get the best of you!! I finished a roll yesterday so now will see if I can get it developed. I hope I can get a good job done! I called up that master sgt. at division a couple of a ago to find out how he is progressing with the film. He claimed he hadn't even started because of so much work. But when we get to the new area, things would be better and he'd have a chance. So I'm waiting very patiently and will get them home as soon as possible.

It is only 10 o'clock a.m. now so I'm rather clever today. I had breakfast at 7 and then walked about a mile and took a nice long shower. So I feel good this morning. All I hope is that it doesn't get too hot today. Yesterday was a scorcher and was quite muggy. Everyone did as little moving around as possible. But by evening it clouded up and we had a terrible thunder storm. And rain!! I had to run around to close all the windows as I used to do at home. The fellows were too lazy and didn't care if everything got wet. I can't figure them out because when I try to help them out, they tell me to mind my own business. And when I don't help, they jump on me and ask why I don't help out a friend. It is strange, but the only two I really care for, Gilbert and Swett, are the only ones who finished high school. The rest hardly finished grammar.

All in all, we get along very nicely but sometimes something that happens gripes me. I don't mean to say that I don't get along with them but I believe you know what I mean.

One thing that aggravated me was the way they reacted when you sent those pictures. They didn't think there was enough pictures of themselves. and the two you are having sets made for now are the only ones that really thought it was very nice of you to do that for them. Oh, well, I won't be in this army forever.

The night before last, I got off guard at midnight so cooked myself a few potatoes as I was terribly hungry .I ate a good many and munched on raw carrots at the same time. So I had a real feast. Potatoes taste good with just salt when I'm hungry. If only we had some fat, we'd have plenty of french fries but we can't seem to get hold of any. Yesterday they had chocolate pie and it was so good I went back for seconds. I'm a good friend of the mess sgt., because he is a camera fiend and he let me have another piece.. It's all in knowing how, eh!

Last night I saw a movie again called "Girl Rush." It was a type I really enjoyed with comedy, music, and excitement. Guess I'll have o go today and see what is up there. For two days I didn't go because I had seen the picture before.

Guess this will be all and wrote more than I thought when I first started. Please don't' worry to much because thing so don't look too bad.

May God bless you and keep you both. With all my love, Harold  
P.S. I'm sending the stamps all ways. Some first class and some airmail with just stamps alone.

#June 11, 1945, Rohrbach, Austria (actually it should be Germany)

Dear Mother and Dad,

As you can see, we have at last moved after waiting for it two weeks. You will find this town 15 miles due nirth of Passau which is a large place at the junction of the Danube and Inn (on the map I am using). I you cannot find Passau, then Linz and follow the Danube upstream for about 50 miles and you'll find it. We are really in the hills now and I believe they are the foot hills of the Bavarian Alps. I am only relying on my geography which I took in the eighth grade.

We certainly did quite a bit of traveling in order to get there and we were all worn out. But after a good night sleep I was fine again. You never saw so many people with red eyes – almost as though w e were crying. It was only due to the wind blowing in our faces all day long. And my skin was wind burnt. But as I said, I fine today. We arrived in this area just before dark last night so was able to get houses without stumbling around in the dark as it is sometimes.

I'll name a few places we came through on our way down so you can follow. We started from Salzgitter, over to Wernigerode, Blauenburg, Quedlingburg, Alchersleben, down to Eisleben (near Halle), Nurnburg, and then over to the super highway. We traveled down that until we hit Bayreuth. There were a couple places on this highway we had to bypass because of blown-out bridge and what roads we took. There were Germany's secondary roads and were no wider than a little old country lane. We passed the 3th Division coming down and I believe that they have been announced as occupation. Sam Harris is in that on, one of the fellows I took basic training with. From Bayreuth, Amberg, Schwandorf, Cham, Regen and then followed down to the town where we are in now. This particular town has been pretty well burned out except at one end where we are. I have a very nice room and couldn't ask for better. The S.S. troopers burned their own towns because the people put up surrender flags. They really must fanatics when they do it to their own people. Most people around here have little love for the S.S. men.

We won't remain in this town very long though because we are relieving the fifth division which is homeward bound. They have been overseas a long time and most men have well over 85 points. So we are only waiting for them to move so we can move into their

towns and take over. The one we'll take over is only 10 miles from here. One of our companies is on the Czech border patrolling and the other three are doing various things.

Before I forget it, we are definitely in the third army so if the 9<sup>th</sup> is announced it is Pacific bound, remember I'm not there any more. I don't know too much but heard the 9<sup>th</sup> is going and I don't know if we are to stay as occupation. But for the time being, we'll be here. At least it'll be that much longer time it'll take me to get to the Pacific, if I'm to go. I told you that the English took over our section where we were and now I heard the Russians are to take over. So everyone has been there for a short time. I had to laugh at our fellows. They were always saying how the English were no good but I noticed that they were talking to the English and inviting them to their house. The British draw liquor rations and, of course, that was what our fellows were after. A slick bunch.

Tonight I hope to have some mail as more has come in for almost a week. It was all being sent down here. So I hope to have plenty tonight.

The scenery was beautiful all the way down – from flat ground to these half mountains. As I am writing, I can look way down the valley and see large mts. with clouds around them. There are almost all softwood trees here and mostly pasture land. But where the valleys are quite level, there are large farms. All the way down, I took pictures so will try to get them developed so you can see what it is like. As I said one other time, all the roads are lined with some sort of tree and quite often fruit trees. For about 100 miles all we saw were cherries and every time the trucks stopped to give us a short rest, the driver would pull his truck up under a tree and let us go to it. Boy, I had a bunch of cherries but still could have eaten more. The fellows in the truck behind us were cursing a blue streak because every time they stopped, it was under one with green cherries and by the time they got over to where we were, the cherries were all gone.

On the super highway I saw something which was a sight to behold. As far as the eye could see on both sides, there were carpets of delphiniums growing wild. When I saw them, I thought of you and how you'd love some. There were white, blue and an awful lot of purple. At home you never saw anything like it. and these were the giant type.

By the way, would you send me more ink even though I won't need it right away. But I don't want to have to use this foreign stuff after what it did to my pen. I only filled it once with that and it was almost two months before the pen wrote the way it should. It writes perfectly now and I wouldn't trade my pen for the most expensive one. And don't forget to send me some stationery first class as I'll need some before too long.

The girls down here have a wonderful natural complexion and not the artificial type like in France. It is probably such a healthy climate. I believe in all the countries I have been in, these are the nicest looking. I know what you'll say – he is learning fast! All I do is look though and what harm is in that. And the girls here have such beautiful hair – well kept and mostly blonde or light brown.

This morning I outlined the division patch in gold thread so it really stands out now. Guess I'll have to start swearing the Eisenhower jacket as it is called – replaces a dress blouse. Everyone wants me to sew theirs like that but it took me nearly four hours because the stitches had to be so close together. I seem to be able to do so much more than a good many. Some are so helpless. I can sew, use a sewing machine, press clothes and other things. Of course, I have only you, Mum, to thank for that. You might not have showed me how to sew but I used to watch.

This will be all for now as I can't think of too much to say right now. May God bless such good parents as I have. With all my love, Harold

#June 12, 1945, Rohnbach, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

I feel more in the mood for writing this afternoon than I did yesterday. So I'll see if I can write one today. First of all, I had one letter from you written June 4 and was so glad to get that after so many days of not having mail. Out of all the sacks, I only got one letter while most averaged five or six. But I suppose the missing two will be along shortly. Every once in awhile I miss a letter and they get to me sooner or later. I will say that we had excellent mail service while in the 9th army and they all came in order. I believe of all the armies we have been in, the 9th army was the best. Better mail service, better food, in fact better all around. Now you know how I felt when those Frenchmen promised those films I had developed on a certain date and then they weren't ready. It certainly makes me boil when that happens. And now I'm getting rather impatient for those Nice pictures which that fellow at division is developing. If he doesn't return them soon I'll call up and tell him to return them. I hope you were able to get them from Mr. Painten and let that place print them for you. I'm so glad you were able to find a place that does such fine work. Alves would never compare to that. I believe since the war began, Alves has lowered its standards by hiring all girls. These girls don't seem to know their work as the men did who used to work there. Work is being passed by an inspector that I would absolutely refuse. If ever you have work done there and it doesn't suit you, make them do it over if the negatives look good.

When I wrote yesterday, I made a couple of mistakes as to where we are. We are still in Germany (Province of Bavaria) and not Austria as I said. We are only 15 miles from Austria and 25 miles from Czechoslovakia so we are right in the corner. And I thought we were in the foothills but we are Bavarian Alps which aren't nearly as high or rugged as the Swiss or Austrian Alps. When I spell Alps, I'm not sure if that is correct or Alps. One in French spelling and once in awhile I get the two confused But I'm almost sure Alps is right after all. Anyway, you know what I mean. Once in awhile, I have even caught a small mistake of yours.

Gilbert found out today that all the runners names have been turned in for a bronze star, definitely for meritorious service. But of course, it has to go through all the channels and has to be approved. I'm not counting my points before they're hatched because these bronze stars might not be approved. But if I do get one and those extra two combat stars, I'll have a total of 4 points so I'll be getting closer to the 85.

This morning I bought a \$25 war bond to help out the seventh war loan And also to get that surplus money I have on hand. It takes too much explanation and too much time to get a money order made out for an amount over \$28 in my case so thought this was a good way of doing it. One boy won so much money in poker games, he bought two hundred dollars worth of bonds. I still haven't collected eleven dollars from one of the company cooks but when I do, I'll put more into bonds because I'll have more than I can possibly spend. I don't expect to go very far after just having that furlough. I still have almost \$27 in my wallet plus the \$11 that is owed me so guess I'll get another \$25 bond. There always seems to be some way of getting around an order just as in this case. I am having a \$28 money order made but it'll probably take almost a month before I get it back because so many people have to check on it to make sure we aren't sending too much.

Yesterday we got more PX rations and this time we didn't pay. Some we pay for and some we don't. Cigarettes were really getting as scarce as hens teeth so most were glad to get the rations. Cigarettes are getting so much scarce and everyone is smoking them down further than usual. I told Swett I'd have to get him a tooth pick so he can get more out of a cigarette. I bet at home, they are precious possessions to those who smoke. All I got were some chocolate bars and gum so I wasn't too anxious to get the ration. Thank goodness I

don't smoke because then I don't have to worry about the cigarettes. My shares are divided between the runners.

I notice that a good many houses around here are of Apine style, low house with slightly peaked roof and wide eaves. You have seen pictures of them in magazines. They are probably designed like that because of snow storms. I never saw such a bunch of children. They seem perfectly healthy and yet if we give them the leftovers at meals, they snatch at them like vulture and eat greedily. Some of the boys have told me that for one small bar of chocolate, any child will give us two eggs. We would much rather have the eggs than chocolate.

As yet, I haven't heard whether you have received any more of my packages, especially my portraits and the perfume. But it takes time as we have found out. And I'm quite anxious to get some more packages to see what you have sent. For some reason the stationary fold never has come yet. But probably will before long.

All that Germany money which I sent home which was printed after 1923 is good. I have found out. I sent home quite a bit of it but don't want it. I thought it was worthless at the time but the same is happening here as in France - the people will accept both invasion money and their own. Money dealings sometime seem so complicated when it has to do with whole countries.

The day before we came down here, I saw the movie "Roger Toughy" who was a famous gangster. Do you remember? I was surprised to find the picture lasted only one hour instead of 1½ to 1 hours as usual. Anyway that was the last movie I expect to see for quite awhile. Our regiment doesn't put on as many movies as the second armored did.

Does that little world atlas give you a detailed map of Germany? I hope you have something so you can follow where I am. All this area is catholic so we won't be using any more churches as we have done in the past. Max Haber's home - Vienna - isn't too far from here but I don't believe he'll ever go back. And we have another fellow who is not a Jew who came only 30 miles from here. You'd be surprised how many Germans and Austrians we have in the battalion.

I see the Yankee Division - 26<sup>th</sup> Div. is around here and I believe I remember you telling me that Donald Harter (GRAMMAR SCHOOL FRIEND) was in it. Maybe you could get his address and if he isn't far could hunt him up. And I wonder what and where Donald Hunter (GRAMMAR SCHOOL FRIEND) is going. Quite a lot of the 9<sup>th</sup> Army anti-aircraft were preparing for the Pacific. So I am just wondering if he is among that bunch or was transferred to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and down here. He was as close to me as 330<sup>th</sup> regimental hdqs. But didn't know that it was my outfit until it was too late. The mail clerk here saw his brother a few days ago and go permission because his brother was Pacific bound. He must have been in some sort of supply outfit or he wouldn't go this quickly. So are I've only heard about four infantry division Pacific bound and they saw very little combat. As a matter of fact, the 9<sup>th</sup> relieved us at Neuss so we could continue the push into Germany.

Well I wrote seven sheets in two days so I'm not doing badly at all. This will be all for now because I want to get it out in today's mail if possible.

May God bless you wonderful people. With all my lov, Harold

#June 13, 1945, Rohrback, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here I am writing another letter tonight but don't expect this to be very long. Most important of all I want to tell you that I'll be going back to E company in a week or two as a bugler because orders have now come down for each company to have bugle calls. And as you know, I am it and so will go back. So please change the address again and tell Em and

Miss Martin because you are the only three who were writing direct to headquarters. I don't mind going back to the company because we are runners got the raw end of some deals because we were not in this company. A bugler in garrison as we will be is a racket. The reason I won't be going back right away is because we aren't quite set up the way we should be. I told you that the 83<sup>rd</sup> is waiting for the 5<sup>th</sup> division to move out and then we'll take their place and set up. Now don't forget to tell the other to change too.

I'll list my points up to the present so you'll know where I get them all. This will include two combat stars and one bronze star which I'm not sure if we'll get. 17 months service = 17, 12 months overseas = 12, 5 combat stars = 25, 1 purple heart = 5, 1 bronze star = 5. That makes a total of 65 so I'm getting closer. I saw in last night's paper that the critical score might be lower soon. The way it spoke, a new score would come out every so often and each man would total his points up to a certain new date and if he had enough he would be discharged. If not enough points he would stay in until a new score is announced. So now in order to get 85 if I get what I said I might, I'll only need less than 1 year more overseas – 10 months.

The dentist was around to this battalion hdq. today because he is filling men's teeth and will for a few days. So I went to him and want to get a little more work done. I found a couple of cavities between my teeth so want them taken care of. All in all, my teeth are fairly good and my front teeth are as good as ever. It is only between my back teeth that I have trouble. And sooner or later I want two of my wisdom teeth pulled because they are diseased and there is no use filling them. I expected him to get very pert but was surprised that he was very descent. So he is to call me in soon. I told him not to forget or I'd come in again and he commented that he couldn't forget me. I told him as long as I need work done, I was coming until it was done. There is no sense in letting my teeth go after all the work that has been put into them. My back teeth might be poor but as long as the front stay good and the fillings don't show, it will be satisfied.

So poor old Gert Spinney is going into the Waves. She certainly used to chase after me and I am glad she gave up.

Last evening, I received the two missing letters written May 30 and June 2 so have them all now. I was so pleased to hear that you received those portraits at last. I knew you would find me looking older because some commented that in that picture. I looked older than I really do. As I said before, if many people want my picture you could have a negative made. If you do this send me one print to see how it comes out. Hope it is better than the one taken at White's. I'm so glad that you liked the handkerchief so well because I thought it was so beautiful. You certainly will have a great many nice things when all that perfume gets home. If you have too much, maybe you could give Em some but don't give anything but "Elle-Elle." The other small bottles are much better. Two years ago, I bet you never thought you'd have what you have now.

Today I made a bargain with my first sergeant and told him he could collect from that fellow who owes me \$10 for that pistol, I sold him, I'd send \$8.75 more and buy a bond. The companies are trying to help out this seventh war loan. I believe I told you that I sold a pistol to an E co. cook for \$10 and haven't seen him yet to collect. I have a pistol myself which I found. I understand we can bring them home and this is such a nice little one. But I have no ammunition at all so can't use it. If I had had to pay for it, I wouldn't have bothered but someone handed it to me. So when the sergeant collects I'll have \$50 worth of bonds.

I read that a new stamp is coming out next month honoring the marines with a picture of the famous flag raising and I wish you'd buy one. Maybe you could a few new stamps once in a while if I'm going to continue my stamp collection when I get home. Guess I'll buy a new stamp book because the one I have is too old now with the new stamps I've

sent home. Guess I plan to do too much after the war but at least I have plans and many have no idea what they are going to do either as work or pleasure. I believe I'm too much of an idealist dreamer because I like to daydream about doing this and that. If I can find those few stamps I have left, I'll enclose them in this letter.

Believe it or not, guess what I'm reading - Shakespeare's plays. And am enjoying them so much more than in high school. I really ask for trouble, don't I? One of hqs. men had it so I borrowed it to see if I could understand it any better. Much to my surprise I can very well. Guess it is because I'm older and my mind is a little more mature. (I seem to be talking foolish now!!)

What crazy weather around these mountains. First it is as nice as can be and then five minutes later it seems as though the heavens just opened. But this is probably the season and just hope it doesn't keep up like this because one never knows what to wear. Anyway it is so much better than combat so I can't complain. All I can do is thank the good Lord for bringing me through safely.

Last night I did quite a bit of work pressing my clothes because they were so messed up after the trip. We have been carrying an iron along so whenever we wanted pressed clothes, we could have them. So now I look much more neat than I did.

I got a laugh out of one of the fellows in some ways but it disgusted me in others. He claimed when we were filling out those educational-occupational blanks that an education was kid's stuff. He is only a hill-billy so can't understand why he said that and I know he'll never amount to anything in civilian life. What about an engineer? He must have an education. The same way with other occupations. Some boys act so stupid at times it seems. Especially those hill-billies.

I have some red hot news and believe it to be true. I understand we will be here for at least two months before this re-deployment begins. So that means it'll take that much longer to go to the Pacific. As you said, I'd rather stay away from home a little longer if it means it'll take me longer to go to the Pacific.

And I believe that all surplus men are to be transferred soon. But at least I'm not surplus so don't have to worry about that order.

There really isn't so much to say but in three days I wrote eleven sheets so that is pretty good, eh!

Guess I'll close now because I have to go on guard before too long. God be with you good parents and may He bless you. Harold

P.S. Please send me a package of candy, gum, cookies, and anything else I might like.

#June 15, 1945. Rohnback, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Time to get busy again and write because I don't like to let your writing go unless it cannot be helped. Last evening while we were eating supper I told Schaub that I bet a package would come for me. He said none would come and would have bet me but naturally I don't bet. Sure enough one came in from you with all kinds of nice things in it. You really can pack a nice box. There was nothing special in it but did have a nice ½ pound box of Fanny Farmer's which didn't last long. What got me though was the way Schaub was eating up my stuff while he had a full box hardly touched. He got quite a few packages lately and hides in a corner and eats it all. So I'm going to let him eat his own and let those who haven't any eat mine. It seems a though people like that are always the first to gripe if nothing from a package is given them but when they get one we never even get a sniff of it. Since I've been in this army, I certainly have run into all kinds and am learning more and

more. I also received a letter from Evie and the "Herald" and church papers from Mrs. Hendrie.

An order has come out that two men from each company will attend bugle school now. So that will be me and some other fellow from the company even though I'm the only one who is carried as a company bugler in E company. Maybe if I get sick the other boy could take over. I need to brush up on the calls some but know I could not do any worse than headquarters bugler did yesterday. We stood retreat last night and the bugler made more mistakes.

I told you in my last letter that I will be moving back to E company very shortly so I started addressing them as you did before. We are getting like garrison soldiers again but it'll take more than these officers to change these men after just getting out of combat. They'll never make good garrison soldiers now because no one cares what happens. All anyone is looking forward to is the day they will be discharged. That is the greatest hope and has been all through combat. We even had reveille this morning but only half the company fell out.

But this division has all kinds of plans for us in the way of recreation and education. It looks fine on paper all right but will it be fine. We are suppose to have a movie everyday so that will mean 16 movie projectors in the regiment. And where in the world will they get all those. Anyway, time will tell what will go on. If we do go to the Pacific, we won't have to worry about these slight troubles.

I just bought another bond this afternoon so will have \$50 worth. That certainly is a much better way than trying to get a money order home. It takes nearly a full month to get the money orders back so that is why I haven't got mine for \$28 yet. Would you please send me some sort of folder for all my photographs? I have so many and no place to keep them. Find one for 2¼ x 3¼ prints and that will be fine. So many people have been sending me pictures. But I'm not complaining because the more the better.

These people around here use some of the oddest teams for hauling things. I have seen a horse and ox pulling together and even milk cows hauling. I don't imagine much milk was gotten from them. A good many teams are being used around here to haul sand and bricks in order to rebuild the houses I suppose the people want to get their destroyed homes built before cold weather comes. I bet it is mean down here in winter because we are so high up now. The men around here wear those alpine shorts which you have seen pictures off. And aren't they funny to look at – a full grown man wearing shorts. The Americans and the rest of the world seem to think so differently that they'll never understand each other on certain things.

What a good meal we had for dinner today. We had fried chicken and all kinds of good things so we felt contented. I don't know where the army issued the birds or our cooks went out and traded cigarettes and chocolate for them. I know with eggs that is what they are doing – given one cigarette for two eggs. So Sunday we expect to have some good old fresh eggs. After not having them for so long, I can really appreciate them.

I thought that first I would have you send me some developer and hypo but have decided to wait for while. I want to see what is to happen first. The army is going to categorize each division so I'm waiting to see when we fare. I just hope it is occupation and so does every last man. But if they drop the critical score soon we may have men who will be leaving us shortly. Anyway, I have over half the points so that is better and more than a good many have.

I really have nothing to say and only am repeating myself in this letter so will close now. Hope to have more news next time.

May GKod bless bosth of .you and keep you safe. I think so much of my parents and know they can't be beat. With all my love, Harold

#June 17, 1945, Rohrnback, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Last night I received a nice long letter from you, Dad, written June 8. I certainly like to hear form you because you tell me nothing that Mum S\says. So I am not bored at all and even if it was the same, I'd still enjoy it very much. I really think so much of you, Dad, and know I could not find a better a father. I am not sure but I believe today is Father's Day so I'll wish you, Dad, the best of health and a long life, Don't worry, I didn't forget your birthday and I know it is June 20 and you'll be 49 years old. Just think, nearly half a century.

I'm enclosing another money order in this letter as you have found out .It is only for \$28 - what I draw right here – and got it back quite quickly this time. I fixed them this time and now only have \$6 left in my pocket. I finally bought two bonds, one here at hdqs. And one at E company so you'll be getting them within a couple of months. That is a good way to get rid of all surplus money. I just found out we are running a contest within the regiment and the platoon of the company who buys the most will go on pass to Paris. I also found out that E company is leading the whole regiment but don't know which platoon. I'm in company E hdqs platoon so hope they win. But the other fellows should have preference over me because I had my turn. I can't understand why men are going to Paris, England, Brusselles and other places and yet none to the Riviera. There has been such a small quota to go there and wm wondering why. The more I think about it, the more fortunate I consider myself.

I had to leave your letter for awhile and go to supper. I was on duty at the C.P. all day acting as runner so tried to write there. But there were too many things to do and I played horseshoes for awhile. I didn't do well but remember how often I used to play when I was younger. There is a large strawberry patch behind the C.P. and had a swell time eating for all I was worth. I ate until I was jammed full.

The mail came in a little early tonight and I received one letter dated June 7 from you and one from Em with more crossword puzzles. She has been a faithful to me and that is why I want her to have my picture. For some reason, Miss Martin hasn't been writing as often as she used to and I really try my best to answer in a short time. Yesterday, I wrote to Mr. Marsell at last because I finally felt in the mod to say something. We had exceptional good meals today starting with breakfast. Fresh eggs, the first meal with pancakes, and good ceral, tomato juice, and coffee. For dinner we had creamed chicken, fresh potatoes, beans, peas, cake and powdered milk sweetened enough o drink. The cooks here do that quite often and the milk is quite popular although not as good a fresh. And for supper we had steak, potatoes, beets, chocolate pudding, bread, and lemonade. So you can see that we are getting pretty good meals. But I would trade it all for home any time.

I saw the official order today which is to send me to bugler's school at regiment. There will be two of us from E company and as I said in my last two letters, I am going back to the company soon, I am saying this int hree letters because you might get this letter before the other two. Don't forget to start sending my mail back to E co. and be sure and tell Em and Miss Martin.

I haven't heard you mention anything about the camera which is being reaired. Did you ever get it bback? I certainly hopethey can fx it.

We have been trading cigarettes for eggs lately and so I've really been having my fill of fresh eggs. But the night before last, I ate six eggs just before I went to bed and did I feel

them yesterday. I have no one to blame but myself but wn't try that any more. Some of the others ate as many as I and yet they felt fine the next day. But I like eggs\gs more than I used to.

When I get home, I certainly would like to get a nice phonograph and have some nice records. I've heard uite a few songs over here I enjoy such as Concerto in B flat minor and others like that. I have heard one I'm very fond of but can't remember what the name is. It was in Walt Disney's "Fantasia." When I get back I know just what I'd like to go and get but I'll probably take a long time.

Thanks, Dad, for those three pictures you sent of the army boats. Any pictures you send are are most welcome. I believe I can get the two rolls of black and white I have developed soon. As yet, I still haven't heard from that sgt. at division but will check up the last of this month. I guess I'm like you and get so impatient when they don't come back in the time I think they should. We do have our troubles, don't we? But I am almost certain if I took up a course in photography while I am in the army it would have no effect on me. The army follows the "Spec number" as it is unofficially called and I'm designated as bugler. Guess I'll have that no. until I'm discharged. But it is much better than being arifleman.

Saturday night I certainly wish I had colored film in my camera because there was a very beautiful sunset - I've rarely seen nice with the sun outlining a large hill in the distance with a colored sky. It always seems as though when I'm least prepared, there is more to take pictures of. But the way, I wish you would send me a few more rolls of Kodachrome even if I can't sent it home yet. They will probably let me if we stay here for awhile.

The reason why only you, Mum, were mentioned in the paper having to do with the purple heart is because they asked for our nearest relative - only one person. So I gave them yours because you are beneficiary in all cases. I'm almost certain that is why.

Yesterday we had church but I couldn't go because the sgt. wanted me on hand at the C.P. But when I walked past there were only 6 men there. So I think that is terribly small. But I knew it would be the way when we got out of combat. How odd humans really are.

Lt. Colonel Norris" brother was visiting here yesterday and don't they look alike - both are of the same rank too except his brother is in the artillery. Guess they had a good time talking over good old times.

The runners now have gotten hold of a radio now and just when I am going back to the co. A radio really cheers up the atmosphere and makes the time pass by more quickly. Oh well, when I get home I can do things I really would like to.

Em wrote and told me Al said he saw the photos of me and said I was a true "Simms." I'm proud of it alright

This is all for now. Good night dear parents. Wisth so much love, Harold

#June 19, 1945. Rohnback, GermanyD

Dear Mum and Dad,

Yesterday I received a nice long letter from you dated June 12 (#60) so it really came in fast order. But now there is still one that I haven't gotten yet. Every once in awhile that happens but soon the missing one comes. Now all do is what [sic] to hear that you received one box of perfume and then I don't care if the others don't get there. But boxes should get home now because ships aren't being sunk. Anything can happen now even with this war over.

By the way, don't forget to send me some stationery via first class because I'm beginning to get quite low on paper. I believe I'll be here long enough o get it. The army

really is sending a bunch of divisions to the Pacific now and almost every day a couple divisions are added to the list. But I'm just hoping that we don't go for quite awhile. The fifth division was just announced and we are taking their place here, remember?

In my last letter I forgot to enclose the money order but will try to remember this time. And I'm enclosing a Polish bill which someone gave me quite awhile ago. Guess I'll also send a map on which I've marked our location with an X.

His morning I had to go to bugle school even though I'm still here at headquarters. As it was, I was a half hour late and expected things to be in full swing. We were supposed to start at 9 and the man who was to teach us the courses never arrived until 11. And then when he did arrive, there were no instruments available so we went back. What a bunch! Why can't they ever do things right! So the next class will be one week from today and every Tuesday after that. I believe about half the class knows how the calls and the other half don't even know how to blow a bugle.

I also received a nice letter from Miss Craig and I noticed she sent mine through headquarters. Be sure to tell her that I'm going back to my company in case she writes to me before I can to her.

We saw a movie last night in a small beer hall that wasn't any bigger than our living room. And weren't we jammed in because half the company was there. But nevertheless I still enjoyed it very much. It was a mystery called "The Conspirators" with Hedy Lamarr. I can always enjoy a good movie because it is more relaxing than the combat we've been through. I would not say that I've been overworking myself and really haven't been doing a thing except to stand guard every other night. I am perfectly contented but so many are restless and I believe a good many would rather go to the Pacific than stay here because of more excitement. I believe those men should have their brains examined. After what they have been through and then to ask for more.

It is strange that this current in this particular town is only 110 volt and yet most these places have 220. Electrical appliances here in this town all must be special bought because most that are manufactured is for 220. They do some odd things over in these countries – things that an American will ever figure out.

I was reading in last night's paper that Boston had an extreme change in temperature and now it is very hot. You certainly are having your troubles alright. But I am glad it is fine because of the garden. Dad, your beans will reach the end before too long. I know that! The weather has been very fine around here for several days now but not too hot, just right, probably because we are in the mountains.

This is going to be a very short letter this time because I just can't seem to think of much to say.

My GKod bless my wonderful parents and keep them safe. With all my love, pHarold  
P.S. Don't forget to send me stamps every once in awhile.

#June 21, 1945. Rohrbach, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here it is the first day of summer and these last two days have really been like summer. What scorches even though we are as high as we are. It is still morning, so don't know what the day will be like but it looks as if it will be hot again. Last night I thought it would be storming but it passed away. This is perfect haying weather and the natives are certainly taking advantage of it. Everything is done by hand and no modern tools so it really hard work. I must try and take a few pictures of them cutting hay because it is so serene and picturesque.

I received the missing letter from you (#59) and also got one from Miss Keany and Betty. I was so pleased to hear that you at last received the perfume. Now I only hope you will be using it. Betty was telling me all about her mother and the perfume. Apparently you let her try some and Betty said her mother was going around telling everyone to smell. I don't quite understand about heavy perfume but probably it is used to capture a fellow. Eh? There still is another box of perfume on the way and this time I sent the same three bottles except not in a display box and two bottles of "Elle-Elle" type. I was only suppose to send three bottles instead of five but got around it by calling that one little box with the group of three only one, always a way to get around rules and regulations. Miss Keany told me that some of my letter was censored although not very badly. It seems as though the further from the front lines the more strict they are in censoring. I wrote a little French message at the end but she said it was perfect although she knew what I meant. She also asked me to send her some "indiscreet" not perfume if I can ever get hold of any and she'll send me a check. That is her favorite scent and she said French perfume outranks any other country. So I'll see if I can't get her some even if I ask someone who is going to Paris.

I'm enclosing a division insignia for Russell Olson but I wouldn't say it is the cleanest. Maybe he can was it off with gasoline or some cleaning fluid. Wonder if he has very many patches now.

Last night I called up division to see if that film is ready but could not contact the sergeant. So I'll wait until we move into the towns we are supposed to. We are waiting for the 5<sup>th</sup> division to move out so we can move in where they are. As it is, if I call up division, the call has to go through four switchboards. But when the 5<sup>th</sup> division makes the call it will only go through two.

I forgot to tell you about seeing poppies coming down here. Why there were acres of solid poppies of both red and orange color. I wish you could have seen it and I know you would have marveled. I never before saw such a display of wild flowers as I have seen over here - all those delphiniums and poppies and others.

Yesterday morning we had a battalion parade in the only flat place for miles around. I don't know what the idea is but we had to march past a reviewing stand. Guess we must practice in case of a regimental or division parade. Boy, was it hot yesterday and we almost roasted. And then in the afternoon we had to see a movie entitled "Why we fight - America in the war." I had seen it in basic training and besides I knew as much as that told me because it was only a summary of American History which I know very well. And we nearly roasted in the theater so we had a "roasting" day.

We are living a a three room apartment but are only using two because there is a young married couple with a little two month old baby. We only planned to remain here for a few days so let them stay but we have been here much longer than we had planned. It is a cute baby and so terribly innocent. I certainly hope these children can grow up to believe like we instead of the Nazis and of course it is up to us. A new rule allows us to play or talk to small children in order to show them how good we Americans are. We must start with these small children. But don't think for a minute there is no fraternizing going on because you are mistaken. For all the difference it makes they might as well repeal the law because it isn't much good. I suppose you have heard about that the maybe didn't believe the truth. But I'm telling you the "grim facts" so you won't be disillusioned. Out of the runners, Swett and I are the only ones who don't violate the rule. And the others call themselves true Christians. Schaub says it is human nataure to have sex life but I know if he was a true Christian he'd be different. Why he really is stepping out on his wife but I know if sge did this to him, it would be different story. He even told me that. How foolish!! Oh well, it is his life and not my worry.

One of Stasi's friends sent him two Philippines peso notes. One was made by the Japs and was good duplication of our money and then one of our own victory issues. They were quite interesting to look at but I just hope I never have a chance to get hold of some myself, first hand.

By the way, would you send me another fingernail file. I lost the one I had. Have you ever priced the perfume or the camera parts as I asked you. I wish you would because if these parts aren't very expensive, it would not be worthwhile carrying them around. And how is the camera coming at the repairs shop?

This will be all for now and must see if I can't answer a few letters. They seem to all be coming at once. My God bless you and keep you safe. Harold

#June 22, 1945. Freyung, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

This morning I came back to E company but not only did I come back but all the runners were sent back to their own companies. We had really finished our job when combat was over and really expected to go back before this. We are located on top of a very high hill and from here can see into Czechoslovakia and even Austria. So you can see we are terribly high. I understand the town we are to move into as soon as this 5<sup>th</sup> division moves out - if ever they move - is a very nice town. We are in a town only about one and one half miles west of Freyung which is due north of Rohrnbach - where we were. Just think one year from July 3, I will have been in headquarters company exactly one year. I don't know very many fellows here but will soon know them all. I thought I didn't have many points but I have one of the highest point men in the company - believe it or not.

Last night, I received a very nice package from Em but no one can send is nice a one as you. And Marjorie sent me quite a letter - seven pages so I was very pleased. Just now the lieutenant called me downstairs and told me that I have mail which was sent up from battalion. I thought I might hear from you but the letter was from Em. I enjoy hearing from her and hope you gave her my picture. Marjorie raved over the picture and actually thought I was very handsome! Anyway, I had a good laugh over that compliment. Em enclosed some nice chocolates in that package and they didn't last too long.

By the way, do you know anything about the Schofield Reference Bible. I was wondering if it explained in clearer terms the different parts of the Bible. If it does and is worthwhile I wish you would send me one and a copy of the Old Testament. I would like to read the whole Bible but as I have said before that old English style isn't too easy to understand. Of course, if that reference Bible is too expensive don't bother.

After I wrote yesterday morning I decided to go down to the swimming hole a short distance from the house. It is a dammed part of a small stream. So, many thought the water was terribly cold but it seemed just right to me once I got in and had a swell time swimming around. All the soldiers were using their underwear as a swimming suit so I did that too. So by doing that I killed two birds with one stone and washed my underwear at the same time. Ellis - the one who is supposed to look so much like me - was down there with me and took such a belly whopper that all the buttons on his shorts tore off, so no more swimming for him. I had an awfully good time and would have like to go down each day. They say where we are going there is a swimming hole so will have to go in all the time. The sun was terribly hot yesterday and with my shirt off a short time I nearly burnt up. But I was wise enough to get in the shade after a while. When I woke up this morning my back was slightly sore but nothing compared to Stasi who foolish stayed out too long. He really was a sore fellow today. I burn up like you, Mum, instead of tanning like Ruby. I suppose she will look like a "nigger" before the summer is over. In Rohrnbach, I saw a small girl who looked

so much like her with that dark complication, dark hair and dark eyes. I will say of all the girls I know back home, I think she is the nicest in looks and manners as well. For goodness sakes don't say anything to the Newells about that, of course nothing serious to it.

What a mess of junk I carried up here but of course, I'm carrying all my loot such as photography equipment, slide rules, etc. Sometime I'm going to get desperate and send my exposed film even though I'm not supposed to. But I'm sick of carrying around those Kodachromes when they could be developed and you looking at them.

Guess this will be because I really have nothing to say. Good night my dear parents. May God blues you and keep you. With all my love, Harold

June 24, 1945, Germany (no town)

Dear Mum and Dad,

I only stayed in the last town where E company was because they moved yesterday. The 5<sup>th</sup> division moved out at 5:30 a.m. and by the time we got there, the places were plundered by the civilians because the houses we were to go into were left un-guard for about 4 hours. But now we have the places cleared up and everything is beginning to take shape. I don't know the name of this town but it is halfway between Freyung (regiment) and Waldkirchen (battalion). Battalion moved also and they are in a much larger town than we.

While I am writing I am talking care of the switchboard which the 5<sup>th</sup> div. left behind. It connects with the different platoons and battalion. In all, there are 10 lines coming into this board so at times, I have my hands full. Believe it or not, I taught all the rest of Co.E hdqs. how to operate it and yet I never operated one before. I used to watch the men use the large one at battalion and so I got used to it. At times, I make a mistake but most always everything goes smoothly. The only guard we stand now is one hour apiece at night on the switchboard so I like that much better. At least I can write a letter inside but outside all we can do is stare into darkness for two hours.

Max Haber, the Jewish fellow who went though basic with me, is still here at the company but now is a (buck) sergeant – (three stripes) – but he doesn't pull his rank like some. I always got along with him very well.

I am very happy tonight because I received two letters from you tonight which was sent down from battalion. They are #61 and 62 so the mail is doing fine and not as irregular as yours. I was pleased to hear that the other perfume has gotten home. I knew what was inside but just wrapped them up tightly. Now do you wonder why I said if you had oo much to give some away. It is good stuff though and don't give it away to just any old one. I'm afraid I won't be able to get any more maps, either the XIX corps map or the 83<sup>rd</sup> Div. map. If I had only known your intentions, I could have sent two but didn't realize it.

By the way, I'm enclosing a red diamond which is the division patch. So please give it to Russell Olson (it is the 5th Infantry Division (not armored). I found it yesterday when we moved in and thought of sending it to him when I came upon it.

This morning I went to church which was held at battalion and we had Chaplain Blitch as speaker. He is always good and I enjoy his sermons. He is planning a trip soon to visit some military cemeteries and take pictures of graves of people requested by the men here. I was going to ask about Francis Nelen but he only wanted names which were very close to the person so I would rather have men with dead relations have the chance. I believe you understand. I really would like to have a picture taken on his grave but would much rather let family relations have priority over me. There were quite a few men at church this week and it made me feel so glad that more men were hearing the chaplain's meaningful words. It is a shame to waste those wonderful words.

You were wondering what Donald was in so I'll tell you what he told me. He is in the 132nd Mobile anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) which is a unit following up a fast moving division usually. It really is too bad we couldn't have gotten together but we just couldn't.

Today, I saw the "beautiful blue Danube" but it really is a deep green. So it is misleading! Glenn Miller's swing band was at Passau so I went not to hear the band but to roam through the city with my camera. Gager, the truck driver who took us down, was a good friend of mine when I was at battalion so he and I took off for division when we found we were pretty close. I wanted to go see that sergeant about the film. I found the G-3 section which he is supposed to be in and found this was not his days. Anyway they told me he lived down the road a short distance but I'll be darned if I could find it. So I had to go back without seeing him. I plan to call him tomorrow on the telephone. I certainly am having a terrible time with that film.

What foolishness there is back at division. You have to dress just so and what got me was the fact that all sergeants and above (buck sergeants, staff sgts, tech sgts. and 1st sgts. and master sgts. were eating separate from the men of low rank. I can understand officers eating separate but the non-coms aren't so good that they can't eat with the pvts., pfc's, and corporals. I suppose now that there is no combat you'll get terribly mean. But thank goodness it isn't bad in the company - because they have all seen plenty of combat. Division is not in Passau but in a large town a few miles up the Danube. So I now have plenty of pictures of it. At Passau, though, three rivers come in together - the Dan(very slow movin), the Inn River (very swift), and a smaller river (medium speed). So there is quite lot of water flowing though there. The city was shelled quite badly in sections and looks as though the Germans put up a struggle. But it isn't bad in comparison to many Of course, all the bridges were blown out but our efficient engineers have them all replaced. Boy, have seen a bunch of important rivers since I have been over here. If I only had had time, I could have walked over one bridge and would have been in Austria. But as it was I could only look and the country looks the same. Ha!

One of the artillery boys who used to stay with the second battalions, a liaison man, saw me and wanted me to stay there at Passau and eat at his mess hall. Artillery is located in that city. But I had no way of getting back or I would have accepted. I certainly know plenty of people but very few in my own company. Strange!. All in all, I had an enjoyable my taking pictures down there.

Guess I won't be a bugler for awhile yet because there is no bugle or trumpet in the company. I am supposed to start tomorrow but I'm afraid I cannot play without an instrument. I threw away the bugle I had in England when I got to France because I knew I would never have any more use for it. But the supply sgt. (Haddad) found it in a foxhole and bawled me out for not turning it in to him. Just shortly after that he was killed too About four months ago we were issued a plastic bugle but the supply sgt. broke it somehow. So we really are having our troubles. The other fellow who is sort of assistant bugler knows all the calls so we might be able to switch on and off each day so one man won't have to do all the work.

The company is setting up a pressing shop so we will be able to have our clothes pressed. And we plan to set up a photo shop if we can ever get the equipment from regiment as they promised. There is a civilian doing some of the work but he does such a poor job that I would never bother. We have a professional photographer in the company so he no doubt will take over. I will have too much to do so won't be able to help develop film. But we will see shortly.

It is getting late now and someone has taken over on the board so I guess I'll close now. I think so much of my parents. And Mum, I am really not over-praising you as you think. May God bless you both and keep you. With all my love, Harold

#June 25, 1945. Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

I am writing this just to tell you what to plan for the near future. We were told this morning what to expect and I'll tell you all I know. First of all, this division is in category 2 which means that we will be going to the Pacific via the States so I understand. We are not to leave this area until about the first of September so might not be back home until nearly November because we might have training in France. And men with points over 70 are to be dropped from the company roster so it looks as though I am completely out of luck. Boy, it seems as though I am having some tough breaks now. I hope when they get me to the Pacific, they are satisfied – they can't do much more to me! Boy, if I swore, I'd swear a blue streak at those dirty so and so's. All I can do is hope they take all men who have always been with the division through combat and transfer them to occupation. Now if I was in division hdqs. I would not mind so much Oh well, all I can do is put my faith in the good Lord and hope that I'll be home for good before too many months have past.

I'm on the switchboard again this morning so am finding time to write some. I have really been busy at times because calls seem to come through in spurts.

I am enclosing a little souvenir that I bought down at Nice and which I forgot to send home, .and I'll send one Spanish stamp which I found. I will have quite a stamp collection, eh?

This is only a note to tell you what to expect and I know what you will think. All we can do is put our trust and faith in the Lord who has carried me though so far. May he bless you and keep you safe. With aall my love, Harold

# June no day, probably 26 or 27, 1945. Germany

Dearest Mum and Dad,

There was a special treat waiting for me yesterday when the mail came in. Just think, a letter from each of you came right together. Now you can see why I call it so special! What a miserable day it is today and rain! It just poured steady just when I went to eat which was about one hour ago. If I hadn't borrowed a raincoat I would have been drenched and as it was my knees were soaked. It is so hard to predict weather around here because yesterday was the nicest I've seen in a long time.

Just after I wrote my last letter to you, I called up division to find out about those films that sergeant was developing for me. He has them done at last but not printed. I don't mind, though, as long as the developing is done fairly well because, at least, I can send the negatives to you. All those pictures are ones I took at the Riviera so if he had lost them I wouldn't have felt as badly as with some because I have most of those scenes in both black and white and colored. Anyway, the films will be sent home as soon as I get them. The other day, we got our PX rations which we bought and which consisted of juice, cigarettes, life savers, soap and coca cola. And there were other things to buy so I took a book of cartoons entitled "Sad Sack" which is very popular strip in "Yank" magazine. I know you will enjoy rhe cartoons very much because they pertain to this poor private and how he is kicked around by the officers and sergeants. In the latest "Yank," Sad Sack has 125 points but has been declared essential. I will send this book home as soon as possible.

At last "Sad Sack" has plenty of point but I don't. I told you in my last letter that our division is due to go to the Pacific at any time so it looks pretty dark. What gets me is the

fact that a good many fellows have plenty of points and yet have only been in front line combat for a couple of months. And here I was from June 27 to May 7 when the war was over. I get so aggravated because things like that irk me. I know that we are getting credit for the other two stars now. So now I hope to get that bronze star and then I will have 64 points. But I'm afraid it won't be enough. But I guess it won't be enough. Guess I'm just an old pessimist! As I said before, all we can do is trust in the Lord!

Yesterday afternoon I and some of the Co E hdqs men played volleyball with men from the 4<sup>th</sup> platoon and I really enjoyed myself. I really have missed sports and it seem good to do something like that again. We lost but got better at the end and the last game ended up 21 to 19 so that was close. Swett didn't get in because he says he is too old! He has got almost a beer belly on him so he isn't too active. Some of these men above 30 really feel sorry for themselves and it gets me mad at times because they moan so. Well, I still say that there is no use groaning because they are still in this army the same as we and I want to get out just as much as the older men.

Just think, here it is almost payday and as usual will send some home. The months seem to come so fast at times and yet so slow at other times. I hope you have been getting those money orders. I have two money order stubs for \$25 and \$28 so will throw them away when you tell me you received them. I only have about \$5 left in my wallet but bought those two \$50 bonds.

There really isn't much to say because I don't seem to be in that mood. To write a good long letter, I have to be feeling just right. Guess this will be all for now. I know you have missed me very much but maybe it won't be too long before I'll be home on furlough. But I still feel like you, I'd rather remain here for awhile as much as I'd like to get home. God bless you, may dear parents and keep you safe. With all my love, Harold

#June 28, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

At last I was able to find out what the name of this town. I doubt jif you will be able to find it except on a very detailed map. Most of the houses in the towns around here are very old – almost a hundred years old but the house we are in isn't very old. We are now setting up all kinds of things and in a good many ways I can't see why because we are due to go to the Pacific within the next two months. We now have a barber shop and a tailor shop and will have a photo shop before long. They are also planning to have a large day room where there is to be beer and books, games, etc. Beer is being manufactured in Freyung for us by a plant that has just started after we took over. It really will be nice if we are only here long enough to enjoy it.

