

## Letters of Remembrance (Letters written to home during WWII)



*This book is a compilation of letters written by Tech. Sgt. Paul K. Routzahn in carbon copy that were shared by wife Kay and parents Ralph and Alethia Routzahn. Paul's tour of duty began with "inactive service" on May 29, 1943 and "active service" starting June 5, 1943. He departed the US for overseas duty on March 1, 1944 and returned to the US on January 5, 1946 earning an EAME (European-African-Middle Eastern) Theater Ribbon with 3 Bronze Stars; Good Conduct medal; and World War II Victory Medal. His date of separation with Honorable Discharge was January 11, 1946.*

*The first dated letter is Sunday, March 12, 1944, and the last letter in the book is dated May 21, 1945 with one other letter added that had been saved separately dated January 2, 1945. These are letters that were saved in a journal by Memaw (Alethia). The letters provide a general description of life in WWII as experienced by Paul as a young, newly married, man. Other more personal letters had been written individually and are not included. The dates and any other indicators at the top of each letter, as well as any headings or closings, are as they were originally typed.*

(1)

Dear Family-

For Mother and Dad this will be letter No. 1, but for Kay No. 2. She sort of rated first, but then, you'll get all of these first letters at the same time. To conserve space in all of my letters, there won't be any paragraphs. It will all be run together but then I think that you'll be able to decipher it. Part of this is duplicate for Kay, so she'll get the carbon copy this time. Of course someone had to drop my typewriter so that it isn't working very well. Even the keyboard is out of line. But then we did get it aboard. There really isn't a lot I can tell you except that we are here and have swell accommodations here on the ship. We have the nicest quarters of all the troops here and in some cases are better off than the officers. On the whole it has been grand

weather and we have had a smooth voyage but just the same I have been seasick – not badly, but sick. I have developed my sea legs and can now go about deck and enjoy looking at the sea. Don't believe all of these ads about how smooth this or that ship rides. Believe Me! They ride very rough all of the time. The food is only fair but I expect that it will be better than what we will get over there. Now that we are outside the US we begin to appreciate how good the US actually is. Everybody on shipboard pulls details. We are lucky and only do guard duty. Others do KP and others swab down the decks and corridors, etc. So we know that our officers pack a lot of weight. Oh, yes, I was AWOL when I came in the other night but they knew that we were all right so that nothing was said or will be said. I was sorry that we couldn't have stayed home that last night but then after all we were all guests at someone else's home. And I do plan to drop them a letter and thank them for everything. I'm all out of information so I'll have to give up and write again later. I'm well and OK so don't worry about me. I'll try to be in and see you again by Christmas – we all hope. As ever,

Paul

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Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March, 1944

Dearest Kay – Mother & Dad –

I'm writing or rather I started to write aboard a bus bound for Burkinhead, pronounced "birk-in-hade". Now I'm on the ferry which takes me across the river to Liverpool. Looks quite large from here and there is a freighter just passing which flies the Stars and Stripes. Looks good.

Our trip to Chester yesterday was much of a success. It's five hours north of London and one hour from Liverpool. About 80,000 populations. It's one of those towns that you see pictures of and it looks like it is supposed to look. The houses are all brick or stone (everywhere, including Scotland) because there is a shortage of wood which must be imported, hence costs more. Even the oldest houses look nice. Each building has its own yard with a hedge around it. A double has a hedge running down the middle separating the two dwellings. Although the town is large it is very quaint. For instance, there is a large palace (which we cannot visit), the old city wall – the main part of which was built by the Romans, a cathedral of pretty good size. The streets have few cars on them and the shops along the streets are in two tiers – that is, there is another walk above the first floor stores which is also lined with store windows. The wall stands about 30 feet high and 5 feet wide. It is made of huge blocks of stone. However, it has been kept in an excellent state of preservation. Of course anything here would be. However, the farms and streets and yards in Scotland were practically perfect. Also here there is no sign of blitzing. As to Liverpool, as you may have

guessed, some times has elapsed since this letter started. I've seen churches and buildings horribly blitzed. The streets are all repaired and streetcars are running. Except for the horrible shells which still stand, you would never know that the town had been blitzed. Liverpool might be just any town except that the buildings are so very old and ornate and dirty. Each building looks like a palace, but seems to be a public building or some large Company, such as the Cunard Line. I had dinner in Liverpool and rode back (am riding back) on the train. Even was on the Subway in Liverpool.