Anyway, today I feel much better because at last I have received official word that I have the bronze star. With the points for this, I now have 64 official points so I'll list all of my credits. These points were given up until May 12 when the point system came out. 17 points for number of months in army, 12 points for overseas service, 25 for campaign stars, 5 for purple heart, and 5 for bronze star. That is a total of 64. We have one fellow in the company who has been in the army since the first draft and he only has 67 points because he has been overseas only 3 months. Imagine being in the army nearly 5 years like he. And we have another fellow here who has 29 points because he has been in such a short time. Anyway, I am much more encouraged and hope it will give me enough points to keep me here as occupation. Just think, I'll be wearing four ribbons now – bronze star, purple hearts, good conduct and E.T.O plus the combat infantry man's badge and the expert rifleman's badge. Boy, my chest will be full of medals. If you don't know much about the bronze star either find it in a book or ask someone because it is hard for me to explain.

Henry Swett got one also and we have exactly the same number of point. I'm so anxious to get back in civilian life that I try to make more out of what I have but can't seem to do it! Strange! Schaub and Greene also got one according to the official notice but for some reason, Stasi, Johnson, Gilbert, and Surface didn't get any. I can never figure out the army. I really am not so anxious to save the aard as much as those five extra points.

Mail hasn't been coming in these last couple of days so don't know if you ever got the purple heart yet. I sent the medal itself and kept the ribbon so I could wear. This bronze star is the same way – it has a bronze star medal in the shape and also a ribbon which is red, blue and white, I believe. I have neglected to send you the "Thunderbolt" paper so will put it in a separate envelope. We were each given one a couple of days ago but it just slipped my mind. I know how you like to reqd them but of course now, they don't te very muchg.

I still halven't gotten those films although the master sgt. from division said he'd send them right ddown to me. I certainly get impatient when people do this to me and will send a note to him agqin to see if he will send them. I have learned it is better to keep them myself than to let someone else developed.

In this letter I'm enclosing a World War I Frence medal witth I I found in a house way back in July 1944. This is caqallked the "Croix du Crombattant" and really don't know if it is as high award as the "Croix de Guerre." This will make a good little souvenir along with the "rest of junk." I have. By this time, I really must have an awful lot of souvenirs and stuff sent from here.

I see by the paper that in England, U.S. troops can call the U.S. for 3 minutes which would cost \$12. It would be wonderful if I could even though it did cost so much. Maybe if I ever did stay as occupation and troops in Germany could call home, I would certainly try. Nothing really would be more wonderful n my opinion.

Two days ago the medics "shot" me with that "hooked needle" as the joke goes. This time I had to take the typhoid shot which we get every so often. I thought for one it wouldn't hurt and it didn't until that night. And it was sore even today so it really was quite a "shot." Some hurt at first and go right away and others don't hurt until nearly a day later.

We have quite some sign painters here in the company. They are professional and are making signs for everything even name plates for the officers. Guess anything that can be done we can find someone in the company who can do the job. There is every field represented by the men in every walk of life.

There is a fellow here who was showing me one of his homes. It is a 14 room mansion in Miami and has a separate house for the servants. It really is a beautiful place with palm trees all around. Guess his people must have a little money. He is the fellow who has only 29 points out there are more in the company who have no more. And this fellow has a home (15 rooms) in Atlanta, Georgia and also a "small farm" in Georgia with only a couple hundred acres. Boy, he really must have money. Imagine for a high school graduation present, he went to Honolulu, Hawaii. I know you could never have done that for me.

But you really have done an awful lot for me and I know I can never repay you. I know don't want to be repaid and I guess the only thing is to do in turn to my children what you did for me. Guess I sound sort of foolish the way I am talking.

Today was a miserable day with rain and so terribly damp. But tonight it has grown fine just before sunset so it is too late in the day to do much good. It is always so much nicer when the sun shines because it seems to enliven the world more lively.

This will be all for now, dear parents. I love you so much that I can't find words to express so much love. I don't seem to have my mind on this letter because of all the mistakes. May God bless you and keep you safe. With all my love, Harod

#June 30, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

There has been no mail at all these last six days so I hope to have some after supper. Letters were coming through so nicely for awhile and then all of a sudden it stops. Everyone seems to be getting packages lately except me but I've been eating some out of each that the fellows get. I don't think you had better send many more packages now until I know for certain what will happen. Probably those on the way will take a couple of months and I could not imagine where I would be then. But I wish you'd send me some stationery via first class because I'm getting dangerously low now. I mentioned it quite a few letters ago but you never mentioned it to me. So please, don't forget it because I would much rather write to you on nice paper than some I have used. Sort of inspires me. Ha!

It always seems as though everyone writes at the same time and now I have accumulated five letters so had better try and answer them soon. If all the Richardsons are going to Nova Scotia I wonder if it would be worthwhile sending a letter or wait until they return. Suppose it depends on how long they are gone Marjorie has been writing me some very nice letters lately. Guess it is because I bawled her out for not writing. Maybe it's because I have a way with woman. Ha! But I can't understand why Miss Martin doesn't write. She used to write so often and now I never hear from her. She certainly must realize that it is much easier for her to write than me. At least I'm doing the best I can under the circumstances. But I'll be darned if I worry about it as long as I get a letter written to you about every other day. You are the only ones who mean much to me. When I say "you" I mean both of you (plural).

Today is payday so I collect more cash. It has been a very cold day and sort of drizzling but the sun is now trying to poke its head through the clouds and might make it. The lieutenant has just returned with the payroll so I expect to get paid soon now. It used to be when we were up at battalion that pay was never given to Swett and me until the officer returned - always last we were. So now I'll get it in the pfc. bunch. I'm usually last because my name is near the end of the alphabet anyway.

You were telling me about men with long service, etc. and all that, would be the first to get discharged. I don't believe any of it because the army has never worked the way it said it would. I get so disgusted when I think of the points that I almost boil. Guess I moan over it too much and worry. By the way, which side of the family do I inherit my worrying. I'll probably always be the same. I seem to be in the middle category and yet I expect to go to the Pacific. Guess I'm just an old pessimist but I don't want to build up my hopes of staying here. Take the 60<sup>th</sup> division for example. They landed Christmas 1944 and all they ever did was hold the pockets at Lorient and St. Nazaire and never did any fighting. Yet these men are remaining to take care of these camps in France through which all re-deployed troops will go. It just isn't fair and I just boil every time I think of it. But I can't do a thing about it because there is no way to get more points.

Swett isn't here today because he is on a one day pass. There is a river boat that leaves Passau in the morning and returns at night. I understand it is nice trip and the boat travels down the Danube as far as Linz and then returns. I was more lucky than he in getting that seven day furlough so I'm glad to see he got something. It really is too bad the army keeps men like him in - so old acting and no pep at all and everything wrong - but he frets over it too much and makes himself worse. All he can do is make the best of it, I guess.

Gilbet told the medics one time that he was in bad condition and was always out of breath! (T was when they had a physical after V-E day while I was gone). But boy, he used to run all over those high hills chasing after women and yet was never out of breath. I don't know how he could do it because I couldn't. Anyway we gave him the nickname of Radar because he'll pick up anything. We kidded him more about being short winded and picking up the most horrible looking girls. Of course, he was not supposed to but they are not strict at all in this non-fraternization rule.

It seems as though you and I are worrying about two kinds of points. You with your ration points and me with my army points. But I realize how you feel about my points and am probably worrying too. There is one man in the company who has three children and has the same number of points as I – 64. He would only have 28 without those children and he has hardly seen any combat at all and has never risked his life. Is it fair? Some say yes and some say no. I can see both sides but I still think a person who has been carried through combat by God's will and only due to Him is entitled to a better break than a married man with children. Some things are really unfair but I suppose no matter what they do it'll be unfair to someone. We have 14 men in this company who are to be discharged. One left yesterday (June 29) and will be home July 2 – flying, of course. They are very slow about discharging! We are losing our first sgt. whom I liked so well. Before long, the company won't be the same. Capt. Packer was transferred to division and we have a new officer – Lt. Peterson. Most of our officers just came to us recently and have never heard a shell land. They are a little bit too stern and don't realize the emotions of the combat men.

We now have a day room fixed up where we can write letters, get beer, listen to the radio, read, etc. A few men fixed it up and it is quite a place with "Sad Sack" pictures all over the wall and everything painted fancy, even fancy drapes. I suppose we'll have to move soon because whenever any nice is gotten we move out and have to leave it behind. And we have gotten some photo supplies so might try to set up a darkroom and develop films for the fellows. Probably two of us – a professional and I will work here so the lieutenant said. Maybe then I'll be able to develop mine and get them home.

This first sgt. who is going home is a match of Mr. Richardson and what a grip he has. Also the mess sgt. and between the two they do what Mr. R. did to me so I have never escaped. But the other day I had the supply sgt. on the floor in a friendly bout so maybe I'm getting a little stronger! Ha!

Dad, you wanted to know what I want the boat named and I really can't think of a thing. So I'll leave it up to you to choose a nice sounding name because I really don't care what it is called. Just as long as we have a boat and you don't decide to sell it as you have done before.

You remember me speaking of Ellis. He is the one they say looks like me. Since all clerks have been declared essential he and many more cannot be discharged even if they have more than 85. I hope I'm never declared essential because I want to get out of this army as soon as possible.

We had different discussions yesterday in the theater near here. It had to do with orientation lectures on the subject of "Prejudices." The negro question was brought up and it almost ended up in a fist fight. We were fighting the Civil War over again. I had nothing to do with the arguing because I don't ever think that question can be solved. We really have an awful bunch of southerners in this company.

I have really not said very much in four sheets so will close. I'm going up now and get paid so that is another excuse.

Keep up your chin and trust in the good Lord. May He bless you and keep you safe. With all my love, Harold

P.S. I'll be sending home the official notice on the bronze star and purple heart shortly.

#July 1, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

At last I got back those films which I sent back to that master sergeant at division. He did a good job of developing but claimed that all films which were taken at the Riviera – his as well as others – were over-exposed. So you'll have to get Taylor's to reduce them, please, so they can be printed. The ones I'm enclosing in this letter are ones that can be printed right away. I am just wondering what my color films will look like – probably so overexposed that it'll be light. There have numbers on them so I'll tell you what they are #17 is a night scene of Hotel Ruhl which was lighted up on V-E night, #2, #3, #4 were of the Rhone River at Lyon. The other group of three was the other river that meets the Rhone at Lyon but I don't remember the name. #9 is slightly overexposed and the building at the right is the Red Cross building, #10 is of the main room at the Red Cross, #11 is of the stairs to the second floor. And the 120 negative is of me and Sgt. Sterling who is communications sgt. of E co. He gave me the negative the today. I'll be sure and send some home in each letter.

The only letter I received yesterday was one I sent to Richard Nelson back on Feb. 1- and it followed him all around. But he went to the States, apparently wounded, and the letter was returned. It certainly is all marked up. No letter from you yet, though.

I became a washer woman today and washed all my dirty things. I had quite a time with my fatigues because I couldn't seem to get them clean. And I washed 7 pairs of socks which I have been collecting for awhile. I only have one pair of shorts right now so am running around today with none on. I get so aggravated at times with the supply sergeant because he doesn't give us all he should. But I suppose it isn't his fault because many times regiment doesn't give him clothes for us. I do certainly have my troubles sometimes, don't I?

Yesterday just after I finished your letter, I went up and got paid. But for some reason got paid \$5.55 extra and I couldn't seem to figure it out. All I remember is that \$5.55 was marked under my name in the pay book but I don't know what for. When I asked the new first sgt. I didn't get much satisfaction. So I'll see if they make the same mistake next month. I suppose I shouldn't mind but I don't want it to continue and then make me miss pay day. I won't be sending money home this month because I bought another bond. They are still trying to get us to help this new war bond drive so I must do my share. I still have \$29.75 so am not very low because the fellow who bought my pistol finally paid me.

This morning I went to church up at battalion again and this time it was the major who gave the sermon. While there I checked up on my mail and didn't have any. I did see a new "Thunderbolt" so took it and am sending it home. I never got the issue of the "Thunderbolt" while I was away but got hold of one today. In each envelope you will find a few negatives so don't forget to take notice. The chaplain gave us great encouragement about the points by telling of a new chaplain who has just joined the division and has only 8 points. He said you'll always find someone in a worse position. But I still would like to have higher. I read in the paper where the points may be lowered to 80 or 78 but I still think that they should let us add points up from month to month. If everyone's is frozen, as it is a man overseas won't get any more credit than a man in the States and naturally a man overseas should get more. But the other way would be more fir. The army doesn't care, though, as long as it has men.

Last night the new day room opened and it is quite fancy – all decorated. And in the front is a large electric sign saying "Service Club" which a German carpenter made. It

really looks so odd to see something like this in the middle of a small German town. Now if we can only set up a photo shop then I'd be all set.

The day before yesterday the communications line to battalion went out and no one knew how or why. So two wiremen came down to check on the lines and to see if there was a break in the wire. It took them terribly long to figure it out but finally we found out the story. One of the men in the 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon needed wire to string light so he just cut the wire which was handiest. They finally told him not to go around just cutting up anything because it might be in use. He had taken 400 yards of wire so the wiremen got it replaced after about two hours work. What some fellows won't do - many never try to use their heads at all.

The other day, I saw the most streamlined car I have ever seen. It was German and has the motor in the rear instead of the front. It really looks like something from "Popular Science." I took a couple of pictures of it so you see what I mean.

We have been using German P.W's to help construct a rifle range near here. But I never saw such easy working hours and I know they would be worked much harder than they do. We always are too soft on them and it's not the way they treated our American POW's. America was always too soft with everyone and we can't seem to learn.

I see in the paper that the 30<sup>th</sup> division and 28<sup>th</sup> are going to the Pacific via U.S. Wasn't Bill Harding in the latter? Sam Harris is in the former so don't know if he'll be transferred.

There really isn't very much to say and it'll only take one more letter to get all negatives home.

May God bless you and keep you, my dear parents. I think so much of you! With all my love, Harold

#July 3, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mother and Dad,

Here it is time to write again so rather than write tomorrow, July 4, I'll try and send it tonight. What a terrible day we have been having today with all the rain. Everything seems so damp but it is much better to be inside than out in a foxhole. But I think because of all this damp weather that it has caused all the epidemics of sore throats. Yesterday, I began to feel miserable in the throat and by evening I had a nice sore throat. So I ran for the Vicks which I've been keeping hold of just in case of such emergencies. I bathed my throat and put on Vicks and covered it with a cloth. Some thought I looked foolish but who cares what they think. When I woke up this morning, I felt so much better and so tonight I'll try it again and see if I can get rid of it entirely.

Just think, tomorrow is July 4 - the day we first pushed off on the offensive. We came up on line way back June 27 but did the offensive until one year ago tomorrow. That was a day I shall never forget because it was an awful slaughter on our side. I wonder where I will be next July 5 but the only thing I can do is wait - hope I'm home by next year.

We have 10 men who are "sweating it out" - as the army says it - going home. They have over 85 points but don't know when they are to go. I know if I had that many I wouldn't worry about a single thing but at least sometime I would get home. In every letter I seem to be mentioning points but with this one, I'll have to stop because I'm probably making you pretty low and I realize what it is like and what you have gone through. But please, dear parents, just trust in the good Lord who has carried me through all safely.

Yesterday, I became a baker because I helped one of the cooks while he was making cookies. This fellow is very religious and I like him very much. His parents ran a large bakery in Utah and so naturally he knows all about it. I helped him carry the dough and

pans down to the local bakery in the town where he was to cook them. I helped cut out the cookies or put one large raisin on each cookie. They were large sugar cookies with a raisin in the center and I can tell you it tasted mighty fine. Everything went fine until he put the pans in the oven and then he didn't realize the oven was so hot. When he took them out about two pans were scorched so badly that they weren't edible. But in the end he had enough good ones baked to give each man in the company (200 men) one apiece. I really never have been so full for a long time as I was yesterday because I ate everything from the dough through to the burn cookies and good ones. He had extra ones left over so I had a whole sack of them which I ate this morning. Boy, by the time I get home I'll be able to even make cookies but I hope it comes out better than the cake I once made. Remember those good old days when we didn't have to worry about being short of food or worrying over points – not my kind of points. Sometime everything will get back to normal and then we will have a good life again.

Last evening, the PX rations came in and I got more than ever before. Rations seem be coming in better thn they were for now we get candy while beore it was only cigarettes. As it is now I have 13 packs of cigarettes which I'd probably give to Henry Swett because he smokes so much. I'll probably keep hold of a couple packs in case I need anything washed. The civilians will do it for a pack of cigarettes. Many times though, I'd rather do my own clothes because I can do a better job both washing and pressing. We must give them soap too because naturally they have none of that. The people have not had good soap for a long time and many have a bad case of BO. I really don't know how Germany put up with it all when she had nothing in the stores. Humans can endure great hardships when they are compelled to. You'd really be surprised! I know I was when I found out how much a soldier can really take.

So often I wish I had joined the navy as I had planned to but the reason I took the army is because you both thought the army was better. I'm not blaming you because it was my own fault. But it is too late to cry over spilled milk. As I have so often said, army life won't hurt me as long as God is with me and I can remain alive.

Yesterday for noon, we had fried chicken for dinner. I ate early because I wanted to relieve the man on the switchboard so he could eat too. When the cooks gave me one piece so small I could hardly see it, I put up and awful squawk because I thought I should have another piece. It is very rarely I ever gripe about food but I knew they had enough for two pieces per man. Anyway, I let it go but while I was eating in the mess hall I noticed all the men aftre me were getting two pieces. So I rushed for the mess sgt. and told him I wanted my other piece. Finally in the end I won out and got the other piece and then I was happy. If I didn't get the other piece one of the cooks would have eaten it anyway and they should get plenty to eat. The mess sgt. comes from Mass. and a swell fellow while the rest of his men with the exception of two are all hillbillies and so hard to reason with. I have found those frem the hills and many from the deep south are inclined to be so much more sexy (sex driven) than those up north. But these cooks are always after the women and at times don't prepare as good a meal as they could. We all have our troubles don't we?

Quite often now for breakfast we get oranges which are being imported from Spain. It wouldn't be worthwhile bringing them all the way across the Atlantic from the States because they'd spoil on the way over. Talking about food, one fellow got two packages yesterday that was sent way back in December. Of course, you can just imagine in what condition it was – the candy crushed flatter than pancakes. So all he did was throw it right out without bothering to open it.

This same man who got the packages is up for discharge because he has 92 points – lucky man. But he is a very good violinist so I had him play for me. He has had nearly 20

years experience in different musical jobs but ended up being a good sign painter. He can almost put me to sleep as I listen to him because he plays so sweetly and none of this jazz. I enjoy talking to someone like this than a good many of these illiterate people such as Johnson. To be truthful, I haven't missed any of the runners except Francis Nelen. Guess maybe because I've known so many people for just a few days and then they were wounded.

Just now the sun is trying to break through and I hope it does so I can bake the cold out of myself. And I want to take some pictures of different places. I wish I were going on that tour tomorrow up to Hitler's home in the mts. I can't remember the name but you know where. I want to see and do everything I possibly can and take pictures of it all. By now, I have quite a bunch of pictures but hope you haven't worn the prints out showing them to people. Maybe it would be best to put them in an album. And then when I get home, I can do what I want.

This is all for now and didn't expect to write this much. With all my love, Harold

#July 4, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

I am quite happy today because I received a letter from you dated June 24 - 0 the first in almost a week and a half. It seems so nice to get letters regularly but because of this redeployment, I suppose delivery can't always be on schedule. The last letter you had from me was June 12 so soon you'll be sending them to E company. It certainly is a nuisance having to wait while it is transferred from one company to the other. I don't know if you have received the letter in which I asked you to send me more stationery because I'm nearly out.

What a terrible day for a holiday. We were supposed to have a track meet at division and that was called off. The same with the parade we were to have and the baseball game. Oh, what weather! It is just like you had for about 2 weeks – just mean and miserable all the time. I wonder what it is like here in winter. I bet we'd be snowbound if we remained here. This country isn't much of a farming area because it is much too hilly but an awful lot of hay is grown. I can't figure out why unless the people can devour hay now. Each house has a little backyard garden but once in awhile there is a large field of potatoes. The other day Swett and I took a stroll around the countryside. We came upon these nice cherry trees jammed full of luscious cherries. So we began to help ourselves but not for long because this old farmer came running out of his house and jabbered something in German. I didn't understand what he said but knew he didn't like us eating his cherries. If we were like the Russians, we would have stripped his trees and left none for him. But we are soft-hearted and give in to the German's every wishes. Every time a German comes crying to us about a sore thumb or sore foot we get the ambulance and evacuate hem. And we cater to them like fools! Guess I'm too hard-hearted!

You were talking about me taking part in this educational program. But I'm afraid that is out because of our future plans. If we were to remain we would be setting up a program but as it is, all we are doing is train. Today, I don't feel as badly about the points as I do other days for some reason. I have gotten this straight from a very reliable source – we are to remain in these towns now until October, so the schedule says. But of course, anything can change. Then after we move out of here we are to go to a training camp in France and after this go to the States and get more training. I heard this from a major so maybe it is true. Let's hope so. I still say that I have a good many points and if each month gives me two points and is collective, I'll have 85 in eight months. So it really could be worse.

The assistant mail clerk is leaving us shortly to go to Corps hdqs. as an instructor. He was a school teacher at one time and all men with teaching experience are to be transferred. Probably it has to do with the educational program being set up. I suppose between now and October many men will be transferred for this and that.

We are supposed to have a big time tonight. It will probably be drinking so I won't have such a time. But I hear that there will be a movie or stage show so I'll enjoy that. But I won't enjoy anything until I get out of this crazy army.

This seems to be all I can think of after writing a four page letter yesterday. May God bless you and keep you, my dear parents. With all my love, Harold

PS. Every day I change my mind but let's take a chance with a couple of packages. One minute I say send and then no.

Added to the above letter

Dear Mum,

I'm writing this separate so you can destroy it in case you don't want Dad to know. I really was terribly surprised to hear that he bought all that property. Boy, I'll never figure him out and I don't think you ever will. Wouldn't it be nice if you could have a new house after the war - one which you'd design yourself but of course with the help of a professional. I hope for your sake it may come true. With all my love, Harold

#July 6, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

I received another letter from you tonight dated June 26 so now I have all except the one dated June 22. But I know that will be along soon. I'm glad you are now sending them through E company because it's so much quicker to get to me. I was certain I had told you why I was at battalion as I said before, I stayed with battalion hdqs. all the time to be around in case a message had to be taken to E co.. So since I was always there as runner (two men from each company) I decided I might just as well have my mail come direct to where I was. So often the company was several miles away and then my letter had to be re-directed to Bn. Hdqs. anyway. When it came through E co., I usually lost a day. I hope you understand now. Yesterday, I heard from Kenneth Smith and he is at Camp Edwards in a convalescing hospital and is expecting a discharge soon. He has been in much longer than I and should be discharged after all he has been through.

I can't understand it, but the 102<sup>nd</sup> division is now moving into our area so possibly we'll be relieved. But the captain said we won't move because this division is just being relieved of certain duties such as border patrol and guarding prisoners. Then we are to begin intensive training again. It is foolishness to me to give a man such hard training because with all that I had in the States it never did me or any of the others any good. But I suppose a man will soften up too much if he doesn't train. Bah! This army! Oh well, all we can do is to sit tight and see what is to happen. We are supposed to rain in this area, by the way.

I have been away all day from the company because I went on the boat trip down the Danube almost to Linz. We had to get up at 5:30 so as to eat and get down there in it. The ship that took us was a double paddle wheel type named "City of Vienna." We went the total distance downstream in only two hours but it took us six hours to return. So you can see how swift it must be. Until the Danube joins the Inn, the river is very slow moving but once at Passau it just rushes downstream. When I think of how fast we went downstream and how fast we returned, it reminds me of those crazy problems we used to work out. How well I remember some of those problems!

The ship itself in peacetime was a regular river passenger boat and was quite a thing in its day. It was about 200 to 250 ft. long and so very clean. We had to bring our own dinner but they served coffee and beer on board. Everything about the trip was so very interesting. It is a wide river – about 400-500 ft wide and twists and turns so gracefully between very steep hills on either side. I noticed the further we went downstream, the steeper the hills got until they were almost abrupt. Once in awhile, there was a small village on a little flat bit of ground right at the water's edge but in general all there was were heavily wooded hills. But nevertheless I enjoyed looking at the scenery. Every once in awhile there was a castle built on the top of one of the hills –some nearly 8 or 9 hundred yds. above the river – even higher at times. At different intervals there were a good many barges and river boats tied along the bank. We even saw the Hungarian navy which consisted of only a few gunboats so small I could have crushed it with my finger. I am not joking when I say about the Hungarian navy. We saw one particularly lavish yacht which I believed must have belonged to royalty. The name was "Hungaria" so maybe you can find out somewhere.

All the way we had music from records attached to loud speakers. I wondered why "Blue Danube" was never played so went to find out. It was because the record was in German and no one could read German. So we did have "Blue Danube" played while we were sailing upstream. Of course my camera was right along with me but the pictures I took when we started out weren't so good because it was raining. But after it cleared off it was perfectly beautiful and warm too. So many fellows were disgusted because all they saw were wooded hills but as I said, I enjoyed it. Guess I'm just a freak.

Last night several of us had a snack before we went to bed – baked potatoes, bread, butter, jam, peanut butter, and cookies. But I should know by this time that I never should do that (eat before bed) because I always wake up feeling miserable. I didn't feel too well today but I wasn't so bad I didn't enjoy myself. Tonight I seem to be all right and I know I'll never eat again before bed. Those baked potatoes tasted so good with the skins and all and it is so rare we ever get any baked.

I have just finished reading the book "Seventh Cross" and found it very interesting. I would now like to read "Assignment in Brittany" because most of the action takes place in St. Malo so I was told. Did you ever bother with the book of the month club or did you give it up entirely?

A few fellows left today to go on passes to Paris and England, but none to the Riviera for some reason. We have a sergeant, here in E co. hdqd., who refuses all passes and furloughs offered him and I can't understand why he hates to go because he just loathes the army. And to go on a furlough is one way to get out of the army for a week or so. (Boy, am I writing fast tonight for some reason and making n awful number of mistakes).

I wish you'd have Miss Martin save me all those new stamps which have been published since I left. Since I have saved so many and sent so many home, I might just as well keep saving. Maybe you could save some too, please. Even the very commonest stamps I haven't bothered to save – such as the one "Nations United for Victory," and others. Please don't forget, I am enclosing a stamp of the latter series as it is is torn and so is no good.

I wonder why Miss Martin hasn't written to me lately. I haven't heard from her in ages.

I do hope you can get to Nfld. this summer and I myself don't expect to be home this summer. If you go, be sure and bring the camera long and take a few color pictures! Try it at least! Don't say you can't, either!

This will be all for now because I want to go to bed. May God bless you dear parents and keep you safe. With all my love Harold

#July 8, 1945. Grainet, German

Dear Mum and Dad,

I must get busy again and write because I do hate to miss any of the days I should write. The missing letter came last night so am now up to date as far as June 27 so that isn't too bad. Probably I'm getting letters faster than you because my letters might have to wait because of all the troops going home. Grandma and Em also sent nice letters which I received last night.

This morning I went to church which was held at battalion and Chaplain Blich gave the sermon. Today, we had the largest attendance at church than I have seen in a very long time. The chaplain told us if we were having trouble to come and see him later and listen to his story. He then told us he has 107 points and has been declared essential – all chaplains. So he said he'd cry on our shoulders. The army certainly does some odd things and right in this regiment we have ordained ministers who are riflemen. But the chaplains' corps was filled up when they came in so now there is only enough to fill the quota. I wonder why they can't recruit enough chaplains to take the places of these high point men – they want to get home too.

Gilbert was talking to us (Swett & I) at church and he has 83 points and is expecting to leave shortly. Guess the critical score has been lowered. Of course, what save many are those children. I hope he can get out without having to remain here maybe a year as some general says might happen.

The first sgt. of battalion hdqrs is going home too and I understand John Ellis might get the position. He is that corporal who everyone says looks like me. Remember? I hope he can get it because he has been only a corporal since the division was first formed back in Aug. 1942. He has 71 points so that won't help him get out. But it is much better than what I have.

The best that I have seen yet was the way one fellow sewed in the press of his pants and the pleats of his shirts. That is a good way to make it last but I don't think too much of it because it last but I don't think too much of it because it is too artificial looking. Guess he is too lazy to bother pressing them once in awhile.

I forgot to mention in the letter two days ago that we didn't start the boat ride right from Passau. We had to go downstream about 5 miles so as to get past the blow up bridges which hindered passage. I believe every bridge along the Danube must have been blown up bBut there were no bridges the whole length where we went. We were in Austria part of that trip so I have now been in eight countries. The number is increasing all the time The next time there are passes to Hitler's mountain hideout, I must try and get there if possible. The fellows who went were telling me there was heavy snow not too far above his house but none right there or below. So it certainly must be awfully high.

Last night we got coca colas and also red wine which came from France. I still don't like wine at all even though it doesn't have much alcohol in it. I still prefer milk to anything and will be glad when I can have all I want to drink.

I have found out that some of the men at battalion have perfume to sell – like what I sent home – so will try and get a large bottle of Indiscreet and send it to Miss Keany. She asked me for some and I didn't think anyone had any left. But I know you must be set with all that I have sent you, eh?

I know this isn't much of a letter but really can't seem to thin of anything to say. May God bless you and keep you safe, my dear parents. With all my love, Harold

P.S. I am enclosing a picture which a fellow gave me at battalion this morning. He took it when we were up in Northern Germany.

#July 10, 1945. Grainet, Germany  
Der Mum and Dad,

I must get busy tonight and get another letter written because today is my day to write. There has been no mail these last couple of days so it seems to come in spurts. One time, I was caught up on my letter writing but now I have six to answer. So I am now right back where I started. Sometimes I just hate to write to other people for some reason and then again I take a spell and write four in one day. Believe it or not, since I have come out of combat, I have felt less like writing to people other than you and I cannot understand why.

The other day I sent a “Thunderbolt” to you and I want to point out the odd statement by Gen. Macon. He said “We will train here on the continent and then, at the end of a period which is at the moment somewhat indefinite, we will be returned to the States. Our future from that point on cannot be publicly disclosed at this time, I think our position is very good. I think we are in the best category and the best part of that category.” That statement is worded very oddly and is sort of confusing. Maybe his idea of being in the best category is going to the Pacific but I wonder. It is strongly rumored that we are to remain in the States as strategic reserve – one of the categories. Of course, only the future will bring forth the truth. See what you can make out of General Macon’s statement.

This morning all those men with 85 or more points left after all this time. They had been told two or three times before that they would leave the next day but it was called off. I believe they are going to the 99<sup>th</sup> division and from there home. But it may take six months. The army does some mighty odd things. We lost our 1<sup>st</sup> sgt. as I have said before and Capt. Packer who was with division after leaving our company a month ago. This company lost 11 men but F company lost both their co. commander and the executive officer – the two most important men. In all, this battalion – about 1000 men – lost 50 men so that wasn’t too many. Battalion has lost quite a few men and two officers. They certainly were a happy bunch when they left and I cannot blame them. Who wouldn’t be? There is one fellow here who has 84 points and cannot go. That certainly is a tough break but at least he is better off than I. In order to get 85 points, I figure it’ll take me till April, if I stay overseas and if the army sets a new date for adding of points.

Sunday I spent washing my clothes because as I said before, the civilians don’t do a good job at all. My O.D. pants were so dirty that I had to do something and when I was finished, they came out spotless. I only have one pair of O.D.’s until the order for the other pair comes in so they must be washed more frequently. I’m quite careful and so far the wool isn’t showing signs of washing. If only we could have a dry cleaning job done such as we had back in the States. I know wool should never be washed much and I have been careful about boiling water because I believe it causes the wool to shrink. Boy, when I get home you’ll have me do the laundry for you! Washerwoman Simms I’ll be know as! Ha! Now if only I can get hold of an iron and press them nicely. I’m getting now so I can handle an iron pretty well. Guess now I’ll be doing my own when I get home! Eh!

Talking about clothes, I tackled the supply sergeant for my two overseas stripes and have sewn them on my blouse. So with all the decorations, my patch outlined in gold and the overseas bars, I look pretty sharp – so different from the bare blouse I had when I went home after basic training. But I still only want to get home and get discharged- never mind the medals!

The mail just came in now and no mail for me. I read the newspaper and I see where the 83<sup>rd</sup> is to return home in November. So at last it has been officially announced and I am sure you have seen it. That is good because he longer I'm here, the longer I'll be out of combat. I believe I may be home sometime in January because it takes almost two months to get back home and the men of their furloughs.

As I said in my last letter, I'm getting Miss Keany a bottle of perfume but what I plan to do is send it to you and let you send it to her. In that way, I can kill two birds with one stone because I want to send you a few little things anyway. I believe I'll take a chance and send a couple rolls of exposed color film and I still haven't sent home that "Sad Sack" book as I said I would. I believe I'll also try sending some of the camera parts. Now feel that since I won't be leaving for four months it'll be worthwhile sending some of this stuff. But if I were going shortly I might as well keep it and take it home with me. We are allowed to carry that stuff home but cannot send it.

Yesterday I tried a few hands at ping pong and didn't do so well for the first few hand. But I caught on to it after a while and then I really licked the mail clerk. Maybe playing tennis helped me. Then I played a couple more fellows and really eat them. I really had an enjoyable time though. That ping pong table is in our service club which is pretty fancy.

I'm enclosing three receipts for war bonds which I might just as well send home. In two cases, you, Mum, are down as co-owner and in the other beneficiary. I just put down whatever I think of first. How are you making my bonds out.

I have more to say but will write another letter tomorrow. It is getting late now so had better go to bed. May God bless you and keep you, my darling parents. With all my love, Harold

P.S. Now I believe it is safe to send me a few packages. So be sure and send a few once in awhile, please.

#July 11, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

As I said last night, I would write today so here I am again. I know you won't complain if I do write again. Tonight some good mail came in but none from you and I can't understand why. But it'll probably be along tomorrow as it happens so often. I did get a letter from Warren but he really has so little to say. And at last, I received a small box of stationery which I certainly can use. The last letter I had from you was dated June 26 and yet this first class box of stationery was mailed June 28 – two days later. So it just goes to show much mixed up mail becomes at times. Mrs. Hendrie also sent me the church papers nand the Herald. I wonder if you could tell me what outfit Allan Lindsey is in. I believe from what he said about being with the 331<sup>st</sup> in the Bulge that he is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> armored. Or else, one of the attached tank battalions we've had all along. I read his letter in the news letter. I was surprised to find Harry Thompson in the Navy because he seemed so much younger than I. Maybe he enlisted. I certainly would never advise enlisting because then you are just inviting trouble.

Tomorrow I understood we are to have church services here in the company area. Guess I'll be going if at all possible. The chaplain has said that E company has had the best attendance at church. It is wonderful to see men still clinging to God even in these times of comparative safety. The chaplain has taken a liking to our company too and visits it quite regularly. We may be losing one of our men soon who might become the chaplain's assistant. This fellow wants to become a pastor someday and probably will study under Chaplain Blich – a good way under the circumstances.

By the way, did you ever send those photos to the Photo magazine as I asked? I also enclosed the address and the technical data. Last night I happened to think of it because I got hold of "Popular Photography" which I like to read. I ask you to do so many things that at times it is little wonder you forget. The other day, the company got in a large box of assorted film – about 400 rolls. So I bought 3 rolls of 35 mm. so as to make sure I have enough. Lately I haven't taken too many pictures because the weather has been so poor. I must get a few more scenes of the country to show you just how nice it is. If ever you think of it, maybe you could send me a couple color films via first class so I can take the scenes in color. I only have one roll left out of five – one at home and three exposed. The other day, one of the boys here, thinking the color film was movie film began to unroll the film but I caught him just in time to keep him from ruining all the pictures. I believe two are spoiled but at least it isn't one of the important rolls.

We have a regular PX set up in a room where all the merchandise is displayed. It used to be given to each platoon to be distributed but now it is a company thing. We are issued very fancy looking ration cards which I understand is to prevent counterfitting – a common occurrence in the army. The PX is open all week from 6 – 9 p.m. but because the rations come in Monday everyone rushes in the first night and then there is nothing left for the rest of the week. The room has been painted up very fancy and is quite a place in general. When we move we'll have to leave it all behind but it is worthwhile even for a couple of months.

These last couple of days, a few of us from company headquarters section have been range guards as they are called. The rifle platoons work problems in a certain area while we guard to make sure no civilian gets by because the soldiers fire live ammunition. It is much better than running the problem because at least we can sit down and read a book and take things easy in general. In this army, I'm not going to work any harder than I have to because I don't gain a thing.

I was finally about to get hold of a bottle of "Indiscreet" perfume in the larger size for Miss Keany so when I send the package home I want you to send the perfume to her and I'll send her address along. I am charging her \$5.00 which I paid in order to get the bottle. Even at that, it isn't very expensive. I might be able to get another box of three for nothing and if I do, I must try and send it (each bottle) to someone I think quite a bit of such as Grandma, Em, etc.

Another Riviera pass has just come up and Sgt. Starling – the fellow in charge of Co. Hdqs. – refused to go as he had done with all other passes. I can't understand him at all. I'd never refuse another chance to go. This makes the third man to go from the company so you can see I was very fortunate.

Our company clerk who stays at regimental personnel section came to the company yesterday to have us sign the payroll so we'll get paid the end of the month. That's the way it used to be done until we got in combat and then we signed as we were paid. I asked him why I got paid that \$5.55 extra and he said it was travel money for the time I went to the Riviera. So I guess I made out alright. He, the clerk, was the second man to go and he thought it was wonderful too. But he claimed that the first bunch was the only ones getting the money. He also asked me if I ever got my bronze star medal which I haven't as yet but have gotten credit on the print system. What a memory that man has! We also had to sign the number of points we have and I have 64 points definitely. I was looking through the list and didn't find more than 30 men higher than I. So I must be in the upper half alright. But will it help me?

The day before yesterday there was a U.S.O. show in Passau but I didn't go. It turned out to be Jack Benny, Fred Allen, and quite a bunch of movie stars which you have

probably heard or heard about. Most of those shows aren't worthwhile but I would like to have seen this one.

Well, this will be all for now because after writing two days in a row, I've run out of news. Hope you are using some of the perfume and don't give much away!! May Glad bless you and keep you my dear parents. With all my love, Harold

#July 12, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mother and Dad,

For some reason I am in the mood to write again tonight so this makes three straight evenings I've written. Tonight I got quite a bit of mail so now I had better get busy and answer all of them. It always happens that I get all my mail at once and then it takes me a couple of month to answer them all. I also received a later from you dated July 1<sup>st</sup> and I'm glad you finally got the camera back. But what an awful price to pay. But I suppose it was worthwhile considering that the camera is worth over \$100.

Ruby sent me an unusually long letter and I was pleased no end. And Mrs. Newell and Miss Martin wrote so I got quite a bunch now to answer. Miss Martin sent me two photos of herself – one alone on a beach and another with Dad on some boat. Boy, Dad, she is snuggled up to you! Mum, I'm aggravated with you because you haven't told me all you should have!! I understand that you have ulcers. Is that true? Why didn't you ever tell me? You did too much worrying but I know it is useless to tell you not to worry because at times I'm the same way.

I got hold of another box with those three small bottles in it and will send it the same time as Miss Keany's. I want those three to go to Em, Grandma, and the Newells (Ruby). Ruby never had much of that while Betty and the rest were able to if they wanted. But don't give any way that you have. If you do, take one of these bottles to make up for it because I want you to have plenty where you never had much good stuff. Now mind you, I want you to keep it!! I'll leave it up to your discretion which bottle to give to which person. Personally I like the "N" scent best of all. And you? I hope you can send Grandma the perfume. If impossible let me know right away and I'll try sending it direct. Check up on it though. And to think that when we first got the perfume up in the Harz Mts. in April that we'd open a bottle and throw it over each other until someone told us that the perfume was worth money. A first we couldn't send it home either but the general got it straightened up with postal authorities. Probably because he had some to send home himself!

At last, I have all my clothes that I'm suppose to but now I can't seem to get hold of an iron so as to press them. Sometime I'll get my clothes in shape. Now I know what you have to go through with washing and ironing.

I told you a few days ago about having a cold but have now gotten rid of it entirely thanks to the Vicks. Everyone seems to have colds now but I lost mine sooner than the rest. This hot and then cold weather seems the best time to catch colds. Maybe we're softening up!

I just happen to think, if you can't send the perfume to Grandma because of border regulations you can give it to Miss Martin. She has been so nice to you and that is why I think so much for her.

When Ruby wrote she told me that now she knows her mother's age because she asked her grandmother. But she wouldn't tell me. Mrs. Newell certainly stayed young for a long time! Ha! Ruby certainly is getting more clever now and has probably wondered about her age for a long time

Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>

I couldn't seem to finish your letter last night so will try again this evening. Dad, sometimes you've taken almost a week to write a letter but of course people were bothering you all the time.

Today I went out to the range again but instead of being guard, I was enemy detail. When I saw the first scout appear I would shoot my rifle into the air and then drop into a hole while they (the main body) behind the 1<sup>st</sup> scout fired on targets nearby. It would take too much space to explain just what I mean but I'll let it go at that.

For some reason, I was giving deep thought to my future and have decided to go back to Tufts and get my engineer's degree. And then if photography interested me I could continue. Anyway that is the way I feel right at present.

I hope you'll be able to get to Nfld. this summer and it's a good time because I am to remain here until November. Even if you do go, I hope we can go back after the war and just travel around and see all my Dad's country. It would be nice to have many scenes in color. Of course, if we get there, I will definitely do that.

Everyone was telling me that you look so much happier now after having it announced that the 83<sup>rd</sup> is to stay for awhile. I'm finding out all about you from my spies stationed near you!! Ha! Things could be much worse, my dear parents. God has been so good and we must never forget. Never relax our faith in times of apparent safety!!

I was wondering if you ever got the package I sent just before I came to southern Germany. I sent a Nazi flag and most important of all, the purple heart medal. I sent the package first class and it cost a small fortune but it was well worth the price because most first class packages take about half the normal time. Now if only I can get hold of a box so I can send some of the stuff that is ready to go. I'm really ending home too much junk though!

This afternoon, I got hold of an iron finally and pressed all my clothes – two suits of OD.'s and a set of underwear so I'm all set for awhile – until they get dirty again. It really took me a long time because that heavy wool didn't want to press just right. But patience is a virtue so they say and I stuck with it until it was right.

You asked me if I ever got the Easter card from Em with the stamps and the answer is yes. I try so hard to tell you everything but once in awhile I slip up.

By the way, how are the evergreens doing now? I'll never forget as long as I live the expression on your face when you saw them after I "butchered them." You certainly had a good cry about them but the last I knew they seem to be doing fine again. Hope you took it easy on them, Dad!

Em told me about her father so you don't have to worry about me saying something to her. I don't tell everything I know, remember!

Tomorrow night there is to be quite a party go on. We, E co., are to have Czech women here and hold a dance in our service club. So now everyone is getting things ready and it really looks very nice. We are even having a dance band come. So the fellows are glad and all excited. Of course, I don't care a thing about it.

Miss Martin claims she has been accused of giving a secret away – the building of the small boat. I don't really remember who told me first but don't be too cruel on the poor girl, Dad! Ha! I have finally decided on two names but guess they aren't much good. The first is "Ruby L" and the other is Haruwill – an odd name but our three names are in it. I'll leave it up to your discretion though. This will be all for now. May God bless you and keep you. With all my love, Harold

#July 15, 1945. Grainet, Germany  
Deqr Mum and Dad,

Today is such a perfect day and so different from a few days ago. The day before yesterday, it grew fine and has been perfect for three days. Let's hope it stays this way because it makes living so much more pleasant. Yesterday I got busy at last and took quite a few pictures especially of scenery. I had my picture taken yesterday under the large E company sign but don't think so much of that because I had on old dirty fatigues. I also took a couple pictures of Richard Hall, a clerk here in the C.P. He has the same character of Francis Nelen and every time I'm near him that is who I think of. The service club was all decorated up yesterday so I went up and took a few pictures inside. The reason it was so fancy was because we had the party last night. Remember I told you about having Czech women here and a dance band. Some of the girls were good looking but some were almost hideous but I didn't bother with a single one. I enjoyed watching them dance, though, and hearing the band play. But as you know, I'm not for that type of entertainment!

Lsst evening for supper we had real blueberry pie. All these German children went out and picked them for us and then the baker went to work. For some reason these berries seemed to be worse than ours at home because when we finished eating everyone's lips and teeth were terribly blue. And what a job to get rid of it. We liked it nevertheless but I still think you're the best cook of all, Mum.

Yesterday, I received the plans for our boat which Mrs. W. sent through battalion headquarters. I think it is quite a nice looking yacht and is just right for three or four persons. I was noticing dotted lines for other types of jibs but can't use nautical terms to explain. There is the ordinary one, a larger one, and a balloon type also. Did you buy all those or is canvas still very scarce. Miss Martin said you had many offers for the boat but I do hope you hold onto it as we've never owned one before. If possible, why don't you take a few pictures of the yacht so I can see what color it is, etc. Is there much room inside and how much? I seem to be asking more questions than anything. I hope you'll christen the boat when it is launched.

I have just been figuring out about the free schooling under the G.I. Bill of Rights. I know I'll be in at least two years so that will entitle me to 36 months of school. But since a college in normal times has only 9 months per year of actual school, I can get four free years of college. According to books, a summer vacation isn't included in the time. Only actual time spent in school. So maybe I won't have to touch any of my money in the bank. I know I can get along on \$50 per month spending money because I have gotten along on much less. As I said in my last letter, I have decided to go back to Tufts but of course, anything can come up.

This morning, I went to church again at battalion and this time it was Chaplain Webster. For some reason I could hardly sit still and listen. Maybe it's because he really isn't too good a speaker. I saw John Ellis while here and he won't be first sergeant after all. They now have a staff sgt. from communications platoon as acting 1<sup>st</sup> sgt.

I have a package all ready to send to you. Guess I'll take a chance and send home all the color film and the Leica parts. I sure hope they aren't caught because I don't believe I should be sending them. But more than once I have taken a chance and have come out all right. By the way, did you ever receive that package with the Nazi flag and purple heart? I'm sending in this box a set of three small bottles of perfume like I sent to you before, some photos which you have sent but haven't enough room to carry them, Leica lens, Leica parts, and the Kodachrome film. I couldn't get everything in that I wanted to because the package would be so heavy it would cost me a small fortune. And not only that, but a small package is less conspicuous than a larger one. In the next box I send, I'll send the Leica motor, "Sad Sack" book, lens mouny, and the bottle of "Indiscrete" perfume for Miss Keany. Her address is Miss Josephine A. Keany, 30 Brandon Rd., Milton 86, Mass. Charge her \$5.00 and that

will be all. With this group of three, give Em a bottle, Ruby, and Grandma if customs regulations permit. If not give it to Miss Martin. I'll leave it up to you as to which bottle should be for whom because I know nothing about that stuff.