Oh yes! I went to a show in Chester among the other things that I did. An English movie. Most movies (cinemas) are American. This one wasn't so hot – followed the Laurel and Hardy routine very closely.

Meals here are very good. Also economical. Last night we (Gregg, Codie, Nelson, Carpenter, Ed, Joslin, John Fleck and myself) ate at the best place in town. Had fish and chips, sweet rolls, bread and butter, jam and tea. Cost 4'6<sup>d</sup> (90¢). Today I ate at a small Chinese restaurant that the Red Cross recommended and had baked chicken (white meat) and chips and the rest. Was two shillings (40¢). My train fare back is 1'5<sup>d</sup>. Would be a cheap place to live. I'm going back to Chester to get the convoy back to Camp at 11:00 p.m. Right at this moment I'm feeling very home sick and have had a pair of damp eyes.

Call Edna Anderson (Standard Oil – Ri 7546) and get John's address. I think that he was somewhere around here. Of course we're to leave shortly and if we move far, it won't do me much good. But at least I can write him and maybe meet him somewhere. Cy is at Yeovil near Bristol – just found that out a few minutes ago. That's about 200 miles from here. So for the present, won't get to see him. I don't have his APO number yet. Hope I can get it.

We had mail yesterday and again today. Mail was dated as late as March 1<sup>st</sup>. I didn't hear from you – well suppose I couldn't even hope to – I didn't leave until the latter part of the month, but some of the boys got three or four letters – lucky boys. Write me lots of mail and you can send me five pound packages with items I ask for. So – send me my shoes, please. You'll have to take the letter to the post master and show him that I asked for them. Also, you might put in my garrison belt. And we're not limited to one package a month.

There's not a lot more to tell. Food is good. Camp is better than we expected and we are in good health. I have a cold and it is pretty damp, but I'm wearing my long-johns and liking it. Hope my mail will finally catch up with me.

Monday night: Jello again. I left all of my writing pad plus this letter at the ARC so I couldn't mail it this morning. It will go in tomorrow morning's mail. Not much news except that I'm back in town again today, but none for me. Some of the letters came over in seven days. All air-mail of course. Haven't received anything else. Hope I hear from you today. Lots of love,

Paul

You'll have to forward this letter remember.

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16 March 1944

Dearest Family –

It's another gloomy, rainy morning. We're still loafing around here waiting for our baggage to come in so that we can move and go to work. Have my mornings work out of the way and have nothing to do until this afternoon when I go to town to buy supplies for the officers and enlisted men. Of course, I'll stay in town and do something afterward. Last night I had gone into town in the middle of the afternoon to buy quite a number of items but the stores were all closed and I, therefore, have to go back. While I was in yesterday, I went to see a play; "Are Honeymoons Really Necessary". I'll send it to Kay and she can forward it to Mother and Dad. Was very entertaining. I would like to see it in a movie with Joan Bennett, Lana Turner and William Powell playing the lead.

There really isn't a thing new here. We're not doing any work as far as our mission is concerned. The food in our mess is still excellent although some other mess halls don't seem to come up to our standards. However, I still like to go into town and eat at a restaurant – when I can find one open. The best meal here is still fish and chips. The other night I had baked fish, mashed potatoes and something else which I don't remember, but the meal was sort of lifeless. Most of the restaurants are only open three or four days a week, due to the shortages in food and also in getting help. Scarcely any place is open on Sunday.