They have decided here, to keep me and another fellow on the switchboard at all times. So we won't do a bit of training and that suits me just fine. I'll have half a day to myself and can do anything and then the other half I'll be on the board. At 6 p.m. we plug n all phones so we are off all the rest of the evening. That is a good deal and I won't be on any deals such as K.P., guard, etc. As yet, I haven't got a bugle but am really not too anxious.

Maybe soon I'll be able to work in the photo shop if they decide to set one up. If only you could send me some chemicals in a short time I'd ask you but it takes so long for packages to come through. Talking about packages, a queer one happened. A fellow here received a package that I swear weighed at least 15 pounds and I'm just wondering how it got through from a civilian.

I forgot to tell you that one of those films I'm sending is Agfacolor and will have to be sent to a different place. Ask Mr. Robbins about it.

This will be all for now. May God bless you and keep you my dear parents. With all my love,, Harold

P..S. . Please send a package of anytng. I;m running low on stamps again.

#July 16 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Last night and this evening I received two letters from you dated July 3 ad 6 (#70 and #71). But I still am missing #68 but expect it at any time. Boy, the mail really came in good last night and today because letters are as late as July 10 – six days to come here so that isn't bad. I also had a letter from Em and she enclosed more crosswords.

You told me in the latest letter about getting the camera back and I'm glad it came back at last. But now if only you can get the film. Most of the German cameras take 120 size while the U.S. takes a 620. I was afraid after that you might jam the camera if you did not know how to close it but you probably know now. I hope after all that money that it'll take a good picture. I guess the Leica motor is worth hanging onto if it is worth nearly \$50. Who could ever think a small item like that would cost so much. As I said in my last letter, I'm going to take a chance and send the camera parts home. Talking about packages, did you ever get that missing package yet? I hope you do because of that purple heart. I may get another medal which I told you about and that is the good conduct medal. All I have is a ribbon I wear on my jacket but this is a regular medal like the purple heart and the bronze star I will get soon. The 50 oldest men in the company are to have them I understand so that will include me. But if I have to wait awhile it won't bother me. I don't care a thing about those things and only want to get home.

You think you're having queer weather! But it couldn't be any worse than over here. It rained for so long and then came out fine but cool. Today has really been a scorcher though and so muggy! I certainly don't like this weather at all and actually liked cold weather better. All through the cold spell when everyone was wearing winter underwear I had on summer ones. Yet I was none the worse. I had to laugh at Stasi just before we left. He was still wearing winter underwear but cut off the legs and arms. We used to tease him and he'd start to curse the supply sergeant for not giving him some summer ones. For some reason we have been getting all clothing in except summer underwear but I'm all set now with my clothes.

Today, I tried to write some letters because I have so many to answer .but the heat bothered me so much that all I could write was two – one each to Ken Smith and Ruby. This

afternoon I went to sleep and slept a couple of hours because there really was nothing else to do. So now I'm aught up on my sleep.

Tonight there was a mad rush for the PX because every Monday a new supply goes on sale. I was about 15<sup>th</sup> in line so was able to get everything that I could. I meant to get a new towel but forgot all about it so will have to make the old one do. I like this new PX system because now there is much more choice instead of being given whatever they feel like. But all in all we have been getting a good deal in the rations.

July 17, 1945.

I wasn't able to finish this last night so well get it done today. Last evening it just seemed as though the heavens opened and did it pour! It kept up almost all night and this morning there was a drizzle. Anyway, it is much cooler but I'm afraid it'll get too cold and damp. What changeable weather! You at home seem to have your weather troubles too

Yesterday we had quite a good meal of fried chicken and I got quite a bit. I have gotten so I don't want the neck but remember how I always used to only want that! I'm still terribly fussy about some food – particularly stew and hash - and will go without before I'll eat that stuff! I never gripe about the food no matter how small a meal we get. But oh, haven't some of the fellows made a fuss over getting too small a meal. I still don't eat too much! We had some nice figs yesterday and these come from Spain too – Canary Islands I believe. The U.S. army is getting oranges, figs, grapes, bananas, etc. through Spain.

I suppose by now you've heard about the fraternization rule being lifted and now the soldiers can talk in public to German grown-ups. But that seems a joke to me because yhe men have been speaking to the women all along and even more! These German kids certainly run for the mess hall every meal and collect all the scraps that are left over. They really make a scramble for the left-over food and some families must be living off the American food.

In the latest "Yank" magazine, there is a picture of Boston – Tremont St. looking toward Park St. church along the commons. It really made me feel homesick but it won't be too long before I'll be home again. I am not sure which month but expect to be home either in December or January. It would be wonderful to be home for this Christmas after missing two years. Just think, we have a good many fellows in this company who were home for last Christmas. But of course, they are very low point men.

We have got new replacements in two days ago to take the place of those men who were sent to be discharged. These men are from the 76<sup>th</sup> division which is supposed to be disbanded shortly. These men are very low point men. The divisions are certainly being turned all around and no one seems to know just what is going on.

I'm so glad you can go out so often and the gas situation couldn't be quite as tough as it was before. You seem to be going to Humarock quite often now and I'm so glad you can do it. You're doing almost as much travelling as I am. But not quite!

I am wondering if it is worth while writing to Betty for awhile. Is she going to be gone all summer or just part?

Sometimes it is so hard to find something to say but I always manage to say something even though it may not be interesting.

May God bless you and keep you my dear parents. With all my love, Harold

#July 18, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here it is bright and early in the morning - about 7:30 – and I'll start on your letter. But I won't be like Ruby who took one whole week to complete one letter! Every morning we get up at 6:30 for reveille even though there is no bugle. But that is the only real formation

we have and don't have retreat in this company even though battalion has. There are a good many things we're really suppose to do but don't because after being in combat most of the men just don't care.

Last evening, I received a letter from you date July 8 (#72) so that isn't too old. Now I'm waiting for #68 which hasn't appeared as yet. I hope there was nothing important in that letter but I hate to miss one letter regardless. Don't forget, if there is anything important to say such as getting a package from me, etc., be sure and tell me in two letters so I'll know as soon as possible. I also heard from Warren last night and in his letter he told more than ever before. He is suppose to be in the supply section but seems to be doing everything. He also is a damage control man in case the ship is hit and he also stands dear old guard (watches I believe in the navy). Maybe his ship is in that fleet that is now shelling the Japanese mainland. That certainly is a feat in itself – this seems to make the situation better than we actually thought.

I got my other package mailed last night with the Leica motor, lens mount, "Sad Sack" book, and Miss Keany's perfume. So now I have everything on the way home that is possible but I still have the slide rule, drawing set, and a couple camera parts too large to get in a package. I believe these parts are for reproducing negatives or something like that. What a bunch of junk I had and unless I sent it home as I did I would never have been able to carry it all home because of the weight.

Last evening for supper, we had a real treat – ice cream and cookies. It certainly tasted good but not as good as the U.S. ice cream. I believe a civilian made it for us but of course we had to furnish ingredients for the mixture. Our baker made some awfully good cookies and I do wish they'd let him bake more often because he is very good at that. In the army everything is done in mass production when it comes to cooking. But I still maintain that no cook or baker will ever equal my mother's cooking.

One of the platoons went to Passau yesterday for one week to put on a tactics demonstration for the artillery. It'll probably be pretty rough on the fellows but nothing like combat. With them there, we had more ice cream last night so it was nice to have them gone.

I have been speaking of platoons, battalion, regiment, etc. but do you really know how the set-up is? I'll try and give you a little idea in this letter. The highest here in Europe was SHAEF which was supreme hdqs. Then an army group came next with and army following - I believe 2 to 4 armies in an army group. Then comes corps – any number of corps in an army. Next comes division with any number in a corps – no designated amount. But from division down we have 3 regiments in a division, 3 battalions in a regiment, 3 rifle companies in a battalion plus a heavy weapons company which has heavy machine guns and 81 mm. mortars plus hdq. company. And in each rifle company there are 8 rifle platoons plus a weapons platoon with light machine guns and mortars. And in each rifle platoon is 3 squads which is made up of 12 men. A squad is the base of the whole army. Probably all this is confusing but maybe you'll have a better idea what I mean at times. In our [second] battalion, E, F and G companies are rifle companies while H is the heavy weapons company. I learned all about the set-up in basic training but until I actually got in a division I never really understood. As a bugler I learned everything and am more or less a jack of all trades. But how many things I have used? Absolutely none!

Two days ago a couple of fellows got into a water fight throwing water at each other near a large watering place. I got the greatest kick out of watching because it ended up everyone was into it and even went as far as men jumping right into the large pool and ducking each other. Boy, were they soaked after that so most went in and had to change clothes. It provided us with a bit of entertainment which we like and need once in awhile.

Yesterday, a few of the men from E company were to be decorated with the bronze star by Colonel Foster – our regimental commander. But instead of going to regiment which is in the next town, they went way to division by mistake which is about a hundred miles round trip. So now they have to go again today and I hope to the right place. I suppose I'll have to go soon when my name comes up. I have credit for my bronze star but have never been awarded the medal itself. Gee, I hate to get up here and have the full colonel read off my name and tell what a wonderful job I did in combat as most citations are done. A large certificate is given also and tells why the medal was awarded. What a line most of them have such as in the case of Max Haber. He got the bronze star for good interpreting and it told how he saved men because of his good job. Oh well, when my turn comes, I'll tell you all about it. But please don't let anything get into the papers because I hate that stuff. I suppose the army will send a story in though as it did with the purple heart. I certainly hope you get that medal before long as it has been on the way for quite awhile. Mail is quite slow going home now, though, so shouldn't expect too much.

Here I am to the end again and haven't said a thing at all but just rambled on and on. It is so hard to find interesting subjects all the time. God bless you. With all my love,  
Harold

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July 19, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Last night I finally received the missing letter so now I'm up to date as far as July 8. I will say that the mail is coming through pretty well now but can't understand why it is so slow coming to you. I always write so it isn't my fault as you realize. I don't see how boys can go so long without writing to their parents. Maybe they haven't the love that I have for you folks. I really think so much of you both and am getting quite anxious to see home once again. When I do get home, I'll be wearing three overseas stripes instead of the two I have now.

As I said before, I sent out two packages just recently so now there are three on the way which you haven't gotten yet. The price of one package has come back and it cost \$1.68 first class so it really cost quite a bit. The second one shouldn't cost quite as much because wasn't quite as heavy. The mail clerk told me that once past the division A.P.O. the packages are safe from censoring. He said the way to tell if the package has passed is by receiving the price of the package. So one has gotten through and now I'll have to wait a couple of days to see if the other one get past. If we were going home right away, it wouldn't be worth while bothering to send them home but these boxes should be home before I arrive. So much for packages. By the way, I found some stamps in the last letter so am set for a few letters. I've been slowly catching up on my writing and at first had 1-0 answer to answer but now have only 4.

Yesterday I found out that all the runners but Swett and I were decorated yesterday afternoon with the bronze star. Our company got mixed up one day so that is why we didn't go. But I'm certain we will go next time which should be in about a week. I suppose I should feel like a big shot but the army has made most of these medals a joke. Everone seems to be getting the bronze star which at one time was an honor to receive. And the purple heart is the same – a man can have a leg off while another has cut himself on a can and still get the same award. Yes, I've known men to get the purple heart for cutting themselves on tin cans, and that is no lie. The combat infantryman's badge was an honor at one time because only men who have been under small arms fire were eligible. But now clerks, cooks, etc. are getting them and most have never been more than 5 miles near the front lines. I'm telling you the blunt facts because I think the people at home are disillusioned so many times. But

don't say anything to anyone about what I just said. Just let them think as they have been. The army always turns something worthwhile into a big joke. In fact the army is a big joke itself!

Last night Swett and I took a walk down to F company to see Stasi and Schaub. The company is only in the next town so wasn't a very long walk. All we found was Stasi so he told us about getting decorated and what he has been doing lately. He is now assistant mail clerk so that is a good job - much better than a runner even though that job is better than being a rifleman! Stasi has gotten both the bronze star medal and good conduct medal lately so is planning to send them both home at once. I hope to be able to do that shortly.

All the fellows here are now receiving their correspondence courses which they sent for but because I wasn't here at the time, I couldn't order them. One has gotten a course in auto mechanics which I don't care a thing about. But another has a course in plane and spherical trigonometry so I'll have to study up on it. I took a course in this at Tufts and need a little brushing up on almost all courses. Since we are returning to the States in November I would not be bothered sending for a course because it takes almost two months for them to come back. So I'll wait and see what will happen when we get back in the good ole U.S.A.

Yesterday the Jack Benny show which you read about in the "Thunderbolt" was here in Passau. There were only five men to go from headquarters of this company. I'm in E hdqs. so when I speak of that that is what I mean. So names were drawn to see who would go but I was unlucky and missed out. Anyway, I wrote some letters - one to Grandma (I'm sending her letters direct now) and one to Mrs. Hendrie. Everyone said it was a good show and usually that type is good. I don't think so much of these shows put on by the soldiers because most haven't had professional experience.

Swett has been overseas nearly 16 months and he hasn't had one pass or furlough yet. So I've been trying to get him something and I believe I'm getting results. Shortly he tells me that he will get something, so the first sgst. said. I saw the list and the number of the order. I happen to be 145<sup>th</sup> so I have to wait an awfully long time before I have another pass. It really doesn't matter to me because I had my fun at the Riviera. Our executive officer has gone to Paris, not on a pass but to attend this I & E school (Information and Education) at Paris for one week., None of us miss him though because he is too strict for this bunch of fellows. These men would take it if they were never in combat but after coming out it is hard to get back to garrison soldiers.

Did I tell you that we had a record attendance last Sunday at church? We had 75 which is the most ever. It seems to be climbing too because the chaplains are getting after the fellows about going to church. Chaplain Blich has a pretty fancy pulpit which he had made at the local carpenter's. It is all folding so so can be carried around very easily. In the army everything needs to be collapsible so it'll take up as little room as possible. The chaplains have done a fine job all along - combat as well - and I'll give them all the credit in the world I see all of them are wearing bronze stars for meritorious service.

I was just thinking that I have met such a bunch of people that I doubt if I'll remember some names at home. After a while names get to be rather confusing with men coming in and out so quickly. When I first came into the army and got to know someone, I hated to part but now it is part of the routine and I don't mind it a bit. The army has taught me not to be so soft-hearted but other than that there is absolutely nothing they taught me.

Today is the day I like - cool but fine. I'm like you and wilt in hot weather for some reason. How is the garden doing this year through all that odd weather? Hope you have the best in the neighborhood, Dad! It would be nicer to be home in spring or summer and see

the garden and all. But just to get home any time will seem wonderful If you see Alice Shedd ask her why she isn't writing.

I didn't plan on writing a letter today because this isn't my day. But I just seem to have more to say for a change. May God bless you and keep you my dear parents. With all my love, Harold

#July 21, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

This morning just after we ate, Swett and I were notified that we should be at battalion headquarters at 9:00 to be decorated. I did more rushing around and finally got ready but we've been having quite a bit of excitement these last couple of days. Later in the letter I'll tell you what I mean. Swett and I finally got there on time and soon all the men who were to be decorated got in line. There were only about 15 men and usually it is usually no less than 25. Colonel Foster, the regimental officer, came and as a captain (unknown name) read off our names and a little bit about why he was getting the award, he (Col.Foster) pinned on the bronze star ribbon. I was next to last with little Swett last and I never thought he'd get to me. When he finally did my heart was throbbing so fast I thought everyone could hear it. Boy, wasn't that a relief to get it over with. Of course, there was all kinds of formalities! Afterward, Capt. Thurmond gave us each the official certificate telling why each was awarded the bronze star. What a line mine had! And they also gave us the bronze star medal itself so now I must try and send it home. For some reason a good many who have been decorated before us have never received the medal itself.

I'll now try and tell you why all the excitement. Gen. Patton himself is coming to review troops of the 83<sup>rd</sup>. I have always heard that we are one of his pet infantry divisions even though he is partial to armored. But there is to be only one battalion from each regiment and this bat. is it. Curse his hide!! He has made us go to more trouble and waste of time just so he can see us. We must wear all ribbons, have shined shoes, and even have our helmets varnished like his. We are to wear the E.T.O. jacket (dress blouse) and if is a hot day, I'm afraid it'll be miserable. I helped yesterday to paint the helmets and I had to laugh at one of the captain's cursing. He said it'll cost the poor tax payers several thousand dollars just so Patton can review us. So now you can see why everything is in an uproar. He is supposed to be here Tuesday at division hdqs. where we will parade but I hope it pours so hard we can't go! I have just finished polishing my shoes which I have been after for about a month now. Even though they were rough leather when I started out, the shoes have quite a good shine now. These are the 8E pair and seem to feel better on my feet. So next time I'll have to order that size. Who said I had such a big hoof! I have smaller than you, Dad, even though you used to kid me by saying I'd have a large nose and foot! But hah, I fooled you!! I seem to be so much easier on shoes now and don't turn them on the side as much as I used to.

Because I work on the switchboard I have overheard quite a few things. Bu last night I heard the company commander say that we'd have breakfast at 8:30 instead of the usual time 7:000. But I soon found out this morning because a 5:30 we arose and raided the whole town to see if we could find any hidden weapons, false credentials, etc. Boy, they really took the civilians by surprise! And the men uncovered all kinds of things such as a whole case of G.I. laundry soap. And small items such as cigarettes, candy, Lux soap. But of this was given to them for laundry they have done for us. The whole division coordinated and raided certain towns. In fact, I believe it was an army order. That is the only way to get the civilians by surprise. I don't know how they get all their information but they know when we are to move and even knew when the fraternization rule had been relaxed.

So now you can see why we had such an exciting time these last couple of days! Of course, my most exciting time will be when I return to the good ole U.S. I hope now that I have been told we are home that I'm not kept in Europe. It wouldn't be bad attending school. But to have basic training again would drive me crazy.

I forgot to tell you that our helmets have been re-painted now with the division patch and my name! And here I had gotten rid of the name. Guess it is useless to try and do anything. Then after all that was done, they sprayed them with lacquer to give them a very shiny finish – looks like Patton's helmet. I helped yesterday to lacquer them and handed the sprayer to a man spraying the helmets – almost like mass production.

Swett is going to Berchtesgarden – Hitler's hideout – to spend 5 days there. He doesn't really want to go there because it's still in Germany. He wants to go where it is possible to buy things such as Paris or England etc. I know he'll be going on another pass after this because he is an old man in the company and this pass he will be on won't count. I just found out today from the mess sgt. that the first sgt. who came overseas with E company wanted us runners to get the first passes the company gave back in Luxemburg. He said we really deserved it but the company commander (Lt. Chambers) had a different opinion. But this sgt. was wounded in the Hurtgen forest so we never got our passes until recently. They in the company seemed to think we never did anything but a few knew the truth.

The other package has now cleared the A.P.O. and this package cost \$1.53 – not quite as much as the other. So now it's just a matter of time when the package gets home. Hope you have sent me a few boxes but judge yourself accordingly because remember it won't be too long before I'll be on my way home!

I really have more to say but I must get busy and prepare for this parade. With all my love Harold

#July 22, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

I meant to write a much longer letter last night than I did but I was so tired after all the excitement that I just didn't feel like doing it. Today has been just like a week day because we had reveille and then prepared for the inspection which was held this afternoon. I have an M-1 for this parade instead of a carbine as I have been carrying because all men from this company must have them. We have done more falling in and out lately for inspections but today was the big one – the regimental commander, Col. Foster came down. We had on all dress equipment in that terribly hot sun and weren't we all hot! I was sporting my four ribbons plus combat infantryman's badge while most had two on. The full Col. Plus Lt. Col. Norris (bat. commander) inspected every man to see that everything was alright. I had to laugh when Col. Foster came to me and surprised me by complimenting that that was how a good soldier should wear his ribbons – neatly as I had them. Then Col. Norris spoke up and said "He's a headquarters man and that's where he learned all he did. He was my runner!" So he remembered. And I almost smiled right out because it took me by surprise and also because he gave battalion hdqs. all the credit for what I knew. It really made me feel rather proud that the two colonels had to say what they did about me. I really had everything in A-1 condition and some were so terribly sloppy. Maybe when I get home I won't be quite as bad in appearance as before!

Tomorrow we are to get up at 4:30 so will be going to bed early. We are to go to the division parade grounds to practice this review and make sure we know what we have to do. But then Tuesday is the big day and I'll be so glad when it's over. And Wednesday we are supposed to have the day off because we missed today. I certainly hope it is a little cooler

Tuesday and This evening after all this hot weather it looks like rain. I wouldn't be surprised if it really rains tonight. Maybe we might even rain Patton out, I hope!!!

Why, this morning I was so busy that I had no time to even go to church - only about four went from here. The rifle I have was rather dirty because it was borrowed and I had to get it clean before this afternoon.

Tonight we had an exceptionally fine supper with steak, fried potatoes, peas, pineapple, and tea! It really tasted fine after some of the stews and hash we have had. I'll give the cooks credit because they really have to work hard to prepare a meal. So many fellows gripe at the meals and say the cooks are lazy but they do the best they can with the rations. We are drawing much less rations now than we were when we were in combat. But I don't seem to be wasting away just yet.

There was no mail tonight, in fact very little. I'm sending out the bronze star certificate which tells why I was award the star. I rolled it up in cardboard and put some airmail stamps on it. So now, I want you to send me more stamps because I put six on that thing.. And please send mesome stationary, because I am getting quite low again. Don't forget!. Yesteerday I got my good conduct medal at last so will be sending two medals together. I hope by this time you get the spurle heart because I would date to lose it. I understand, though, that you can uy these medalks nack in the states so it isn't as ad lodin them as if it was impossible to replace.

I was just thinking of that sailor we saw on our train going to Boston He had three ribbons on abd really thought he was a general. Remember? I never thought I'd have that many and even have four.. One fellow heree has been in five years and only has three ribbons so I am not bad at all Guess I brag too much abosut my awards. But I'm proud of them!

I see in tonight's paper that the point system may be lowered but it won[t affect me. Thek points are frozen of May 12 so unless it comes down to 64 it won't help. But at least I'll be that much closer. I believe in about six monaths they will be adding up points again the way the papers read - every every six monts is the way we all understand. I would have 76 in Nov. - six fmonths after May. But it is no use counting my chickens before they're hatched. Eh?

Did I tell you that I have two dress (E.T.O.) jackets now. I got one when I went to Nice and then a few days ago, the supply sgt. issued me another one. Of course, what the sgt. doesn't know doesn't hurt him.

I change on and off so one won't get too dirty. I wouldn't want to wash one because they are so heavy and I don't think they'd look good. The best way is dry cleaning I believe. It really will seem good to get home again at least back in the States where I can speak he languages and know he money system. If I have a bugle back in the States in the training camp it won't be bad at all - I'll have a good job.

Two days ago, I tried to fire my automatic carbine to see what it was like. Boy, it sounded like a machine gun. The barrel was really hot when I finished so had to wait until it cooled. Then had to get busy and clean it because after firing it must be done.

This really will be all for this evening because now I'm out of news. I may not have time to write for a couple of days so don't expect a letter. Looks as though the storm has passed over, darn it.

May God bless you and keep you my dear parents. With all my love, Harold

#July 24, 1945. Grainet, Germany  
Dear Mum and Dad,

I didn't think I'd get a chance to write today because of all the excitement but at the last minute this whole parade was called off. And to think that we worked so hard trying to get everything down pat. Isn't that always the way things go?

As I said Sunday night when I wrote, we got up at 4:30 yesterday morning and then got ready to go to the parade grounds – about 60 miles from here. We only had our work clothes on while drilling because our good clothes would be kept till today. It took us two hours to get there. This place is somewhere about 40 miles down the Inn River from Passau on a huge airfield where Patton was suppose to land. Just think, we drilled from 8 o'clock until about 4 and we were all dead tired! I will say it was a very impressive parade with the band playing, guns saluting, and the Infantry marching while artillery rode past in trucks. There was more brass around and almost all the officers were lt. colonels or higher. At noon we did get an hour and a half off to eat our one K ration but I knew I could have eaten two I was so hungry. Thank goodness the day was cool or it really would have been miserable. And to think we had to go through all that suffering and then to have it called off. Grr, I'd like to shake someone, alright!! This morning if the parade hadn't been called off, we would have gotten up at 3:30 a.m. Anyway we have the whole day off so everyone is resting up. I had a terribly sun and wind burned face and look like a beet this morning.

The airfield where we were was full of German planes along the edge. Boy, our air force really fixed them and shot most to pieces. They did have a huge transport there which was captured intact. I should have brought my camera along but just didn't think of it.

Well last night I received another letter from you dated July 11 and one from George St. Andre who is in Greenland,. I believe. I can't understand why Don Hunter never tells his parents anything. I like to let you know of every single thing that goes on here. Just awhile ago I wrapped up the bronze star and good conduct ribbons so now it will be on its way shortly. You will have three medals (not ribbons) when and if you get them all. I'm still hoping you get the purple heart before long because that is a beautiful looking medal. So now I have 4 packages on the way!

Boy, was I surprised to hear that Uncle Leon was in Boston and hope you were able to see him. But the uncle I like the best is Uncle Don, probably because he used to visit us more often. Uncle Leon has a fine job now and with him leaving Shelburne will there be any Pentzes in the town?

Guess I've got to start prodding you now because you let too many three day intervals go by now. I'd rather have you write every other day even if there is nothing to say. You should really have more to tell than me because I have the same routine day after day. Now don't forget, don't slip up on your writing.

I have just been counting up my money and have \$18 left so next month I'll have to be sure and send a money order. But I didn't feel as though I could afford to buy a bond and send money home too. I believe I'll hang onto a little extra now in expectation of going home! I have really spent more lately than ever before because of all these PX rations and all the packages I have been sending home. A little here and a little there really adds up after awhile. Lasst night we drew our rations agdin and I wqaas quite close to the front of the line because most men were so tired they woudnt be bothered to go

My writing seems to be more scribbly than ever in this letter because I'm trying or rush. I have been thinking of so many things that I have to write fast to keep up with my mind. We will be having dinner shortly so want to be sure and have this done by then. It was nice to come back last night stared and find plenty to eat. It was exceptionally fine with plenty of fried chicken! I don't think so much of boiled chicken but still like it the way you do it. I certainly hope the food situation gets better before long and am so glad that Mr. Richardson can help you once in awhile.

We have a 20 year old fellow here who really doesn't know what civilian life is because his father is in the regular army as a lt. colonel. He has always lived on an army post but now he hates the army so much that I don't believe he will live in a camp again. And who with any sense does like this darned place. All I can do is hope my points will help me sometime. Guess all we can do is just wait and see what is to happen.

Today is so nice and cool – just right for a parade. Boy, to think how one man can cause a whole division of men to suffer. Of course, it's because our officers want to impress him just as all the politicians of Boston had to do when he arrived here.

This will be all for now and am going to eat now. May God bless and keep you dear parents. I think so much of you. With all my love, Harold

#July 25, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Der Mum and Dad,

I have just finished a nice steak supper so feel just in the mood for writing even though today isn't my day. Lately I seem to be writing mood than you or I should say more often. But nevertheless I write more words on a sheet. This evening I seemed to have hit the jackpot because I received two late letters from you - #74 and #75), a nice letter from Mr. Marsell, the news sheet from Mrs. Hendrie, and a package from you. I just ran out of ink so that's why the sudden change of ink. I would not trade this pen for the best one going because this has never given me any trouble except when I put German ink in it. Getting back to the package, I wouldn't be surprised if that was the missing box. It had soap in it which I can use because the ones we are being issued now are too heavy for me. I never like heavy ones as you know. And there was nuts, candy coated almonds, peanut butter and crackers, etc. It is as good an assortment as usual and I know I've seen the most impractical things come out of some boxes.

I'm hoping that you'll be able to get to Nfld. without any trouble but nowadays travelling is a hard thing to do. I see where almost all the Pullmans have been taken over by the army and I know I'm glad to see it done. On a long trip it was no fun trying to sleep in coaches. The civilians will just have to do less travelling than before until redeployment is over with. Boy, everyone in our family seems to be flying now. I'm glad Uncle Leon was able to see you after so many years – in 1939 wasn't it the last time you saw him?

You were asking about the bronze star citation certificate and it is on its way as I said yesterday. It is in a cardboard roll and has 5 airmail stamps on it. That sort of puts me low on stamps but was able to scrape up 5 to replace those. I wish you would send me some more stamps and stationery as I'm getting dangerously low. I may write on toilet paper before long. Boy, what a lot of money I've spent on packages this month, \$4.50 for those three or four. But I know first class is much faster than 3<sup>rd</sup>. I have really been hard at work today trying to answer as many letters as possible. I managed to write three plus this one to you. So now have only two left to answer. I bet they'll all come in at once again!

For some strange reason I have been comparing the looks of my teeth with many and were readily surprised to find mine looked nicer than most. So many have dull and dirty teeth and others terribly crooked. One time I thought mine were going very crooked but aren't bad at all. One of our fellows has pyria (is that the correct spelling?) And I never saw such a terrible bleeding of the gums in my life. Mine bleed when I brush them hard but the blood soon stops. I have seen things in this army which I never came in contact with in civilian life.

In the latest "Thunderbolt" which I sent yesterday you will see that the 330th regiment is due to go on a two week maneuvers Aug 27 but now the latest rumor which may be true is that that schedule is to be cancelled because we will be leaving for home in

September. They say the shipping (redeployment) is 45 days ahead of schedule. So maybe I'll be home sooner than I thought. For some reason since I know that we are going to the Pacific via U.S. I'm sort of anxious to get going. I would have been content to remain here if we had an educational program set up but all we have now is hard training which I loathe. I wish I knew what to expect but maybe it is for the better that I don't. Today I helped one of the fellows do some trigonometric problems as he couldn't seem to do them. He is the one who has the correspondence course. Helping him really refreshes my memory and I'm sure it wouldn't take long for me to get in the studying stride again. I have a good mind to write to Dean Burden of Tufts Engineering School to ask him about what the college plans to do after the war. And also he'll have me in mind when I enter again. I forget the vice-president's name but when I left he said I'd have seniority over those who never have been in college. He really seemed as though he'd like to see me back again. I know it makes you happy, Dad, that I have decided that is the wisest course.

We are getting all kinds of things now to help make us look dressed up. The latest is a necktie. I'll see if I can name everything we'll be wearing when everything is finally issued. Two lapel buttons such as I wore home on furlough, two regimental insignias worn on the lower lapels, division insignia, 3 overseas stripes before long, the four ribbons, combat, infantryman's badge, and expert rifleman's medal. Boy, we'll certainly look snazzy when we get everything. Oh, I forgot that we'll have a regimental insignia on our overseas cap or are suppose to. It really is a nice insignia and so full of color, not like the division patch which is really morbid.

I hope when you go to Nfld. that you take the Leica along and take some color shots. You have all the equipment and even if you use a couple of different exposures for the same scene it'll be worthwhile if one turns out. Please try so I can see what the place is like. I was just thinking, does Grandpa have a stamp collection When he came to the States he brought a bunch of stamps. If he has, see if you can get some stamps for me because I said before I plan to continue the collection after having sent home so many from over here. My three big strikes were in Dinard, Aachen, and the small town we were in just before coming south. Please try to remember if possible. Uncle George once told me he'd send me some but never did. Maybe you could ask him too. I know you won't forget.

Tonight I read Joe Trott's letter in the news sheet and it appears as if the 75th is due to be broken up. It is such a new outfit and only saw action in the Ardennes and the Ruhr pocket. He couldn't have too many points but I doubt if they'll help any. 6 or 60 will be the same thing, I am afraid if the army works as crazy - like it usually has.

The news seems to be good now but so many "secret" things and mysterious things seem to be going on now that something seems to be in the wind. I certainly hope Japan decides to quite after seeing what we did to the much larger country of Germany. In tonight's paper it told about the raid which took place in the whole U.S. sector. I told you about getting up early and searching the civilians' houses. So now you can see the results and it is truly amazing that so much was found out.

We have now got two more new officers in the company and I really don't know what they'll do with them because I thought E co. had its officer quota filled. They're both young fellows and one wears a "ranger" patch.

The Red Cross doughnut girls came here today but it was the usual procedure of getting a cup of coffee and two doughnuts. Sometimes the girls make it nicer by putting out candy, gum and cigarettes and plenty of music. Probably they were in a hurry to get somewhere. One little girl handles that huge 2½ ton truck and I'd think it'd be quite a job. But they all say that it is very easy to handle the army vehicles. I hope I never see another

army vehicle when I get out because there is nothing like a nice sedan to ride in. Our regimental commander (a full colonel and higher), all have sedans.

Guess I have waded through another letter without saying much. You had better not send any more packages just in case we do go home in September. May God bless you and keep you safe, my dear parents. I love you so much. With all my love, Harold

#July 27, 1945, Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

This evening I seem to have so much to say – blowing steam as well as facts. I need someone to tell all my troubles to and here in the army there is no one except through letter writing to you. You have been so patient with me and I really thought it was wonderful of you to listen to all my troubles.

Tonight I received another letter from you dated July 18 (#76) and wasn't I pleased to have such a long one. You may not have thought it was much but I look in every word – just as you do with mine. But tonight I'm plain aggravated because this darn Patton is to come Monday, we hope, and so have to go again tomorrow and practice. Boy, I hate that especially getting up at 4:30 just to practice. I'll be so glad when he does come because we're sick of the whole thing – drilling in the hot sun. Imagine wearing E.T.O jackets in this very hot weather. We'll be soaking wet! When I was in combat I thought I could take this training and stuff but I actually loathe it. There is quite a stink being raised by all these fellows in all outfits about doing so much "basic training." There is no recreation at all and at least back in the States we could go to town or see a good movie. But here there is neither town nor movie. It is terribly monotonous but it won't be long before we will be back in the states.

Today I finally found out just what Gen. Macon meant by his odd statement. As I said before, we have two new officers in the company – one from the 26<sup>th</sup> Yankee Division (101<sup>st</sup> Inf. Co. A) so wouldn't know Donald Harter, and the other was in a Ranger battalion. Both saw plenty of combat and are swell officers. The one was telling me the 20<sup>th</sup> and 83<sup>rd</sup> are in the same category – strategic reserve. The way I understand it is that the division in that status is not committed unless things get very tough. We may even be kept on the west coast for a long time. Things may turn out very well and as you have said, things could have been much worse. God really has guided me every step of the way and we must never forget because of no immediate danger. I understand that the maneuvers are being called off which you saw in the last "Thunderbolt." Of course, that may not be true but I believe it is right. So many unknown things are going on and we can't figure it all out at times. This afternoon we had to give our name and address where we want to go when we go on furlough. So they seem to be getting ready for everything. One of the fellows here has a father as a lt. colonel in the army. And guess where he will be going – Fort Benjamin Harrison (an army camp). I know on my furlough I want to get as far away from the army as possible. All of us are pretty well disgusted and will be so glad to get out. Neither garrison nor combat life is meant for me!!

Yesterday we had a company problem but really didn't do much more than walking and under the boiling sun. The officers were pretty well disgusted with the men because we don't take an interest in anything. No matter what they do will still work out problems as unconcerned as can be. One of the lieutenants got after some of us for eating turnips, carrots, etc. we found in the fields while on the problems. He said it wasn't tactical but I didn't say a thing to him because he knew no better – he was fresh from the States almost two months ago and never was in combat. Why I used to eat more things from a garden especially in Normandy while fighting. Oh, some of these officers are so stupid and just

don't know any better. Guess tonight I'm just plain disgusted with anything and everything.

The last package that I sent with the bronze star and good conduct medals has passed the A.P.O. and is on the way. This cost only 40 cents so it certainly was much less than the others. I have no more loot or things to send home so there will be no more packages unless I get hold of something new. I still have that slide rule, tripod, and two large camera parts which I have no idea what they are for but believe it is for reproducing positives from negatives. These parts are too large to get in a box so will keep them and bring them home – if possible. I believe I told you I have a pistol but no ammunition. I'm really not crazy for one but since it was given to me that was all right. I wouldn't be surprised if all of the weapons were confiscated because there has been a noticeable increase in crime using these foreign arms. All I want to do is get home whether I have souvenirs or not.

Before I forget it, be sure and send those Kodachromes air mail, special delivery because it is so much quicker. Never let Alves take care of it again because they were sent 3<sup>rd</sup> class - the slowest mail possible. There are little cellophane envelopes inside the bags so stick the price stamps designated on the side. Everything has been taken care of except postage – both there and back. Don't forget! As for that Agfacolor film, be sure and send that to the Agfa Company, not Kodak or it will be returned.

I believe Sunday I'll take some picture of myself with my best clothes on so you can see what it is like. If only I can get the films developed. A new order has come down saying that we can send home film so maybe I'll try to send the five black and white rolls which I have taken. But I would hate to send them and not have them get home. Anyway if I do, I'll just have to take the chance.

Soon there will be four men from the company who are to go on pass to Switzerland. There are suppose to be four different towns which cannot be picked but the army tells which one the person will go on. I bet that trip would be interesting but I know most won't like it because all they'd see would be scenery. After having that pass I am not too anxious to anywhere although I wouldn't mind going to Paris just to see what the place looks like after reading so much about it in the French class. When I get home, I must go back to see some of my old teachers and go to Tufts to see Mrs. Bolton and see if there are any old fellows left – I doubt it. I can't understand about Mrs. Bolton though because I wrote twice to her and I only got a Xmas package from her. I really can't figure it out.

It certainly would be nice to have a home just the way you want it overlooking the lake. Did it go low this year? But you, Dad, I understand, would like to be a grandfather!!! I'm afraid you would spoil my children. If I ever remain near Boston, I might buy our old house now as you said you might like to do. Braintree has been a nice place to grow up in and if I had children, the town would be as good a place as any. The people are so friendly compared to many places.

Last night we had ice cream for supper and with the peach sauce it was really the best I've had in a long time. But battalion had the best ice cream I've ever tasted over here. It was so rich and so filling!

With all this hot weather the people are cutting their grains by hand. There is no machinery and they work hard from morn to sundown. I guess they have all kinds of grains but don't know the difference. When we get our farm, Dad, you'll be able to teach me all about that. Boy, I have so many crazy thoughts about the future and probably nothing will ever come of it.

Guess this will be all for now. I must mail this, then wash and crawl into bed early. May God bless you and keep you safe, my wonderful and thoughtful parents. With all my love, Harold

#July 29, 1945. Grainet, Gemany

Dear Mum and Dad,

I cannot write so often and so much because I have very little paper left. I really don't know what I will do when I run out because everyone is in the same boat as I. Maybe I'll write on toilet paper!!

Yester there were nno letters for me but Evie sent me a small package of candied ginger and that w as all. I have no ide why so maybe you could find out. Boy, was that stuff hot and everyone wqs srushing around trying to put out lthe fire in their mouths. They all said that that was the sstongest ginger they have ever eaten..

Well, yesterday we got up early and went out to that airfield to practice again. This airfield is near Pocking so maybe on a good map you'll be able to find it. It's on the Inn River. Gen. Macon went there this time and watched us go through it all. So when we were finished he praised us to the high skies and said we did such a good job the first time that we wouldn't have to practice again. So we were out there only in the morning instead of all day as before. It just goes to show what I have always said. The higher the rank the easier they are to please.

This regiment has published a booklet about its activities through combat. It is something like the division booklet I sent but this has actual photographs in it. In many ways it is much nicer. But please, Dad, don't wear it out showing it to people.

Today, we have to practice only an hour but will have fixed bayonets. Boy, someone has nothing to do but think up crazy things. That means more work for us and makes the rifle heavier. I forgot to tell you that Gen. Macon was a very popular fellow and we all gave him a large cheer when he said to go home. Home is where you hang your helmet, so the army says.

Maybe I'm so anxious but as yet haven't heard if you got those negatives of the Riviera. I believe, I put them in three envelopes – two letters and one "Thunderbolt." I thought I sent them the first of July and you have gotten up to the third the last I heard. If I can possibly get hold of some 120 German film, I'll try and send some so you can use it. An official order has come through saying we can send undeveloped film home now so it is safe. I believe I can get some film from the mess sergeant at battalion because he told me if I ever needed any to let him know. Have you ever finished taking pictures with the new camera? I certainly hope it works good because all totaled it cost us about \$75. But it is still worth over \$100 so if the thing does work it will be a bargain. The mail clerk was telling me about one of his packages which he sent way back in May. It just got home the other day so maybe the box with purple heart, Nazi flag, etc. will arrive soon. That flag really is dirty so if possible could you wash it?

I mentioned in my last letter that if possible would you try and pick me up some stamps while in Nfld.? I believe Uncle George has some which he promised me once and maybe some other relative has some. Please see if you can't get hold of some. As I said before, I'll revive my collection after sending home so many. Don't forget to save some of those new U.S. issues that are coming out.

Maybe Miss Martin would save some too??? You forget too easily at times so have to keep reminding you. **DON'T FORGET STATIONERY.**

Swett has just arrived back from Berchtesgarden where he stayed for five days. Schaub and Surface went down there also so there were three runners represented. He said

it was really beautiful because they went on sightseeing tours each day. He brought back some postcards and it really was beautiful especially one lake where they went which was surrounded by gigantic mountains. I certainly wouldn't mind going and take my camera along. It certainly would be nice to travel Europe with color film. I certainly hope you get those color films I sent awhile ago.

I saw in yesterday's paper that most of those Nazi big shots are being kept in Mondorf Les Bain in Luxemburg. We stayed there about a week and had the Thanksgiving dinner there, remember? These Nazis are being kept at the Palace Hotel which was only a short distance from where we were. When I get home, these European places will mean more to me when they are mentioned. It used to mean just another name.

The news is certainly beginning to look good but the big question is, will the Japs give up before too long? I certainly hope so, just as everyone else does. The time is drawing closer when we will return to the States and I'm hoping we get in a camp which isn't way in California – at least somewhere near home. But at least, you would be able to see me and if not, I could call you up. I don't believe California is closer to Boston than England and yet one seems too far because of that huge expanse of water. I'm getting so anxious to get back and see everyone.

This will be all for now because I don't want my letters to run over three sheets. The Lord has been good to us and we must never forget Him. With all my love, Harold

#July 30 1945. Grainet, Germnay  
Dear Mum and Dad,

Here it is almost the first of August and a month closer to getting home. I'm really getting anxious to return now that we are definitely going. Tomorrow we get paid but I have a good mind to save some just in case I need any on the way home. Anyway, I'll let you know what I plan to do.

Last evening, I seem to have hit the jackpot because almost all the mail was from you. Three envelopes had those enlarged pictures in them which I thought were splendid. I really was surprised three scratches showed up as little as they did and I know from now on I shall take them to that place. I suppose for grain, those pictures weren't the best and some were slightly out of focus but at least it is something. I cannot expect the best under the conditions we went through. I also got the folder to hold prints in and that will do me very nicely. I also received that letter written July 19 so am quite up to date. Now if only you will start to get some of those packages which are on their way. I now have a total of 5 – flag & purple heart, perfume and camera part, more perfume and camera parts, bronze star medal and 5 rolls of exposed film. This last item hasn't gone but I plan to send it tomorrow. I have pictures of General Patton on one roll so take good care of them. I will send those pictures you sent me out to the different ones and I know it was nice of you. But don't bother again because it makes too much trouble for you. I took a walk down to F company last evening and gave the pictures to Schaub but Stasi wasn't there. He went on a furlough to the Riviera so he was another lucky fellow.

Now for the details of what has happened since yesterday morning when I last wrote. As I said, we had to drill with bayonets attached to the rifles. The company commander thought we did so well we didn't do too much extra practicing. This morning we got up at 4:30 and arrived down there at 9:00. Patton was to arrive at 10. Just as the item said in the last "Thunderbolt" which I sent yesterday afternoon. He arrived right on time and, of course, there were more generals on that field following him around just like a bunch of dogs following their master. He inspected the guard of honor first which was a cavalry unit and then he came for the rest of us. I really got a very good look at him because

he stopped right front of our company as he inspected. He looks just like his picture which is in the "Thunderbolt" and has the same uniform and that riding stick. After being inspected, we passed before the reviewing stand in perfect formation with the artillery coming behind the infantry. After all passed we all moved up near the stand where Patton gave us a speech. He was ta least good enough to let us sit and did I have a ringside seat directly in front of him about 20 feet. Boy, the ribbons he wore. He had on 20 but there is one he can't get and that is the combat infantry.'s badge. No general can wear it!! He really is a large man and makes Gen. Macon look small even though he is a good size man himself. Patton really did plenty of cursing which he is noted for but, of course, the fellows got a big kick out of him.

I happened to be close enough to hear him pass a remark to Gen. Macon which really wasn't meant for us. He said of all the division he has reviewed the 83<sup>rd</sup> had them all beat and he seemed rather please. General Patton emphasized the fact that we need a peace time army and talked about it for quite awhile. He also talked about Japs and cursed them up and down saying that that war may end before many of us realize. I took it to mean that maybe more is in the air than we think. He never said a thing about this division going via U.S. to the Pacific but kept shying when we return home and get into civilian life. Some statements he made were very odd and were sort of puzzling. After his talk, he went to Passau, I believe, to have luncheon. Then we came back. I certainly am glad it is over with for we really had to work hard. As Patton said we probably had to slave so some old bloke (he was referring to himself) could watch them parade. Everyone seemed to think quite a lot of the way he seemed. You'll probably read all about it in the next issue of our paper. What a flock of photographers chasing after him. I knew one of the men who is correspondent for this second battalion so I brought my camera along and he took about 12 pictures of the general himself and more of the parade. So that was the way I got around it. I couldn't be in the parade and take pictures too. I will say we were pretty sharp and marched the best we ever did.

The weather was very cool for which we were thankful. In fact, so cool before 9:00 that all along the river, the mist just rose off the water. I am quite tired tonight so will go to bed early. And I mustn't use up too much paper because I have so little now. See if you can't send more first class. Hope you find the "Thunderbolt" interesting. I thought it was the best in a long time. Good night, dear parents. May God bless you. With all my love, Harold

#August 2, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

I meant to write yesterday but just didn't get around to doing it. The day you leave for Nfld. is tomorrow, the 3<sup>rd</sup>, isn't it?? I didn't show surprise at your going because I had expected you to go sometime this summer. I'm so glad you can go but do wish I could go also.

This morning we have off because last night we had a night problem until 2 o'clock. But because I was on the switchboard for 16 straight hours, I didn't have to fall out so slept all night until 8:00 this morning when we had breakfast. This dopey lieutenant here in headquarters has us training like a rifleman now because he thinks hdqs. should do more than it used to. And then we are expected to stay on the switchboard 16 straight hours. This officer is disliked by everyone in the company and is making things miserable for all of us. But thank goodness, it won't be too long before we'll return to the States. At present all men must be P & M qualified which means "preparation for overseas movement" – just like basic training. And everyone hates it because who wants that type of training. But in order to get back to the States, we must have it! Bah! I hate this army more every day. The army

on an overall picture looks good and has done a good job but these individual companies. E company really has gone to the dogs since I last knew it! This army certainly has us hooked with the training but no one has any interest in it and of course it shows. These officer have enough nerve to ask why we can't get interested in it. All it is is a review of basic. Guess I've said enough and will probably cool down shortly. I never liked the army and I never will.

Monday afternoon we got paid and as usual got \$28.40 so I am sending home \$30 this month because I really have no need for money. No town to spend it in. I still have \$13.05 so have plenty. Probably you'll receive this letter in Nfld. So will have to hang onto the check (money order). After getting paid we had what they called a physical but all they looked at was our mouths. And they call that a thorough examination. Bah, on this army.

That evening we had a movie but I don't remember the name other than it was a mediocre movie. We also saw a short subject which told about how our class E allotments are handled. And it really interested me very much. They start making those checks about the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month in order to have them ready for the 1<sup>st</sup> of the next. Everything is automatic from the writing of the check to the sealing of the envelope. It really is quite a thing to see how it is all done without many mistakes. I like to see a movie once in awhile in order to forget this army routine. They are trying to make us garrison but not under garrison conditions.

Yesterday the company clerk came to the company from regiment where he says and showed us all our service records to make sure everything was all right. Everything is in that from the time I entered the service until the present. If this little book is lost it much trouble to get a new one because only Washington has a copy. And you know how much red tape that would mean.

I got my PX rations again this week and was able to get a pad of writing paper. But I hope you have sent some stationery before you go because that pad won't last long. We didn't get any candy this week because someone stole the whole crate of them. So we have to go without It will be nice when we get home and can have a large choice.

The other day I decided to take a bath. So got a wooden tub which I just barely fit in sitting down and filled it full of hot water. I just soaked in the tub for a half hour because it felt so good. I thought I was stuck when I tried to get out because it isn't very large! Now I know what it is like to take a bath in one like you used to Dad, It's impossible to keep very clean around here so have to walk quite often.

Last night I received another letter from you dated July 23 (#79) and the day before one dated July 21 (#78) so it is coming in fairly well. It is strange why mail isn't going through to you. But I'm wondering why you never got that one package yet because it has been two months since I sent it. But probably now it may take about three so I won't give up; hope.

Lately, I'm trying to adjust my watch because it gained a little. But then I made it lose. Now it is still a bit fast but will get it right sooner or later. The watch has never stopped after one year so much be pretty good. Guess I'll have it adjusted when I get home if impossible now.

This is all for now. May God bless you and keep you. With all my love, Harold

#August 4, 1945, Grainet, German

Dear Mum and Dad,

Note at beginning of letter: I'm enclosing a picture of a power boat just like I was on and the same scenery.

I am wondering if I dated may later written August 1 as July. So many times I do things so absent mindedly. Like once in awhile I don't put the date on because I am not sure of it but mean to check up. As a result, I often forget that. Dad, you certainly took a long time in writing the letter I received the day before yesterday. You started it July 11 and finished it July 24. But nevertheless I am tickled to get it and understand why and how it is almost impossible to be left alone a short time at the yard. And last night, I got a letter from you, Mum, and was so glad to hear that at last you got the package. What I have to laugh at is the fact that you are praising me so highly and have to have all that put in the paper. If you want to go ahead, do so. But I'm not really particular.

Today I assume you are in Newfoundland because you were to leave yesterday. I know you will both enjoy yourselves and it is good to get away from the business. Of course, the best thing would be to take the car but that is impossible now. I hope after the war we can go down and I know we'll have a wonderful time just riding around. We all enjoy scenery which so many people lack.

I meant to write yesterday but Ellis at battalion asked me to come back there to help do some printing so I was busy all yesterday. I slept there one night and helped the next day to classify each man according to the number of points and then make up a complete roster. Out of 120 men, only 33 have less than me so the average is really higher. But in the company I am one of the highest. We all thought the points were to be lowered but yesterday word came out that the officials have decided to keep it at 85 but in January will count points again. By then I'll have 78 so don't know. With all the good news coming in about the Japs, we all hope it will be over before the beginning of the year. And we are wondering if the invasion is coming soon.

The reason why I liked to go back to battalion is because I got out of that lousy training. Battalion doesn't do any training so they lay around all day long- just the way the runners used to do when we were there. When I got back last evening that letter I just mentioned dated July 26 (#80) and a first class box of stationery were waiting for which I was thankful. I really was getting low and in my last couple of letters have been almost begging you to send some. I am only using this good paper to write to you. With the other people, I'll use the paper I bought in the PX. and stamped envelopes which I bought from the mail clerk. I think, though, it was odd that you didn't send any stamps because I need them. Of course, now you can't send any but will try and get some through the mail clerk.

I hope those pictures of te Riviera come out even though they are quite overexposed. My pride is the one photo I took at night because that was the first one I've taken at night like that. I hope you have them done before you go and then they'll be ready when you return. I'm quite anxious to have you get those color films and that box of six black and white films which I sent recently - ten rolls altogether. I really don't care about the other things as much as those films because they can never be replaced. In color, I have a picture of us crossing the Rohr River the day after the big drive and shows Julich in ruins and I mean ruins. And I took some in the Harz Mts. I wouldn't say all my pictures are a work of art but under the conditions, they aren't too bad. I can't have the films developed with fine grain developer, etc. so the photos have some grain. But these are pictures which I want not for the pictorial value but for the actual facts. Enough of this foolish talk.

In this letter I am enclosing a money order - that is if I don't forget as I have done before. I have decided to send \$30 and still have \$12.50 left. I have no place to go anyway. Slowly but surely I'm saving and hope to have some tucked away for a rainy day!

John Ellis was telling me the reason why this division is giving so many awards out now. This regiment is suppose to get a presidential citation as soon as a certain number of awards are given out. That would mean we'd be wearing another ribbon except on he

opposite side of the regular ribbons. This ribbon is solid blue with a solid rim of gold on the edge. Of course, it isn't certain that we'll get it but it would be nice. Some units are just getting citations for things which happened way back on D-day. This battalion is rumored to get it for our operation in St. Malo. We took a solid granite stronghold called "Rock of St. Joseph" which held up that operation and the whole division for three days. Only those men who were here then can wear it when we leave the battalion to go somewhere else (some other unit). The rest can wear it as long as they are with us but when transferred have to turn these citations in. I might just as well wear another one if possible! Ha! Ribbon crazy! Eh! As I said it isn't definite but I believe it might happen!

Our assistant division commander has been transferred to Washington as a high official after war was over. So we all suspect that is why we are in strategic reserve and as Gen. Macon said, "We are in the best category and the best part of that category." It is all in who you know in this army. All politics !! If this is the case, I hope this division has enough pull to keep us in the States. I hope ! Guess all we can do is just wait and see what is to happen!

I believe we will still be going on those maneuvers the last of this month for two weeks. It isn't too long a time so won't be too bad. The way I understand is we'll keep most of our equipment in this town and return here after the maneuvers. We are suppose to prepare for home in this place and pack almost all our equipment which means we'll have little to carry to the States. It isn't like the time we came over and carried everything except the kitchen sink. Everything is to be boxed and shipped along with us.

By the way be sure and let everyone know that I'll be home by Christmas so the XSas packages won't be sent over here. Next month the packages start, so don't bother to send any more when you return from Nfld. I want the church in particular to know. So be sure and don't forget.

Today, I was issued four pairs of pfc stripes but won't sew them on until I get a direct order. I hate the sight of that little stripe and would just as soon have none. When the fellows back in the States refused to wear them, the officers made them privates again "if they didn't want stripes" as the officers put it. I don't want that to happen though, because I want no black mark against me on my service record. And today I got three overseas stripes instead of two which I'm saving until I get home. In November, I'll be entitled to wear three so want them on hand. Might as well look as well as possible and wear all my ribbons because everyone will. Boy, I'll look like a million dollars.

This college program is really a joke over here because out of a whole corps – about 100,000 men – only one man is going to each college (about 10 schools). And then you must at least two years of college before entering the service. So it is more of a racket and isn't as nice as it sounded on paper. That is always the way the army works – makes a joke out of a good thing.

This is getting quite long now and I really have nothing to say. May God bless you my dear parents. I think so much of you. With all my love, Harold

#August 6, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

I'm just wondering if in my last two letters I put July instead of August. Time passes by so quickly that I can't seem to keep up at all. The mail is in so am waiting to see if there is a letter from you. I am on the switchboard today so have some time to write. I plan to go to a U.S.O. show this evening in which Bob Hope is in person so I'd like to go.

The mail has just arrived and I too have hit the jsckpot. One from you (#81) , one from Miss Martin, Miss Grant, Mrs. Hendrie, and Em. I'm so glad mail is going through so

well now and I really can't complain now at this end because they are coming just fine. Maybe it is due to the fact that the redeployment is slowing down so the paper says. Once we heard they were six weeks ahead of schedule but now if it slows down we may still return when we are supposed to. I see in the paper also that Mass. has passed a \$100 bonus bill after plenty of debating. Probably when I get home, I'll have to buy all new clothes so will need some money. By the way a one ime did you say hat you gae Mynard my geen suit because of he moths? I can't remember for sure.

The last package I sent which was five rolls of negatives has passed the A.P.O. so now it is on the way. I only had to pay 48 cents for this so that was cheap after the others. When you open the package do you find the slips we are required to put inside? Or are they taken out somewhere along the line? I don't know why with those negatives you didn't give them to Mr. Robbins because it would have been so much better. Oh well, guess you know best.

Recently, I bought some airmail stamps and stamped envelopes from he mail clerk. So have a good supply with all that you are sending too. The last I counted, I had about 70 stamps and twenty stamped envelopes so ought to have enough. I hate to be low on anything and would much rather have too much than too little.

Say, what happened to those photos you took at the Tait's cottage Maybe they are on their way but I enjoy getting pictures so much. I looks as though I've been sending you more things than you have to me. That's a good one, eh? I ought to see if I can't get some 120 film and send it to you as I know you'd like some. How does the new camera work? Which one did you take to Nfld.? In this letter I seem to be asking so many questions which I don't do too often.

Yesterday, I went to church and they had a record attendance – nearly 100. I really enjoyed that sermon so much and what impressed me was the fact that the chaplain never used notes and can speak along without any hesitation. You have to be born natural speaker and I know I'm not a good speaker. The chaplain had a portable pulpit made here at E co. – the local German carpenter. Everyone who hears Chaplain Blich speak says his words cut right through them and can see how everything applies to themselves.

After I came back from church, I got busy and began to wash almost so all my clothes. Boy, I was worn out and now I know how hard it must have been to wash by hand. I washed 2 pairs of fatigues, one pair of O.D.'s, two pairs of underwear, 2 handkerchiefs, one towel, one belt, and a cap. Why I was so stiff that I couldn't move for a few seconds. I would rather wash them myself because these civilians don't have the soap. If I give them soap they aren't as clean as I like. A little work like that is worthwhile to have the clothes turn out as well as they do. They smell so fresh and clean – a smell I always used to like at home. Now I haven't so may extra clothes because I'm getting rid of all the extra. I am getting ready to go home and don't want to carry any more than I absolutely have to. I used to carry so much extra but you would know my equipment now. Why some fellowswill require three duffel bags to carry all he stuff they have.

Yesterday I helped out the fellow who has the course in trigonometry because he couldn't get a certain problem. I worked quie awhile and finally got it. I've been sort of keeping up with him in his studies and am getting onto it very nicely. All I need is some review but if I do, it now I won't have to do it when I get back to school. I just hope I can get onto physics better than I did before I came into the army because engineering is based on physics. Oh well, I'll do my best as you know. I always like to please my parents who have been so kind to me. I certainly hate to embarrass my folks by doing something wrong.

The dentist with whom I had all the arguments has been transferred and a new one in his place. So shortly I ought to go up and see him and get my teeth partly fixed up at

least. I hope he is a better fellow than the other although he knew his stuff. What I plan to do is when I go home on furlough, I'll see some civilian dentist and have all my teeth the way I want them. It'll take money maybe but I believe it'll be worthwhile. I'd like to have x-rays taken of places between some teeth where food may have lodged. Just the same my teeth are much better than I expected after not brushing them at times when it was not possible under the circumstances. I don't like to spend money foolishly but I consider this a good investment. It was different when I wasn't earning my own money. Remember how stingy I was when I began to earn my own. I really grew to be an old miser and am not as bad as I used to be. But at least I'm not like some who throw their money away! Now I'm talking foolishly so had better go on because I know you hate me to rave on and on as sometimes I do.

At last we have an American flag which a civilian made us so now will be us so now will be able to stand retreat and salute something but the houses. It is an impressive ceremony if done with both a flag and bugle. But alone, it means nothing but a nuisance doing it. So far, they haven't found me a bugle. The other Sunday, funeral went by led by a four piece band and there was a trumpet among them. Boy, lots of excitement went on and I though the first sgt. would go out and grab it from the man's hands. We couldn't find any fellow available who could speak German so had to let it go.

I'm enclosing something which I wish you'd send for. So often I've seen a patch I don't know. Maybe you could have it by the time I get home and then I could look up some I've seen but don't know. And it'll be good for you too because it is suppose to have everything in it.

I finally was able to get hold of another list of the divisions and when they are scheduled. Someone took the other one I had and so often we want to know when certain division are leaving here.

Last evening we saw an excellent movie entitled "Valley of Decision" with Greer Garson in it. It was of a serious nature but I enjoyed this much more than many. She certainly is a good actress but I don't remember who the actor was – someone I never saw before. Since the war so many new people have entered the movies that I can't keep up with them.

Miss Grant sent me the story about Dr.Scotland - the writer of the Scotland Bible – and it tells how he was a drunkard at one time but was saved. She says the Bible is excellent and has used one for years. It is a good idea to wait until I return because it may not get to me in time.

This is all for now my dear parents. With all my love, Harold

#August 8, 1945. Grainnet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

We have this morning off because of a night problem which lasted until one o'clock. Company headquarters was made "enemy" and had to shoot off flares and fire guns when we heard the men coming. That is the best job on those problems because we can always return to our billets earlier. We came back about twelve and then went to the kitchen and had coffee and good sugar cookies which had been prepared for our return. Last night I came upon a carrot patch and didn't I go to work eating all I could. I must have strained my back last night because it aches some at times now. I know when I set a flare off I made a long leap over a small brook and landed in an awkward position. But it'll be all right soon. If I was older at would be different but as young as I am, things like that aren't so bad.

I was reading in last night's paper about the A.P.O's in New York and San Francisco are using inspectoscopes which is are machines used to inspect packages for banned

material without opening the boxes. I see it is based on x-rays and said that accidentally 6'0 rolls of films were ruined because of this machine. X-rays always ruin ordinary film so now I'm just hoping neither one of my packages is inspected in which I have film. You'll know if the films come back blank what happened and wasn't my fault. I believe in these A.P.O' s. They only spot-check and maybe mine will get by so I'm not going to worry too much. It would be a shame to lose those pictures but there is nothing we can do if it happens.

Yesterday, I received a letter from Don Hunter and he is in a small place called Wallau which is 90 miles due east of Cologne. He was due to ship this month but was later changed. Now they plan to leave for home in October but he isn't sure, of course. He may get to see the Riviera because his unit is supposed to go down near Cannes and practice with their ack-ack guns. He seems to tell me more about himself than he tells his parents.

I was just stopped by the company clerk a few minutes ago and he handed me the following which just came from the regimental personnel section: "Harold G. Simms has a chance to go to Army Hdqs. to do the type of work he was doing in civilian life. This applies to army of occupation. That almost stunned me. I was so surprised and am sure it pertains to photography because that is the only civilian job I ever had except going to school. I really have been giving it heavy thought and have been weighing all. It has ended up that I'll take it because I'd be much more content there doing something I like instead of this darned training. It is the greatest moment in my life it seems because my future may lay on this decision. I know I have decided right because God has carried me through this far and will continue to do so. I believe He has given me this opportunity. I found it so hard to choose but I'm sure you'll find the decision all right. It is so hard without parents to fall on but must decide on my own because shortly I will be entering the road of life on my own when my own decisions count. I will have to stay as army of occupation and won't be home as soon as I hoped, but I would hate to go to the Pacific – no use taking chances. My darling parents, it's so difficult to explain what I mean but I know you understand. I sound more like a philosopher and I know it is utter foolishness so don't pay any attention to some of the odd things I say.

I certainly had to laugh at Miss Martin and her experience with that crazy women. She says everyone is kidding her by saying she is out on bail. Boy, she certainly had some experience and one that was exciting.

With so many letters coming in I have six to answer and was caught up a short while ago. Oh well, that's the way it seems to work.

The company commander, Lt. Peterson, has left the company for awhile to be a referee on some maneuvers. So now we have the executive officer now as our head, and what a crazy guy, as I have told you before. It'll really be good to get of this army!!

I just called up the personnel section to tell them I'd accept and the sgt. said I'd be working in a large army photo finishing plant if accepted. So now I have to wait and see what happens. I may never even go but the sgt. said I have such high qualifications that I have a good chance. He thought my decision was good since my points were not too high.

I'm enclosing a poem which the chaplain gave us. When he gave lectures to the companies on sex morals he read this poem to the men and after that there were many requests for it. The poem sounds so true and I know I feel that way. So many men aren't true to their wives and folks back home and they should be ashamed of themselves.

The reason why I have the third sheet torn in half is because I didn't expect to say as much as I did.

Last night I got my PX rations instead of Monday because I saw the Bob Hope show. I really wasn't so thrilled about the show but anything to get away from the regular army

routine. I took a couple of photos so don't know how they will turn out. I took a couple at the Lily Pons show and these were light struck I noticed but you have gotten something out of the negatives. Did they print those?

This will be all for now and I'll be sure to let you know if anything comes up about this job. With all my love, Harold

#August 10, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

I'm waiting to go to dinner now so will at least get this letter started. Yesterday, I received your letter dated July 30 with the stamps and the article enclosed. Boy, my name certainly was put in large type at the top. If you wrote that article, it was a good job and you left out nothing. If you really had wanted to say something else you could have said I had the expert rifleman's medal for the M1 and carbine – the thing I wore home on furlough. But it isn't such a wonderful thing. Swett said his wife is going to put his name in the papers too because she is proud of him! Did you say Mr. Jones might put it in the "Herald?"

The mail has been coming through very well lately and all the mail is coming in order. The letters take almost the same time each time I get some. In other words, I get a letter 9 to 10 days later and then if another is sent two days after the first, I'll receive it two days after the first. Maybe you don't understand my jumble. You told me about that perfume and how you were giving Em some of it. You claimed he stoppers are tight and yet it evaporates. That's impossible because only until air hits the liquid can it evaporate. When I sent the one box, there was very little left in the "N" bottle because much of it had spilled out. I believe there is a stain on the box which will show you that I am right. I still maintain that as long as those stoppers are kept perfectly tight – not almost – you won't lose any. But don't give too much away. I'm sending you another box of perfume as I said for Grandma, Ruby, and Em but if Em has some please keep one bottle for yourself. Now do as I say and don't be obstinate!!

As I told you in my last letter, I have a chance to go to army headquarters and work as a photographic darkroom technician as it's called – might even get a rating out of it. I finally gave my consent to go but with the news the way it is now, I wonder if it was a wise choice. Of course, I may never go so don't know just how I stand. As soon as I know what is to happen, I'll let you know. Then you'll just have an idea what to do about Xmas packages. I may stay here as army of occupation. Between Russia entering the war against Japan and the new atomic bomb, it looks as though the war may be over soon. And Japan says she has an announcement to make on Monday which all the world has been waiting to hear. We all pray that it will be over. But what I'm afraid of is that I may be stuck here for a year or two as army of occupation. But if they still are going according to points, I may have a chance. And I've been overseas so much longer than many – 15 months the thirteenth of this month. It certainly is sometime to wonder at but I know everything will turn out for the best as it always has with God's guiding hand. We have so much to be thankful for.

I am enclosing a new stamp which I got from an envelope so want you to save it. I hope you'll be able to get some stamps while in Nfld. because I'm sure Uncle George's wife collects them. I certainly hope the mail from you isn't slowed up too much because it is sent to New York. I figure it may take two days to reach N.Y. so that won't be too bad.

Yesterday, I typed a letter to Tufts and asked them a couple of questions such as "would they accept me back?" and "will I be able to take advantage of the G.I. Bill of Rights through Tufts?" I really wrote it so the dean wouldn't forget me when I want to go back. I

think it was a good idea to do it but can't seem to explain just what I mean. I hope I won't be too old when I finally get that white sheet of paper we are all waiting for – the discharge paper. I'll have to frame it in a solid gold mount because that will be the happiest day of my life.!

Swett is leaving for Paris on the twelfth of the month. So at last he is getting something although he would like to go to the Riviera. At least he'll get out of some of this crazy training. The fellows don't put any spirit into any of the training as it is. But would like to see what'll happen in Japan now. Dad, did you ever send the picture of that LCI #400- to Swett's wife? If you did she never received them. Maybe my letter never got home. Anyway, I asked you to send them to her. He is so pleased to be able to get all the photos I have taken because he has been almost everywhere I have. Right a little present, we only have two officers left in this company because the rest are out at the maneuver area. Personally, I think this company has gone to the dogs and I am glad I have no rank because there is too much slitting of throats in the higher ranks. Even this new first sgt. is no good and tries to act tough. Why every other word he says is "God damn" and I know most are plenty disgusted the way he uses such foul language all the time. I sure wish we had Sgt. Nordhoff who was the sgt. I liked so well. If it hadn't been for him checking up, I wouldn't have had the Purple Heart either. Oh well, I'll have to put up with everything as long as I am here. The only way to leave is to get discharged or get transferred.

I have no more news now because so little excitement ever happens. But will not send this letter until I see what is for me in today's mail which is due in at 3 o'clock. Then I'll finish up. I know since I've come back to the company, my letters aren't nearly as good as before. So it'll probably be a great let down to you!

Here it is 5 o'clock and I have just gotten the mail. There were letters from you, Mum, one from Dad (Aug 2, just before leaving the U.S.), one from Miss Martin and Betty, and a "Herald" from Mrs. Hendrie. So I really hit the jackpot. These last couple of days I have been in the mood to write and have done quite a bit but can't seem to get caught up.

Mum. I notice that you used simplified spelling when possible such as thot, and thru, etc. But I can't seem to get out of using the old conventional way. Guess I'm sort of old fashioned.

I'm glad you took the camera because I want to see what the old place looks like. Hope we can go down after the war. They tell me the Pan American clippers are nice planes and know you won't mind it as much as some you've been on. At one time, Boston had very few airlines going out but now there seems to be plenty.

All anyone now can talk about is the Japanese war and all are excited. The latest unconfirmed reports say the Japs will give up if they are allowed to keep their emperor. Let's hope it won't be too long before it's all over. And I also hope I'm not stuck over here. I doubt if they'll release too many men each month even after war because it would cause such an upheaval. So many fellows never studied social history and can't see it. But I know if 5 million men were allowed to go home at once, there would be awful turmoil.

This all for now my dear parents and I do hope you have an enjoyable time while down there. Give my love to Grandpa and the rest. With all my love, Harold

#August 12, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Mostly all the mail that came in yesterday was first class and I did get but two boxes of stationery sent July 31. So that is excellent time but I certainly wish those packages that I sent would get home as rapidly. Now I have plenty of paper for awhile and hope I'm home before I use it all up. Who knows!

We are all excited by the latest news because the U.S. has accepted Japs terms with one condition – the emperor takes orders from us. Now we must wait and see what the Japanese reply is. The radio claims the points will now drop considerably so maybe I'll be included. Let's hope so but if it is all over I just hope I'm never picked to do this photographic work because I want to get home as soon as possible. Even if I went there I may not be bad because the radio claimed only those men deemed essential for army of occupation would not be affected by the points. And then these men will be released when a man can take his place. So we'll just have to wait and see. Everyone certainly is excited and I know it is wonderful news. The States are celebrating all ready so the news says. How foolish until they know for certain what is going on.

I just went to church so will continue so this will go out with today's mail. I am on the switchboard today and didn't think I could go but one of the fellows took over and let me go. I thought that was pretty nice of him.

At present, we are waiting for the latest news on the radio but as yet the electricity isn't on. When we first came here, we used the civilians' electricity but that was too weak so now we have two large generators giving us current. With the gasoline situation as it is we can only run the generator certain times. It'll be good to get back and have the nice conveniences of home.

Yesterday we didn't do a single thing but have a "show-down" in section in the morning and nothing in the afternoon. The supply sergeant had to check that we had only so much clothing and that everything was all right. I had to laugh at the way all the fellows rushed around with their extra clothes hiding them because if found, they would have to be turned in. I only had two extras so didn't have to worry but one had four extras of everything. I see no sense in all that because it'll have to be left behind when we leave here anyway.

I saw William Schaub at church this morning and told him about that offer. I had. It turned out he had an offer to go to the same place as a lithographer – his civilian job. But he refused so I'm beginning to wonder if I didn't make a bad choice. Probably the whole occupational set-up will be changed and I'll be forgotten – I hope!

Last evening I finally got around to pressing those clothes which I washed last Sunday. Boy, it really is no fun to try and press wool because it won't press flat. I still think it is best with wool to have it dry cleaned. When I get home, I see I'll be pressing all my clothes! Ha! You'll say I've had so much experience!!

These last couple of days has really been miserable because I just pelted each day. The civilians say this is the start of the cold weather - not cold all at once but gradual – and I hope we'll be out of here before the snow comes. The civilians have started to take in their wood piles which they stacked outside because of the rainy weather. We have had more arguments with them over wood because we need some everyday to have hot water. Some funny things have happened and they really are funny. One day, the woodshed was open so two of the boys went in and just loaded themselves with wood. As they walked out, the woman came who owned it and they just kept on as unconcerned as could be. She either swore in German or said something but tried to get it back but to no avail. It was funny to see her jabbering away in German and chasing the two fellows. She never did get her wood back!!

Yesterday afternoon, because there wasn't anything to do, I took a book and read for awhile. It was a mystery called "The case of the Stuttering Bishop" and really interested me more than many mysteries. Then I grew terribly sleepy and slept for nearly three hours. Remember what a time you used to have to get me to take a nap when I was young? Last

night I suffered for it because I tossed and turned till nearly twelve trying to get to sleep. Guess that'll teach me just like eating those eggs just before bedtime.

The company now has an American flag which a civilian made. And they have a pole now so each day the flag is raised. But if ever you could see it. It's the darndest looking thing with such as a small flag and a large pole. Why the flag should be four times the size it is in order to look in proportion. What a crazy bunch here.

This seems to be all I have now so will get this up to the mail box before the mail clerk goes out. May God bless you and keep you my dear people. With all my love, Harold

#August 13, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

I don't remember if I wrote to you yesterday but will start this in case I can't get it finished entirely tonight. I really haven't much to say but at least it is something. These last couple of days there has been no mail at all for anyone in the company. So this has given me a chance to get almost caught up on my writing. I just happened to think that I wrote you yesterday. After writing yours, I tried out something new and got a typewriter and began. I really was surprised to write such long ones this way and ended up answering four people. So now I only owe Mr. Marsell a letter which I'll send off in a short time and then I will be caught up. These German typewriters are a little different in some keys so it slowed me down considerably but I typed faster than I could have written any [by hand].

After trying for an awfully long time, I was at last able to get hold of another map of the 83<sup>rd</sup> as you asked but as yet haven't found an envelope in which to send it home. Anyway, it will be on its way soon. I have tried to get one of the XIX Corps but have been unsuccessful as yet. I'll remain on the lookout but I don't believe I can get one.

Here it is the next morning because I just felt too tired to write any more. Today is going to be fine – the first nice day for quite awhile. But will probably last only a day or two.

Yesterday afternoon, all training was called off because of a movie which came there then. It was an old picture but one I had never seen before – “Wuthering Heights.” It was an excellent picture and very worthwhile seeing. But of course, it isn't as nice as in a regular theater where there is no changing of reels. The man who ran the machine was cussing because whoever used the film before hadn't re-rolled them right and as a result we had to wait a half hour before he could get things straightened. Isn't that the way, with so many fellows. Their idea is “as long as everything is all right for me, never mind the other fellow.” So often you'll find in this army a feeling similar to that but I can't seem to feel that way. So often you must look out for yourself or someone will take advantage of your kindness.

I believe I told you about those high point men leaving us about a month ago on their first lap home. We just got word that one fellow named Clinger, and one whom I knew, had died. He was supposed to have drunk some poison liquor which was one of his weaknesses. It really is too bad because he has a wife and two children waiting for him at home. But we have been warned of poisoned liquor so often!!

We have just received word that Japan has at last accepted our peace terms and what glorious news!! I really thank God it is at last over and now we all can look forward to returning home. It might be quite awhile but maybe not too long because the radio claims the points may drop to 60 or lower. That would be just fine for me. The men are excited and aren't working themselves very hard. Why should they? So far the maneuvers are still going to be carried through but hope orders come down saying that it is cancelled. We have

so much to thank God for and I know no matter what I do or where I go He will be there to guide me every step.

I'll have you know that now each of us has a radio in our beds. We hooked up a wire from the radio downstairs in the orderly room to our room up here and then hooked up "sound power" telephones for each bed. These phones need no batteries and two people can hear each other just by speaking into the mouthpiece. Right now, they have the radio on and we can hear it so plainly with four phones in the room. Leave it up to a soldier to think up something like that.

The other day, the I & E (Information and Education) officer brought several school books down here to the company. After looking through them I finally picked a mathematics book but found it only a review for what I already knew! So I got another one on English grammar to just review and that didn't take long. Then I got a spoken French book which I went through like a flash. Then I took a book of our government construction and as yet haven't finish it. All those books are only as a review and it doesn't take very long but it does refresh my mind. They also have a book on American Social and Political History but I found out it is the same as I used in college – exactly, by Faulkner. I suppose the books teach something to some fellows but most are just elementary.

Last evening I got hold of some carrots and ate for all I was worth. So many think they taste terrible but I really think they are wonderful. The apples, plums, and pears aren't quite ripe yet and I can just see that some of these civilians are going to miss some when they are ripe which won't be too long. I like any kind of fresh vegetables or fruits and try to get all I can because I don't think this army gives enough fresh food. Quite often, though, we get fresh tomatoes from Spain.

Tonight we have another night problem so I suppose I'll be used as "enemy detail." I'd much rather do that than run the problem.

I'll keep this letter open just in case I have some mail from you this afternoon. No mail at all so will close. May God bless you wonderful people. With all my love, Harold

#August 15, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Today there was no mail except for one letter and guess who that was from. You, of course, and written at Moncton, N.B. while you were waiting for that other plane to come and take you to Nfld. That letter came in good time and I can't complain if all your letter come as fast. I am so glad that you were able to go as you did (via Pan American) because I have often read of their wonderful planes. After the war, the three of us will have to take the same trip down - not by plane though because we'd have our car with us. You met so many interesting people and I know I like to make friends on trips because it makes the time pass and not drag.

At last this morning word has come through that V-J day has at last come officially. When I wrote yesterday, I told you about the war being over but it wasn't official so we weren't sure if it were true. Now is the time to be joyous and the news says that the people nearly went crazy at home. Yes, it is really wonderful to think that there is at last peace in the world after all these years.

As I said before we are all looking forward to returning home and the news says the points are to be added up again and another critical score announced – maybe as low as 50 giving preference to the highest men first. I figure I should have about 72 points then so I'll be up in the higher group. I don't know when Tufts starts but if they are on the accelerated plan, school will start in July and if the normal school year in September. Anyway, I hope to be home so I can begins school next year so I won't have to lose any time. I don't want to

be an old man when I get out. If that accelerated program is kept up, I figure I'd be out just as quickly as if I had done the course in four years,. I hope you understand because I know I explained to you once how he program worked. Maybe I get a reply to the letter I sent to the college, it will tell me what I want to know.

Today, we have the entire day off because of two things. First, we had a night problem and so had this morning off and second, today is the third anniversary of the division's re-activation so we have this afternoon off. We're hoping we'll be getting a holiday both Thursday and Friday as President Truman has proclaimed but it doesn't look as though we'll be getting it. We haven't been overworking ourselves after we heard the news either and I know it is going to be terribly hard to get the men to train. And tomorrow we have lectures on Jap tactics!!! Ironic, isn't it. Oh well, we have to put with all this until official army word comes down saying to do away with the rigorous schedule.

It has been a week since I gave my consent to the transfer and so much has happened in one short week that I never would have said yes if I had only known. All the boys here believe I'll never go because the war ending will bring about a great change. I certainly hope so and hope the division is to return to the States when we were scheduled. So far, we are still going as planned but I shouldn't be surprised to have everything twisted around. The divisions slated to go home the soonest will have the highest point men in them while the lesser point men in order will be put in divisions in the order they are to return to the U.S. That is a crazy way to try and explain anything but I believe you understand what I mean.

I believe when it comes to these packages, I'll have you do this. Don't plan to send any unless I tell you differently and then I'll be sure and let you know in plenty of time. It is no use having packages come here and not have me here. At least, I hope to be home by Christmas. As I have so often said, all we can do is wait and we see what the outcome is to be.

I forgot to tell you that I saw Schaub at church Sunday and he was offered a job at the same place as I only as a lithographer. He refused so is better off than I.now Come to think of it, I'm sure I told you about it before.

A one o'clock today we were told that the radio station at Munich was suppose to dedicate 15 minutes to telling he story of the 83<sup>rd</sup> on its re-activation day. We listened in and it took the announcer about 30 seconds to say what he did. All it was about the 83<sup>rd</sup> beginning in Camp Atterbury, Indiana and coming overseas and then he said he saluted us. Boy, were we disappointed when we heard it because it was suppose to be so wonderful.

I tolddyou about that fellow named Clinger dying. We finally found out the truth. He had been drunk all he time where he was with the 99<sup>th</sup> division. Two men left him drunk near a river with a woman and somehow he fell into the river and drowned. That really is horrible. You'd be surprised to learn how many G.I. bodies have been found floating down the Danube. Sort of odd, don't you think? I won't even associate with these children as much as I like them.

Guess this about all the news for now. Hope you have a nice time. May God be with you my dear parents.With all my love, Harold

#August 17, 1945 , Grainet, Germany (type written)

Dear Mum and Dad,

I have decided to try writing with a typewriter because my handwriting is so awfully poor and I can travel so much faster this way and get a more natural sounding letter. Here it is only 8:30 and I'm starting because I feel like writing this morning. It is strange how I get that urge sometimes. Yesterday I finally got caught up on all my writing and answered

Mr. Marsell's letter and received a letter from Maynard so answered it just as soon as I got it. He wanted to write me more than once, so Ruby said, but he wouldn't write because he makes too many mistakes which I don't mind at all because I am far from perfect myself. I haven't heard so long from Eric that I wrote him a short letter to see if I could hear from him at all. So you can see that I really went to town yesterday and answered every last one. But probably today a whole bunch will come in and then I'll have to start over. Such is life.

I forgot to tell you that we have today off Victory day for us. We were hoping we would get one day off but at first we didn't know what was happening. The army is so slow in doing anything it seems. Now we are hoping the maneuvers and training are called off but as yet there is no official word at all. I know the officers are pretty fed up with all the training since the war is over just the same as the rest of us. We were supposed to climb a big hill near here tonight and bivouac – pitching tents. But I believe that has been called off.

Last night the radio said a new critical score will be announced soon and it is believe it will be dropped to 75. We are supposed to add up points until the new announced date to find out what we have. I have been figuring mine out and can make it only 71 points so that'll break my heart to be so close and yet so far. But if it is dropped again, I'll get in that so it isn't as bad as it might seem. As it is, I won't be in the army as long as most men with higher points than me because more in this company are higher than I, have had almost three years service. So far I have heard nothing of that transfer and hope those fellows are right when they say since the war is over the transfer will not go through. Things will turn out no matter what I do.

I want to remind you once again that I think you are mistaken when you said the perfume stopper is tight and yet the liquid evaporates. It is impossible because it can't evaporate unless air hits it. So there must be a leakage someplace and I would suggest making certain the tops are on very tightly. I want you to be sure and keep one bottle out of the three I am sending to make up for that one that was evaporated. Now don't be obstinate and say no because I'm going to make sure you have plenty of that stuff now that I don't have to pay a dear price for it. You're going to have plenty of that if I have something to say in the matter. This bottle (small) that I said was for Emily will be for you since you gave her the large bottle of Elle-Elle. Why don't you keep the "N" so you can use it when I'm around because that is my favorite scent. Guess it is useless to talk to you stubborn females. Sometime, Dad, you'll have to give me a lesson in the art of handling women because they are the most stubborn creatures in the world. They are always craving for something and when you finally give it to them they do not want it.

Last night the company had quite a time because there was another dance and the place was just full of women - most of them far from being beautiful. At least there was an age limit on them and not like before when they brought in all kinds of females ranging in age from six to sixty. Down in this section of Germany there are very few beautiful women in my estimation because they are always working themselves to death in the fields. Why most of them work harder than any man ever thought of doing back home. There is one nice looking girl in this town who is from Berlin and she is only about seventeen. She seems so much like Ruby with no makeup and a pretty face. I hate these May West type or girls who dress up to kill. Most of Germany beautiful are in the industrial north where a woman's place is in the home. Getting back to the dance, the women came from everywhere and there were plenty of choices. Why they went down to Pasau and Freyung just to get some. I took a quick look in the dance hall to see what was going on and how the girls looked. Once I saw I got out from there as fast as I could. Then I went up to the kitchen because I heard they had sandwiches and pretzels to eat at the dance but I didn't want to wait that long.

So I found one of the cooks who I like very much and who goes to church with me all the time. It ended up that I had about five large sandwiches and came back so full that I could hardly move. I really was hungry after we had supper because we didn't have a very large meal. Of course, that isn't the fault of the cooks but rather the army which has been giving out very scanty rations at times. The mess sergeant is from Groton, Mass. and since he and I are pretty good friends he made me up a Dagwood super-duper sandwich which I ate with ease. After that, I came back here to the billets and got ready for bed. But, there was not a single light bulb in the whole building because they were all taken while I was out so they could see at the dance. It would have been better to dance with the girl in the dark rather than have to look at her ugly face. Finally after hunting high and low I found a bulb but in my ordeal of trying to find one, I stumbled on more fellows with girls in their rooms. All morning long that is all most of them have been talking about is their wonderful women. I got so disgusted and now realize how differently I was brought up. Why the worst men are the ones who are married and with children. It is bad enough for the single fellows but I can't see eye to eye with the married because they expect their wives to be true to them and yet they can't do the same to their wives. After all, a wife has feeling and many have more sense than some of these stupid men around here. I am acting like the chaplain now and giving a sermon on morals so had better leave this subject because I know it doesn't interest you.

Just when I got into bed, Richard Hall, the fellow from Atlanta, Georgia about whom I have talked about before, came in and we began to talk and I found out a lot about him. He really is well to do and he is a good friend of Harry Hopkins and other high political figures. I have no doubt he could have stayed out of this army but he wanted to be just like the rest of the men. His father died about four days before he was to go into the army so had to get an extension on his three weeks furlough before coming to the army. It ended up that we talked about everything in this army from the day we came in until the day we get out. Before we knew it, the time was midnight so we called it a day and then started to sleep until the mad herd came rushing up and then they reminded me of a bunch of women-gossips. Blah, blah until we told them the night is made for sleeping and that they could talk about their experiences at the dance this morning. Boy, this morning they have been making up for lost time because their tongues are really travelling. Enough of that because that doesn't mean much to you.

By the way, I sent one letter that was sealed at one end with scotch tape so don't think the censors have been at work again. I don't just remember what it was but I forgot to enclose something so rather than waste precious envelopes, I slit open the end and sealed it up again with the tape. That tape has been about the handiest stuff you've sent me and whenever anyone has a package to send, they come running to me to give them some tape. When we use that stuff, we have to send those first class so since all of mine go that way, I can do it. How do you like the way I wrap the packages now? It took me a long time to get onto how to do it right but I believe it is all right now. When I was younger, I remember I could never wrap Christmas packages and would have to call on you for assistance.

Tuesday we got more PX rations but this time I played things smarter and traded my cigarettes for candy which I would much rather have. And I traded my beer for a candy bar so all in all I made out pretty well. I can't save candy the way some do because it torments me until I eat up every speck and then have no more for the rest of the week. That is the way I have always been with these rations. They were selling more things this week but I have everything I need which is very little. I did manage to get a good Cannon face cloth which is something I have been trying to get for a long time. I suppose I should have asked you for one but the piece of towel I was using did me. Swett ought to get a large

choice at the PX's at Paris because they are large and have plenty of merchandise. He should be back before too long and I hope he had a good time because he has been overseas a long time and this is his first pass. I gave him some money to make sure he wouldn't run out but he is one man I can really trust. And after being with him as long as I have, I really know him very well. Some of the fellows around here are like me when I first heard him with that awful southern drawl. Why I couldn't understand him at first and used to keep asking him what he said. It really embarrassed me but I could do nothing else because I just couldn't understand him. After being in this army for awhile, I have gotten so I can understand anyone and in a good many cases don't notice a difference accent unless it is extreme such as Swett. But it is always good to hear the good old Boston accent with the broad A's. I get a laugh out of so many of these fellows with their mistaken ideas about Boston. Most think they are snobbish people but they seem friendly enough to me and we were strangers there once ourselves. Of course, most have never been there and that is the trouble with so many – they judge not from their own experiences but from what they have heard.

I am enclosing a couple more stamps which I have taken off envelopes so please save them for me. I ought to have quite a few when I get home and if I keep it up I'll have to get a new stamp book because the one I have is one that Eric gave to me way back in 1936. And I 'm enclosing an article that I want you to save for me about a couple of Leica parts. I want to get that universal view finder if I am going to use more than the one lens I have on it now I would like to also buy a wide angle lens so when I take interior pictures more of the room will be included in the photograph. Guess I want too much but there are certain things I'm going to buy because I want them very much. One thing I want to ask you about is the camera you took to Newfoundland. You didn't make it quite clear which of the folding cameras you took. Was it the new one or the one that Dad likes so well? Guess when I get home I'll have to give you that camera, Dad, but since you aren't dumb I'm still going to teach you how to use a more complicated camera and I'll keep after you until you do learn. Hope you get some good pictures out of the trip because I do so want to see them. I also hope those films that I sent are home when you get back and in good condition instead of being ruined by that inspecting machine in New York as I told you in one of my other letters. Boy I would hate anything to happen to these latest because I have some good pictures among them, I hope.

Last evening we heard a bugle sounding somewhere in the company so the lieutenant got busy and what a mad rush to find out where the sound was coming from. The company really must want one very badly to go to all that trouble. We finally located it and what a looking thing. One of the fellows in the second platoon had "liberated" the thing and because it had no mouthpiece had made one out of wood. It is much larger than an ordinary one and therefore has a much deeper tone. There is a leak in the bugle too so that'll have to be fixed but the most trouble is that darned wooden mouthpiece. When I tried it the thing cut my lip all to pieces so that will never do. I won't play that thing until they get me a regular mouthpiece. If they make me play it just the same, I'll make sure there is a large hole in it. Ill fix them if they try to get smart. Last night at midnight there was much confusion going on in all the rooms that I decided to add to the din and play bugle calls then and there. It wasn't too long before some came in and asked me not to make so much noise but I said as long as they were making a lot of racket and not letting me sleep, I'd make sure they didn't either. It wasn't long before they calmed down and we had peace and there seems to have been quiet once again!!!

There seems to have been little else doing now so really have no more news. I have been looking over what I have typed so far and I know I have said more in these three

sheets than I could say in six handwritten sheets. I know this doesn't seem quite as personal to receive a letter of this sort but I just wanted to see how much I really could write to you if I could keep up with my thoughts. And now I have proven to myself that I can write so much more. You'll probably pick up all the mistakes but at times I don't stop to think just how a word should be spelled and make a mistake. Since I have been using this machine I have found I can type much faster than before. This typewriter isn't as nice to use as an American one because a couple of the figures are in different places and a couple of them keep sticking terribly especially the O so you'll find a good many of my mistakes are with that letter.

Today seems to be a nice day with scattered clouds but how long will it last that way? It is liable to be raining this afternoon.

I hope it won't be too long before I get into civilian life once more and as I said before hold off until I let you know where to send Christmas packages. May God bless you and keep you safe my wonderful parents. With all my love, Hrold

#August 18, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

I typed you a long letter yesterday but have more to tell you so don't want to put it off till tomorrow or I might forget what I want to say. I won't be typing any more letters to you because I don't believe they are personal enough - too formal.

Yesterday I received the first letter I've had since you arrived in Newfoundland dated Aug. 9. But there is one so it'll probably get there before too long. I am not familiar enough with my relations to understand all the people you talk about such as Marjorie Sterling. I have heard of her before but just not remember. And is "Florence" Uncle Hal's wife? Maybe when I receive the first letter a few questions will be cleared up. Probably by the time you get this letter you'll be back in the States. I'm sorry you don't enjoy it too well because I thought the country would be a little more modern than it is. Even with your own car, here it wouldn't be so bad. Guess here is no place like the home we have in Baintree. Both of you seem to have been taken by the place we live. We really couldn't ask for a nicer bunch of neighbors. Also the same time your letter came in was a letter from Ruby so I answered that one immediately so I wouldn't have to owe a single person. Today's mail has come in but nothing for me.

A couple days ago I sent you the latest "Thunderbolt" and I want you to take particular notice of General Macon's photograph. His pocket is unbuttoned and if any of us poor enlisted men ever did that we would be bawled out by some officer. And notice the fancy stitching on the division patch. That is another thing we are not allowed to do because we are told that they are meant to be plain. Boy, it gripes me sometimes to see the way the old motto of the army works "don't do as I do but do as I say." Did you ever hear of that, Dad?

Yesterday I heard the officers talking about moving this company to Rohrnbach where I was with battalion when we first moved here to southern Germany. That town has no troops there now so is open to us. The story is that the troops of the 102<sup>nd</sup> division which has relieved us of duties want to move into this town so as to get set for the winter. They are to remain here until February while we don't know where we are to go. The Red Cross girls at the division rest center at Passau told some of the men that maneuvers have been called off and we are to return to the U.S. in October. So often we have been told by Red cross girls and even civilians what is to happen to us. They actually know more than we do and I'm not kidding. I certainly hope it is true because I want to get back as soon as possible. So far here is no word of my being transferred so I hope nothing comes of it. Now

that I don't want anything to happen, it probably will. Getting back to moving, I would much rather be in the other town because there is much better houses there and better in every way. These houses here are almost ancient and really not too nice. The one we're in is made of stone and cement as almost all these foreign houses are. There is no wallpaper on the walls but rather fancy paintings which are a cheap imitation of paper. The walls are just as solid as can be and not very easy to hang up pictures. There are no modern appliances in the place but we get along very nicely although they are nice to have.