I still haven't had any mail from you. One of the boys from Minn. had a letter which he received in seven days. Of course, all of the mail received has been Air Mail. So if I didn't tell you before I'll tell you now, I'm getting pretty blue about the subject. Think you'll all have to write extra letters so that I get caught up. And I think that I'm doing pretty well myself!!!

While I was in town yesterday I visited the grocery store to see what could be purchased for nightly snacks. I got a salmon and shrimp paste, bloater (fish) paste, a

can of lentil soup and a can of vegetable soup, pancake flour and a ready-mixed cake flour and some strawberry junket. Of course, we've got powdered milk in the Army so we'll be able to make out with that. But the best thing of all was a half-pound can of Chase and Sanborn's Coffee. When the store opens today, I'll buy us a small coffee pot. Oh, joy! Everyone else thinks the same way.

Don't bother to send me cigs at any time. We are allowed 7 packs a week and that more than takes care of me. Besides, they only cost us about 6¢ per pack. We're also allowed 2 cakes of soap, 1 pack of cookies, (when they have them), 2 bars of candy (English) and 2 razor blades. That's per week. So that's not so bad.

I wrote to the Galyeans, Schieszs and Williams and will write the Crawfords some time later this week. In the meantime I will try to enjoy myself.

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19<sup>th</sup> March 1944

Sunday 3:45 PM

It was so swell hearing from home. Things sound as natural and "as usual". Coming home and having steak - that is definitely Routzahn custom. The main trouble over here with going to the shows is that they are all so old. For instance, here at camp tonight the show is "Dubarry Was a Lady". In town, the largest show is "Thank Your Lucky Stars" and at another one is "St. Martins Lane" and at the other large one is "The Cowboy and the Lady". Of course the smaller ones have the same things except one that usually features English pictures. They all are rather slow moving and not so hot. So - I don't think I'll go.

Kay's letter seems to have come straight through. It is postmarked in Madison at 6:30 PM March 11<sup>th</sup> and I got it on March 19<sup>th</sup>. That is only eight days, which is very good.

If you haven't mailed my shoes yet, don't send them. We've found out that the PX here has plenty of shoes and that we can buy them through an officer (you know - officer's shoes) and if you haven't mailed them as yet, write and tell me so and I'll just buy another pair.

Today has been beautiful. The sun has been out all day and there is a nice breeze. It has also been a little warmer. I've had a very lousy cold I couldn't seem to throw off and so I took off that lousy winter underwear and actually I feel better already. Of course I 'spect it will make a difference when I put on fatigue clothes tomorrow.

We are changing camps next week. Expect that by the time you have this letter, Cy and I will be together. My clothes are so dirty. Surely hope that Cy has some clean ones for me to borrow so that I can get my dirty ones done up. Was so glad to hear that we were going to join the old battalions and see our old buddies. We won't be with them very long, but we can have a lot of fun while we are together. Just wish that I knew where John is located. I think that he either is, or was, near Liverpool. Hope we can see each other. Has your birthday present come? How do you like it? HUM?

Don't know anything else. Now that I've started getting mail I hope it keeps coming through. Maybe I will be lucky from now on. All of this mail coming through now is marked mis-sent, so that explains why I haven't gotten Kay's first five letters and your letters. I'll write later in the week. As ever,  
Paul

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26 March 1944  
Sunday Afternoon

Dear Family –

This is another one of those famous carbon-copy letters. I haven't a lot to say, for we are going to be censored pretty heavily from now on. But, at least I can tell you that I am well and feeling pretty good, having a pretty good time and eating well. My cold hasn't improved in the least, I still hack and hack and snifle, but guess that I'll live.

I guess that I told you I received my first letter from Mother and Dad and two letters from Edna Anderson. Still have had just the one letter from Kay though. Hope I'll start receiving my mail one of these days. Expect that it will eventually catch up with me. You don't know how much I really appreciate these letters. It makes all the difference in the world. I used to think that Aunt Pearl and Uncle Skip were a little mushy about their letters from Earle Wm., but I'm learning differently quickly. Today we got the first newspapers from the other side that we had had since we left the States. Some of the boys have scanned the Pittsburgh paper from front to back, although they're supposed to be working. I was guilty too.

One of the main things we miss is funny papers. We don't have them in England. One of the boys managed to borrow one from another organization and it was read until worn out.

I haven't run into Cy yet. We are with the 51<sup>st</sup> BN and of course it practically is a family reunion. Talked to Cy on the phone and he plans to come over and see us this coming week. Hope I'll be able to take time off and spend part of it with him. He

sure was surprised to hear from me when I called him the other night. Joe Murphy is mess Sgt. and Roy Barr, who was mess Sgt., was reduced to cook. The other day Roy hit Joe while drunk on duty and they gave him six months. We went into town last night and were disappointed in it. They've had an awfully lot of soldiers here and colored troops have run the Army down. At the present we are being housed in a large gymnasium. We sort of fill it. We are setting up tents and will move into them in the next few days. It will be cold for a while and there will be no such thing as hot water. We can go into town to take a shower so they say, so we can get around everything. However, the weather here is very nice. I'm not wearing my field jacket this afternoon (of course I've got a wool undershirt on under my shirt) and it is nice and warm. The sun has been shining for four days here and my desk is right beside an east window, which is grand, for I will do the bulk of my work in the morning. The city is completely surrounded (and camp) by barrage ballons. They haul them down in the morning and raise them again in the evening. A plane came over night before last and it was wonderful how they immediately spotted it in the searchlights. But quick. Think I'll go send Kay a Cablegram for her birthday and then quit for the day. By the way, I wrote to the Crawfords, Earle Wm., and John Anderson. Take care of yourselves and write to me as often as possible.

As ever,  
Paul

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Envelope Postmarked 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1944

Saturday Afternoon

I've been looking for another letter from you, but to no avail. Have still only had your original letter. Have had quite a few from Kay and I really appreciate them. Is everyone OK? There really isn't a lot to tell.

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Sunday Afternoon

Dearest Kay-

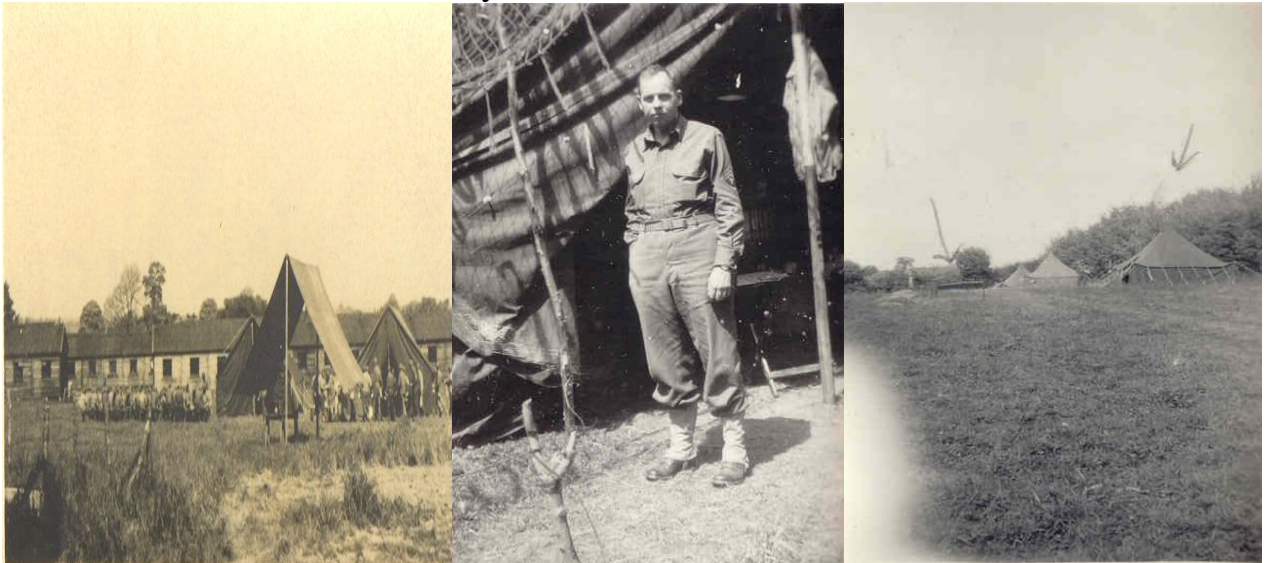
Have just had your letter written March 12 and V-Mail written March 18. Surely glad to get them. Guess Dad can't be too sick – you can't keep a good man down. But I am sorry to hear he's not feeling well. Can't tell from the letters if he's been sick in bed all week or not.