This afternoon I decided I ought to take a bath so heated up plenty of hot water and jumped into that little round tub in which I nearly get stuck every time. So now I feel just fine with all my clean clothes on. Sunday. tomorrow, I'll have to do a little more washing but nothing compared with my last wash. I don't like to wear O.D's too often because they are too hard to wash.

Yesterday afternoon I saw this man who was covered with coal dust, it seemed, .come pedaling his bicycle up the hill near here wearing a high silk hat! I could not imagine who or what he was but later discovered he was a "chimney sweep" and does just what his name suggests - sweeps out chimneys. We have none at home but have often read about hem in these countries. That tall silk hat is part of their custom and every chimney sweep wears one. It certainly is something to laugh at.

Word just came through that we are not going to move, not going on maneuvers, and are taking over the occupational duties of the 102nd division. So that might mean we'll be over here for awhile. As yet no one knows just what is going on.

I was able to get hold of the victory issue of the Stars and Stripes so have both the V-E and V--J issues. I'll send it home before too long.

Swett just arrived back a couple of days ago. He enjoyed Paris all right but said the trip was too long for being there only three days. But I know it was worthwhile taking the trip to the Riviera beause I was there for nine days.

I certainly wish I knew what was going on because I would like some Christmas packages if I'm to remain here. But darn this army, we are not always the best informed as is often told. Seldom we know anything even in combat until a couple of minutes before it happens.

Guess this is all for now and I'll try and write tomorrow. May God be with you. With all my love, Harold

#August 19, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

The mail has just come in and there was the missing letter – the first one you wrote from Newfoundland. After reading this I now know who some of the people are at least. Also today I received a short note from Russell Olson thanking me for those insignias. I thought that was very nice of him.

There has been little excitement going on but always manage to have something to say each time I write. I believe I've written quite a few times this week because I have just been in the mood.

I'm enclosing a few more stamps which I have picked up and also a photograph of myself taken here at the C.P. It is very poor because the fellow who took it doesn't hold a camera still. That is the secret to a successful photographer. I believe I'll take some today or what I mean to say is that someone take some of myself.

Yesterday the company did little because we had inspections for a couple hours and then went out to train the next two. I should say we were supposed to train, but didn't do a speck of work until the major came around. Then we put on a great show for him until he

left and then we took it easy again. It is almost impossible to get the men to do much. Today we are to take over occupational duties once again because the 102nd is leaving to replace some of these divisions that are going home now. Originally the 102nd came here to relieve us of duties so we could devote all our time to intensive training. But now the whole set-up has changed and yet I have been told we will return home when we are suppose to. Now whether there is any truth in the matter is hard to tell but it won't be too long before we find out.

This battalion is certainly fortunate because more than half of the division has just finished maneuvers and have returned to find out that the rest have been cancelled. And just in time to keep us from going out.

I have been listening to the news and the end of the war certainly is freeing many things from rationing. Won't it be nice to pull up to a gas station and ask them to "fill 'er up"? Probably some items will be scarce for awhile but it won't be too long before everything will be back to normal. With lumber and plumbing, etc. being released maybe you will be able to build some boats, Dad. I also heard that the first division to return to the States for redeployment, the 86th division, is scheduled to go to the Pacific after all to take up occupational duties. But the high point men are to be taken out. So I believe I have enough points to at least keep me in the States if I get back home without getting suck over here. We are all anxious for this point system to lower in order to start all this large redeployment stuff and maybe it won't get too long before I can get home. All I hope is I get discharged by next February but no later than July because Tufts is still on their accelerated plan, the school semesters will begin at the beginning of those months. I'm sure my choice is the best and wisest but I have to laugh at Ruby when she wrote her last letter and asked me if I were crazy to think of going back to school!! Probably she will understand when she gets out of high school.

It seems as though the army has slowed me up considerably when I eat and I'll say I'm not as fast as I used to be. In fact, most of the fellows are through way ahead of me unless I'm in a hurry to go some place. You always used to comment how fast the three of us used to eat and that it wasn't good for the indigestion. And many men have said that I speak so much slower than most northerners and am much easier to understand because I take my time. In fact, they say I'm even slower than many southerners except those who drawl their words out. Don't think I have acquired a "you all," southern accent because it isn't true. I don't think I talk as slowly as they make out because I have been talking the same as always. Of course, I may not notice the difference but if I have lived around Boston all my life and haven't picked up their true accent, I'm sure being in this army for this length of time I won't change my speech.

Yesterday we had the best cheese in the kitchen that I have ever tasted. It comes in a great huge bulk and looks as though it were made in a large pot. I really don't know just what kind it is even though it tastes strong. But it is much nicer than many of our weaker cheese at home. It seems as though I just ate and ate and still never tire of it. The cooks fixed up to the potatoes the best way they have ever done when they melted cheese right in the pot with the spuds. Sort of reminded me of one dish you used to prepare when I was home. And last night we had almond in a very special form and instead of the usual way – hot salmon; or salmon patty cakes – we had it cold with cold vegetable mixed in to form a sort of salad. Everyone thought it was excellent and to me was the best way they have ever prepared that because I just hate hot salmon. But what I missed of all was mayonnaise in the fish. It is next to impossible to get any over here unless it is homemade but they don't have the ingredients to do that. So we don't have everything we like to but have been

getting along very nicely. Nothing will beat those fresh vegetables right out of the garden and that is what the army has little of – fresh vegetables.

These children must have something lacking in their diet because every last one of them has a bloated stomach which I believe is the sign of malnutrition. So many fellows have commented that these children must get plenty to eat in order to have such round little bellies but not when they are that way on a wholesale scale. I have seen some of the meals some of these foreigners eat – not the Germans so much but the French and Dutch – and about all they eat is some of that bread that feels like lead and maybe some porridge. After seeing these people I consider the Americans very lucky to have all they did even with the rationing going on.

On all the American radio stations over here there is no advertising at all and if a program such as “Fibber McGee and Molly” are broadcast, all the advertising is left out and instead is music for time the ads are going on. It’ll spoil me when I get home after not hearing about “the skin you love to touch “ and “the muscle building cereal.” I notice the British stationary the same way and there is not a speck of advertising on one single program. But it is probably through competition such as this brings about more varied and better programs. Most often English entertainment is so dry for my sense of humor but maybe it is because most Americans have a sharper wit.

This morning I have been to church bright and early. The biggest surprise was when the first sergeant went because that is the first time he has been inside a church since he came overseas. But Chaplain Blich who visits this company very often finally persuaded him to attend the services. It certainly was worthwhile going because he gave about the best sermon he has ever preached even though every one of his is excellent and brings a deep meaning to all. I certainly would like to have him as our pastor at home because he is so good. His subject today concerned everyone of us and how we can help our nation become stronger morally and spiritually. He believes our nation is getting more immoral all the time and a country is as strong only as its morals. I’m afraid this war has caused many people to lose all their moral and spiritual habits!! And I believe as he does that without God, a nation is lost. All through history this has shown up and will continue to do so. At the sermon, we had communion so I stayed. It is strange but I never partook at home because I seldom stayed for morning services. I know that we have gained in this war because we have grown to love and worship God which we didn’t have before I left home. We must never forget Him in times of peace. Guess I’m trying to preach a sermon myself but really am doing a poor job of it.

We are supposed to have ice cream tonight and that is a real treat because we don’t often have any. Oh, for that good ice cream we used to get at home. Now with the gasoline rationing being done away with, you’ll be able to go out more often and get things like that. Last night I got some more carrots for my eyesight you know!! These people after awhile will get wise to us taking those and will keep us out. And I got some ripe pears from a tree near here so had quite a meal before going to bed. This time eating before going to bed didn’t bother me like the time I ate those six eggs. Boy, how I suffered.

This has turned out to be much longer than I had expected. This is all the news if that is what you call it. May God bless you people. With all my love, Harold

#August 21, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Because we have each afternoon off now I’ll be able to write more regularly. Later on in this letter I’ll explain to you what has happened to give everyone this change of heart. Yesterday afternoon, I received another Nfld. letter from you #86. I just stopped for awhile

because the mail just came in and I received another letter from you #87, one from Em, a Boston Herald, and a package from you with socks, nuts, maple candy, etc. in it. So I didn't do too badly today. I'm glad you are taking a few pictures because I want to see what the place looks like. And I'm also pleased that you are getting some stamps from Uncle George to add to my collection. Talking about stamps, between you and Em sending me some stamps, I have plenty on hand right now.

We have each afternoon off now after waiting for the training schedule to be revised. So now we have a little drill and lectures in the morning. And after that we can do anything we want. Because these last two days have been so rainy, we have held classes inside and haven't done a blessed thing because the officers don't want to teach anything. All we do is listen to them crack some jokes and then we sleep the rest of the time as best we can in chairs.

I don't like to sleep in the daytime so well so yesterday afternoon I decided to go down to F company which is about a mile from here and see Stasi since he has just returned from the Riviera. I believe I told you he went and it was rather strange he should be there for V-J day while I was there for the V-E celebration. He was gone much longer than I was because he stayed in Luxembourg City for almost a week because they couldn't get transportation back to the outfit. It actually was shorter to take that trip when we were in Northern Germany because here they are brought way up north to Luxembourg where they take the train for Southern France. F company is about to move now although the company won't be because they are going to take over a stockade full of prisoners and guard them. G. company is to take over border patrol on the Czechoslovakian border – the same job it had before being relieved by the 102<sup>nd</sup> division. I understand this 102<sup>nd</sup> is to take over the 99th because that is to go home soon. This company wasn't doing a thing when we first came down here so will remain in this town and have a little training each morning. Boy, I'd rather be here than do some of the duties. Now I'll have plenty of time of time for writing my letters but if I don't receive only more than I've gotten lately I might as well forget that people write, Gosh, I don't know what I do with myself now. At least I can sleep if there is nothing else to do.

Today, I took another one of those darned shots but I wasn't as bad off as Swett who had one in each arm. At least I have only one sore arm. When I told him he was to get two he thought I was joking but soon found out differently.

Last night I decided to cover my ribbons with cellophane in order to keep them clean. After awhile the cloth gets terribly dirty. When Swett was in Paris he bought three ribbons in one solid piece instead of each ribbon being separate. So Sunday, I saw him covering them with cellophane from a pack of cigarettes. That is what gave me the idea! So now everyone is covered and I hope they'll keep a little cleaner. It was lots of work because they have to be taken part in a special way and then replaced the same way in order to make them right. Sunday, Swett and I went out with all our best clothes on and took a whole roll of film of each other and together in a few. I am determined to have a good one of myself so used the whole roll up. I might seem conceited but I only did that so you can have them even if I have to carry them home. If we do return to the States when we were originally scheduled, it would be better to just hang onto the exposed film because I'd be home just as fast as the mail would carry them. I hope by the time you return from your trip that the films will be home and in good condition instead of being ruined by that inspecting machine. I still will be glad to get back and use the Leica with all the new parts. I have sent home, Boy I'll have a camera worth plenty of money when I get all those accessories that I want. There is nothing like that good old camera for sharpness and color rendition. By the way, have you taken any more color pictures lately? You have not

mentioned taking any and I am just wondering if the color is better than those I took when on furlough. Why in the world did you bother to get such a good exposure meter if you're scared to death to use the thing? Maybe you bought it for me when I return, eh?

One of the men in this company has a relative here visiting him. He is from the air corps and is stationed in Munich. I heard him talk about the setup they have there where they have meals served on plates by girls. So they are much better off than we and you'll always find the air corps has always been better off even in combat than we poor infantrymen. What a bunch of ribbons, etc. he has on his E.T.O. jacket – five overseas stripes and has been in seven major campaigns. He has 102 point but can't get out probably because the air corps requires so many more points for discharge than the ground forces. All the air corps gets point every time they go into the air. We have to go through a whole campaign, maybe one or two months, but all they have to do is go on five combat air missions which may take five days and then they get their medal which is worth five points.

This morning I had the first sergeant make an appointment for me at the dentist and I'm to go tomorrow at one o'clock. So now I hope to have everything fixed up and hope this new dentist is more cooperative than the old one. I know I had an awful time with the other man but always did get what I wanted done eventually. Probably he'll pull those two wisdom teeth that have been bothering me slightly but I am glad to have them out because those teeth are so far back that they do me no good.

I have more to say but am too tired to keep awake. So will go to bed and write another letter tomorrow. May God bless you. With all my love, Harold

#August 22, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

I didn't finish your letter yesterday because I had much more to say. So will write again and see how far I get. As I'm writing, we are having one of the worst thunder storms I've ever seen over here. Boy, and I mean it is raining! An evening like this makes me feel so glad to be inside instead of outside in a foxhole. I really can appreciate so many more things than before!

I wrote Em a short time ago and sealed in an envelope as usual. Then I found out I had addressed it to you! So then I had to open it again and put it in another envelope. That just goes to show you that I am thinking of you all the time.

This afternoon I had a dental appointment at 1 o'clock but because one of the jeeps was being repaired and the other was in use, I had to get a ride as best I could. After almost waiting a half hour on the road an F company jeep came along going to battalion. I got there half an hour late and the dentist sort of bawled me out but laughed about it. This new man is about 23 it seems and I will say is a pleasant fellow and knows his business. He inspected all my teeth and found only one small cavity. So my teeth are much better off than I imagined so I let my imagination run away with myself. But he did pull out that wisdom tooth that I told you about and it didn't hurt a single bit. In fact, I couldn't even feel a thing after he injected some sort of pain killer in the gums. Boy, it was over before I knew it and couldn't feel a single thing in that place for a long time. Even now it just barely aches and not enough to bother. At least, I'm glad my teeth are all right because I would hate to lose them after you spent so much money on them

The battalion is starting up five schools where we can learn five different subjects. I am not interested in agriculture, radio, or electricity but believe I'll take a course in blueprint reading in order to help me out when I get back to Tufts and take up engineering drawing. The trouble is most fellows aren't interested in college courses but would rather

have practical knowledge - nothing that I want to know. The best thing to do is wait until I return to a good school because this army always makes a big joke out of everything.

I was finally able to get hold of a metal mouthpiece and I can't begin to tell you how much better it sounds. Why before, the instrument sounded like a fog horn but now it sounds so differently. So now they have me playing retreat starting last night and it doesn't u bad at all even if I haven't had an instrument in my mouth for so long. I'm surprised I remembered the calls as well as I have. Some of these fellows seemed to think it is easy to blow so I let them try and most give up in disgust. Now they don't criticize buglers the way they did because now they realize it is no easy job and takes plenty of practice.

I'm enclosing a cartoon which I really enjoyed and know you will too. It backs up my statement about these officers and how most of them didn't have very good jobs in civilian life. Many are going to find it very hard to go back to civilian life and I bet many will remain in this crazy army. Boy, you couldn't get me to stay in a any price.

Today, we had a man in the company give us his solution for determining the month we will go back to the States and I will say it was very sound reasonable but don't know if the army will change its mind. He is a college graduate with a master's degree so in no dumbbell. He figures from the number of divisions that have arrived home and the number that have been alerted. It is too much to tell you all but his prediction is that this division would leave here and go home the last of September or the first of October. I certainly hope he is right even if I don't get out of this army for awhile. One of the lieutenants put up an argument and the fellow soon fixed him because the officer was stuck out on a limb on all his questions. Of course that was his opinion and what he said won't go. I really enjoyed that argument because it makes more sense than some of the things we argue about.

For some reason, I was terribly tired last night so went to bed very early. But for some other reason, I kept waking up early in the morning. I felt quite rested this morning but now am tired again. And yet I don't over work myself.

I have been busy working these latest crossword puzzles that Em sent. But find some of them almost too hard for my mind. But when I worked out the last word definition in Reader's Digest I got ten out of twenty right. So that was better than average when I usually get two or three right. I would like to build up a larger vocabulary than I have and yet have much larger than most fellows that I have known in this army.

Guess this is all for tonight dear people. May God bless you. With all my love,  
Harold

#August 25, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here it is Saturday and another week has gone by. Today is inspection day so we were very busy cleaning up although it is next to impossible to get these rooms perfectly clean. Yesterday when he mail came in, one of your letters was among the bunch dated Aug 14 (#89) so there is one more letter someplace on the way. For a couple of days the mail has been coming in very poorly but now all of a sudden it is coming in very well. We don't know what to expect from day to day at all! I like your description of the "teas" you often have and the way you're always on the go. But the best thing you have told me is the fact that Mrs. Daiute told you that two of the four packages have finally arrived home which isn't bad time considering I sent them the middle of July. Just think, September will be upon us before we know it and then my birthday. I certainly hope this is the last one I spend in this army. I'm now wondering what two packages they are because I sent four in all - two with camera parts and perfume and all kinds of odd junk, another had the bronze star and good conduct medals, and the last had five or six rolls of exposed film which I hope turn out well.

Have you ever received the bronze star certificate which I sent in a case via airmail? So far you haven't mentioned it and the case should have gotten home by this time.

Betty wrote and told me that she is now learning to drive in the sandpits but isn't doing so well because she says her father gets too impatient when she makes a mistake. Remember the time he got fiery hot and I ran out of their house to escape his temper. I never will forget that evening. Teaching me how to drive is one thing you're going to do, Dad, and I will keep after you until you do even if I have to say it so often that you get sick of hearing me. You'll finally give in! You're not that busy that you can't do so. Imagine letting Betty get ahead of me when I'm so much older than she!!

Thursday night the company had another dance but because we weren't able to get the regimental band and we had to use a phonograph. Everyone tells me it was a complete flop because those German frauleins can't dance to records for some reason. I don't and won't have a thing to do with any of those activities because I wouldn't be bothered with these foreigners – not because I am so much better than they but because it was due to these darn Germans that I'm over here today. And so I'm not going to cater to them the way so many of these soft-hearted Americans are doing. The women of Germany had as much to do with the war. For refreshments, they had pretzels which some civilian made for us and I don't know what they were made from but tasted like shoe leather. Boy, were they tough!! We had some before and they were made perfectly. I don't like the beer which they sell at our "service club" here in town so really have no form of entertainment other than write letters or books. But I'm perfectly content in my own secluded way.

The latest word I have heard pertaining to us going home is that this division is to return 45 days ahead of schedule which would place us about the last of September. It is claimed this is official and not a rumor but I am skeptical of everything. I certainly hope it is true just the same. If that were the case, that means I may be able to see grandma if she visits you when she is supposed to. ] have been over here long enough and am rather anxious to return after having been overseas almost a year and a half which is a long time to me.

I see by the papers that the 95<sup>th</sup> division is raising a stink about having to go to the Pacific. And I really don't blame some of them because some have been overseas a year and a half and even longer. But the army is screening out men with more than 75 points and more than 37 years of age. I know how I'd feel if I had to go with only 64 points but with all the overseas I've had. There should be enough men in the States. How unfair this army works!

Boy, wasn't I aggravated yesterday afternoon! I was suppose to go to the dentist but wasn't able to get there because this company had no transportation going that way. Anyway, I tried to get a ride on one of the passing vehicles but to no avail because just after the noon hour is a very bad time of day to try and get rides – there just aren't any jeeps passing then. I waited almost an hour and a half waiting for some vehicle to come along. But do you think any would come? That always seems to be the way! I blame the company for not getting there because I told the first sergeant two days before that I had to have that appointment yesterday. I know if I had a bar on my shoulder or wore plenty of sergeant's stripes they'd send me in a special jeep. But because I'm only a pfc., I don't rate.

This afternoon the officers took a jeep (two of them) and went and saw a baseball game – nothing important. Of course that is different!! Bah!!! Boy, in this army the only ones who rate are those with high ranks. I get so mad at times like this. I hate to arrive late for anything and would rather be there two hours early than 15 minutes late.

Oh well, I may be able to get another appointment sometime soon but don't imagine the dentist will be in too much of a hurry after me having to break the one yesterday. Thank goodness the cavity is very small and the only one I have. So that can wait awhile.

The mail came in just a few minutes ago but I didn't have a single thing among it all. So maybe tomorrow I'll get something. This seems to be all I can think of to say right now.

May God bless you good Idarents. You have been so wonderful to me and I know I appreciate veerything. With all my love, Harold.

#August 27 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

There was no mail a all for me nor anyone as a matter of fact. The mail clerk told me that the division A.P.O. does not work on Saturday afternoon nor Sunday so as a result we do not get mail either Sunday no today. That gripes all of us because we would like to get our mail regardless but I suppose they work so terribly hard back there - the poor boys. I know we couldn't take Sunday off when we were fighting. I can't see why he army lets them close up for the week-ends when mail is a large morale builder. Tomorrow we'll probably get all the mail at once as usual and then I'll probably have so many to answer after not receiving any for so long.

I just came in from playing a game of ping-pong but didn't do too well because I was playing the two best players in the company. I hope one of them really loses to someone because he is so conceited and knows he is good. Boy, nothing aggravates me more than to have someone like that. I really haven't played much at that game and it wasn't until today that I finally got so I can hold the racket in such a way that it feels natural. There is no conventional way so tried holding the racket in such a way that it feels natural. I'm not playing the best men in order to beat them but in order to learn how to play the game halfway decently. Anyway, I'm playing a lot better game than before but not the way I really would like to - practice makes perfect. What I'd like to do is have a good game of tennis because when I was at Tufts I really enjoyed playing very much. When I get back I'll play that game all I want and will use the same racket unless the thing is all warped. That frame should have kept it straight, but has it? I always liked to play those different type of sports but can't play baseball nor any sport in which I have to use my hand to throw because when I do, my right arm begins to ache. One of these days when I get home, I plan to have a final x-ray taken of that arm to see if really healed up completely. Some fellows here tell me all I need is exercise but with all that I have taken both in school and in the army it still aches when I throw something very far. Guess there is nothing to worry about, though, because if it was not all right something would have happened before this.

Tonight we are to have another dance in the company and this time I will say that more planning has gone into the dance itself and decorations have been hung and the regimental band is to be here. They also are to have coffee, beer, and strong wine so I suppose there will be plenty of drunkards. That is the first time they have been able to get wine and is some different than when we were almost flying across central Germany and finding wine and all kinds of liquor by the gallon. I'm rather glad there is no alcohol around very often because there is nothing more unsightly than a bunch of crazy drunken fools. We are also to have more pretzels to eat and I hope they aren't as tough as the last time because I nearly pulled out my teeth trying to take one bite. And most important of all, there are to be girls here!!! Of all the females I've seen here, there is only one I think is really beautiful and she is almost perfect in my mind. She has blue eyes and a very pretty face and with no makeup at all. Boy, she really would look splendid in an eening dress and

with American makeup put on decently – not a dab of rouge to represent color in the cheeks. If I got married and my wife doesn't know how to put the stuff on correctly, I know I'll send her to a school because I know you looked so much better after you went, Mum. Don't you think so, Dad?? Don't think I'm falling for that girl. I just mention her because I'm not. All I'm doing is commenting about her. There are no girls like the good ole American ones.

For some reason I was terribly tired yesterday so slept all morning and then in the afternoon washed a few small things such as underwear and socks, etc. So I really had no exciting day at all so can't tell you much about it. I did miss church but the Major was there and gave his usual lecture. So I really did not miss much. I know I should have gone regardless but hate to listen to that Major because he is so dry. When it comes to the captain, he has so much to say and can make it so interesting that I don't tire of him at all and don't get bored. I did take another bath last night because I like to take advantage of the opportunity after not being able to bathe for so long. Boy, I really had that room full of steam from the water I was heating and it got so bad that I could hardly see the other wall which was not very far away. Thank goodness there are no bugs here in this building because so many fellows in other places are complaining about all the insects and how they are biting them to death at night. That's the trouble with these houses in these countries in Europe. They are so full of bugs in some parts such as Normandy and even parts of Brittany. What the company will have to do is get some of this DDT powder and spray around. That is supposed to kill them off. I'm not telling you to make you worry because as I said before, only once have I ever been bothered by bugs and that was in a hay barn on the way to St. Malo way back last August.

I believe next Monday we are to start the battalion school which is to teach us eight different courses. I told you about it, didn't I? The only subject I find halfway interesting is blueprint reading and the rest are not for me. There is livestock raising, farming, managing a small business, radio, and electricity. What I wouldn't mind is a refresher course in photography and have been trying to get something done about it. The officer might let the few of us who want that course to take it on a company level because classes would be too large on a larger scale. If they don't bother I really don't dare care because I have plenty of time when I get into civilian life. By the way, just before I came overseas you mentioned about getting those series books that I bought bound like regular books!! I haven't hear you say thing about it since so am wondering if anything came of it. It would be nice to have them done that way all right!

When it comes to education in this army, I think it is a big joke because only a select few are allowed to go to a decent school. Oh well, this army gave me nothing and I expect nothing from it in return. If they allowed me to go to college for nothing, that is all I ask. If they won't I have enough money save up to go myself anyway.

There really is so little to say but I want you to realize that I tell you more facts about this life than a good many would tell but I feel it is better to know the solid truth than keep telling you lies. I could tell you I like this army but that is an absolute lie. I try to tell you everything regardless whether it is pleasant or not so don't think that I'm trying to keep anything from you. Please don't feel that way about that person telling me about you having ulcers because I really am not worrying about you after finding out it can be cured. I would much rather know the truth then than find it out at a later date. Who told me the fact is a deep secret and you won't get it out of me. So there!! That is one thing that I'm keeping from you. There are things that have happened when I was young that I never told you about and sometime I'll tell you all about them. They are all funny now but at the time weren't.

This seems to be all I have to say and can't think of another thing at all. ay God  
bless you my wonderful parent. Wisth all my love HroldM  
P.S. The way things look now don't think of sending any Xmas packages.

#August 29, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

I am rather late tonight writing to you because I had a full day even though not much of importance has happened. First of all, we had a little training in the morning, then in the afternoon I played some ping-pong, and finally slept till time for retreat when I had to blow the bugle. We must dress in O.D.'s for this formation and after supper I juts had to change to fatigues because he whole day s been exceptionally hot and I mean hot! Quite unusual after having such cool weather. Then tonight we drew PX rations and I did plenty of trading to get rid of my cigarettes. I drew seven packs of cigarettes, one pack of gum,, six bars of candy, one can of tomato juice, and one can of salted peanuts. So what I did was trade two packs of cigarettes for one can of peanuts which I thought was a pretty good deal. And I also traded the rest of my cigarettes for candy. Smokes are terribly hard to get now ad those who smoke excessively will give anything for a pack. I certainly am glad I don't smoke and I know Swett is glad I don't either because I have given him more of my cigarette ever since I knew him.

We heard on the radio tonight more about this point system and all I hope is that it is to be run as has been announced by the war department. What they propose to do is count up all points again after V-J day has been officially proclaimed and after it is determined how many combat troops MacArthur will need. After this, we will add up the points again and I believe I'll have 72 which isn't too bad. They also said that anyone with more than 60 points won't be sent overseas regardless. So maybe when I do get back to the States it will be for good. And the way the discharges will work is the critical score will be lowered to 80 first and as soon as all these men are out, the 75 to 80 men will get out and then in the next bunch I'll be, I hope. Let's hope the army doesn't change its mind because in this way I might get out before another year passes. If they work it according to age and service I'm absolutely licked.

The regimental commander – Colonel Foster – was down to the company today and was talking to some of the officers about us going home. The company clerk who stays in the C.P. told me about what he had overheard while they were talking. The colonel claimed corps headquarters had notified this division that we are to go home one month ahead of schedule which would put us up to October. We expect to be alerted within the next month, so he said. And after hearing that he said it himself, I am more inclined to believe him than some of those fantastic rumors.

Today I didn't receive a single letter but yesterday hit the jackpot and received five letters in which three countries were represented – Canada, Newfoundland, and U.S.A. I received two letters from you dated August 16 & 18. So now I am up to date as far as this date. I also received a nice letter from Grandma and one from Miss Keany. And the most important was that I heard from Tufts. I will enclose the letter so you can see for yourself what was said. From the way the thing read, they seem anxious to have me back. I think it was a pretty good idea that I did write because I don't want them to forget me. I felt like a civilian once again after being called "mister" which is something unheard of in this army except when addressing warrant officers. I believe even though the accelerated program doesn't give us much time for vacation, I would rather continue on in that way because I wouldn't be too old when I did get out. I would have only lost a year of my career instead of

the two years that I have been in this army if they do continue that way. That statement probably sounds foolish but I'm certain you understand what I mean.

I'm enclosing a few more stamps which I have been picking up from one of the fellows who has a small newspaper sent to him each week with a bunch of stamps on the envelopes. I would like to complete that series of flags of Allied Nations which I have been sending home recently – stamps of course! I hope were able to get a few stamps when you were in Nfld. as you said you would do.

I believe you should be almost home now because weren't you due to leave Botwood the 28th which means you would have arrived in the States either yesterday or today I bet you're both glad to get home. You're like me – the home type who hates to move from place to place. Talking about moving, we were told by our officers that we will move in about two weeks to take over F company which is guarding prisoners. I hate the thoughts of it because I despise moving when I am settled. But of course, if it were to go home, I would be more than happy to make even a long move Boy, that will be a blessed day when we set foot on American soil once again after being away for so long. It would be nice to arrive back in Boston but at least I'm better off landing even in New York than many of those fellows who live in the far west and who have to travel all that way by those darned day coaches in most cases which are no fun. Oh well, I don't know what will happen so shouldn't speculate so much. All we can do is wait and see what will happen.

Boy, these last couple of days I have been as stiff as a board because I did some strenuous exercises and that left me all crippled up. Getting old!! Why, the next morning after doing that I was so stiff when I awoke that I couldn't raise my body at first. I just goes to show how the body gets soft if there is no exercise. Guess I'll have to do more training than I have been doing because I haven't been exerting myself very much. Nobody is overdoing themselves now and I don't blame them at all. We had a lecture today on what plans we had for post war business and how the army jobs fit us for civilian life. I can't see anything that I could do in the infantry that would help me as a civilian unless I planned to become a postman. This army didn't seem to be very worried about us coming in but now when we are getting out they are so concerned!! We finally agreed that the infantry did not offer much opportunity for the life I hope to return to soon.

I forgot to tell you about the dance we had Monday night. I believe it was the best one the company has had yet because more planning went into it than the rest. There were plenty of decorations, women, music, and wine. That wine was potent stuff because most everyone was feeling happy and staggering. I only remained for a minute to see how the dance was progressing but soon came to bed. There were quite a few drunk fellows here but they weren't the rowdy type and so I slept undisturbed. I know when I get home I'd like to learn how to dance and I really plan to after seeing how much fun most of the fellows have dancing with girls. Dad, you ought to learn too and then you could take Mum out when I take a girl, if I ever have one. Maybe I'm not good enough looking for them. Why is it you are dying to become a grandfather. Wouldn't that show people your true age?

This seems to be about all I can think of now so will say goodnight and may God bless you, my dear parents, and I hope it won't be too long before I can return and see you. With all my love, Harold

P.S. Here it is exactly midnight and I am just finishing this letter. It certainly is time for me to go to bed.

#August 31, 1945. Grainet, Germany  
Dear Mum and Dad,

Today I really feel down hearted because official word has come through saying all men with 65 or more points are to be transferred to the 8<sup>th</sup> armored division which is going home soon. That leaves me out completely in the cold because I only need one more point and I could go with this group. Boy, that almost breaks my heart because I am so anxious to return. But the first sergeant said that this divisions to return either in October or November with men from 40 up to 65 and the men below 40 are to remain here as occupation. I have never known him to spread rumors so I'm rather inclined to believe him. All I can do is hope he is right. But I would much rather be going home in Sept. or Oct. when the 8<sup>th</sup> armored is scheduled to go. I'm so close and yet so far and have been moaning about the fact all morning. Curse the luck!! Things seem to be so black and I don't know for sure what will happen. It is just like the time I came overseas and everything looked so dark. But the good Lord made things turn out and I came through with my life. So all you and I can do is trust in the Lord and I know He will take care of us.

With all this transferring, the I. & E. schools that I talked about have been discontinued even before they started. .So I didn't learn a single thing over here. Oh well, that is the way things seem to be going. Those men with more than 65 points can't go on pass or furlough now so the lower men are going in their place. That means that maybe I'll go somewhere again before I get home. The officers have been frozen here and cannot go home regardless of their points so they didn't get a good deal at all. I believe 65 men are to go from this one company but from battalion headquarters about 100 are going which will leave about twenty men. What a mess this transferring is going to cause.

Yesterday I received another letter from you and this one took much less time – dated August 20 (#92) – and a nice letter from Marjorie. When I read your description of Grandpa, I got quite a laugh out of it. Boy, he must be a character. He reminds me of Dad when he gets obstinate. Ha!! Grandpa took a great liking to you when he was down to Boston and he would always seem to do as you said. It really is too bad he is living the way he is but I suppose if he is happy that is all that counts.

We have a few men in the company who don't want to get out of this army qdn qre going to re-enlist. The first sergeant is one of these men and if he could keep his rating as 1<sup>st</sup> sgt. it would be better for him to remain because all he ever did was a very little bit of farming down in Alabama. I hate this army so much that you couldn't bribe me to stay in. I don't know why I'm always telling you my troubles because you have your own, I know!

Yesterday I drew my German pistol out of the supply room to clean it because I was afraid it may have gotten rusty. We have to keep all our foreign weapons in a large boxes under lock and key in the supply room because there have been too many casualties from accidental explosions. It has never happened in this company but because it did elsewhere, an order came down. That is the first time I have ever tried to take the thing apart and thoroughly clean it. I finally got the thing apart and really brushed it up and then set about to put it together. I really was amazed that I got it together without much trouble and could seem to remember just where everything went. Some different from the way I used to be at home where I would take things part and then couldn't get it together. All the fellows told me it was too complicated and so would never get it together after having stripped out everything that was possible and what a bunch of parts. Mum, I'll be your handyman at home since I am a little better putting things together. As you say, if I don't blow my horn who will? More men offered me plenty of money for the pistol – as high as \$60 – but I refused because that is the only thing of that sort that I have ever kept. I probably will never use it but the pistol will be nice to keep. And yesterday, I was offered two dollars and a knife if I would sell the one I was carrying. This fellow wanted my knife because it had all

the attachments like an American boyscout knife. But I wouldn't sell because that gadget has really come in very handy at times for opening cans, bottles and unscrewing things.

Talking about money, we are to get paid today, I hope, and then I'll send some money home. All we're allowed to send now is what we actually draw plus ten percent which means I can send about 30 dollars. Swett owed me some money this month because when he went to Paris I lent him some. He has always paid me before so will help him out if he needs it but these people that you have o remind about a dozen times before they pay you. And many times it is never paid up. Boy, this Army certainly has taught me a few things in the way of getting along with people and I know now not to let someone pull something over on me because then they take advantage of me. I always lay the law down to them and tell them what I expect of them if they try anything funny. I actually believe I can get along better with most fellows than before after having been with almost every type. But one nice thing about going to college is that I will be with fellows my own age and not almost old enough to be my father.

All I have done in this letter is rave on and on with nothing to say of importance. Let's hope the division is to return to the State when they say. May God be with you, my parents. With all my love IHaroald

#September 2, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

The mail has just come in but there was nothing for me but a Sunday School Times. There were quite a few packages but none at all for me. They should get here before too long because they have been on the way for quite awhile now. I certainly hope you get those two other packages I sent. You told me about Mrs. Daiute saying that two packages are home so now I expect the others to be there soon if not before now. I believe that is the last of the packages I'll send so if those two get home, I will have been very fortunate because I will not have lost a single box through the mail – so different from some who have lost so many somewhere along the line.

Yesterday, though, I received two letters – one from you dated August 22 (#93) and one from Warren Scott. Your letters are coming through in pretty good time now and I wish the ones that I'm sending home would get there as quickly. I know it is an awful feeling having to wait and wait for mail. Boy, you seem to be always on the go here and there and I know when you are home, the wear and tear will show up on you even if that was suppose to be a vacation. I didn't realize that I had so many relatives in Newfoundland!!!

Warren didn't have much to say because censorship was still going on when he wrote the day after the surrender was announced. He said the men were so glad that they were giving each other handshakes, slaps on the back, etc. It is strange how different the army over here celebrated - no hilarious time., just carrying on as usual but saying a prayer of thanks to themselves.

I was mad about jus missing the 65 points which would bring me home sooner but now I have forgotten about that and am now as happy as a lark. Now one of the low point men - 40 points – is beginning to worry and after laughing at me the way he did. It is my turn to laugh now. The way things look now, all men below 45 will be transferred and all above 65 leaving only those between 45 and 65. No official word has come down to that effect but I'll try and explain what makes me believe that. First of all no men with less than 45 nor more than 65 are allowed to go on passes which are coming up all the time. That surely means something. There are very few men in this company who are in this middle groups so there won't be many of the men here now who will remain for long. And another thing that makes me think the way I do is a casual statement made by Colonel Norris to me

yesterday morning when he was here at the company. I saw him pull up to the house so went down to speak with his driver whom I knew very well. Just as the driver asked me how many points I had, Colonel Norris came out and heard me say 64. He said it was too bad but then went on to say that maybe I would get home as soon as the high points men who are leaving now. Colonel Norris isn't a type of man who says meaningless things and the casual way he made that statement leads me to believe that more is in the air than we have been told. From being with him as long as I have, I have found out that his casual statements usually have more meaning than many think. He is just a man who doesn't emphasize something he knows but passes it on in a subtle way. As I have said before, I am only speculating and really have no idea what will happen. So because I make certain statements don't think they are so. I am sending the latest "Thunderbolt" and you'll see more about these points in there.

I heard that the first sergeant's request to remain in this company with the 84 points he has been turned down and so he will have to leave when the others do. He hates to go but plans to re-enlist when he gets to the States. So now, we have another acting 1<sup>st</sup> sgt. who I don't know too well but hope he'll be better than this one. The trouble with the present one is that he has a few pets and lets them do anything instead of treating everyone alike. I certainly hated to see Sgt. Nordhoff go when he did because I really like him as 1<sup>st</sup> sgt. He did more for me than anyone else has ever done in this army. It is a strange thing that the 1<sup>st</sup> sgt. wants to remain in the army so badly while I want to get out so badly. They are making him leave against his will and are keeping me in against my will. Strange contrast! Such is life!!

I have just been figuring out how much the army will have to pay when I go back to Tufts. It will take me 28 months to finish school and will get \$65 per month to cover any expenses other than the actual tuition fee. Before I averaged about \$12 a week so maybe I can save some money this way. The army will have paid me \$1,820 by the time I have finished and \$1075 for tuition which will make a total of \$2,895 and is a big saving to me. The reason why I am planning on a full four years of college is because the army states that a person who has served in the armed forces for 90 days is entitled to one year of college plus one year for each year of service. That means I'm entitled to 3 years of school but because a college year is only eight months, I can take advantage of the extra four months. The three years makes a total of 36 months and I'll only require 28 months. I haven't explain it too clearly but hope you understand. I have read booklets on the subject and know I am right according to what they say. When I get back I will have to talk to Dr. Leighton as Dean Burden told me and then I will find out just what and how everything will be done. That is a wonderful thing the way the government is financing the college programs because in that way the fellows who can't go to otherwise can go now.

This morning I went to church and Chaplain Blich was the preacher so enjoyed it very much. He didn't give his usual sermon but told us of our responsibilities in the post war planning. He also said today the surrender documents were signed early this morning so now he expects the points to add again. I really enjoyed listening to him even if he didn't talk about the Bible as usual. He did give a short sermon but it amounted to nothing. Just before we left he wanted to know how many men in that room had points between 45 and 65 and only about six out of fifty had so he assumed that he won't see the others again because they are expected to be transferred. I wish I had a picture of him and I guess it is only through neglect that I never took one of him because I have about three of the other chaplains.

Last night the company had another dance and plenty of work went into it. But the whole thing turned out to be terrible. There was suppose to be a German civilian band play

for us but someone got ahead of us and captured them first. So, all that could be done was to use a phonograph which didn't work too well. It is almost impossible to have a decent dance over here, especially in such a small town where we don't have the proper facilities. I did manage to get one of the drivers to save me some pretzels this time which were pretty good. Usually I miss all that because there is such a long line and do I hate to stand in line if I don't have to. Boy, I know I won't stand in line when I become a civilian after all that I have done in this army. Two of the fellows in the house that we live in got drunk on something and got hold of my bugle. They played that all night and wasn't I mad! Why it was almost 4 o'clock before they settled down for the night. Most of these men in headquarters are being transferred so there will only be five of us original men left. When I say original I don't mean those men who came over with the division - I mean those who are here now because after all this twisting around I'm afraid I won't know the company.

The day before yesterday we got paid as usual and I drew the same as I always do - \$25 and 40 cents. But I don't believe I'll send home any this month because I'd rather save it in case I'm going home before too long - I hope.

I read in the paper that a new postage stamp is being issued in honor of the Army so would you be sure and I get me a couple. And be sure and get Miss Martin to save me some especially those stamps with the different United Nations that I am sending home. In fact, maybe you could get some from Aunt Frances if you ever go there again or they come here. I wish I had thought of it when you went to Canada or when they came down here last summer. But then, I had more important things to worry about.

I was reading that a fellow in the 26<sup>th</sup> (Yankee) division has received the distinguished service cross and the item interested me after seeing that he was from Stoughton, Mass. Maybe Em or Al knows who he is since the town is small. His name is Sgt. Augustine S. Silva.

This is all for now. With all my love. Harold

#September 5, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

For the last two days we have not had any mail because of Sunday and Monday was a holiday for us - V-J day. The mail clerk has just left now to get the mail so here should be plenty for me.

There has been great excitement teeming these last couple of days because the radio has announced that the points are to be added again and the new critical score will be 80. The latest broadcast said that in December we will have another re-count so then maybe I'll have enough. Many men in the company will have well over 80 points but to add eight to mine, will only give me 72 which isn't of too much help. Everyone in the E.T.O. will have the same ratio and only a certain number of men can be placed in one division. Talking about being transferred, some of the men are leaving tomorrow and what gets me in that fellows with only one more point than I am going. One of the boys going has 66 now but when he adds points again, he will have 72 - just what I have and yet I can't leave now. Some people seem to get all the breaks. It is hard to explain just what I mean about adding points but some men will have 6,7 and 8 extra points. In my case, it will be 8 because I get credit for the full month even though I have just a little more than 15 days to my credit. It might not be too long before Swett goes home because the radio also announced that the new age limit is 35 and that is just what he is. So now he will apply to get his discharge. I'm glad to see that the age didn't come down any further or I'm afraid we young men would have to wait at the end of the line regardless of our points. I know I want to get out as badly as anyone else.

I wrote a short letter to Grandma yesterday and am sending it to you so you can give it to her. She should be in Braintree before too long if she comes as planned. Don't forget to give her that portrait and the perfume!! She'll certainly smell glamorous., eh?

We just had a fellow leave yesterday to go on a furlough to Paris but instead of the usual three days spent in the city itself, he will remain there one week and from now on that is what the army plans. And furthermore all men who are going on furlough whether to the Riviera, Britain, or Paris will go as far as Munich by train and then from there fly to their destinations. So that is a good thing and much better than going by those darned day coaches. With all these men leaving, I hope I won't be too long before I can get another pass because this time I'd like to go to Paris after being over here in Europe. I studied so much about it in French that I'd hate to miss it.

Because the communications sergeant is leaving us soon, the lieutenant has decided to put me in charge for the time being but I'm really not too thrilled because with a pfc's rating I was happy and with no worries. But I don't think the job will last too long because when the new men from the eighth armored division arrive, one will hold the rating of communications sergeant. So then he will take over. I am just to the stage where I don't care and am not like that when I first came into the army and tried to get ahead. All I want to do is get home now and the same as when I first came in the army - a buck private. With this new job, my troubles just begin!!!I hope I don't keep the position.

It seems as though I'm wasting my time now because all we are doing is marking time and am not doing a single thing. This morning we did a little bit of baseball but nothing else. With all these men leaving, soon not much is going on in the way of training. If men keep leaving the privates will end up being on guard every other day for 4 straight hours each time on guard. But thank goodness I work on the switchboard and so cannot be put on regular guard. At least inside I can write a letter or two even if we are on the board from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.

I wish I were going to Switzerland now because then I'd call you up by telephone. It might take two days to contact but is well worth the trouble. I would so like to hear your voices once again after being away all these months. The calls cost \$12 for 3 minutes but in my estimation is worth many times that price to me. And I would like to see what the little country looks like and I understand the scenery is beautiful.

One of the men leaving tomorrow who goes to church with me told me that if he lands in Boston, he'll be sure and call you up. I thought that was terribly nice of him and gave him your address. He talks quite oddly and might act oddly too but one can't help but like him. He is a very smart fellow and is very religious. He may land in New York though so then he won't call.

The mail has just come in and not a single thing for me. Probably tomorrow some will come in. What I am anxious to hear from you is that you've received all four boxes I sent the middle of July.

The weather hasn't been as cold as I thought it would be for awhile. But I suppose it will change soon and then watch out. I do hope we get out of here before we get snowbound because I would have to have it hinder my return home. I certainly am looking forward to that day and I know you are too.

This seems to be my shortest letter for quite awhile but all there is to talk about is the points. And by this time, I know you must be sick of hearing about it.

May God bless you wonderful parents – the best any boy could hope for. With all my love, Harold

#September 7, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

There was quite a bit of mail come in this afternoon and I got one from you which was written August 24 but not mailed till the 27. I am rather anxious to get one from you after you get back to the States because I want to know if you have received my packages yet. Yesterday, there was nothing for me but the day before I received three but none from you. Today I got smart and answered Marjorie, Warren, and Mrs. Hendrie but still have Em and Miss Martin to answer. I am not as slow about answering as I used to be because I have so much more time. Then, all I cared was that you receive letters from me regularly.

We have a new mail clerk because the other one left yesterday on points to the 8<sup>th</sup> armored. So now we have a new man and I hope he is as efficient as the other one was. Originally it was planned to have another man replace the mail clerk who just left. But he went home on an emergency furlough because his father is terribly sick. He left by jeep to go to Munich and from there will fly home. He is so much more fortunate than some because he is getting home but while the fighting was going on no man could get an emergency furlough.

There were more "Stars and Stripes" today than I have ever seen and plenty of "Yank" magazines – almost enough for each man. Every pay day we have been giving 5 cents for newspapers, etc. so every man should get one. I'll be darned if I'll pay when I don't get one all the time. I sure am stingy with my money now and wont to save every cent I can for a "rainy" day.

Yesterday morning the first bunch of high point men left for the 8<sup>th</sup> armored and the other group will leave Sunday for the same place – the high men were divided into two groups. Guess it was too much to try and transfer all the men at once. We should be getting the first bunch of armored men before too long and I hope they have a communications sergeant among the group because I don't want any responsibilities in this army. I wish I were leaving with the rest but naturally it is impossible to do so. But last night I heard the most encouraging news I have heard in a long time. The Paris headquarters for the re-deployment has just announced that all men with 70 or more points including this new adding of points will leave Europe by Christmas. And I have 72 right now (including he extra eight\_) so hope to see the good ole U.S. before the beginning of the year. One of the fellows here is really growing worried because he has only 40 points before the new re-tabulation and now has 48. He is wondering if he will still be stuck here as army of occupation. Now with the war over I don't blame anyone from dreading to be over here. It has been a month since I accepted the job at army hdqs. ad I haven't heard a thing yet. I doubt with all this redeployment going on, if they will call for me. I wouldn't worry about it though because I am certain nothing will come of it.

I always thought I had a large hand and long fingers but I know a fellow in this company who makes mine look miniature beside his. He is about 6 ft. 4 inches and is very lanky. Why, his fingers must be about an inch long than mine. He certainly isn't very dainty and is quite awkward with that height.

About all I did today was play volleyball and for a change I really enjoyed the game very much. Both teams had good men and this is the only way we can get something out of the game. There was plenty of cooperation on both sides but the team I was on was too good for the other side and we won three out of four. That all happened this morning but this afternoon I didn't want to work so hard so played some ping pong and didn't do too badly. That is the most strenuous game .I like to play!! I'll be darned if I'm going to strain or over exert myself when I don't have to. I don't get paid any extra!!

The other night all of us in this house – five men - got together and decided we were going to have some fresh vegetables from these German gardens. It ended up that we had

onions which I couldn't eat because they nearly burned the roof out of my mouth. Then I came in with carrots which is my favorite vegetable. Someone else got some lettuce and then two of us walked up a small hill near here and got a couple of nice white turnips which weren't strong at all. But the funny part is that we stumbled upon something in the dark on our way in a slight hollow. We shined our flashlights to see what it was. There were two people – an American boy and German girl loving each other. It was strange that we should stumble upon them when we could have gone almost any other place without seeing them. Anyway, the turnips were good and some thought that maybe I had gotten hold of sugar beets because they were so large. I wouldn't call them large but the southern men here said they were massive compared to the ones they raise in the south. These turnips were about the size of the ones we used to get from P.E.I. I certainly like fresh vegetables and it is much better for me because we get very little fresh foods in the army over here. I suppose you have read that the army is issuing bananas now. It is true and we had a nice dessert a couple days ago of peaches and bananas. I read that this fruit comes from the Canary Islands which I believe belongs to Spain. That country certainly is two faced because as long as Hitler was winning, Spain was on that side but now they are all for the Allies.

I feel so sleepy tonight even though I didn't do too much, Tomorrow, I'll write again because I have more to tell. By the way, I wish you'd send me another small box of stationery first class because I have just started on the last one you sent.

May God bless you, my dear parents. With all my love, Hrold

#September 9, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here it is Sunday morning and I didn't get yesterday's letter written to you as I had promised. So much went on and so much excitement that I just didn't have time. All morning long we got the quarters into shape for the inspection which was at 11. Only a couple of small things were wrong such as dust but with houses nearly a hundred years old I don't know what they expect. The second platoon had such bad billets that they had to drill yesterday afternoon while the rest of us had off. One man refused to stand inspection because he said he was on guard the night before and wasn't suppose to do anything the next morning. I believe now he is sorry because the officers are giving him a court martial which I would not want not this close to being discharged. If the army can speed up this re-deployment I believe it won't be too long before I get discharged.

Yesterday afternoon I received three letters from you all sent the same day – Sept. 1. But then they were opened I found they ranged from August 27<sup>th</sup> through the 30<sup>th</sup> and were written in Nfld. even though sent from home. I figured that you could not mail them until Braintree and then as soon as you stepped off the train mailed them. Miss Grant also sent a nice letter and doesn't she have an awfully nice handwriting.

You certainly had your troubles trying to get back to the U.S. and I got quite a laugh out of your letters. I don't mind hearing your gripes because after all you have been very patient and have listened to all I have to say. Dad, I'm so glad you were able to get a little fishing in on the trip because you always talked so much about it. After I get home we may be able to go up there once again one of these times. But this time we will take the car and go where ever we want to go.

There has been a noticeable change in the day snow because it is almost 8 before the sun is up and 6 when it sets. The days get so short in the dead of winter over here. We here in Central Europe are two hours ahead of British time so that means if you have returned to Eastern standard time, we are still six hours ahead of you. One time the British were using "British Double summer time" which advanced them two hours. But then they

dropped back to plain summer time and then to Greenwich Mean Time. It is all sort of confusing.

We are getting rather short of men now because of all the ones leaving. Tomorrow the final bunch leaves and then I hope we get more men in than we got yesterday. There were ten men but eight of them non-coms so that doesn't help the poor privates of the guard to have to do the dirty work. One non-com each night commands the guard but there is no walking post for him. No communications sergeant has come in yet so I still am acting com. sgt. I saw in the C.P. that I don't have to stand now which is a relief because since I have been back to the company, the only guard I have pulled is on the switchboard which isn't too bad. Tomorrow all the men we plan to have left in hdqs. is two to run the switchboard so I see that I'll have to help them not that I mind. I am not better than they.

I was talking to an eighth armored man yesterday and found out that the division saw very little fighting. In fact, they landed in Europe in November and never saw action until January so they can't call themselves old. They probably have a larger bunch of high point men because they had few casualties. That is what licked this division when it comes to going home.

We are to have church services this afternoon instead of the usual morning. Only Chaplain Webster is here now because Chap. Blich has left to return to the States with his 118 points. At first he thought that he would be returning to the States with the 83<sup>rd</sup> but I'm glad to see that he is to be discharged after all he has done. I understand Chap. Webster is mad because he has 124 points and isn't going before the other man. If that is the case, I don't think he is a preacher of God because one in his position should never let jealousy enter into his life. I was told that Blich was chosen because he was always on the front lines while the other was way back. I'm glad to see anyone get out of this crazy army.

Swett is going on pass today down to the 83<sup>rd</sup> rest center at Passau so he really had his share of passes. I could have gone but it isn't worth it because I don't have to stand guard. Many were glad to go down there because now they'll get out of guard. I had to laugh at Swett last night. He came running up to me and made me promise him that I'd trade him my cigarettes for six bars of candy. I used to give them to him without any trade but when I found I could get candy in exchange it was foolish to give them away. He smokes 6 packs in five days so he really is almost a chain smoker.

Yesterday we had an awfully good meal but it was strange that not too many thought so much of it. In fact, I went back and had seconds and I know you will be surprised to hear what it was - liver, potatoes, fresh boiled carrots and dessert. Boy, that liver and carrots tasted so good and I know you'll be surprised because I used to hate both those foods so much.

I'm enclosing an advertisement which I took out of a late Collier's. Why I want you to see it is the fact that those three men are from his company. I know the two front men but not the other. It certainly is a coincidence all right.

After being around these countries and seeing just how the people live, I certainly feel lucky to be an American. We have such a high standard of living compared to most of the countries. Over here most are either extremely rich or in dire poverty. Well maybe not that bad but not like our middle class. We should all feel very fortunate even though we have had to go through some trying times in our lifetime.

I asked you in my last letter if you'd send me some more stationery because I am starting on the last box which you sent me. I am doing so much more writing now than before and so will need more. I don't believe you'll need to send too much because I hope to be on my way home by November and here it is almost the middle of September. Just think, my birthday isn't too far off and I am certain I won't be in this army for another one either.

Some are going to re-enlist because they are frightened by the future. No true Christian should feel that way but should put his full trust in Him. I have been reading the "Link" magazine lately which is a religious booklet for men in the armed forces. It is a good magazine and is very easy to read.

This seems to be about all for now. May He be with you, my dear parents. With all my love, Harold

#September 11, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here it is time for me to write again but this time I don't expect to write as long a letter. The reason why I can get such long letters sometimes is because I type up what I want to say before because in that way I know I don't miss a thing. Then I recopy it because I hate to send you a typed letter as they seem too formal. I don't mean to say that I type every letter up because only once in awhile I do that.

There was no mail from you either yesterday or the day before. But because the A.P.O. doesn't work on Sat. nor Sun. there should be plenty come in this afternoon. I will say the new mail clerk is doing quite well sorting out the letters the way he has and with few mistakes. He is no dumbbell because he was Mormon missionary over in Denmark before the war so is very adept at this German lingo.

Boy, what meals we had yesterday because all the old cooks have left, we had to replace them with men without the company who have had cooking experience. And the group they picked really are good. The old ones seemed so skimpy with things and never seemed to give us the full ration and after eating with these new cooks. Yesterday, we had fried chicken and wasn't it good. And two pieces at that while it would break the other cooks' hearts to give us so much. Then I went back for seconds and had two more pieces. They also served fresh potatoes, carrots, and a nice bread pudding. For supper we had meatball and one piece of chicken and more good things to eat. I know there is less griping about the meals and now we couldn't ask for any better.

Battalion just called down again and told us that the unit schools are to start again after being cancelled when the high point men left. I am getting so sick of going hroughall that again that I'll be darned if I'd bother to sign up again. The schools are only for men between 45 and 64 so the low pointers are just out of luck. As I have said before, I won't get a thing out of this army in the way of education so will just have to wait until I return.

This morning I went up to the regimental P.X. to inquire about the Bavarian glassware they have on sale. I have a good mind to get some – maybe about \$10 worth – because I can get it so cheaply. There are seven different types of glasses – same style- and to get a set of six of each only cost \$4.54. The ware is cut glass and not too plain nor too fancy. Then there are a couple different shaped vases, different pitchers, bowls, and cups. I know you have a nice set of glassware but who knows, I may get married sometime and could have these for my home. Sort of planning for the future. I have always heard Bavarian glassware is good stuff and it seems pretty good – not too expensive either. I know you'd pay a dear price for what I can get for \$10.00 here. I believe why they are so cheap is because these German factories still think the mark is worth 40 cents while it is only worth 10 cents to us. Anyway, we'll see if I can get hold of any.

Well, now we have no more high point men left because the last group left us yesterday morning. Boy, those fellows certainly left more junk behind so I got hold of a few coins the communications sergeant left behind. Now we are waiting for the new men to come in but so far none has come. Now I in charge of headquarters but with only four men left behind I guess there isn't much for me to do. All the rest are either on pass and four

high points left. The company commander, Lt. Peterson, has just arrived back from a Riviera furlough and everyone hates the thoughts of him back. No one likes him and all would much rather have the executive officer because he is much easier to reason with. The best thing to do is stay out of way and then everything will be all right. We certainly are having trouble with the company now.

Today we sign the payroll because it is getting toward the middle of the month. It used to be that we'd sign when we received our pay. But now that we are garrisoned, all men sign about the middle of the month and then there is no fuss on payday which isn't too far off.

Last night, the company had another dance and with so few men left it wasn't too much of a success. I didn't even bother to go up and see what was going on. I went right to bed and I'll be darned if I could get to sleep. Of course, it was due to the fact that I slept almost three hours yesterday afternoon because I was dead tired even though I didn't do a thing. There was very little activity in this house last night because I and two others were the only ones left. In fact I am the only one in my room – all by myself. So now I can open that window just as wide as can be. Before, one of the fellows always objected and said it was cold even if it was hot. I can't see how he could ever sleep with no air. Anyway I always had my way because all the rest were siding with me and liked fresh air.

No mail again today. May God bless you. With all my love, Harold

NOTE I enclosed a cut out portion of newspaper showing the Normandy beach 3 days after the initial landing on June 6.

#September 13, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

At last I received a package from you and since there was no date, I'll have to try and describe it to you. I finally got the folder for stationery in this box and am using it right now. It certainly is nice and the only thing is that I wish I have it all though combat. Oh well, better late than never and I'll be using it. I also got nuts, candy, canned chicken and cheese tidbits so you should be able to tell what package it is. It was strange that I should get PX rations yesterday too. So now I have plenty to eat but I don't expect it to last long. I was able to get a soap dish in this last ration for which I was thankful for because my other one was rusted from use. I should have requested one long ago but I neglected to do so.

Last evening we had a magician come here to the company to give us a show. I had not been to a show for so long that I decided to go. And I'm glad I did go because he really was good. The only thing that spoiled the whole performance was the fact that none of the cast could speak English. But nevertheless we understood well enough and got quite a kick out of some of his tricks.

At last, I am up to date on my letter writing and now am patiently waiting for more to come in as will no doubt happen. The mail really hasn't been coming through too well and as yet I haven't gotten one from you written from home.

Last evening word came down that this company was to send one man to the eighty armored with 62 to 64 points. As you can see I wasn't picked because the fellow had to leave this morning. The officers took an awful long time trying to decide and they certainly had me in a state of anxiety. It ended up that the new mess sergeant was to go and after hearing why I thought it was fair. This man has got a very sick wife and a child who needs a very serious operation. But the doctors won't operate until he gets home and gives his consent. The Red Cross has been trying to get him an emergency discharge but have been unsuccessful due to all the mix-up the army is having over this re-deployment. When Swett heard who was going he got terribly mad and I couldn't persuade him that a man in that

fellow's position should go. But no, Swett things he should go and should be ahead of everyone else. I know he got me aggravated because he is terribly selfish and thinks he is the only one who wants to get home. Swett makes things harder because he feels sorry for himself because he says he is getting awfully old - 35. I don't know why he is that way because he'll be leaving soon on age. All he is doing is waiting until the orders come through.

The reason why I called this re-deployment a big mix-up is because every day the radio is contradicting itself. Now men with less than 60 are to remain here for awhile as this close-out force and I don't know what all I know, though that I am really sweating out the whole thing and just hope for the best. There seems to be something going on with these men between 60 and 65 because now we can't go on pass or do anything. So they might expect us to be shipped. I hope. Of course, I am just speculating and really don't know all that is going on until it actually happens. All we can do is wait and see what will happen.

This morning about forty men of the company had to get up at 4:30 because the battalion set another raid. This time it wasn't in this town but in a neighboring one. I certainly am glad I didn't have to get up because that is awfully early. We didn't have breakfast until 8:30 instead of the usual 6:45 so I slept rather late this morning - as if I needed all that extra sleep. These poor fellows who had to get up at that hour and lose all that sleep. I bet they surprised those civilians and had then scared. The other time we pulled a raid here in this town, one of the men told me what happened in the houses. They tried to get into one home but found it locked so knocked. All of a sudden they heard a woman and some children begin to cry inside and finally the door opened. The woman told the Americans not to kill her children but shoot her first. Those Nazi must have given those people a line of propaganda and told how we liked to butcher children. How gullible they must have been to believe them (did I spell gullible right?) Lately I'm terrible at spelling and am rather lost without that little pocket dictionary which I had for so long. If I were remaining here for sure I'd request a dictionary but with things the way they are, now I don't want you to send me a single thing.

Boy, is today terribly windy and quite chilly. I know that I don't find it as much as these Southerners because this weather reminds me of the March and fall winds we have in Boston. Oh, to get back there once again.

I hope there is some mail from you today because I haven't heard for a few days.' May God be with you, my dear parents. I think so much of you. Wisth all my love, Harold

#September 15, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

I don't know how to begin this letter because I am so happy today Last night the first sergeant told me to be ready to start home the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> because then I am to be transferred to an outfit going home. I know how pleased you will be that at last I am at least starting on my way. I am so anxious to get back now and just hope the outfit I go to is ready to leave because I want to get started. Another fellow is going with me from this company and he also has 64 points. At first, I felt terrible because Swett and the other fellow were leaving. But later it developed that Swett is going Monday with another over-age man and so his name was taken off the other list and mine put in his place. Swett is tickled to death and I know I'm not very far behind. I have no idea where I'm going because not even the first sergeant knows. Anyway, keep writing because the mail clerk will forward everything to me. If it is an outfit that is going right home I'll get all the letters back in the States. But if I stay for awhile in the E.T.O., I want to get mail. So that is why I

believe you should write. I'll be sure to send as many letters as I can but don't be surprised at anything because I may not even be transferred the way this army works at times.

There was no mail yesterday for me but the day before I received two from you and two birthday cards – one from Betty and one from Marjorie. These letters from you were sent after you arrived home and were no.96 and 97. Now I'm please because you have at last gotten all the packages I have sent home. And out of all I sent since I came over here you received every single one even though ships were being sunk. I'm glad you have plenty of perfume now because you, dear Mum, deserve the best. I think you both are so wonderful and it took the war to make me realize more than ever how much I truly love you

I wouldn't pay a bit of attention to what people think or say about you buying the land. They can say you made money out of this war but so did almost everyone else. And furthermore you gave me for the war effort. In all, you went through more than most of the people who didn't have sons overseas. So please, don't listen to anyone, my dears.

This morning we have just had the usual Saturday morning inspection and headquarters passed with flying colors. There were a couple little things wrong but the company commander complimented us. I probably could get those sergeant's stripes but I'm glad to leave – the best rating is the civilian one.

We had a movie the day before yesterday and I really enjoyed it – I seem to enjoy any of them. The picture was called” Hollywood Canteen” and was really good as it was a first rate picture.

Now the official word has come down saying that we add points up again. This will give me 72 points for sure and all men with 70 or more are shipping out soon. Today we were told that men with 55 or less are definitely going to be transferred before the end of the month. They will be going to the army of occupation. The men with 56 to 69 inclusive are to remain with the division which is supposed to go home in November. Everything seems to be working out quite nicely for me and as bad as things have looked, they always turned out. The good Lord certainly has been taking care of us. Now all I hope is that I'm really on my way before too long.

One of the men just returned from Paris and he brought me a strip of ribbons – the purple heart, good conduct, and E.T.O. It is much better than the three separate ones and I have the five stars on the new ribbons. Boy, I'll have plenty of ribbons and will have to strut around like a peacock.

I believe I'll have the division keep sending me the “Thunderbolt” after I leave. I have been with the division for so long that I'd like to know what goes on. As bad as many men think their company is I'm afraid they'll find some worse. There is always something worse.

I have been sleeping in the sleeping bag ever since the Ardennes campaign and have found it to be all right. Most can't sleep in the thing because they always get tangled up as they sleep. I know I move so seldom that I hardly disturb the bedding. One day when we were at battalion, Stasi tried to get up but got so tangled up in the sleeping bag that he couldn't open the thing up. Boy, he cursed a blue streak and finally did get the thing opened.

There really isn't too much to talk about now except the fact that I'm going home. I know how pleased you must be. And I'm glad you got all the packages because there is plenty of wealth in them

This will be all for now. May God bless you my dear parents and I hope it won't be too long before I return. I'm so excited now. With all my love, Harold

#September 16, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here I am all packed except for a couple of things and am waiting for word to move. The order has come down transferring me tomorrow, I believe, so you had better start sending my mail to the new address. It is 803 T.D. Bn., APO 403. The TD stands for tank destroyer and this outfit is attached to the 83<sup>rd</sup> now but expects to be relieved by the 18<sup>th</sup>. There is a little article about it in the new "Thunderbolt" which you will see. Rudolph Stasi and John Alexa are being sent there too so I'll be with them. I might not go home right away but at least I'll be one step closer to home. And I also know the two men that are being sent from battalion headquarters also. If there should be any change in address, I'll be sure and let you know right away.

This morning the clocks went back one hour so the day -morning - has seemed quite long. It has been so cool that I decided to build a fire in the stove. These last couple of days has been damp and rainy and don't I hate this weather.

After sending all the loot home except for a few items, I really haven't too much to carry and nothing like when I was in combat. There really is no use to have so much. I still have that long slide-rule and the tripod. It looks as though I'll have enough film to get me home because I still have about eight. There has been so little to take picture of so haven't used much lately.

I know this isn't long but I really have so little to say right now. God be with you, dear parents. With all my love, Harold

#September16, 1945. Grainet, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

I wrote a short note this morning and for some reason wrote only one sheet. That was terribly short, I know, but for some reason, I could not seem to think clearly. I also was in a hurry to try and get everything packed. This afternoon I got so sleepy that I hardly lay down when I felt asleep and never woke up until supper time – five o'clock. So this evening I feel rather rested and want to write a longer letter to you.

I had to build a fire this morning to get some heat in order to dry the washing which I did a couple of days ago. The weather hasn't been fit for drying and I won't put wet clothes in the duffel bag. It didn't take too long to dry so now have everything ready and rarin' to go!! I just found out this afternoon that Swett is being transferred tomorrow also and believe it or not he is going to the same place as I. so if he goes to the same company we will still be together. I would like to stay with him because we have been through all of combat together. There are about 30 over-age men going there and 20 high point men. So that is a good sign to have the high-age men with us because that might mean we will get home sooner. The men over 35 are supposed to be discharged as soon as possible. Don't forget that address is 803 T.D.Bn.,A.P.O. 403. I will let you know what company I am in when I get there tomorrow. We leave tomorrow at 8 o'clock and I don't think it will take long because the outfit is around the division headquarters area which is only about 50 from here. I expected Swett to go someplace else but sure enough he is going with me. I know quite a few men – about eight of them that are leaving.

There are four high point men to leave the 18<sup>th</sup> and as yet they don't know where they are going. But what got me is that two men refused to leave the company so two men were put in their place. I can't see that because even if I'm home only two weeks ahead of the division it'll be worthwhile. I am so anxious to see you people once again after all this time.

Two of the officers of this company have just re-enlisted in the regular army. I believe they must have been drunk because no man in his right mind would do such a

thing. I know I'd like to see myself do such an act. Some of these men (enlisted men also) never had such a good life and want to remain if they can keep their high ratings. I know I have always had a good home life and much better than many.

I am glad to leave these mountains because it will soon be getting cold around here and I bet it is miserable being so high. All I hope is that the mail follows me up quickly because it is such a morale booster. I don't know how fast the new mail clerk works so can't say how soon I'll get my mail. There was no mail today but that is to be expected because the AP.O. doesn't work on Saturdays.

There are quite a few men who are going to be mighty surprised when they find out that they are to get only six points instead of the eight which was announced originally. I always said that everyone wouldn't get a straight eight and got into more arguments about it. Once in awhile I do turn out right even though I might sound crazy at the time! At least I don't have to worry because I get the full eight. The men who should worry are those with 62 because if they don't get the full 8 they won't have 70 and so will have to stay with the division. Everything seems to be going so well and I'm terribly happy and I hope you feel the same way too. God certainly has taken care of us and we should never forget it.

When these low point men leave the division there will be only about 40 men left out of an original 189. So there will almost be a new outfit.

Last night I took a nice bath in the old tub and soaked in the water almost five minutes before I realized that my watch was still on my wrist. Boy, I nearly had a fit because there is no use taking a chance on having it stop after all this time. The thing is still going so I guess no harm came of it. It is a pretty good watch and I believe I'd rather wear this to college because it'll take more of a beating. Remember how I smashed the crystal of the one I wore to Tufts? I should have this adjusted because it still losses  $\frac{1}{2}$  minute a day. I like to be accurate than that and know the watch could keep better time than that. Talking about clocks, I believe I told you this morning that the clocks went back an hour. Boy that has made it rather a long day for us and I know that I was terribly hungry when dinner came. We went six hours between breakfast and dinner because we ate at 8 and then the official word came down saying to push the clock back. Then we ate at one which really was two. It was an excellent dinner for we had nice fried chicken and potatoes and all the fixings. For supper we have ice cream so all in all we had pretty good meals today. Breakfast will be the last meal I have in the 83<sup>rd</sup>. I don't feel sad to leave even though I have been here almost sixteen months.

I must not forget to get the German pistol I have at the supply room because it will make a pretty good souvenir. I am not so worried about ammunition because I don't expect to fire the thing. The fellows do tell me that the regular 32mm ammo fits that gun. I believe I told you one time that all those foreign pistols the men have are kept under lock and key in order to prevent shooting accidents. It is a good idea because there have been quite a few accidents although not in this company.

We got a wine ration yesterday and there was half a bottle per man. So that was more than usual because we seldom have been given wine since V-E day. Before then, the men just grabbed it when they saw some. Anyway, I sold mine to someone who wanted it. This was about the worst stuff I have ever tastes and I have tried all kinds of liquor over here even though I never took more than a sip of any of it.

Some nights one of the men gets me to stay on the switchboard for him at night when he goes out. So what I charge is one candy bar and let it go at that. I have been rather lucky since I came back to the company. Why, I haven't stood a single bit of guard since being here because of the switchboard. When I became acting communications sgt. I didn't

do a blessed thing – not even touch the switchboard. I just didn't care what happened and still don't just as long as I get home.

This seems to have turned out longer than I expected so will say goodnight you good people. With all my love Harold

#September 17, 1945. Passau, Germany

Dear Mum and Dad,

Well, here I am in the new outfit and it is only about a mile from the center of Passau. This morning we left the company at 8 o'clock and then went to regiment where we got trucks to take us where we were going. We went down the Danube a ways and came to C company of the 803rd where we were sent to the different companies. What a mess for awhile because the T.D. men were leaving to go to the 83rd and then we were coming in. In this company where I am now, there are only about 20 T.D. men left and the rest are an assortment of everything. We have over-age men, high point men, T.D. men, 83rd men, 8th armored, and 11th armored men. So there are all kinds of patches around here. I feel quite fortunate getting in with over-age men because they have priority know in the shipping home.

We are to start for France tomorrow so they aren't wasting a bit of time I was told we were going to Camp Boston at Rheims and then someone said Camp Luck Strikes. The latter is better because that is a staging area and from there it is the boat. I'm all excited because it may not be long before I leave Europe.

I have decided that it is best that you don't write to me at all because I expect to move so fast that I doubt if your mail will catch up to me. Anyway, I'll keep writing and let you know what is going on.

What a nice place we are in – very modern houses and so close to the city. If only we could have lived in places like this when we first came to southern Germany. I nearly roasted today waiting in the sun because the day cleared up and the day was terribly hot – almost exceptional. I feel so much better now but am not griping because at least it is on the way home. I would like to see your face when you read about me coming. I bet you'll have a good cry!! The men who left a couple of weeks ago said they would be home soon but I joked and told them that maybe I'd beat them. And sure enough, the way it looks now we may although I'm not sure. I plan to be home one month from now.

I got my pistol and got mad in the deal because the supply sgt. told me to get it at breakfast. So after, I ate this morning I went in but he wouldn't give it to me because the officer wasn't there. I got made because I hate to be told one time and then have to come back again. I finally got the pistol just before I left.

It is strange that my "spec" number as it is called is 803. That means I'm a bugler. Everything in the army goes according to number and here I am in the 803rd T.D. Battalion. I am in Co. A. so if you want to take a chance writing, I don't mind. But I think we'll be travelling too fast to make it worthwhile.

Guess I had better close because we'll be getting up at 4 in the morning. This is one formation I don't want to miss. Swett is right with me and is now in the next room. He can't lose me that easily. God be with you. With all my love, Harold

#September 22, 1945. Camp Boston, Rheims, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

We just arrived in this camp last night about 11 o'clock so this is the first time I have been able to write. The day after I wrote on Monday he 17th, we board the train in Passau at 4 o'clock and then left at 8 that evening. We really rode in style because we had

40 and 8's which are boxcars. I liked them much better though because at least at night we were able to lie stretched out – not like those coaches which I rode on going down to the Riviera where I had to sleep sitting. In all we were on the go for three nights and three days and I know I was glad when we finally go there.

As I said before, we started out the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup> and went through Nurnberg, up to Mainz, Saarbrucken, and then here to Rheims. I really don't remember all the towns we went through but you have an idea. When we got here to France, I never saw the likes of it. The American soldiers began to sell all their G.I. equipment to the French for awful prices. It reminded me of Jew's hangout the way all this bargaining and trading went on. I know some men made plenty of money but I'm not over here to make money the way some are. That is why precaution is being taken about sending money home. Boy, those French will buy anything and anyone can get a good price. I could have sold my camera a dozen times over but that is coming home with me since I have had a complete photo record up to now. Every time the train stopped the people just rushed for the train and what a noise with everyone jabbering at once. The only thing that got me mad was the fact that someone sold one of my blankets in the excitement. He should have known that wasn't right but that is the way some are. I really don't mind so much because I have that sleeping bag which is warm without any blankets.

Swett has been right along with me and in the same car. But this morning he was put in B company which is right across the road. But we'll be right along together because the two companies are going right along together. What I hated about the trip is that we stopped and started so much that we wasted almost one day and really needed only to be on the train two nights and days. Why, we stopped in one town for almost eight hours before we moved. And it was that way all along. Everyone seemed to pass up heading for the A.A.C. camps. We met units of the 8<sup>th</sup> armored heading for here and that is the outfit to which we sent our high point men. So I'll be right along with them even though I never dreamed it would happen so fast. I'm not badly off because the points are to be lower soon and then I may get out, who knows? We met another bunch coming here also and they were all over-aged men but all were 38 or over. Those men should have been sent home quite awhile ago. There are plenty of high point men – higher than I – who we talked to and they don't expect to go home for quite awhile. So I really fortunate things have turned out that way.

We slept rather late this morning and had breakfast at 8 o'clock. And then we turned in our money to have it exchanged in that foreign American money. Bu, I'm afraid I haven't forgotten how to use it. And then we turned in our pistols. What a long wait for me because we had to line up according to rank and then in alphabetical order. It ended up that I was fifth to last so really had a long wait. Boy, I hate to wait in lines. This afternoon I went up to the PX. and got my rations – some different from the company because here we have so much to choose from. I really have been taking it easy because I have to recuperate from that darn train ride.

I am not sure if this letter will beat me but chances are it will. Sometimes the mail is so terribly slow. I know that you had no idea everything would happen so fast and neither did I. But I'm not griping about a thing because it is on the way home and freedom eventually, Just as long as I get out by February. I'll be satisfied. But of course if I can get out sooner so much he better. I still want to return to Tufts and nbow that is what you hope for.

The men I'm with are ordnance men and I get a laugh out of listening to them talk about their front line experience. Most of the time they have been about ten miles back where nothing could hurt them. You'll find that most of the men back in the States who

brag about their combat are rear echelon men who have never heard a shell land. Don't expect too much from me because I really have no desire to talk about it.

This is about all because all we have done is travelled. May God be with you, my dear parents. With all my love, Harold

#September 24, 1945. Camp Boston, Rheims, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I will continue to write just as long as possible even though I haven't received a letter from you for quite some time. Some of the mail is just starting to come through so maybe it won't be long before I hear from you.

These last two days has been terrible and not fine the way it was on the train ride here. I consider we were very lucky having such fine and mild weather. But hasn't it been cold and rainy these last couple of days. And since we are sleeping in these tents with cement floors I can tell you that this weather is miserable. I'm glad I have plenty of bed clothes because it really gets cold and I know that those fellows who sold all their blankets are sorry men now and freeze at night.

Today we got our money back - the German marks which we turned in - and it was in French francs. I hate that money because the bills are so large that my wallet gets all out of shape. I got a laugh out of the way we were paid because the lowest rank came first and then worked upward. That is the first time I have ever been in the army when I got ahead of a sergeant. I know a good many pfc's were happy because they didn't have o wait in line for hours.

I have just been figuring out what I will have in cash when I return and it is no small sum. I have \$45.58 on my person now and Swett owed me \$10 which I lent him to get his rations with. He had no French money at the time and because I sold a couple of things on the way up here, I have some French money which I lent him. I ended up having \$22 to the good. Boy a soldier could make a fortune around in France and I know plenty of men have. Most aren't in the infantry because we never had time for things like that. I don't care about the money but only want to get home. So many worship money and I think it is wrong. I will get \$28.40 the end of this month for my regular pay and will get a bonus of \$17 from the French which you have probably read about. It is to help curb the inflation and I wish we got it when we were fighting in France.

It looks now as though things will start to happen soon because the headquarters of the 803<sup>rd</sup> has finally arrived here at camp. They brought up all the vehicles and we have been waiting for them before we start all the processing. We did have a clothing check yesterday and I hardly had anything missing although some had hardly anything left after having sold everything to these French. It is a good thing they don't have to pay for everything that is missing or it would run into large money. The men tell me that about all we have to do now is sign our furlough papers (discharge in some cases) and get final pay and injections.

Of course, almost everything is rumors and so I really don't know what will happen! Some say we board the ship at Le Havre, others say at Marseille so no one knows. I have heard that our sailing date is October 2, so if that is true it will be fine. The 8<sup>th</sup> armored sails then too so they won't be home much sooner than I. And I thought I would be left behind and stuck in Europe for awhile. Little does one know what the next day will bring forth. There is just one thing I ask of you is, try not to cry when I call you up when I get in the States. It'll only make me feel badly.

These last couple of days I saw a movie each night although last night I enjoyed it very much. I laughed so hard all the way through because it was terribly comical. That is

the type I like and not those darned war pictures. I have seen enough of the very serious side of life and want to have a little fun.

And yesterday morning I went to the theater to attend church. Of all the sermons I heard over here this was the strangest I have ever heard. I can't explain it but believe the chaplain's odd voice added to the oddity. He sounded so much like an Englishman and am curious to know where he came from.

I got more PX rations this morning and later traded my cigarettes for candy .So now I have about 15 bars of candy. Since I have been in the army, I have eaten so much more sweets than at home. Probably when I get home I won't be bothered with the stuff because I can eat other things between meals. Candy doesn't bother my face the way it used to so can eat more than before. But I hate those darned freckles which I have. Guess there is nothing I can do about it.

Hope I won't be long before I'm on my way on the ship. And wouldn't it be nice if we could land in Boston. I'm so happy about the whole thing and know how you must feel. May God bless my dear parents whom I love so dearly. With all my love, Hrold

#September 26, 1945. Camp Boston, Reims, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here it is almost the end of the month and tomorrow is my birthday. I really can't gripe because I consider myself so fortunate that I won't be in the army too much longer.

This afternoon I received some mail for the first time since I left the division. And I really got a bunch – two letters from you (#99 and #100), a birthday card from you, a card from Aunt Gert, Mrs. Hendrie, Ruby, and the church paper from Mrs. Hendrie. So far you haven't heard that I am about to leave but when you do I know what or how you'll feel. We have been here five days now so I am hoping that it won't be long before we depart for the port and home. There have been quite a number of rumors so really don't know what to believe. We have taken care of almost everything now except for the checking of the service records. And that is to be done tomorrow so then everything will be done until we are alerted to go. Passes will start soon and I hope I may be able to get to Paris just to see what the looks like.

Today we signed the payroll and the \$17 dollars French bonus so I should draw quite a bit this month. There are very few men in this company who will be drawing the infantry pay because most are from other branches. Every time we have to do something we must line up alphabetically and according to rank. So that puts me to the rear every single time and I know I'm getting sick of it. Why didn't they reverse the procedure once in awhile.

I must tell you the latest rumors and then will tell you what I know to be actual fact. We are supposed to board the ship the 8<sup>th</sup> of next month but have also heard the 2<sup>nd</sup>. And we will leave the camp around the 30<sup>th</sup>. I hate this waiting around though because I am so anxious to see you folks once again. We have a fellow working on our records now who sleeps in our tent and he said that all men will be discharged as soon as they get home. So that would be wonderful and even at that I never expected to get out until after the first of the year. As I said before, I want to get out by February but I won't complain if it is sooner. I can review certain things that I have forgotten and I know I have forgotten many things. It won't take long for me to get into the swing again.

I hate to stay here not only because I am anxious but because it is terribly damp around here in these tents. The weather was beautiful coming here but since last Saturday it has rained about every day. I have had very few colds over here but all of us have them here. I hate this damp weather and wish the sun would come out for a day just to dry things out. The nights have really been so cold but we were issued an extra blanket in order

to keep warm. I have been warm all along but some who have only one blanket were glad to get the other. Europe was never meant for me and I'll be so glad to get out of the place!!

The evening before yesterday, two of us went to see a movie over at the large movie house. It really is a huge tent set inside a tin structure so is more of a firetrap. Because of this, we are not supposed to smoke. But you know how some men are and they broke the rule. An officer (the man in charge of the movie) got up on the stage and began to lecture us on smoking so the fellows booed him and caused such a commotion that it ended up that the officer got mad and threatened to close up the theater. I grew so disgusted I left but that kept up for about an hour. The movie finally did begin but never finished because the next show was to begin then. It ended up the next show never began because the commotion continued. I can see both sides and I know the officer made a fool of himself the way he acted. But then the men should have done as he said. Anyway last night I went again and finally saw the picture. So lately we have been having an exciting time and I know most of these fellows won't take any lip from these 90 day-wonder officers we have around here.

The other night, I happened to be buying a couple of coca colas and wh should step up but two fellows I left back in E co. They were transferred to the 771<sup>st</sup> TD's and came here yesterday. Three TD outfits are suppose to go home together so I understand (77<sup>th</sup>, 802<sup>nd</sup> and 803<sup>rd</sup> TD/s) I went to their tent and talked for awhile. While there, I found two men who owned Leicas so we got to a into a deep discussion. I looked at the Leica Manual over, like what you have at home, and found during the discussion that I have forgotten many things about photography since I haven't studied up on that for so long. Guess I'll have to get in the old groove again. I really enjoyed talking that way and would like to get a couple more camera accessories for the Leica when I get home. Hope it won't run too high.

I just found out in the church calendar that Allan Lindsey was in the 774<sup>th</sup> tank battalion and that was attached to us for so long. I would like to have seen him. This is all for now. With all my love, Harold

#September 28, 1945. Camp Boston, Reims, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Since I received those letters a couple of days ago no mail has come in for me. But probably before I leave the continent, I'll get a few letters. So far, no one has any idea when we are to leave. But the first sergeant told me this evening that we are having passes beginning tomorrow but no later than next Wednesday. So he believes we'll be here until about nest Saturday. I hate to stay here so long after being here for one week but guess I'm just so anxious to get home.

We have just finished being processed and the passes begin tomorrow to Paris, Brussels and Reims. I would like to go to Paris but I didn't win the drawing so will have to be content with going to Reims where I'll see the sights and take a few pictures. Yesterday we had our service records examined by the camp personnel to make certain that all was in order. Our company was perfect so here was no fuss here. That was the first time I ever got a look at the service records and can't see how such a small book can tell all about my army career. I found out that just before I left I was recommended for a clasp for my good conduct ribbon which denotes two year's good service. That was all new to me so you see I learn something every day. After having the records inspected, we had to go and take an influenza injection which really hurt at first. I never saw anything like this shot because about half the men had a bad fever last night and most were terribly restless. I wasn't bothered by the shot but had a case of dyrrhea (that is mess of spelling but to be honest, I don't know how to spell it even though I should) Because of this I woke up twice last night and had to run for the toilet as fast as I could. That is he first night for a long time that I

haven't slept perfectly. I suppose those flu shots are for our own protection because maybe there will be another epidemic after this war.

This morning we got that \$17 dollars bonus and Sunday we expect to get our pay or at least a partial pay if not all. When I get this I'll have \$101 and will carry this home. If I were like most, I'd probably lose it all in gambling. Thank goodness I don't because I have seen too many men lose plenty of money.

This morning my turn came up for a detail or I got the honor of working with the kitchen rations and breaking down the food for the three kitchens. It was terribly easy because the battalion drew very few rations today so we were finished before dinner. Usually there is about three times that much and the men have to work into the late afternoon. I consider myself lucky because now I don't have any more details – no K.P. nor guard which A company has to pull every fourth day on the vehicles. But tomorrow I understand all the vehicles are to be turned in and I can tell you there are plenty of trucks and jeeps – much more than an infantry outfit has. I was surprised how all the fellows respect the infantry and combat badges which many of us wear. We still continue to draw the \$10 which we are entitled to until we are discharged. Talking about discharge, all our records and things are being made out to our separation center so they must expect us to be discharged. It looks now as though it will be about the last of October before I'll even think of discharge but I hope to see Grandma before she leaves. I know I'll be going home way before I expected anyway. I'm glad I didn't remain with division because I read where it is to stay in Europe as a close-out force until about March. After things like that happening I consider myself very lucky. When the men found out that I have been in the army less than two years, they can't understand how I got so many points. As much as we griped we should thank God that everything has gone so well for me.

The weather has been the same and we are hoping that it will come out fine and warm up. It is little wonder most of us have colds of some sort. Mine isn't bad because I got right after it as soon as it started. It is little wonder we aren't worse with this dampness and sleeping in tents where there is no heat. I forgot to tell you that we have just redirected our mail to our home address. So when I leave for home you'll probably get all my letters sometime.

I wish the weather would stay fine because I would like to take some picture of the camp. There are a lot of signs pertaining to Boston but there is one I'd like to take a picture of – it tells about the Bostonian broad A and is very comical. There are three theaters here in the camp and are named after movie houses in Boston – Tremont, R.K.O. Boston, and Lowe's State. Sort of makes me homesick after reading about Boston on all the signs. There is a Red Cross doughnut building and I get a laugh out of the name of the place – Dunker's Hill. Sounds so much like Bunker Hill. Quite often I go over and have coffee and doughnuts I like to go over with this fellow who I met coming up here. He was from the 8<sup>th</sup> armored and came to the 83<sup>rd</sup> in the transfer. He is 37 but a nice fellow. He likes me, I know, because I don't gamble, swear, and not sex crazy. We plan to go to Reims tomorrow together and I like him very much because he is more my type. Just think, he is only four years younger than you, Mum, and I'm very proud to have such a young mother. Of course I love you too, Dad, even though you are older. There is a fellow with us whose name is Snook and I think that is very odd. He plans to return someday to Passau and marry a girl he loves there. I can't see because there are many nice American girls.

I seem to write quite a long letter and yet I don't say a thing. This will be all for now. May God bless you, good people. With all my love, Harold

#October 1, 1945. Camp Boston, Reims, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I should have written a letter yesterday but for some reason neglected to do so. The day before yesterday, I received another letter from you (#1) and a short note from George St. Andre who is still up in Greenland. I noticed his letters are still being censored while the army has lifted its ban. I feel fortunate getting my mail because so few are getting their mail forwarded to them. It is all up to the company mail clerk and if he is "on the ball" the men get it redirected quickly. I'm glad he sends it to me because I do want to continue to hear from you as long as I'm on the continent. I believe we'll just meet ends because you'll probably stop sending letters now and the back ones will continue to reach me. We have to think in terms of one to two weeks because that is the time the mail takes to reach each other.

The day before yesterday, this fellow I told you I was going with and I decided we'd go to Reims and see what excitement we could find. We got ready and went up to get a truck which leaves the camp every hour. But there were so many going that we couldn't even squeeze on but we were able to get a ride on a truck from another outfit that was heading for Reims. All around here we saw remnants of the old battlefield where the famous Battle of the Marne was fought. In fact, this camp is situated in the middle of the field. On the way down, we passed Camp Cleveland and here we saw the huge motor park where all these camps turn in their vehicles. Boy, I looked for miles and still couldn't see the end. Our battalion turned in their vehicles the day we went to Reims so maybe it won't be long before we leave.

When we got to Reims we went and saw the large cathedral which the town is noted for and it is indeed a beautiful structure. It is so old in parts that the stone is wearing away and many statues are almost crumbled to pieces. There are all kinds of statues all around and I suppose each has a meaning. I took a few pictures and had one taken while on the steps. While there, we went inside and saw the end of a wedding – an American soldier and a French girl. After seeing this we went around to a couple of other historical places such as the church of St. Remi and the library. But I didn't feel like walking because to see all the places would require a couple of days. So we went to the Red Cross and had coffee and doughnuts. Then we got sick of the place so left for the camp. Almost everyone who went there were terribly disappointed and came back right after us. The day was perfect with a few clouds and the warmth felt so good after having such damp weather.

The company has been trying to get men to go to Paris tomorrow but no one will go. I would like to but with conditions as fluid as they are I wouldn't like to take the chance of being left behind. The last day for passes is Wednesday so we hope it won't be long before we go to the port. There has been some ugly rumors going around the last couple days that they are strictly rumors. Of course, anything can happen but I believe we'll be on schedule.

I forgot to tell you that we weren't able to get dinner in Reims so I bought a couple of cucumbers and ate those for dinner. Then I had coffee and doughnuts – my dinner. So I was glad to get back to camp and have a good supper. Sometimes I spell the city Rheims and sometimes Reims so don't know which is correct. Yesterday for dinner we had fried chicken and wasn't so good compared to the stewed chicken. And I never had so much of it to eat. Why I had the wing, breast, and neck in one piece and there was more meat than I thought!

I wrote to the 83rd division paper the other and asked them if they'd send the paper each week to my house. I would like to see if something happens while I'm gone.

You never told me if you got all the three war bonds I sent. But maybe I just forgot. Before I leave this army, though, I'd like to know so it can be traced just in case anything did happen to one of them. I'm just hoping too, that all those undeveloped films got home

safely and weren't ruined by that inspecting x-ray machine. Those films I sent can never be replaced again so I hope they are safe. When I get to the U.S., I'll know when I call you.

We had a lecture today on insurance and the different types we can convert our present policy. Guess I'll wait until I can speak to you, Dad, because you can give me the best advice, after dealing with that stuff for so long. You are a smart man, Dad, and I am proud of you. I thought today we'd be getting paid but it looks as if we'll be late. It really doesn't matter because I have enough money. I don't think Miss Keany meant to forget about paying for the perfume but we'll see later. I hate to waste money though when people owe it to me. That is why I want to know about the bond. Every dollar is a lot and when added together makes more. Swett paid me all he owed so now I am square with him. I can always trust him so am always willing to let him have the money. But so many men try to take advantage of someone.

After seeing some of the other A.A.C. camps, I feel that Camp Boston is 100% better than the rest. We at least have some wooden structures such as movie, P.X., kitchens, etc. but the others have all tents. I have heard that this camp is rated as the best of the group. I will have to take a couple of pictures of the camp before I leave. I have just finished up one film in Reims so am on another. But before I leave, I must use the color film before I get back home where I can see it.

A fellow has a gun catalog from an American firm on these foreign pistols and I find the Walther pistol I have is worth \$80. So that is a pretty good price.

Guess this will be all for now. May God be with you. All my love, Harold

#October 4, 1945. Camp Boston, Reims, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

No sign of moving yet so will continue to write as long as I am here. A couple of days ago I got a few letters – two from you redirected from the 83<sup>rd</sup> and dated Sept. 15 and 18 and another one sent direct to here. I am so much more fortunate than most because I have been getting mail right along while the rest have never had one letter. I also received a letter from Miss Keany and she asked me about the money. I believe she misunderstood and thought I wanted it sent to me so I told her she could give it to you in either check, money order, or cash. Anyway, we finally got it straightened out and I knew she didn't forget on purpose

Last night the platoon sergeant came into our tent and asked if I were there. I thought maybe it was for a detail but much to my relief it was for mail .and this time it was a letter from you sent direct and sent Sept. 28. Boy, that took only took five days so I thought that was pretty fast. Also I got two birthday cards – one from Miss Martin and one from Mrs. Foster. So you can see that I have been getting mail quite well.