Kay says that the pictures are OK and that she's sending me one although it is the wrong size. So I'll send it back when I get around to it. Maybe she can use it elsewhere. Sort of sounds like my picture is being well plastered around the country.

Chas. Cooper was at the Miami OSC also but has been dropped because of a knee injury. Surely wish Dick a lot of luck. Hope he makes it this time.

The trip home probably did Kay a lot of good. She had to concentrate on her driving and didn't have so much time to think of me. You know yourself when you are busy you feel better.

The food sounds excellent. Our food has slipped a little. However, we had ice cream for dessert the other night. The first time that I'd had any since we left N.Y. Tasted wonderful even if I don't like chocolate ice cream. We changed mess halls today and moved into our own mess hall. Had roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, peas, fruit salad, bread and butter and coffee. Tasted pretty good and we got much more liberal helpings than we had before. Last night we had fish and chips in town. Went to town to the show. Saw Laurence Oliver in "Demi-Paradise". Liked it a lot. Had supper afterward and back and to bed by 10:00 PM.



We moved into tent city yesterday. Not too good. But not too bad. Slept nice and warm, but it is pretty tough getting up in the morning. We've been sleeping in a large gym. So I sort of like this best. Easier to keep track of your things. Too used to having you and Kay look after me.

Your V-Mails are very readable. Take your choice on either method of writing me. Both take the same amount of time to get here and I can read them both. Air Mail letters are longer though. My – but you ask a lot of questions. Those things that I can tell you, I do. Those that I can't won't come through if I did write them, for our letters are censored heavily. Most of your questions are answered already but some I'll have to ignore. Yes, I've been through an Air Raid. Didn't bother me in the least. In fact,

I was sort of amused at some of the kids around me. Some of them can think up more damned imaginative things.

The weather hasn't been nearly so nice as when we first arrived. It has rained a couple of times and is quite damp and cold. We're making out though, and making the best of everything. We're rationed on everything. We can buy seven packs of cigarettes or twelve cigars and three packs of cigs. Also, four cans of pipe tobacco, two boxes of matches, two razor blades, two bars of candy, one pack of mints or gum, one box of cookies and one bar of soap. Also may buy magazines (Life, Yank) and newspapers as we wish. Plenty of lighter fluid, everyone here has a lighter. Ceiling price on them was 6/6d.

We are also rationed on laundry. We may send nine pieces each week. No more. Free. One pair of socks count as one piece, three handkerchiefs count as one piece, and everything else is individual items. Our fatigue uniforms are also free. Go separately. However, we work in OD's. Haven't had anything cleaned or pressed since Durham. The clothes will stand in the corner by themselves. We will send our first cleaning in the morning.

Cy and Luther were over one day last week. They are about 15 miles from here. Too bad we aren't together. I'm about out of news. Have to go get my clothes ready for the cleaners. Have to turn them in tonight. I've seen the show so think I'll write for a while after dinner. Write to Kay, and several others. Had an Easter card from the Galyeans. Tell them I'll write later. Hope I have more mail from you soon. Keep sending the "What's Cookin". We all enjoy it.  
Lots of love,  
Paul

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Thursday Morning  
13 April 1944

Dearest Kay:

My, oh my!!! What a mail! One Air Mail from Mother and Dad and two Air Mails, one V-Mail and an Easter greeting from Kay, a letter from John Anderson and one letter from Uncle Skip. Sure is a red letter day. Could take them like this every day and like it. And how...



First, let me tell you how much I have enjoyed the pictures. Have gone over to the depot and showed off the latest pictures of my family. All of that roll is very good. Just have a lot of fun looking at them. Put the folder that your Mother gave me just before we left, out on the desk. Has a picture of Kay sitting on a stone bench at the courthouse at Raleigh and the one taken in New York of Kay, Mother and Dad. Honest, it helps so darned much to have the pictures to put on my desk. Seem's to shorten those miles one hell of a lot. The Captain turns around about every five minutes and finds me looking at them again, and he just shakes his head sadly.....

Did I tell you that I have a new system for keeping track of all the letters you write to me? I keep all of them on a spindle – one spindle for those letters from Kay and one for those from Mother and Dad. Very effective. At least I'm not always pulling a letter out of every pocket. This way I know when I've answered them and if I was unable to answer something, I know so.

Honest, I've been very faithful to both of you about writing. My numbering system usually breaks down, but the letters do go out as I expect you are slowly finding out. I've never gone longer than four days without writing to you and I usually try to get a letter in every other day. Once in a while though that is impossible.

Poor Dad! Complaining about that house cleaning. Says there aren't any rugs on the floor. Too bad. Well you can come out here and live with me --- only the making up of the cot every morning and policing around picking up cigarette stubs and we have a nice rug of grass on the floor. Of course, it is wearing pretty thin in most places and is being replaced by just plain dirt but then it holds us up in the air and does a pretty good job. Also in the morning all we have to do is roll over and turn on the steam heat, for it is very damp in the tents, and then walk about 300 yards to wash our face and hands. Rugged? Well, sorta.

Kay's letter says that she had a pretty nice time up in Indianapolis. Sounds like she was coming up again about Easter (last Sunday). Think I'll run over for the weekend too – if you'll approve.

I've only seen Cy once since I've been here. We are about 15 miles apart and don't get together for that reason. Had wanted to go to their camp to see their outfit last week, but of course, they insisted that I go to the hospital instead. Wish I could get away, but the work, while it isn't too much or too great, is confining inasmuch as I have to be here every day to turn that work out and verify it as to accuracy.

Had a nice letter from John Anderson. Welcomed me to the Old Country and asked how Heaven (US) was. Sort of a cute letter. Had been to London once. Maybe I'll be able to get together with him one of these days.

Too bad about that damned car. Tell your maw to either fix or junk the durned thing. I don't like to think about you out on the road and something maybe going wrong. And my, my, breakfast in bed, OK smarty. The first three mornings that I was in the hospital I did too. So there, too.

Dear – send me my other belt. And I think that in some letter I asked for copies of the Sunday Star. Did I? And I received my first copy of Reader's Digest. Came to the old address, but I gave them the new one about three weeks ago.

Gee, that party at Madison sounded pretty swell. Wish I could have come. Sorry your birthday present hadn't arrived yet. Hope it has by now. I sent it registered mail so that they would be sure and reach you. Probably has by now. Sounds like you hit the jackpot though, and anyhow, no one else gave you any gloves. Anything from Peg and Jim?

As for the trip into Chester – and staying overnight – that was merely to sleep in a bed again and we stayed at the Red Cross, in other words, it is a large dormitory affair. There were a lot of us that went in. 'Spect most of the other questions were answered. Those that aren't answered are military secrets. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

I started this letter out as a typewritten one but war letters take priority over personal mail. I've copied that part that I had to tear off because of messy carbon paper and will copy the rest in longhand for I seem to tell you a little more if I write to both of you at once. You mentioned that some of the letters had cellophane on one end. Our unit censor reads the mail before the envelopes are sealed and the cellophane is put on

by the censor. That could account for the lateness in receiving mail. Are many of them coming through with tape on the end?