I was so pleased that those colored film turned out so well even though the one roll wasn't quite up to standard. From the way you spoke they turned out pretty well even without an exposure meter - all guesswork. Now if only the black and white turns out. I don't believe that x-ray machine ever got hold of my packages. I believe they only take the very large boxes and inspect them. I have just been checking up on what letters I am missing and find #4, 5 and 7 are still to come. So that isn't too badly. Was I surprised when I heard from you about Em going to adopt a baby. Little do I know what is going on at home.

I am so pleased that Grandma is able to be with you for awhile. I do hope I can see her before she returns because I always loved her so much. I'm glad she got my picture and the perfume and I knew she would be pleased.

So far I have no idea when we are to leave but yesterday the passes were cancelled and we are to get our duffle bags stenciled with the shipping number today. After that article in "Stars and Stripes" which told about no 70 point men could go home until the 80's were on the way, there were a bunch of rumors flying around saying that our sailing has been cancelled. Of course, that is just rumor and nothing to it because we are still going ahead with everything. I suppose we are all jittery because we are so near to going home that it would break our hearts to have it cancelled. I really can't say when I am leaving but will let you know when it happens.

Yesterday we got the clothes we were short and I got the new overcoat. With days this chilly it certainly feels good. I was issued a pack but not like those darned infantry packs. Instead it is more like a bag and is called a musette bag. Mostly artillery wore these. I won't wear the regular infantry pack but will use this new musette bag. Boy, it will hold plenty of junk and that is what I should have had in combat in order to hold all the junk I had. With all the clothing they just gave me, I have everything so am all ready to leave. Now if only they do something instead of just hanging around here. I hate it here because the weather has been so miserable but I don't mind it so much because I am not going through the agony of combat.

I was going to Paris yesterday but an order came down to cancel six of the ten passes. So I was cancelled and so probably will never be able to get to Paris. I would like to go because I have studied about the city in French. But getting home is more important. I wonder why Tufts sent that information blank for? Probably checking up on me!

By the way, I'm enclosing a small booklet which I got in Reims. I mean to send it to you in the last letter but forgot for some reason.

Almost every day I go down to the P.X. and get a dish of ice cream because it is so good. I never had anything as good as this ice cream since I have been over here. So many refuse to eat it because the temperature is so cold but I'll suffer in order to have something like that. And I often go and have coca-colas which we can get around here.

I have been getting my cigarettes every week and lately have been trading them off for two bars of candy for one pack of cigarettes which I consider quite good. I really have done plenty of bargaining and I know I'm tougher at trading now. I don't let people pull the wool over my eyes. Guess I'm just getting tougher.

I have been using the stationery folder which you sent me and I think it is pretty slick. If only I could have had it before because it just fits in this new musette bag perfectly. I bought some smaller stationery here in camp just in case I run out before I leave. If we go soon it will be all right though.

These last few days have become quite warm with the sun shining. But the nights are so cold and what extremes between the day and night. I sleep well though because I have a double sleeping bag, three wool blankets, and overcoat, and a raincoat. The only thing is I might suffocate under the weight because it does weigh plenty.

I have heard that we are to get paid tomorrow so will keep that until I get home. I should have plenty (\$101) plus the \$330 I get from the army plus \$100 from the State (Mass.) Guess there isn't much to say. With all my love, Harold

#October 6, 1945, Camp Boston, Reims, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

It is time to get busy and write again because I want to continue my letters until the last minute. Most of the men with me haven't written a letter since they came here. And that was two weeks ago last night. I certainly hope we don't stay here too much longer because two week is plenty long enough for this camp. Even though Camp Boston is

supposed to be the best, it is far too damp and cold for me. Lately though, the days have been fine and warm while the nights are terribly cold. But with all the clothing I have over me I don't get cold although I did get cool at my shoulders.

As far as I can find out, we are to leave either tomorrow on Monday. It isn't for certain but I hope so. By now, we have all our clothes and just finished painting our names and the shipping numbers on the duffle bags. So that is a good sign too. No one seems to know just what is going on so will just have to wait. Yesterday we signed another payroll but this time it is only a partial pay for \$10 and they say that happens just before we leave for the boat. It seems as though I have been signing more payrolls since I came here but don't think I'm complaining. I like it because the more money I get the better I like it. I did have over a hundred dollars but have used some of it for P.X. rations and yesterday I bought more Lucien LeLong perfume (group of three) for three dollars. That was such a bargain that I just had to take it even though you won't use it. This fellow who had it said he had more and didn't want to carry too much because the bottles might break. Last night I happened to get a small drop on my hand and didn't I smell to high heavens. And didn't the smell stay with me for a long time. Did you ever give Grandma a bottle of the perfume yet? I have been figuring up how much money I have now and it amounts to \$95.60 so hope I don't get held up! Ha! And now with the extra \$10 as partial pay, I'll be rich. It will seldom be so good to use the good old American dollars because then I realize the full value of a dollar. Ten German marks are worth one dollar but we really don't seem to realize it. I have seen poker games played using 50 and 100 marks and that amounts to five and ten dollars.

Yesterday I received more mail and one was from you dated Sept. 25 and sent directly here. I was sorry to hear that Mrs. Newell had just sent me a Xmas package because it'll probably chase me all over creation before it gets to me at home no doubt. I certainly hope I'll be discharged by Christmas because it would be the happiest one we've had in a long time. And I was so glad to share that those films turned out so well. That castle that you talked about was taken in Werngerode (I hope that is correct) near Bad Harzburg. I just happened to get that particular view through no fault of my own. The German truck I was riding in happened to stop there and I saw it was a good place. So I took the picture right through the window glass. I am just wondering if those of Truman Bridge show the reflection in the glass. I am sort of proud of myself to think that I should get such good color pictures by just guessing at the exposure. By the way, I hope you sent that Agfacolor to the Agfa studio instead of Kodak. There were 30 exposures on that so hope most turn out even if the scenes are of the Riviera.

You sent me that list of different fellows from Braintree in the service. I do know about four fellows because they went to school with me. You seem to feel sorry that I was not mentioned as having the bronze star. But I wouldn't feel badly because I don't care if anybody knows. Just as long as I get home is all that counts!

The camp has installed large loudspeakers all over the area because of the world series. Every night when they're being played, the loudspeakers are turned on and the whole camp can hear. There are so many that they conflict with each other. Because I might be closer to one than another I hear the closer one first and then the other a couple of seconds later. Imagine that with about ten speakers within our area. I really can't see much sense to it because no one can understand it that way. This morning when we woke up we heard music coming from the speakers so it is not used only for the ballgames. We get up at seven and have breakfast at 1:30 so that is later than at division. Boy, have we had it easy and to me it is just a waste of precious time. I doubt if I'll be discharged in time to start school in November but I don't want to break my neck trying to get back to studying. I want to take it easy for a couple of weeks at least.

I forgot to tell you in my last letter that I heard from Mrs. Hendrie which she sent directly here. And yesterday I heard from Miss Martin and she seemed so thrilled to hear that I'm on my way home. I can't get over the number of people who are anxious to see me at home because I only expect you two to feel that way. Since I've been in this army, I have learned a lot about home which I didn't know before. Sometime I'll let you know what I mean.

Yesterday afternoon I went to the R.K.O. Boston theater and saw a movie. Then last night I went to the Tremont and saw another. So I really have been getting my fill of movies after not having seen very much for so long. The only trouble here is we have to get in line at least an hour ahead of time in order to get a good seat. And don't I hate to stand in line after doing it so much in this army. But I suppose at home when I see a line I'll fall in at the end just through force of habit! Ha! There really is little to tell now but in case we do move tomorrow, I'll try to let you know. If I can't you'll know the pause is due to my leave. Gee, it'll seem swell to see you two once again. May God bless you, my dear parents. With all my love, Harold

#October 10, 1945. Camp Boston. Reims, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I certainly have been slipping because I let about four days go by without writing. But I just seem to be terribly lazy and don't do a thing all day long. About all that goes on now is the persistent rumors which I always run across. I noticed that there is a notice on the bulletin board this morning and it tells us just why the delay in shipping. Of course, the war department isn't to blame (so it says) and the cause of the delay is because of the storms in the Atlantic. When we came over here, regardless of the weather, we left the U.S. and always made it. But now the army is so terribly cautious. Boy, it makes me boil the way the war dept. always puts the blame on something else. All ships should be able to get through storms as they always have because that is the way they are built. I am getting so disgusted just hanging around here when I could be home. Another thing that gets most of us is the fact that the army is discharging unessential men with two years service and yet we can't get out because we're stuck here. Oh, I hate this army and the way it works!!!

I have had no mail from you these lasts few days and the only thing I received was the church calendar and newsletter from Mrs. Hendrie. Was I surprised when I looked and found that my letter to Mr. Marsell was in it. I couldn't get over the fact that my letter was put in word for word and yet not too many are put in that way. And didn't my letter take up plenty of space. What I don't like about my letters to him is that I write to Mr. Marsell in too formal a style. But I can't seem to write to him the way I write to you.

We have a fellow in the next tent who went to the hospital a few days ago with what we thought was a cold – possibly pneumonia. Yesterday, we found out it was diphtheria and the fellows who went to see him said the nurse claimed it was he worse case she ever saw. I thought we were all inoculated for diphtheria when we came in. I certainly would hate to get sick now because if I were left behind, I'd probably never get home. In this camp, there is one section where men whose records are lost are kept Those poor fellows will probably be here six months before new records are made up. Boy, this army certainly has the upper hand.

Lately, the weather has been perfect because the sun is out all day and warms the place up. The only trouble is, the nights are terribly cold but thank goodness I have plenty of blankets to keep me warm – I didn't sell all my blankets the way some did. Yesterday was such a beautiful day that I just had to take a few more pictures. I finished up the black and white so now have the last roll of color in the camera and have used a few pictures. As I

told you before there are old battlefields all around here from the last war. Not too far from here is a unique church dedicated to the men who died in the last war. And beside that is a large cemetery. But the reason why the church is unique is the fact that it is of Russian style and is dedicated to the Russians soldiers who died for France. The church had a little minaret and is so odd looking that I just had to take a picture of it in color. And I took a picture of all the Russian graves in the next field. Then I came back to camp and took a few scenes here and there although I'm not wasting my film. I always said that I would use up the last color film on my way home.

These last few days I have been getting plenty of candy. There were two fellows who only wanted the cigarettes but didn't feel like going to the P.X. So I went and got their rations for them!! So they gave me everything except the cigarettes which I don't touch anyway. And then I traded my cigarettes for candy so I had plenty to eat this week. If I were home I probably wouldn't bother with sweets because I would rather have bread and some of your good jam. Or potato chips! It is only because I don't always get enough to eat that I like candy. I really shouldn't say there isn't enough to eat but it is just that I don't like stew and refuse to eat certain things. I'm not quite as fussy as before but still dislike certain things. I do like liver now and actually refused steak one night so I could have some liver. Guess no one will ever understand me.

I told you about going around with this older fellow all the time and I almost like him the best of anyone I ever knew. He seems to understand me and because I don't swear, drink and do all that, he gives me credit instead degrading me. He complimented my parents and said you raised me well and not like most. How disgusted he is with the rest of them and the way they talk about things. He complimented me and said I seemed to be about the only sensible fellow he ever knew in the army. So few feel that way because they think being tough is the sign of a man. But I know that I live with entirely different people than many. I can hold my head high and feel proud of both myself and my parents. How disillusioned many are about the worldly things.

Guess I have better close and see if I can get this letter off. We don't expect to leave just yet so will be writing every so often.

May God be with you, my dear parents. With all my love, Hrold

#October 11, 1945. Camp Boston; Reims, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

This afternoon I hit the jackpot for mail and received three old letters from you. So now I am up to date – up to #8. I also received a birthday card from Mr. & Mrs. Ackerson, Miss Ring, and Em. Better late than never, though. I don't know what to tell you when it comes to writing because all that is going on. The latest official word is that all these outfits in the A.A.C. [assembly area command] camps are being broken up so eighty and more points men and over-age men will go before we seventy to eighty pointers. Oh well, I expected that to happen because whenever I'm involved something happens. The 8<sup>th</sup> armored division is breaking up tomorrow so maybe some of the men will go there. It would be odd if they did because many of our men are from the 8<sup>th</sup> armored who went to the 83<sup>rd</sup>. What a mess the whole redeployment is in and it'll probably be a month or so before I even get started home. I believe you'd better start writing me again because I have no idea when I'll leave here. But wait until I find out if I'm to be transferred before you write. No use sending mail all over the place.

Another thing that is making all the fellows boil is the fact that this longshoremen's strike in New York is holding up all this redeployment. The best thing most say is to take all those men in the army and send them over here to replace some of the men in army of

occupation. Boy, those men don't know how it is to be stranded overseas and to think they are holding us up maybe a half a month. I don't blame the men for getting so mad.

Since there has been nothing to do these last few days, I go down to the library and look through the dictionary to find words I don't know. Guess I'm odd but I do get enjoyment out of it and like to find out the origin of words. I never realized I could get pleasure out of it but with nothing to do all day long, doing that breaks the monotony. The days just drag by so quite often I go to the movies at night. But I really don't enjoy them because most are only second or third rate pictures – maybe I don't like them because I hate all this hocus-pocus. But last night I saw a Sonia Henie (something like that spelling) picture in technicolor. I really enjoyed all the skating but I'll be darned if just about 15 minutes before the film ended, the lights went out (the whole camp was black). Well that spoiled that. About very night lately, the electricity has gone out and remained for about an hour. In some ways, I would rather have stayed back in the company until they were ready to send me to the states.

I have been saving all the letters I received lately because they'll be nice to look over in years to come. But I wish I could have saved every one that was sent. In combat, though, I couldn't very well carry around any surplus weight and a bunch of letters really weighs plenty after awhile as you have no doubt found out with mine.

Today we finally installed the stoves which just came in. But now that the weather is fairly mild, of course the stoves came in. We certainly could have used them when it was raining all the time and so damp and cold. The weather has been beautiful lately and perfect for picture taking. I'm ready to move now, though, because I've had my fill of this tent city.

Today, I finally got a haircut at the P.X. A German POW (prisoner) did it and I will say it was a pretty good job. In this camp, they have these P.W's doing most of the labor and these men live the life of Riley I actually think we treat them too well – better to be here than at their homes in Germany. The only thing we have to do around here is K.P. once in a while or ration break-down. Guess it'll be my turn before too long.

There really isn't so much to tell because I've told you all my troubles. I don't know what I'd do without you two to tell my troubles to. Hope everything turns out all right and that it won't be too long before I get home

May God bless you, dear my parents. With all my love, Hrold

#October 13, 1945. Camp Boston; Reims, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Today there is great excitement after reading about this darned redeployment in the morning paper. What a mess because the three British ships (the Queens) have been transferred back to the English and so now the whole thing has gone haywire. It seems as though I'll never get home now because the paper says everything is about a month and a half behind schedule. I found out yesterday we would have been home now if everything had gone right because we were to leave Oct. 8. Oh well, I don't feel so badly because I still have my life when so many don't. Guess you'd better start writing again to this address until I tell you differently. Be sure and tell me about those black and white films and whether they turned out. I was hoping I'd get to see Grandma but if she goes back I am quite doubtful I will see her.

On the camp loud speakers all we hear all day long are the songs "I'm dreaming of a White Christmas" and "I'll be home in Time for Christmas." It certainly is demoralizing because of things get ore mixed up (and I don't think it could get much worse) I'm doubtful whether I'll be home in time for Xmas. I don't know why I'm saying these things because it

won't make you feel good –guess I'm just disgusted today. But really, things aren't as bad as they might seem because I never thought I'd be as far along as I am now. Another thing that disgust us is the fact that all 70 points men are being discharged at home while men way above 80 over here can't even get back. And the men in the U.S. with 60 have been sent home on furlough and told to report to the separation center on Nov. 1 when they'll be discharged. And there we'll sit while they go out. Enough of this moaning for awhile because all this doesn't help you feel any better.

I thought that I'd be getting K.P. when my time came but instead of that, I had to unload the coal last evening. I expected it to take quite awhile but it only lasted ten minutes. So now, I won't have K.P. (I hope).!! The tents are nice and warm now with all this coal and I will say these stoves really give off the heat.

Last night one of the fellows persuaded me to go get a couple of coca colas and then go to the movies. We got on the end of that long line and j\just managed to get in. The picture as "Captain Eddie" and was just getting started nicely when the darn lights went out. I waited for one half hour and then left in disgust and swore I'd never go to the shows as long as I'm here. I can't understand why they go out every night for about an hour thus spoiling the whole evening. I say that but will probably go the next time.

Today I didn't get a letter but yesterday I received three letters – one from Miss Grant, Betty, and Em. I haven't heard from you for quite awhile so assume you did as I asked and stopped sending mail. If we had been on schedule, everything would have been fine but now you had better start in again because I might be here for another month. I'll let you know if anything turns up.

We have been told that if we stay here for awhile we may get 72 hour passes so if that is the case, I'll go to Paris. but to go for just one or two days isn't worthwhile because the city is too large to see in that short a time. And I'd like to use up my color film because it isn't too good to keep it in the camera.

Everyone in the tent has left to see the movies so I believe I'll go down to the library and look around. On the way I'll mail it in the post office because I noticed when letters are mailed in the company it sometimes takes a couple of days before they are sent to the A.P.O. And maybe I'll make out a money order because I should be here for another payday.

Guess this will be all for now, my dear parents. With all my love, Harold

#October 15, 1945. Camp Boston; Reims, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

After I wrote my last letter to you I took I down to the Red Cross and mailed it there because I believe that way I will go faster – at least on its way sooner. While I was here I noticed that cablegrams could be sent from there so inquired as to how one went about it. I had known that cables cold be sent but just never paid any attention to it. The girl who I asked brought me to the office and it was there that I made up the cable to you. I hope it wasn't long before you received it and my purpose was to tell you about everything going haywire and to continue writing. I knew my letters would take so long and this didn't cost too much – about 120 francs (\$2.40). It used to be that the only types we could send were the form ones such as I have sent before but now we make up our own. These last few days haven't received any mail but now that I'm going to be here for awhile I hope you start writing again. I can't promise you when I'll be home because as you read, everything is so fluid. All depends on how fast the 80 pointes can be shipped out. Anyway, I just pray that I'll be home in time for Christmas this year because then it would be the merriest we've had in a long time. I know that the house will be well decorated for Xmas if I'm home because

I'll do it myself and put the lights on the evergreens in the front the way we used to do. Guess I sound like a wishful thinker.

I thought after having that coal detail the other day that I wouldn't have another detail for awhile. But I guess the sergeant decided it was too easy – lasting only 15 minutes – so I had the honor of standing guard at the 803<sup>rd</sup> T.D. motor pool. That is the first time I've had guard since I left battalion and that was quite awhile ago. The time was from 4 to 7 this morning so that wasn't too bad considering I usually go to bed at 9 and get up at 7. Boy, are we getting lazy hanging around like that. What a waste of time hanging around here when I could be home getting an education.

I got hold of the same physics books from the library as I had at Tufts. So I have been studying it lately in order to get brushed up because I always was quite weak at that subject. I have found it so much easier than when I took it before and don't know if I'll be able to rush up on everything if they don't get me home before too long. In case I don't have time, I may have to take the first half year over in order to get a solid foundation. No use building my education on a weak foundation or it might cave in. Being away from school for two years has caused me to forget plenty. Almost every day I stop off at my two favorite haunts – the library and Red Cross – so as to help pass the time of day. Although the library hasn't very many books I can always find something that will interest me anyway.

I suppose you noticed that I have just run out of the good stationery and so will have to use the stuff I bought in the P.X. today when I got my rations. Getting in the P.X. required lots of patience because of the long lines which I hate. In these P.X.'s French girls do all the waiting and what an ugly looking bunch. I really never did think many of these French girls are very beautiful because they don't look natural.

Yesterday for dinner we had chicken and it was the best meal I've had in a long time. So few meals are seasoned the way I like it. But for once, there was plenty of salt and I got a leg with plenty of meat on it. Usually I get the darned wing and it doesn't have a single bit of meat. I'm not starving, though, because we usually have fairly good food but yesterday it was better than ever.

The other day, I finally just had to get busy and wash my clothes because they were getting so dirty. I put off washing in hopes that I'd be on my way and wouldn't have to do it. But now that we are remaining here I got busy and did plenty of clothes. It took a couple of days to dry because the weather hasn't been extra fine. Then I got busy and sewed on a couple of missing buttons, then used the iron one one of the fellows had. Boy, now I know how hard a woman works doing all that work. I should make a good wife for some woman, eh? I'll be pretty adept at that job by the time I get home and you'll probably make me do my own things. Ha!!

I haven't been going to the movies these last few days because of the lights going out each night. Now that I haven't been going, the lights never go out at night now. Isn't that always the way with things? Guess I'll end up going to see a show before too long.

That older fellow who I go around with expects to be transferred in the next couple of days. all the over-age and high pointers are leaving for outfits that are going for the States ahead of us. So it won't be long before all these outfits are all broken up once again.

It's just about time for supper so I'd better get this mailed if I want it on the way. May God bless you, my dear parents. With all my love, Harold

#Telegram dated October 15, 1945 from Harold Simms .  
To W.E SIMMS, 130 WALNUT ST. BRAINTREE, MASS.

PLANS DELAYED SHIPPING DATE INDEFINITE CONTINUE WRITING SAME  
ADDRESS LOVE. HAROLD SIMMS

#October 17, 1945. Camp Boston; Rheims, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Well after seeing this morning's paper I have come to the conclusion that things are in more mess than ever. And I notice that the government is changing its tune because at first they blamed all the delay on storms and the strikes. But now it comes out that the deal is caused to inefficiency just as I thought! All men over 35 were classified as high point men up until today and now only those men over 38 are put in high pointers – the rest (35-37) as 70 pointers. So I guess Swett will remain with me after all. In this battalion it won't cause such a mix-up because we haven't begun to transfer our men. But with those outfits that did transfer all their over-age men, I'm afraid if the 35-37s are in a high priority outfit, they'll be transferred again. Oh, what a mess and no one had any idea when we'll leave. The government is always changing its mind and causing us plenty of headaches. I know that most of the men are thoroughly disgusted with Pres. Truman because he hasn't taken action. They all say he'll never get in another term! I know that if all the service men would ban together after this war, we'd get action because we'd be strong. I'll be able to vote next year and I know I'm voting against this "efficient government." Bah, am I disgusted! I probably make you feel badly talking this way but I'd rather tell you the truth than lie the way many do.

This morning for breakfast, we had the best meal I've had in a long time – fresh eggs, toast, and dry cereal. I can tell you those eggs tasted mighty fine and when I get home I'll never refuse another egg. Boy, I guess I've changed when it comes to food because I'm not as fussy until it comes to stew or hash and then I would rather go hungry than eat that stuff.

Yesterday, a few fellows signed out for a truck to take them to Camp Oklahoma City where the 8<sup>th</sup> armored division is located. Swett and I had nothing else to do so we went along to see who was left now that 70 pointers were sent out. The camp is about 60 miles from here and way on the other side of Reims so it took almost two hours to get there. We got off at one end of camp and I'll be darned if we didn't have to walk way to the other end of the camp in order to get to where most of our fellows were. Boy, was I tired hiking way over there because the camp is spread all over the place and not half as nice as ours. There were very few men left that I knew because most high pointers from 70-79 and so were transferred to Camp Detroit. The men who I especially wanted to see weren't there. But I wanted to see them after all the kidding I took from them before they left. Now I wanted to laugh at them because I was right up with them. We ate there at noon but only got potato, bread and peaches because we got there rather late for dinner. About 2:30 we had to meet at one of the service clubs to meet the truck and I'll be darned if it wasn't way at the other end of the camp. Was I worn out after all that! So went to bed early and slept like a log. What got me while over there was the fact that we were to meet the truck at 2:30 and here it was 3:30 before it arrived. I hate to wait because that is all I have ever done since I've been in this army. And then on top of that, the driver only did about 20 miles per hour on the way back so that annoyed me something awful. Usually I don't let those things get me but guess it was because I was rather tired. If I had known I was to take so long I would never have gone because there was no one I really wanted to see who was still there. We just barely got back in time to get supper but I did eat potato and dessert because they had hash! So I really had a starch diet yesterday with all that potato. We went by Camp Cleveland both coming and going because it is between here and Reims. The place is closed down for good, I believe, so I am wondering where Joe Trott is now. This camp was only for summer and never was winterized like this one. After seeing a few of the others, I have decided this camp isn't such a bad place after all.

The weather has been quite nice these last few days with the early morning being very hazy or foggy while later the sun breaks through. It is now starting to look winterish because the trees are just beginning to turn. I hope I won't be here when snow flies or I'm afraid it will be miserable. As yet none of us have any idea when we'll leave. So don't build your hopes up too high. And don't feel too badly because at least it won't be more than a couple of months that they'll keep us.

Everyone is going on pass now so maybe before too long I'll take a 20 hour pass to Paris and use up the color film. I bet I'll get there unless something turns up because I'm determined to see the place before I leave Europe – for good, probably.

Don't feel too down hearted my dear parents, because at least I'm not in danger of combat. We should thank God that everything turned out for us. Please continue writing because I always like to hear from you.

May God bless you my dear parents and I can't express the deep love I have for you. With all my love, Harold

#October 19, 1945. Camp Boston; Reims, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Well, here I still sit and for goodness knows for how long. Boy it gets so monotonous hanging around here without doing much of anything. This morning everyone is boiling again because the army has just announced that men with 50 points will be discharged starting Dec. 1. What our gripe is that men over 80 still are here and yet 60 pointers are ready to get out. The excuse is that these men are being discharged in order to keep up the discharge quota. Why in the world can't they get us back with all the ships the U.S. has. It is little wonder we got so disgusted after reading the way things are going.

Yesterday, official word finally came down that all men over 38 years of age and 80 points will be shipped to another outfit. So yesterday, after they left for Camp New York which is about five miles down the road from here. When the trucks came back, they were loaded with men to take their place in order to fill up the battalion again. Because there was a quota on the number of over-age men that left (38 or older), fifteen fellows still remain in this battalion who are over 38. And the odd thing is that one of the men sent had only 50 points and 35 years old, yet he went. The fellow told an officer that he should not go so they checked up and found he had been put on by orders by mistake. So he had to go regardless while a man who deserved to go remained here. That's army efficiency for you! We have plenty of over-age men in the battalion so I am hoping we'll have a high priority because of all these old men.

Yesterday, an odd thing happened and as yet I don't know quite what to make of it. The library has called all books in from the 803<sup>rd</sup>, two other T.D. outfits, and five artillery units. So I brought back the physics book I had and asked the Red Cross girl who is in charge of the library, if I could take any more books out. She said she was sorry but it was impossible because we have been alerted and so can't take any more books out. That sounds like a pretty good sign but I hope when we move, we go to the port, not another A.A.C. camp.

After I came back from the library, I saw the battalion sergeant-major who was he sgt major back in the 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion. A sgt.-major handles all the business of the battalion and knows everything that goes on. He holds the rank of technical sgt. and there is no rank of sgt. major - just a position. He told me after I asked him, why we had to turn in all library books, that this unit is on a 72 hour alert and coming from him it should be official. Anyway I hope it won't be too long before something happens and I'm on my way.

I hated to turn in the physics book because I was right in the middle of a bunch of problems. It seems so much easier to understand that stuff now and believe a good review in everything will bring back all my knowledge and maybe make me understand certain things easier. Physics always was my weakest subject so I hope I can understand it more clearly. I wish you'd write Tufts and ask them when the new semester starts because I want to have an idea about taking life easy for awhile. If I'm not mistaken, February is when it starts again (Nov. also but I won't make that) so if that is true I plan to do some enlarging and photography work on the photos I sent home and study up on all my subjects. I don't expect to work hard for awhile anyway. When I was in the library I went to this box where all occupations are listed and tells about each. After reading about civil engineering, Dad, I have an idea why you wanted me to take that subject instead of something else. Here is what I think, but of course, I may be wrong. A naval architect must be a civil engineer so you and Mr. Crocker decided that it would be best if I did that. I have an idea you are hoping I get interested in boats but so far, I haven't the slightest interest in it. It seem as though in the Simms family, no son follows the occupation his father holds. So maybe it is just born in us. I'm still looking to photography but I can a good education first because that profession requires plenty of knowledge. Of course, maybe in my courses of study I find something more interesting and so turn to it. My future is so mysterious but I know in the end, everything will turn out. I may only be 20 but I'm not as disillusioned about the world and its ways as many are. After hearing you talk, Dad, and being with you, I realize the world is not going to give me anything without hard work on my part. Sitting back doesn't get anyone any place. Everyone I have known says I act and think more like a man of 30 instead of my age. I'd much rather be like that than act like a little kid and think it's smart to get drunk, curse, etc. Guess I've been brought up so differently and after seeing the way most are, I feel so fortunate. Their fun is so different from mine and they seem to call me eccentric. Let them laugh because I don't care!!

I was looking through the latest "Time" magazine and came across this sentence - "Far from unauthentic, they are passionately ferocious caricatures of the globally ubiquitous petty bourgeois at his worst - a worst already recoded by such masters as Flaubert." Now what kind of a sentence is that to put in a magazine that everyone reads. Why only one out of ten would understand such large words. I knew it all except for the word "ubiquitous" so down to the library I trotted and looked it up. There was more joking going on in this tent about this sentence and was read a dozen times by all.

Yesterday I played a game of pinochle and found it an interesting game. It is not only luck but also skill in drawing the other man's cards out. I have learned more card games since I came overseas and even know how to play poker. Cards are all right for awhile but get too monotonous for me if I keep at it.

Here I am to the end of the sheet and I haven't done anything but gripe as usual. That seems to be about all I can do these days. May God bless you, dear parents. With all my love, Hraold

#October 21, 1945. Camp Boston; Reims, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I suppose before I get too far along with this letter, I'll begin to gripe about everything. I'm enclosing two articles which I cut out of yesterday's and today's "Stars and stripes." It tells you in the first article what soldiers think this hold up is due to and I know it is exactly my opinion. And the second says that storms have not delayed redeployment. In other words, it is due to army inefficiency as I have said all along!! A couple of the fellows from this tent passed by the recruiting office here in camp so they went up to see

what it was all about. In the course of discussion the recruiting man told them that this whole hold-up is due to the fact that the army wants to hold us here in order to get men to volunteer again. If they re-enlist, the men are flown home and given a 90 day furlough. Of course, we have men who don't realize the consequences and just go ahead so they'll get home sooner. But their freedom lasts only 90 days and then they are "in" again. I wouldn't doubt if this delay is due to that last statement I made because the army hopes that 1 in 5 men will join again. I am getting more anxious to get home now because I suppose most of the boys my age are already home. I know I don't want to be the last one.

About the latest news I've heard around this outfit is that we are transferring our 35-37 year olds Tuesday to another outfit in Camp Boston. But this other unit will sail before us. The "ready day" for this battalion was announced on the loudspeaker yesterday and it is supposed to be Nov.4. We aren't certain if that means the day to leave here or to board the ship. But most have agreed the most logical thing is the latter. I certainly hope they are right because then I may see the States about the middle of Nov. Of course, I'm only speculating and don't know anything for certain so don't think that everything I say will happen.

Everyone around here calls me by my first name and this is the first time since I've been in the army. It sounded so queer after being called Simms all the time – even in high school. I'm in with a fairly good bunch of fellows although at times they get on my nerves whenever they start to act like little kids. I have been learning to play pinochle as I told you before but am now getting much better. It takes so much concentrated thought that I forget different cards when my mind begins to wander.

Each morning one of the older men (same one each day) makes a fire in our stove. So we wait until it gets going good then everyone rushes for the stove. After a certain hour this man can't sleep so gets up way ahead of us. Hanging around here has made me terribly lazy and I get sleepy so easily. Since I can't take any books out of the library, I got hold of a couple of books which the army publishes. One tells about the post-war planning and after reading about photography. I have decided that I'd like to make some color prints when I get home. It is quite a process because these negatives dyed the three prime colors are used so makes it quite long. Color has really fascinated me and I wish all my photographs overseas could have been in color. But it was impossible! Now I'm anxious to hear from you about those black and white pictures I sent home and hope they turned out well.

The weather has been perfectly beautiful after that week and a half of rain we had after we first came here. I can't see that there should be too many storms on the Atlantic. Last night it rained though but is now clearing off this afternoon. The evenings are so nice with the temp. warm and a big full moon. Just the kind for loving, eh?

There is so little to say now so will run over to the Red Cross and mail this. Then I will get some coffee and doughnuts.

May God be with you. With all my love, Harold

#October 23, 1945. Paris, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Well, here I am at last in Gay Paree. I always said I'd get there and sure enough I did. Yesterday afternoon, the sergeant came around asking for men who would like to go on a 60 hour pass to Paris. At first, I was undecided but took it not only because of the fact of coming here but because I could get out of details as long as I'm away from the company. I will say, though, that we don't have to do a single thing except K.P. or guard once in awhile and we don't have officers or sgts. who nag us. For awhile the passes here were for only 24

hours but that really isn't worth the trouble because there is so much to see that it would take weeks.

This morning the C.Q (charge of quarters as the sgt. at night is called) woke me up bright and early – at 6 o'clock. That is early after being used to the 7 o'clock reveille we have. It is not necessary to get up, though, but I can't get along without having a breakfast. Some afternoons I sneak a snooze or two to help pass the time. About all the fellows have me doing is playing pinochle in order to pass the time. Once in awhile I win but I think that is a mistake.

Anyway, getting back to my original subject of getting up this morning. I rushed around putting things in order and then went down to the kitchen a 6:30 expecting to get some breakfast. But somehow the cooks didn't get up till late themselves so I went without. The bus stop was way at the other end of the camp so had quite hike. But I'll be darned if, when I got there, I had forgotten my pass. After talking to the Lt. in charge of the convoy, I ran all the way back because he was going to hold up for fifteen minutes in order to give me a chance to get back. Before I got back, I nearly felt like dropping because I was so tired from running. That shows I'm getting soft! When I got to the company, the C.G. told me one of the other men took my pass down to the bus stop. So what a situation. The sgt. gave me a blank pass and told me to fill it out in case I didn't see the fellow with my pass. I made the run back in time and never found the man with my pass.

Everything started off on the wrong foot and then the convoy took off. But there was the truck I was in still there because some lieutenant and the assistant driver had an argument as to who was sitting in the front seat. It ended up that both sat in the front so finally we left. After catching up with the rest of the convoy, one of the trucks broke down so had to transfer the men to the rest – anything to slow us down. We started at seven and arrived here at 11:30 – one hour late.

Coming through these streets of Paris in the truck I never saw such rivers as these French. They'll run anyone down in their way and seem so terribly reckless to me. I laughed more at some of the things that happened. The parking lot near the Hotel des Invalides and from there we were assigned to a Red Cross Hotel to stay in. I am in the Transatlantic Club and I will say it is quite nice with good meals.

The first thing I did was sign up for a sight-seeing tour in order to get familiar with the different places. This tour was to take place at 3:30. I had about an hour and a half to wait so decided to face the dangers of the Metro-Paris's subway. I never got so confused in all my born days but did manage to get to Notre Dame with a map of the subway system clutched in my hand. Once I understood things, It wasn't bad but, oh, at first! Paris has the best subways I've ever seen and anyone can get anyplace – just follow the little maps with the different colored lines.

I made it back to here in time for the tour and was glad I took it because we went everywhere – a two hour trip. If only it could have been a fine day in order to use up the color film. I now have in my camera. I certainly hope tomorrow will be clear but if it isn't I'll go ahead and use it just the same because I want to take pictures of everything I can and have time for. I'll make a good try even though I know I won't begin to see everything. During the trip I saw a girl who had the shortest dress I ever have seen yet. Why you could see her behind and didn't it look terrible. I'll name a few places I saw by bus today. L. 'opera, Louvre, Place de la Concorde, Arc de Triomphe, Tour Eiffel, and at the Hotel les Invalides where Napoleon is buried the whole group of the tour had its picture taken. I have a copy but wouldn't say it is too good because I look as terribly mad. Then we continued and saw Jardin de Luxembourg, Sorbonne, Notre Dame, and finally back here. Tomorrow I'm starting out bright and early and have a list of the places I plan to go. I

opened the perfume I bought back at the camp and found the Passionment has evaporated some because the stopper wasn't on tightly. Be sure you don't leave yours loose or you won't have any left.

I took a little stroll this evening just to get some air but came right back because I want to get some sleep. When I came back, who should I meet but Sgt. Gintner who was our mess sgt. back in E co. and who comes from Groton, Mass. He is with the 8<sup>th</sup> armored and has 94 points so he is much worse off than I. Boy, what a mess this redeployment is in. He is leaving tonight to return to his outfit but we did have a good talk. He told me the 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion of the 300<sup>th</sup> inf. has received the presidential unit citation and if that is true I can wear another ribbon. He wasn't certain about that so I just wrote to our company clerk and asked him. If you are getting the "Thunderbolt" as I asked them to send, you might be able to tell me if it has been in the paper. I think we deserve it if I do say so myself!

Company A has certainly been changed around lately because yesterday men over 35 left for outfits that were leaving soon. And, of course, we got men to replace those we lost. We have quite a few of those Japanese-Americans [Nisei] among the new men and boy, have they the ribbons. Sometime if we live long enough I'll get home and see all you folks once again. I sure hope you started writing when that cablegram got to you because I always love to hear from you.

In this letter, I seemed to go into such minor details and I know it isn't really interesting.

Soldiers can ride the subways free and for awhile I almost forgot I was in uniform being among all those civilians. Reminded me so much of Boston but these are so terribly deep. All I did was climb up and down those long flights of stairs. I see that I'll need to go back to Camp Boston in order to rest up again. Ha!

Guess this will be all for now, my dear parents. May God be with you. With all y love, Harold

P.S. Received a couple of letters a couple of days ago which were re-directed. One from Mr. Marsell, one from Miss Grant, and one from Eric. Forgot to tell you in my last letter.

#October 27, 1945. Camp Boston; Reims, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

It is time for me to write again because I slipped up a couple of day. When I arrived back from Paris, a couple of letters for me from you and were dated Oct 16 and 17 (#9 and 10). Yesterday afternoon, I received another from you dated Oct. 20. So the mail is really coming through quite well now. I'm terribly sorry I had to disappoint you that way but there really is nothing I can do. If I had my way, I'd be home immediately but what can we do when the army says it differently.

One of the fellows who was in battalion hdqs. back in the 83<sup>rd</sup> and who is in B company, told me that he thought he saw a letter for me in B co.'s orderly room. So I went over there right away and found one for me but instead of being re-directed to A, it went to B. The E co. mail clerk must have something wrong because that happened once before. Guess who it was from, though. My dear friend, Gertrude Spinney!!! I don't know whatever possessed her to write. She is in the WAVES in California and gave me a big line about herself. She claims to still be carrying my picture and Myrna Jewell has sent her clippings about me. Boy, when I read that letter, I almost laughed myself sick. I thought she had given up trying to get me.

While I was in Paris I went to an army store where I was able to buy a few ribbons for some of the fellows here at camp. The only thing I bought for myself was the presidential unit citation even though I wasn't certain f I could wear it. And a purple heart

ribbon to replace the one I lost a few days ago. I saw in yesterday's paper that all army men will get two more ribbons – the post Pearl Harbor and Victory ribbon. I'm almost certain now that I can wear the presidential citation. So in all, I'll have seven ribbons – six on one side and the citation on the other. This last ribbon is a blue one outlined in gold and is quite pretty. Boy, if it keeps up, I'll look like a general. Since I wasn't in the states a year, I'm not entitled to the American Theater ribbon but I'd say I have enough as it is. All I want to do is get out and forget about all this army and its ribbons. But I've come to the conclusion that as long as I'm in the army, I'm going to seem ribbon crazy like the rest and wear every single one I am entitled to. No one is going to out-do me if I can help it. Boy!! By the way I'm wondering if it would be possible for you to get me three 330<sup>th</sup> regimental pins. I want three because that is what should be worn – two on the lapels and one on the cap. I can't tell you where to get them but maybe someone can tell you. I am proud of that regiment and want to show it off. I'll probably have to wear the uniform because I'm not too sure if I can get into such a small waist as I had before. Then it'll be OD.'s until I can get a new outfit. I might even end up wearing the T.D. patch on one sleeve and the 83rd on the other. Guess I've gone crazy!!

Now for more about Paris. Not one of the three days I was there was the weather fine enough to use color. I was terribly disappointed but after I came back here the days were just as nice as could be. Isn't that always the way!! In the time I was here, I saw everything of importance and took black and whites of everything but one place. And that was the Place de Republique which is one of the largest in Paris and is where we stayed. For some reason, I clean forgot to take any pictures since it was right here. I even saw the Sacre Coeur which was way out of the way but I had some spare time. Every place I went was my Metro which was free to men in uniform. But beginning Oct. 29 we will have go pay. I got lost on the sube\way a few times but always managed to get about. But once I got off at a certain sop and tried to find an exit. I'll be darned if I could, though, and it was only until a little boy came up and helped me. I know I would never have gotten out if it hadn't been for him. Just the afternoon before I left I went on the tour to Versailles and found it very interesting. although I was utterly worn out after all the walking. France certainly has some beautiful places but I believe they live too much in the past instead of looking toward the future. They consider themselves a prime nation but I believe it is only secondary now. Paris was so clean and there were trees all over. I wouldn't say it was laid out perfectly but has such nice wide avenues compared to Boston.

In the hotel where I stayed there was an information desk run by both civilians and Red Cross girls., I wanted o know how to get to where the ribbons were being sold so asked one of the civilian girls. After I received instructions, I asked there if she had even been ot England because she spoke such perfect English. She laughed and said she was Scotch so it is no wonder she spoke so perfectly. After her parents died she came to Paris (1937) and was here all during the occupation. She doesn't like Paris now because the people are money crazy and not like the nice city it used to be. Her ambition is to go to Canada where she has a brother. I really enjoyed talking to her and learned more from her than if I had spoken to an English speaking Frenchman.

I looked up in the States register to see if there as anyone I knew. And sure enough, I saw John Rossi's name and he had been here only three days before. I'm certain you remember him because he was in my class for a few years until he stayed back one grade.

I'm sending a package home today because I have a few odds and ends which I hate to carry home In it are a few postcards of Paris, the perfume I bought here, a few foreign coins, and a few letters. It'll probably arrive there way after I get home because mail is terribly slow.

I had to be the parking lot in Paris at 11 so to take the truck for camp. We left there at 11:30 in a blinding rain and wind storm. And I mean it rained and blew a hurricane, Nevertheless we made good time, and arrived back here at 3 o'clock. As a matter of fact it took us 4 and one half hours to go down there in the daytime and only 3 and a half through that storm at night. When I got in my tent here, I thought the thing was going to blow over. I slept late yesterday morning because I didn't have any sleep that night. It blew all day yesterday and is still blowing today although not like yesterday. This will probably slow up the redeployment. Well, at least this time they have a logical excuse.

I forgot to tell you that I didn't pay a cent for billets because the Red Cross takes care of that. I really had a good time there although I'd like to have stayed there for about a week. And then I could have taken my time.

The latest rumor about this outfit is that we have a readiness date of Nov. 4. Let's hope that is right. And the other rumor is that the 330<sup>th</sup> has received the Croix de Guerre which is a French award. It is not confirmed and really doubt if it is true.

Guess this will be all for now. May God bless you, my dear parents. Give my love to Grandma. With all my love, Harold

#October 29,1945. Camp Boston, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here it is the last of the month again and I just hope,. I'm not here to see another. Today, on the camp loudspeaker, a captain spoke about all this redeployment and I can tell you we were all ears. He claims the 80 pointers in this camp leave before the end of this month and the 70's will be shipped between Nov. 2 and 23. All the men around here claim this outfit is one of the first to go. I have no idea but certainly hope it is true because nothing would please me any better than being home in time for Christmas. I do hope to see Grandma before she leaves but if she doesn't go before the first of December I expect to see her although I can't be certain of anything. Oh well, all we can do is wait and hope for the best. When I arrived at the next camp, I'll be sure and send a cable so you won't have to wait until a letter reaches you. The mail now takes so long although the paper says the snarl has been straightened out.

This evening he mail clerk of this company but who came from the 330<sup>th</sup> regiment told a few of us that the official notice has come down the stating that all men from the 83<sup>rd</sup> and wear the presidential unit citation and we were to be awarded the ribbon. I have already got mine when I was in Paris. And he also mentioned something about getting a foreign award but I'm not quite certain what he means. The way I gather from the fellows, though, the whole 83<sup>rd</sup> is getting the Luxembourg citation and the 330<sup>th</sup> is getting a French Citation plus the other. Of course, there might be nothing to it so I'm not counting on it. But if it is so, I'll be wearing two colors of braid around the shoulder to designate the two foreign awards. Boy, then I'll look like a general, eh!!

Today I bought my PX rations but instead of trading the cigarettes for candy I decided to keep them and sell them to these Frenchmen. Usually I traded mine for one bar of candy per pack and later the fellow would sell them at 6 to 8 dollars a carton, thus making of huge profit. So this time I grew foxy and so kept them with the hope I could sell them later. It wasn't long before an American who was going to Paris wanted to buy some cigarettes. Anyway, I got eight dollars out of the deal and that was a pretty good price. I'm starting to get down on money so needed something to help push it up again. Buying those different little things certainly added up but not too much, though. At present, I have about \$82 so really have more than enough. I would like to send some home but it would cause me

more trouble than it is worth. There is more red tape to go through in order to make out a money order.

Oct. 30

I meant to finish this letter last evening but stopped to help fry some French fries. And by the time we finished, it was too late to do anything. Last night, I really had my fill of french-fries and didn't I gobble them down. As a matter of fact that wasn't all. We had bread, tomato juice, and pork chops. The reason for all this is because we have a cook in this tent and every evening, he brings us all kinds of food. He shouldn't do that I suppose but if he doesn't someone else will. So every night we have a snack and because I don't go to extremes, I haven't had an upset stomach yet.

The duty roster was just posted a short while ago and I see I'm on K.P. in a couple of days. I had to laugh at the first sergeant all last week because every time he saw me he'd say "you haven't been on K.P. for quite awhile, have you?" I never would commit myself but at last he caught up to me. Everyone thinks he's a swell fellow and I agree because he'll joke with anyone of us. The duty roster goes till Nov. 8 so it looks as though we'll be here for another week although that roster doesn't mean much. Orders can change so quickly as I've found out.

Sunday morning I slept a little late because the breakfast was so terrible. But I did get up in time to get to church at 10 o'clock at one of the theaters. It wasn't a bad sermon but nothing like the old chaplain back at the 330<sup>th</sup>. I have heard no one who can equal that man yet. Just awhile after I arrived back we had dinner and the usual Sunday chicken dinner. This chicken was prepared better than usual and am glad these cooks don't believe in creaming things or I'd go hungry. I still hate creamed things and won't eat a speck of gravy. Still the same old person in my dislikes of those foods. How you used to get aggravated when I wouldn't eat your "good" gravy as you called it. Talking about meals, at dinner today the mess sergeant who was helping to serve asked me if I wanted bread with or without butter. After he had placed the bread in my mess kit I said thank you. He stopped all of a sudden and stared at me. At first he took me by surprise but he explained by saying that it is so rare that he hears "thank you" in this army. I have always had that habit and have never lost it. As many people claim, the army doesn't change a fellow but brings the true character out in him. I'm almost inclined to believe this because many said I'd be so different after a few months. But I haven't changed much although I'm bound to be a little different after all this time.

I'm so glad Carol Daiute was able to get home but I can't understand why he should be so nervous. As far as I can see, I have never been very nervous and am definitely contented now to just "hang" around. So many always have to be on the go but at least I can sit still.

Lately, I have been going to the movies and thank goodness the lights haven't been going out. I saw "Kiss and Tell" with Shirley Temple lately and I was full of laughs. And last night was "George White's scandals of 45" with Joan Davis. I like any type of picture but hate these corny types. First rate are the only ones I like. Particular, I guess. But even though I've seen quite a few pictures lately, I still haven't developed into a steady movie goer so don't be afraid of that.

The day after I came back from Paris, I got busy and started to wash all my dirty clothes. Well, it wasn't until yesterday that the last of it was done. So today, I have been ironing and boy, what a job doing all that. Guess I'll appreciate home more than ever after all this. At least, I know how to press clothes because I really was surprised to find so many who don't know how to even start.

So far in your letters you have failed to mention the black and white film which you had developed awhile ago. I'm still waiting to hear about it. And you have not said a thing about that Agfacolor. I wish you'd be sure to tell me because I want to make certain all films turn out. I could have sold my camera in Paris but money means nothing to me. I'll never be able to replace these pictures and I want more pictures until the day I get home.

I have been teaching myself how to use a slide rule again and so have taken out a book on the subject. I still remember most but it is a little hard to use this large slide rule without the glass. As I told you before I broke that but am certain it can be replaced in the States because the slide rule is made by a well know German factor.

Guess this will be about all for now. May God bless you, my dear parents. With all my love Harold

#October 31, 1945. Camp Boston; Reims, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Even though I wrote last night I decided I have been slipping o my wiring so much lately that I owe you more letters than I have been sending. I don't mean that I send you letter for letter but believe you understand what I'm driving at. I doubt if I'll finish this tonight but will finish it as soon as possible.

Today is payday but we never even got a cent so don't know when we'll get our money - probably when we're back in the States. I'm not hurting for cash anyway because I can get along on almost nothing. As a matter of fact, I spent more money today. You'll probably be surprised that it was for two magazine subscriptions. One of the fellows - an Italian fellow by the name of deMarinis from Springfield, Mass, received a renewal for "Life" through the mail. Because I could save one dollar on each subscription, I decided it would be nice to have. them. I'm certain you never took that magazine! I also am having "Time" sent because I get more enjoyment out of that magazine than many. We have a continental edition over here but it has no advertising of any sort. The two cost seven dollars so thought it was well worth the price. I really used the cigarette money and still have a dollar left over. Talking about magazines reminds me to ask whether you've ever had that book shelf made, Dad? You ought to be ashamed of yourself if you didn't because that would be a perfect place. If it isn't done when I get home I'm going to do it myself but maybe I'll let you supervise!! I plan to do the things around the house that you neglected now that I'm big enough to do it. And furthermore, Mum, you shouldn't be doing all you have lately. I know I shall put a stop to that too. Grandma certain is right because I love my parents very much and want to do all I can to help them.

Today I received a couple of letters from you dated Oct. 23 and 24 so that really came in fairly good time. I also had the church newsletter from Mrs. Hendie and a letter from Kenneth Smith. He is going to Bates College starting November but didn't say what course. He must be finally getting himself back to civilian life after being discharged Sept. 26. He is lucky I suppose but I'd rather be in my condition than his. He also told me that Bob Milk has just gotten married in Albuquerque, N.M. and it just seems impossible. Everyone I grew up with is getting married and Gert Spinney told me Alice Shedd may get hitched too. Guess I'm not to give up hope because I've seen uglier fellows get girls. I don't consider myself a Clark Gable but I'm better than some. Not conceited, really!

It was nice that you could meet that fellow from the 83<sup>rd</sup> but I doubt very much if he knows me because he was always way back at the finance office. I knew no one there. I don't believe it'll be long before we are on our way because things will be happening after the fourth of next month. I don't feel too badly because I won't go to school until February.

Of course, I'd like to see you but am thankful I came through without being disabled. Never forget that!!

It is too bad the photos turned out to be so grainy but as long as there is a picture one can see it is all right. We'll see when I get home and then maybe I'll make some slides of several photos and project them on the screen. And maybe I'll make a few enlargements if the negatives are good enough.

Don't think that Don Hunter would have made tech. sgt. if all this redeployment hadn't been going. I could have definitely been a sergeant if I hadn't had all the points I have. But I'd rather go home than be a first sergeant. I suppose he'll be on his way before long because hasn't he at least 60 points?

I was reading an interesting article in "Coronet" magazine about correct usage of English grammar. The way it spoke, the Bostonians speak more correct English than any other section of the country. I know I speak more correctly than anyone I know and it isn't to show off. I do it unconsciously and never give my speech a second thought. I get kidded quite a bit but most think I'm very well educated just the way I speak. I'm proud of my speech because I owe most of it to my parents, especially my mother. Most said we talked exactly alike except for my deeper voice. But won't it be good to bet back and the good old Bostonian accent. One joke in that magazine was about this dog who would not respond to "lay down." But when he "lie down" was said he'd respond immediately. The reason – he was a Boston terrier. What a laugh. Boston – the city of snobs and society as many think.

This afternoon I slept for an hour in order to make up for the sleep I might lose tomorrow morning. I'll probably have to get up a little ahead because I have the honor of being on K.P. I was only able to sleep one hour because a couple of the fellows woke me up in order to play pinochle with them. So often they grab me so they must think I can play although I consider myself terrible. At least it passes the time because it grows so slowly at times.

Yesterday we had a surprise inspection of clothing and pistols. I had nothing extra or a pistol so everything was all right. But I did turn in ammunition for my pistol because it is forbidden. If I want to fire the pistol, I can get bullets in the States because it is of a standard size. But what mess the tent was in because we had a meal the night before and never cleaned up. I wasn't long after the lieutenant told us to clean it up that it was done.

Guess this is about all for so I'll say good night and may God bless you. With all my love,, Hrold

November 3, 1945. Camp Boston, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Guess I'd better get busy and write again. I tried to begin last night but felt so sleepy that I went straight to bed. I don't know why I get so tired because all I do is rest all day long anyway. Yesterday I received a letter from you dated Oct. 22 so now have all mail up to the 24<sup>th</sup> You really had a writing spell for a few days the way you were writing all the time. Of course, I don't mind because I like to get letters from you.

I usually don't get up for breakfast because the breakfast isn't always good but I wanted to get a haircut as soon as the barbershop opened. I got up there at nine o'clock. When the place opened but even at that, there were four men ahead of me. The place is always packed and there is such a long wait if one goes up after noon. Almost all of our battalion sleeps in the morning because there is nothing better to do. But some outfits are standing reveille and retreat but so far we haven't done this. Our officers are very easy going and all will "bend way over backwards" in order to help us. Why, the other day, when we had that surprise inspection men caught with pistols should have been turned in to

camp headquarters. All those men who were turned in are getting court martialed and I have no idea if this will detain their going home. At least our officers didn't turn in a single man. I laugh at many soldiers the way they think all officers are plain idiots who drew about \$15 per week acting as a waiter in civilian life. I'll admit many might have been in that circumstance but many are nobody's fool and are nice people. Guess I'm broad minded because I can see both sides of any question. I believe the more education one has the more board minded one gets.

The morning after I wrote, I went on K.P. and was it tough! Why all I did was peel a bag of potatoes and sweep the kitchen twice. And that was all. I thought there would be some work but there wasn't a thing to do. There were four K.P.s but because two of us got to the kitchen first, we worked inside doing odds and ends while the other two had to do all the pots and pans outside. That was a tough job but what I did was so easy. I did eat good that day and grabbed some food so we could have it at night. We almost have half the kitchen up here in our tent because each man who is on K.P. brings back all kinds of food. Because I never eat much, I have plenty to eat but I'm afraid those who have large appetites are never satisfied.

Anyway, I hope I'm not here long enough to get on K.P. again! Not because I don't want to but because it'll be about a month before I get it again. We finally know when we leave here because over the loudspeaker yesterday the camp commander listed all outfits and told about when they leave. Of course, all order can change so this isn't definite. He said the 803<sup>rd</sup> will leave somewhere between November 12th and 18<sup>th</sup>. So we still have quite a wait at that. I'm getting so I'll feel lucky to be discharged by Christmas. But at least, I'm not in danger now. So we should feel very thankful. We are about the last outfit to leave and what gets me is the fact that there is an outfit right across the road which moved in just a week ago and yet they are leaving before us. These fellows who were transferred to this outfit when all that changing was going on are disgusted because they have been here two weeks longer than we. And when they left for here, they were told the 803<sup>rd</sup> would be the first to ship with 70 pointers. Well, keep up your chin because it won't be too long. There are new passes to Paris now so that means we'll be here for awhile.

There is a split opinion here about Truman and also the strikes. Many think that the workers are entitled to more pay after having been held down during the war. I can see that side all right but many don't stop to realize that when wages go up, prices jump also. And if that keeps up for awhile inflation sets in. Many are ignorant of that fact and all they think of is money. Then comes the argument that employers are making large fortunes. I don't believe that because we still have many honest men running businesses. These politicians certainly must spread plenty of propaganda.

Now for Truman.. Many think it was he who ended the war because Roosevelt didn't. Roosevelt wanted war so he'd make money. It is possible but I believe he'd like to have gotten out of politics because of ill health. One fellow made the statement that the Republicans will never attain power but of course he didn't know what he was saying. There will be at least two parties in our country. Guess I'm getting or acting like a philosopher and am sounding silly. But I have set ideas and will be able to vote next election.

The fellow who was in the hospital with diphtheria has finally returned to us after being there a month. He really was a sick boy and lost plenty of weight. I know he can hardly walk even now. No one else has come down with a case so things seem all right now.

About every third day, wood and coal come to the company and you never saw such a scramble in all your life. Everyone runs to get some because some are plain hogs and take more than their share. Our tent is always nice and warm now since we got the stove. But

quite often lately there has been no need for heat because these autumn days have really been beautiful and so warm – more like an Indian summer. Some different from the way it was when we first came here – so cold and damp and without a stove.

I suppose you saw in the latest papers that the head of the maritime union is for the soldiers getting home and will withdraw men from ships used for other countries. At least, we have someone with us. We were told that all 70 pointers are guaranteed to be out of here before the 60 pointers. It doesn't console me though because now they are only trying to feed us propaganda. Oh, what a bunch. I read both "Time" and "Newsweek" all the time and am quite surprised to see "Newsweek" criticizing Truman's policies both domestic and foreign. Enough of politics for now.

I haven't seen any moves lately because the lines are way too long for me. I hate to wait a long time and then find I can't get in. I did see the latest newsreels the other day because most men didn't go and so no line. With five theaters in camp it is still almost impossible to get in because that is the only way to get some relaxation. I can get enjoyment out of just reading but so few are like that - rather be on the go.

We have another first sgt. transferred to this outfit recently so now have two. This new one came in our tent to use the iron which one of our fellows has and I got acquainted with him. I really enjoyed talking with because he has a college degree and was a principal in a Kentucky school. It is pleasant to talk to someone who tries to carry a half way decent conversation. He told me all about Kentucky's educational system and I really enjoyed listening because he sounded halfway intelligent.

We have a fellow in this tent who is about 26 and who came from the mine platoon of the 330<sup>th</sup> regiment. He has been having quite a list of financial troubles because his wife is one who spends all the money. Before he left the States all his money and property was put in her name. Now she writes and tells him that she believes all the money will go before long. I feel sorry for him and hope I never get a woman of that type. Why this fellow told me he had 20 thousand in the bank, part of which he inherited. I have heard of these women but never knew one to go to such extremes. He certainly is worried but can't do a thing till he gets home.

This is about all I have for now. God bless you, dear parents. With all my love,  
Harold

#November 7, 1945. Camp Boston, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I should be ashamed of myself for not writing as often as I used to. Since I have come here. I always feel so lazy and just hate to do a thing. But at least I'm better than most because they haven't written since we came here. And that has been quite awhile. Of course, when we first came, we thought it would be just a short time and then we'd be on our way home. It has been quite a time because we arrived here the night of the 21<sup>st</sup> of Sept.

But I believe things are beginning because the first units moved out yesterday – three days ahead of schedule. And today, we had a complete show-down inspection with an officer looking at all our equipment. We also have to get everything in order such as turn in records we have been carrying such as immunization papers and pay book. The latest rumor says we leave the 10<sup>th</sup> but of course that may turn out to be false. Let's hope it is true because I'm getting terribly anxious to see you all once again. I was surprised at how many people at home were sorry to hear that I wasn't coming home. I never thought anyone but you thought that much of me. But I suppose in many ways the Richardsons think of me almost as a foster son because I have always been over there. The first sergeant told me

awhile ago that he was willing to bet we'll be home by the first of Dec. .So things must be hot and I'm certain when you read this you'll be so tickled.

And I'm glad you've been getting letters a little bit faster now because I know how it is to have news so old. Today two letters came from you dated Oct. 29 and 30 so that really isn't too bad. I certainly hope you don't send that package because now it looks as though I won't be here. I bet that one of Mrs. Newell's will go halfway around the world and I really won't care if it ever gets to me. The best Christmas present for me and you also is to have me home – I know you'll agree. And then our house is really going to be dressed gaily with Christmas ornaments. And I don't want a single present because I will have everything I desire – to be home and have the deep affection of my beloved parents. Maybe I'm too sentimental but I do love you so truly and it was really due to the distance between us that made me realize certain things about you. I always took your love for granted and never really understood.

Yesterday we had to see a compulsory movie at one of the theaters. It was entitled "Know America" and told about how much better a citizen we should be after fighting for its freedom. I actually believe most soldiers will appreciate being an American after seeing conditions in these countries. If war could have been brought to the U.S., I'm afraid everyone would act differently. It is a wonderful place with all freedoms. These fellows who say these countries are no good make me mad. To the Frenchman, France is the best and this is the way it goes in all countries. Too many people are critical and always find fault. They think all these foreigners are prostitutes but they don't stop to realize that only that type of girl bothers with a soldier. Only the decent boy gets the good girls over here because parents always escort the girl.

The days are certainly getting short now and am glad we won't be here too much longer. The P.W.s have been working hard in this camp to completely winterize and I really feel lucky I won't be here when snow falls or else the best place would be in bed all the time. This morning I got up bright and early and ate a good breakfast because I was hungry. But only about 30 men eat breakfast these mornings because all sleep. This is the sleepest bunch I ever saw for if they're up before 10 it is lucky. But I never could sleep that way except when I was home on furlough! Remember? I really was worn out after that basic training and hope I never have to go through anything like that again. Talking about sleep, the other night we all went to bed at 10:30 – rather unusual because 12 is about average but for some reason I couldn't sleep. And neither could the fellow beside me who is about 32 years old. We got to talking and it wasn't until almost 1:30 that we began to get sleepy so quit.

The day before yesterday I started on my weekly washing because there was plenty of hot water. But I can tell you it didn't last long because there were men washing, showering, and shaving. At least I was able to wash in hot water although I rinsed in cold and I mean cold. It takes some work but just to have clean clothes is well worth the trouble. I couldn't do the way so many do because they wear clothes until they're black. When mine first begin to get soiled, off they come and they're washed. Some different from the way I used to be when I didn't care how I looked. Anyway I got over that and now take pride in my appearance.

We have been having quite a few friendly arguments about cards lately so I went to the library yesterday to see if they had a book on card rules by Hoyle. The girl gave me a pocket edition to keep so have it with me now. But it still doesn't satisfy the fellows. So have given up because then in their own opinion they are right and no one call tell them differently. I always understood that Hoyle's book was the most used rules and what it said

goes. At least from that book I'll learn how to play cribbage because of that set Uncle Don gave to me the first Christmas I spent in the army.

Every night we have been having our evening snack and we have better meals than the kitchen serves us. Imagine having steak and French fries quite often!! That certainly is delicious and I still like French fries. Someone spilled the grease last night and what a mess on the floor. We finally got it cleaned up but I consider ourselves lucky because the grease didn't catch afire. What a fire we would have had then and I'm certain the tent would have definitely burned down. Some nights we have pork for a change but tonight there isn't a single thing except raisin bread. Guess I'll have to eat that but I like it anyway.

A couple of days ago I woke up and certain I had a nice cold in my throat. But it went away and about all I have now is a frog in my throat. Sometimes I go around grunting like a frog trying to get my throat clear. I will say that I've had few colds since I've been in the army. And I hope I never have the amount of colds I used to have at home.

Now, whenever we buy P.X. rations we must produce our dog tags for identification and the ration card. The two are checked to make certain they match and then it is all right. There have been more rations drawn than men in this theater so naturally the authorities are taking care now. It use to be that men leaving for home would sell the ration card to someone who was remaining in Europe. These soldiers certainly were slick in many ways but I never could do those dishonest things.

I have been doing a little more physics lately after drawing out the book from the library. I believe I told you about studying or rather reviewing and much to my surprise, or rather delight, I can do almost every problem. It used to be that I could never get it through my thick skull. I have just thought that I made a mistake by saying that the next college semester begins in February. It should be the first of March and I'm glad because it will give me more time to review and rest up.

I refused to take a partial pay yesterday because there is no need for the money. I'd rather wait and get it all at once back in the states. I'll have two months pay coming to me plus the Federal mustering out pay (\$300) plus the State bonus (\$100). I'll have plenty of money, wouldn't you say?

Guess I'd better finish this up and get it mailed so it'll be sure to go tomorrow. Until I notify you definitely of my being in the port you had better continue writing. I certainly hope I see Grandma and I do hope she'll stay, until I get home.

May God be with you my dear parents. With all my love, :Harold

#November 9, 1945. Camp Boston, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

I have just finished eating breakfast so decided to start because there is much noise in the tent yet. So few of us get up for breakfast but I hate to sleep too much because I just feel that much more tired. I haven't received any letters from you for a couple of days but maybe there'll be one today

Things are looking so nicely now and it appears we'll be leaving out of here Sunday. Nov. 9. I hope that we'll go to LeHavre instead of Marseilles because to go away down there means another long ride in boxcars. But I really wouldn't mind as long as it is on the way home. I also hope we won't fool around at the port for a couple of weeks. I don't believe so because there is supposed to be plenty of ships now at the ports. The army has finally gotten "on the ball" after everyone has criticized it so terribly. I just have hopes of getting on a navy ship or a regular army transport rather than one of those darned victory ships. The latter is the slowest form of travel and will take about two weeks to traverse the ocean.

We have been getting things in order now and have even signed the payroll. I didn't want to sign because here is no need for money but it was a must that I sign. We also had to make out different forms pertaining to our loot and souvenirs. Never did I see such a mess because no one knows how to fill out the forms. They have to be filled out six times and there is also four tags attached to our baggage (a duffle bag and musette bag). Someone said we have to make them out again with the help of an officer to show us how. That sounds just like the army always making an easy thing hard. I didn't know at first whether to mark my camera on a customer's declaration slip because it was brought from the States. One way I interpreted the directions was to list things brought from the States but finally decided it meant just anything purchased here. That seems more logical because I know I don't have to declare anything I brought from home. The army always gives directions so no one seems to know just how to read it. I hope it won't be long before we get it all straight. Tomorrow we'll have to scrub the cement floor of our tent and get it in shape for the next bunch. I really believe this is no false alarm but until I get to the port I'm not letting you know definitely.

Last night I finally got around to ironing my shirt – the one which I washed about a week ago. After I started someone tried to get me to play pinochle but argue as he did I wouldn't give in. As a result, I have all my clothes pressed but doubt if they remain that way for long. The trouble with the shirt I pressed was the fact that the neck was too small and so I couldn't wear a necktie. I tried to move the button hole and button but the front seam now goes crooked so I guess I'll have to get rid of it before I go home.

Yesterday certainly was a miserable day as it rained all day and night. Thank goodness the tent didn't leak where I sleep but some really had wet clothes. We kept the fire going all evening and really kept nice and warm. We only had potatoes to fry last night so we really are slipping. It really isn't our fault because the kitchen has so little left – supposed to close Saturday afternoon then we'll have to eat at the camp transient mess for the remaining time. I certainly hope we won't be disappointed this time after being let down so many times. Maybe I'll get to see grandma after all.

I walked through the rain yesterday just to bring the library book back because I knew if I didn't they'd soon tell me so. I did pick up a pocket edition of "Pickwick Papers" by Charles Dickens and hope it is worthwhile. Have you ever read it, Mum? Suppose you still are the great reader you used to be.

I had to stop for a few minutes to fill out some more of those darned slips. The way we filled them out yesterday was incorrect so now we had to go through all that again. This time we got it straight and is quite easy. The only thing that must be declared is captured military equipment (not civilian loot) and souvenirs which are meant for someone else. It would be quite difficult for us to claim perfume for our own personal use. Probably we'll never be inspected anyway but I guess it is just a precaution.

I'm sending a couple of Christmas cards to you today because I might get them dirtier than ever. Back at E company, a fellow received a large box of Christmas cards from his employer. Since he was leaving for the 8<sup>th</sup> armored he left them all behind. So, a few of us grabbed some cards. I had thirteen cards then but since I was leaving gave them to a fellow who'd definitely be over here for Christmas. All I kept were the two I'm sending and even though it is a little early it expresses my sentiments exactly. But I know the nicest thing that could happen is to be home for Christmas and be with my folks again. I'm just hoping my civilian suits will fit me because I want to get rid of O.D.s as quickly as possible. Mum, I wish you'd do me a favor and when I finally do see you, don't cry!! You might even get me to. Remember how I used to cry even if someone looked at me. Now promise me that

you won't or I'll go home by myself and see you at home instead of at Fort Devens or North Station.

We really can thank God that I'm returning safe to you after realizing there are so many who will never see their loved ones. The thought of going "home" at last give me a great thrill and no one who hasn't been away will ever know the feeling. Guess I'm just starting to talk foolishly so I had better close.

May God bless you my dear parent. With all my love, Harold

P.S. Give my love to Grandma and tell her I hope to see her before she leaves.

#November 11, 1945. Camp Boston, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

Here it is Sunday morning again and I have been to the ten o'clock church service and back. Since today is Armistice Day it was appropriate for the chaplain to preach about peace. It was very interesting – more so than other times I have been. Two of us went to the services last Sunday but at eleven o'clock. We arrived a little late but the chaplain never arrived until after eleven thirty when we left. The sermon would last until after twelve and we couldn't afford to miss a meal so we just couldn't stay. I believe last Sunday was communion and so each sermon was later than usual. I was quite surprised at the large crowd we had this morning considering that the weather was nasty and raining. I had to keep my gloves on because inside that steel theater it was colder than outside. Right now, I am huddled up against the stove while I'm writing and feel quite cozy now.

Last night everyone commented on how cold it was sleeping but for some reason I slept as warm as a bug in a rug. I always fold my blankets up like a sleeping bag because then the cold air can't get in. I forgot to mention that our sleeping bags were taken away awhile ago but I haven't felt cold one night. And another thing, I don't seem to chill as easily as many – probably used to that rugged New England climate.

The sergeant in charge of quarters last night came around at 5:15 a.m. and woke up the fellow in our tent who was on K.P. I awoke also and thought it was terribly early when usually it is seven when the K.P.s report to the kitchen. I never did find out why but the fellow never went to the kitchen until the regular time. I have been getting up around seven every morning because I found that when I slept late I felt terrible and always sleepy. But now I'm as spry as a fly! Ha! There was a little bit of mail yesterday – one letter from you dated Nov. 2. So that isn't bad time at all considering that at one time it took almost a full month. From the way your letters read you are getting mine much faster than for awhile.

I told you in my last letter that we were supposed to move the 11<sup>th</sup>. But here it is the day and we are still here. For some unknown reason, orders were cancelled at the last minute and now I hear it'll be the 15<sup>th</sup>. This beating around the bush certainly gets me and I wish when the army says a thing it would go ahead and do it. Anyway we are just about ready and just for the signal to move. Then you'll see everyone jump quickly because they are all anxious to see the States. Yesterday each man received a form letter from our new battalion commander in which he pleaded for sexual abstinence (maybe continence is a better word). We have sent two men from this battalion to the hospital with V.D. This will keep them from going home when they are supposed to. The major also said that from all indications we'll be home about the first of December. I'm beginning to lose faith but I still can see a faint ray of hope. All we can do is wait and see but I know they can't disappoint us much more after being here almost two months – all wasted time in my opinion.

About the only thing I have been doing lately is read and play cards. The latest book is "Pickwick Papers" by Charles Dickens and from what I have read, it is interesting. I

never paid any attention to his style of writing while in school but now notice his sentences are so long (almost a full paragraph) and so vivid. When I get home I know I'll appreciate more things than I did and will try to learn rather than fight against knowledge. Maybe you don't quite understand what I mean. It really doesn't matter though. I hope that between us we'll be able to build up a small but nice library in case you are grandparents. The library would be for my children. I was looking at the "Lincoln Library" the other day and really was surprised to find all it has inside. I never paid much attention when I was at home. Maybe now you understand just what I mean. I know I've changed in thought and think so much more deeply!

One of the talkative fellows in this tent accused me of books being my god. He said I've had no practical experience and so don't really know anything. Then to top it all, he contrasted me to his father who is probably 2½ times as old as I. His father is a self made safety engineer and never finished high school. But most said the same thing as I – that a house must have a solid foundation before the actual structure begins. This fellow speaks foolishly and is only 21 – a kid himself – and yet he tries to tell me certain things like that. It isn't worth arguing over and lately I haven't argued because it is just a case of seeing who can yell the loudest. That is so different from civilian life where an argument is more of a small debate – each man giving his point rather than seeing who can yell the loudest.

We haven't been paid for quite awhile now but each week I'm saving my cigarettes instead of trading them for candy. All of a sudden I have no desire for candy. I have decided it is no good for me to eat very little! Every week some fellow comes around offering 400 francs (eight dollar) for a carton of cigarettes so I'm saving them and making money. One fellow in the next tent has been bragging about how he fools the unwary Frenchmen by selling them a carton of cigarettes with only five packs instead of ten. What he does is carefully unwrap the waxed wrapping and in place of the five packs on the lower layer he inserts a block of wood. Then he places the wrapping again and seals it by applying heat. It is clever I'll admit, but I think dishonest. I'm afraid these French will have a very poor opinion of the Americans after we leave Europe. But still there is the other side where the French charge us such high prices for cheap articles. So many American say never mind what these people think but we can't be isolationists now with the world getting smaller through air power. When it comes down to it the American believes only the U.S. is the country. How narrow minded when they can't see that the French like France, etc. I have said this before in my letters but I have to blow my steam to someone.

If ever you could see the number of stray dogs hanging around this company. We had over ten of them in this tent one time and if ever you could have heard all the barking at once. Most, I believe, had been left behind by men who hoped to get their pets through but couldn't. One fellow in A company has the prettiest black and white cocker spaniel and I hope he'll get the dog through. I don't see why the army is so strict but then I suppose everyone would have a pet. So many have just plain mongrels and so ugly. I can't see how or why they want to keep such pets.

This really isn't much of a letter but at least it is something. As I said before, continue writing until I let you know otherwise. Give my love to Grandma

May God bless you my dear parents. With all my love, Harold

#November 13, 1945. Camp Boston, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

A short while after I wrote to you on Sunday, a letter arrived from you dated Nov. 5 so I thought that was excellent time. I only hope it is going home as fast as it arrives here. You seemed so disappointed that I'm not coming home soon. It has been quite a wait here. –

almost two months – but the latest news says that we leave around the 17th and board the ship the 21st. We are certainly getting disgusted hanging around and have had so many false alarms that we don't believe a single thing. We were officially scheduled to leave the 11th (Sunday) but something went wrong and as a result we are about the last of the 70s in the camp. There are three T.D. outfits here in camp and they originally we were all to leave together. But now the other two leave before us. What get me is the fact that this outfit was one of the first units to arrive here when the camp was nearly bare. And it looks as though we'll be last. We are all so disgusted with all the redeployment because there is no real excuse for keeping us. All I do is hope I'll be home for Christmas. I see on the bulletin board that we are suppose to leave on the 17<sup>th</sup> as I said before so cross your fingers and let's hope. If there was a reason for all this foolishness it wouldn't be so bad but there is no excuse at all.

I received a letter from Miss Craig today and the church bulletins from Mrs. Hendrie. Miss Craig's letter was so very interesting and she told me that Warren is now a seaman 1<sup>st</sup> class – I believe that is equal to our corporeal. I doubt if he'll get out for quite awhile but if I don't hurry he will. I'm at least glad to know that everyone hasn't beaten me home because I don't want to be last. I was wondering if it was a good idea for you to tell Tufts that I intend to start in March or wait for me to do so. I guess the latter would be better because then I could go right over and tend to things myself. Hope I can get an education through the army and save my money because I might have need of it later on. You haven't told me for quite awhile how much I have now but I am quite certain it is over \$4000 including bonds. I wish you wouldn't buy any more bonds because I'd much rather have the money in the bank.

I have been doing quite a bit of sewing these last couple of days because someone gave me a T.D. (tank destroyer) patch. It is very pretty, much nicer than the 83<sup>rd</sup>, and has a black panther crushing a tank in its jaws. I sewed that patch on my left sleeve and the 83<sup>rd</sup> on the right so now look all decorated up. With all those ribbons I'll look like a general. I also sewed for another fellow as he didn't even know how to begin. I have been doing it for so long now, that I'm getting to be an expert. But don't expect me to help you darn mocks Mum! Ha! By the way, you never told me about getting a sewing machine (electric) until the last letter in which you mentioned it so casually. I think it is wonder – keep it up and you'll have most almost all you need. Sometime, maybe we'll get an oil burner too and then you won't even have to go down in the cellar. Then the basement will look so much better than it does now – unless Dad has changed. Remember the mess I always made?

I got Russell Olson a couple more patches but don't know if he is still collecting. They are the 7<sup>th</sup> army and 8<sup>th</sup> armored.

This morning I got up bright and early even though I didn't get to bed till twelve and had breakfast. It wasn't the best because I don't like powdered eggs. But at least it satisfied my hunger. Then I came back and laborious started a fire – still the same old person who doesn't know how to do it. But once it got going half the tent jumped out of bed and ran to the stove to get warm. Guess they were just waiting for me.

Very little excitement went on today and about the thing I left the tent for was to get meals and P.X. rations. Because of so many men who were eating in A company mess hall and who weren't supposed to, we have been issued meal tickets to show that we eat in that place. It used to be that men would migrate from one mess hall to another depending on which one had the best meal. Not always would two kitchens serve the same thing at the same time. Maybe B company would macaroni for dinner while we had liver. Then at night the procedure would be reversed. I don't have to worry about a meal ticket though because the sergeant who stands at the door knows my name somehow.

The best meal we have had lately was the liver for supper yesterday. It was perfectly delicious and makes me think how I hated it so when I was younger. Sunday we had chicken again but it wasn't good to me because it was creamed! I detest anything creamed and I refuse to eat anything served that way even if you do so. I don't believe I ever had gravy since I have been in the army either. Guess I don't know what's good for me, as you always used to say. The army serves many potatoes and I'm surprised that this has been the most many men have eaten. At home they ate very few' potatoes but in our house that was the main food. How differently many families ate!

Sunday night I got disgusted hanging around the tent so two of us went to the library to see what we could read. It ended up that I was reading "Revelations" of the Bible using both the King James version and the simplified English one. I found it quite interesting although parts of it were too deep such as the seven candles, etc. I have my own ideas but am probably wrong. Finally I got so sleepy that I just had to return and go to bed.

I believe I started to tell ou about getting my rations today. This time I got cigars instead of cigarettes for one of the fellows who asked me. Boy, are they getting strict now when you go in the P.X. we must show our dog tags, P.X. card and the latest is signing our names so they can be compared with the signatures on the ration card. I got through without any trouble but I know many were turned out. The soldiers brought it upon themselves and they have no one else to blame. All this black market has caused lots of trouble and yesterday we had to declare all money in our possession. I am allowed to carry \$73.80 back to the states although the \$80 I have wouldn't make much difference. The men with \$500 and up is what they are looking for so the first sgt. told me.

Guess this will be all for now. May God bless you, my dears. With all my love,  
Harold

#November 16, 1945. Camp Boston, France

Dear Mum and Dad,

At long last, something is finally happening and we are to leave for the port tomorrow. This move was bound to come before too long because we were originally altered about a week ago. But something went wrong. This morning the company kitchen closed and so have to walk way over to the transient mess where the P.O.W.s do all the work. We have been having all kinds of inspections but the officers aren't too particular because they'll leave the army too.

This morning we had a spot inspection of equipment and afterward a physical. But everything is a joke because no one is very fussy and none of us care either. This afternoon we must turn in our duffle bags because they go separately. So that'll mean I'll have to make a separate bedroll because I don't want to be without blankets since the weather is getting much colder. I'm going to make certain that I don't get cold because I plan to put on a pair of O.D.s, a pair of fatigues, a jacket and overcoat. Sort of like being back in combat where my clothes weighed more than myself. We just turned in our duffle bags this very minute so that means less for me to carry. All I hope is that the slide rule gets through without being broken. It really doesn't matter too much though just as long as I get home. We are supposed to get up at five o'clock tomorrow morning so that is quite early. At 9:45 we will leave by train and go to Camp Philip Morris although I don't know how long it will take. It shoudn't be too long but I hope it wouldn't be long before we board a ship. I just hope we get a navy vessel but anything that floats will suite me. It almost seems impossible that I'm on my way at last after waiting all this time.

The day before yesterday I received a letter from you dated Nov. 7, I believe, and it took one week. I also heard from the company clerk back in the old outfit. The 2nd battalion

hasn't as yet received the presidential unit citation but it is on the way. Only the 1<sup>st</sup> bat. has received it yet but he said I should wear it and be proud of E company and the battalion.

The weather has been terribly cold these last two days and in the morning, the grounds have been covered with a heavy white frost. We certainly have been huddling the stove but I always sleep warm. Usually I am up first and make the fire but this morning someone else started it while I was still in bed. When it got warm enough I dashed out of bed and got right against the stove. Today isn't too bad because the sun is out but yesterday there was a heavy fog and quite cold. I certainly am glad we are getting out before the ready cold sets in but I do hate to return to the states where it'll be terribly cold. I always liked to see trees and things growing.

Last night I had a last minutes washing of my underwear and socks because I don't know if there will be another chance for quite awhile. There was quite an argument about whose towel was hanging on the line but thank goodness I had no part of it. About the only thing dirty now is a pair of fatigues but they really aren't bad.

Yesterday we had to declare all the money we have sent home the last two months plus the cash in our pockets. I'm over the allowed sum by about ten dollars but that doesn't mean much. When a man has few hundred then there is an investigation. I have made some money selling cigarettes but not enough to make much difference. The best price yet for cigarettes was ten dollars which was offered the day before yesterday. I only had five packs (half a carton) so another fellow gave me five to make the full carton. Then we split the money –getting business knowledge, eh? I believed, in this declaration, I said I had \$80 but will probably spend some on rations and odds and ends before I finally leave. I really am not allowed to keep much – only \$74 – because I send over half of it home. I guess I have saved quite a bit and that is the best way – to have it sent direct home – rather than have to send a money order home each month.

The other night I made a bargain with a fellow – I was to sew on his patches and chevrons and he was to press my blouse. I had an awful time trying to get his patches straight but I final did. Everyone thinks I sewed nicely and I could have plenty of business. But it isn't much use having more money now after declaring what I had. My blouse certainly looks nice now with the patches, etc. I can imagine what it'll look like when I take it out of the duffle bag.

I'm so happy now and have my fingers crossed that we'll pass right along quickly. It would be just like them to keep us at the port for awhile. Grandmas, I might make it yet before you return to Montreal. You know this will be the merriest Christmas we've ever had if I can get home in time for the holiday.

May God bless you, my wonderful parents. With all my love, Harold

#November 19, 1945. Camp Philip Morris, Le Havre, France.

Dear Mum and Dad,

As you can see, we are at last at the port and hope it won't be too long before we board some ship. After I wrote you the last letter telling you we were moving, orders were hanged and we were to get up at 6:30 and board the train at 1:30 p.m. Then later, the orders hanged again and we got up at 5:00 as I had originally stated. It was such a mad rush because we had to be out of the area by 6:30 so the camp commander could inspect our area to see if it was clean. Our tent had to return because we left a lot of junk behind which we couldn't see in the dark.

Finally at 7:30 we boarded large trailer trucks which brought us to a large town names Suippes not far from Camp Boston. We expected to board the train at nine but we

hung around and it wasn't until 4:30 that afternoon that we pulled out – the old usual army red tape. Someone probably slipped up terribly! We did get these regular foreign coaches but the only trouble was that all the windows were broken. It didn't take long to fix those though because we tacked up blankets and made the place quite warm. Anyway, it was better than raveling in those box cars. I didn't sleep too soundly but really didn't mind the trip at all.

We ate three K rations and had supper at twelve midnight and breakfast at six the next morning. So I didn't complain at all even though many grumbled awfully. They have never been in the infantry and never knew what it was to suffer. A little discomfort doesn't bother me.

We were originally scheduled to arrive here at 4:30 a.m. yesterday morning but didn't arrive until about 3 p.m. From the train station where we got off, we boarded trucks which took us to this camp – about five miles from the port itself. This is a very nice camp with regular wooden barracks and no tents. I wish we could have been in a camp like this while we were waiting all that time in Camp Boston. Just about the time we got off the train, we saw some soldiers who were just getting on box cars heading the way we came. It turned out they had just disembarked that morning from the transport Monticello and were on their way to relieve men in army of occupation. They certainly looked sad but they should feel fortunate they never saw any combat.

What a mess things were in when we first got here because no one knew just where the difference companies belonged. It ended up that there was a mad rush for bunks and all companies were scattered all about. But this morning, they remedied the situation and each company has been designated a certain row of barracks. So in the end, I had to move to where I am now.

After we arrived, we ate dinner which had been saved from noon. We arrived so late that this meal was our supper instead of dinner and it was good. Chicken and all the fixings and cake. – something we rarely have. But last night you never saw such a bunch. All night long the latrine was full because everyone had diarrhea. We believe it was from the old chicken and the whole battalion was running all night long. I was a little more fortunate because I didn't start until after five. But some were up all night long. I took a few pills and then felt pretty good. Now we can laugh about it but last night it wasn't quite so funny.

Last night I went over to the service club which is right across the street. It is quite a modern place and it was so warm. I noticed that the temperature is so much warmer than where we were so the stoves don't need to be going full blast. I was going to send a cable to tell you I arrived here but decided to wait until today to see what will happen. But we turned in our money this morning for good ole U.S. dollars and so won't be able to [buy] much to my sorrow. It was strange that all shipping numbers but ours has been given a tentative shipping date as late as Nov. 26. Our number is RE-7384RR but all I could find was one R which is another shipment.

Rumors are flying fast and furious this morning and it is said we might move out tonight. It is a good sign when in turn in money because then we won't be here too much longer. Otherwise we'd keep it so as buy P.X. rations, etc. It is useless to send any mail now because all letters will be return now have left Camp Boston. I have my fingers crossed that we'll be on the high seas before too long but haven't built up my hopes too high because I have been disappointed too much.

Guess we'll be having dinner before too long so had better close now. I believe I must take a few pictures of the camp because I do want pictures of everything until I get out.

May God bless you, my dear parents and I do hope it won't be too long before I'm reunited with you.

With all my love, Harold

#November 21 1945. Camp Philip Morris, Le Havre, France.

Dear Mum and Dad,

Guess it is time for me to write again because I will write up to the time I have as I have told you. There will be no more mail now so I won't be looking forward to that.

The latest official word is that we'll depart on the transport "West Point" on the 25<sup>th</sup> which isn't too far away. Of course this can be changed but I believe that'll be the boat because it requires a pretty good size ship to carry this battalion – almost 800 men. And they won't split us up. The West Point was to carry a great many units but this morning all units but ours was pushed up and many will be on these cruisers which are due tomorrow. I don't mind waiting because at least the ship we are scheduled to load can make the crossing in five to six days while a victory or liberty ship takes about ten days. Many want to get any kind off a ship but the difference means that we'll be home about as soon as a victory ship leaving today. There are three units in this "block" as it's called - a quartermaster unit, ordnance unit and us. Originally the ordnance outfit was to go with us but I see it is going on the U.S. S. Savannah. The quartermaster is leaving this afternoon on the Coaldale Victory and I wish you'd check in the newspaper and tell me what day it arrives in port. If only we weren't so large we might get a navy vessel but I'm satisfied just to know I'll be in the States for Christmas. It certainly would be wonderful if only I could be discharged for Christmas, don't you think?

I believe I told you about turning in all our French money and I can't figure it out because now we have so little money to spend. We act like misers the way we count every single cent now Why, I couldn't even buy my cigarettes this week because I just barely had enough money to get the candy and juice. When I was in the P.X., I had to price the juice to make certain I could afford it. The fellow who was behind me all of a sudden handed me a few five franc notes after he heard me say I had turned in my money. I was very reluctant at first to take it but finally did when he said he was stationed in this camp and had plenty of money. I still have more money than most even after buying my rations because I have all of ten francs – twenty cents. All poker games have stopped but they'll resume as soon as we get the American dollars.

The weather has been so nice lately but yesterday it clouded up and is still the same. As yet no rain or wind though and we are hoping it'll stay fine until we leave, at least. I can't get over how nice and warm it has been since we came here – almost like summer compared to Camp Boston and all the time I thought it would be even colder here since it was close to the ocean. This place is nice, alright but what I object to is the fact that the movies, etc. are so terribly crowded that I hate to stand in line.

Our battalion commanding officer – a major - gave us a talk yesterday as to the situation and to let us know what to expect. That is one of the first officers I've ever known to be so frank in all his statements. I detected a Bostonian accent and later when I had to have him sign a statement declaring that all my excess money was acquired legally, I asked him if he were from Mass. It turned out he came from Athol and even though I don't know just where it is I believe it isn't too far from Fort Devans.

We just heard the good news that our outfit is leaving the 23<sup>rd</sup> now instead of the 25<sup>th</sup> and we depart on the U.S. Philadelphia. I'm so happy now because I have had visions of going on some old crate. A navy boat is a good deal because it is so nice and clean and I know we'll eat good. I know you'll be delighted when you get this letter. Of course, anything can happen so if anything does go wrong, please don't be too disappointed.

Just think, tomorrow is Thanksgiving and I suppose we we'll have a large dinner. Two years ago at this time, I was home so I really haven't been in the army too long considering that many have been in four and five years and still have no more points than I. We have been having good meals and no K.P. or guard now. P.O.W.'s do all the K.P. and so we don't do a single thing except sleep all the time. I certainly ought to be rested up by the time I get home and then I'll be rarin' to go. I hate the thought of seeing snow though because it has been so nice here. Yesterday's paper said Boston had snow and that seems to be the first fall of the winter.

The latest book I'm reading is "Henry Esmond" by William Makepeace. Thackeray. It is strange that I should hate those books when in high school but now that I don't have to, I read those books. There are so many things I appreciate now whereas when I was younger, I never knew the difference.

We have just been given back our pistols so something must be definite. Only at the last minute are pistols given out.

Guess this will be all for now. May God bless you, my dear parents. With all my love,  
Harold

P.S. Give my love to Grandma.

Arrived at Camp Boston, September 21, left 83<sup>rd</sup> Sept. 17, left Camp Boston Nov. 17, arrived Philip Morris Nov. 18. Left Philip Morris, Nov. 23, sailed on U.S.S. Philadelphia, arrived N.Y. Nov. 29, 1945, discharge Dec. 5, 1945.

Went aboard boat for Liverpool, England on May 12, 1944. Left Boston May 13, 1944. Arrived Liverpool, May 24, 1944, Moved to ? June 4, 1944

Edward Shipman, 57 North First East, Provo, Utah

Mr. l'abbé Joseph Simon

Révérénd Curé

à Izier (Bomal S/O, Belgique).

Left Boston on May 13, 1945, landed at Liverpool, England on May 25, 1945. Went to replacement depot (repo depot). We disembarked at night time to dimly lighted streets and taken directly to a large troop train. Then we boarded the train and taken to a repo depot.

During War, Grandma was at 5235 Cote St. Luc, Apt. 38, Montreal.

Sgt. Roy Miller came from Iola, Kansas

Richard V. Hall, 1192, Niles Ave., Atlanta, GA, c/o Mr. C. L. Vines

John Ellis, 36 Woodbine Ave., Plainfield, N.J.

College friend: Jeanne Beaugarde who later married at the Goddard chapel at Tufts College.

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Lt. John H. Bodge, 67<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, A.P.O. 709-2, c/o P.M., San Francisco Calif.

Antoine Janssen, Libeek - St. Gertruid, Limburg, Holland

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Antoine Janssen, Libeek - St. Gertruid, Limburg, Holland

St. Phillips, 1st sgt of Company hdg.

(1) Sgt. Woolridge, 1st sgt. of E company.

(2) Sgt. Nordhoff, 1st sgt. of E company.

(3) Sgt. Haney, 1st sgt. of E company.

Sgt. Starling, Comm. Sgt. of E. company

Sgt. Mahoney, Co. E. Headquarters.

"Pop" Summers - Co. E. Hdqrs.

Bob Overton, Co. E. cook

Dunbar, H company

Harry Holzman, Co. Hdq.

Scott, Co. Hdq.

Sgt. Stevenson, Med. company

Brandt, Co. Hdq.

Lt. Devine, service platoon

George Bryant, Co. Hdq.

Lt. Viegleman, anti-tank platoon.

Capt. Brown, Cannon Co.

Finkelstein, Co. Hdq.

Captain Graves

Sgt. Keiper

Rodgers, graves registration

Donald P. Lebo, 2nd Lt. E. company, made 2nd louey

Bacchus, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion headquarters, friend of Bouws

Captain Therman (may be wrong spelling). Runner Stasi came into the headquarters one day and said "who is this guy Thoimite who I am supposed to see. Capt. Therman got quite a kick out of that.

Bouws, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion headquarters, friend of Bacchus, died in 2002

George Bouws: 375-38-4345 Last Residence: 49423 Holland, Ottawa, MI Born: 2 Jan 1917 Last Benefit: Died: 25 Mar 2002 State (Year) SSN issued: MI (1955)

I found the following on 7 May 2007 among some of Mom's items.

I have no idea what this is about. 11 Spt. 2-15.