Our pup is fine, he had a bath Saturday and he is filling out and is going to make a swell dog. Still not much larger than a dime.

I've some coins that I want to send home one of these days. A Farthing ¼d on up. Still have to get a Crown.

Please – either Mother and Dad, or Kay, send me another O.D. cap from Blocks, size 6-7/8 with the square ends. Must have the top ends long. Don Morrison knows what he sold me before. I'd like some candy too.

I'll try to write by the weekend again, hope I'll have some more letters by then. As ever,  
Paul

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Sunday Afternoon  
16 April 1944  
4:15 PM

Dearest Kay, Mother and Dad –

It's a lazy day and we've worked all day, mostly writing letters home. I haven't spent the whole day writing for I did have to do some work and I also played poker for an hour, but I've written to Kay and have written a bunch of postcards of Chester. Also have some of where we are but can't send them out because of censorship regulations.

I bought your birthday present yesterday and mailed it today registered. It isn't so valuable by any means, but since I'm sending it Air-Mail, Registering it, merely insures it getting to you. I can hardly dare hope that it will reach you on your birthday. 'Spect you'll get it about the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May. But anyhow I want to wish you a very Happy Birthday and many more of them. Next year we'll have a big birthday party for you with angel food cake and all the trimmings.

I'm Charge of Quarters tonight and have just been over to have supper. We had fricasseed chicken, a few country potatoes (cook gave me some he was frying for himself) and green beans, cocoa, bread and butter. Tasted pretty good. Of course, it isn't like eating at home, but then, it was still good.

I'm not just sure whose birthday it is – yours or Kay's. I went to town early to buy you a birthday present and had a heck of a time finding anything. I'd told Kay that she had better buy something locally because I was laid up in the hospital and not able to go into town. I do hope you like what I sent. They are not much, but then we have to pay 100% tax on all jewelry items over here and have to have coupons on all items of cloth, so there wasn't a lot of choice. Then later I came across a small handmade bouquet carrier for a coat in one of the jewelry shops. Did not cost so very much and I sent it to Kay. I was looking for the Crown, which you will see in the collections of coins that I sent home today. Then, still hunting the same coin, I came across a Victoria Crown with a hook already put on it and so I bought that too and have sent it to Kay to use as a pendant on a silver chain until I come home and then it will become a watch fob – I hope. Anyhow, I thought that it was lovely and they are very scarce. They and the Coronation Crowns were called in by the Government a couple of years ago, so their value has been increased greatly. Their actual value is five shillings or a dollar, but for the Victoria Crown, I paid 9 shillings and for the Coronation Crown, I paid the standard price of 7-1/2 shillings.



I mailed the collection of coins home to Kay this morning and she, in turn, will either send or bring them with her to Indianapolis. These are all of the common coins used over here. The rest are all relics and hard to get hold of, as well as expensive. There is a four-penny bit, a four-shilling piece and a sovereign (sp). But I think that this collection will fill the bill. My God, though, the postage was terrific. Cost 56¢ for the coin envelope alone.

If you think about it, send me some more of the Air Mail stickers. I'm down to the booklet from Hogan Transfer and writing three and four letters a week to both you and Kay, it sort of uses them up fast.

I'm feeling quite a bit better. The cold is much better and the cough has sort of quieted down. Only have a big attack once or twice a day now. If the sun would just

come out and stay for a week or two I'd get over the damned thing. 'Spect I'll get over it anyhow. The weather has been foul as usual. A lot of rain. It stays cloudy most of the day and rains as a rule about an hour and a half a day. Just stays damp the rest of the time.

I'm out of information; don't know anything other than military secrets. Wish I could get over to see Cy or John, but I can't be gone overnight. Expect I'll hear from you, so you'd better write to me.

I forgot to get a card yesterday and there's no place open today, so again, **HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND MANY MORE OF THEM.**

Paul

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Somewhere in England  
Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May, 1944

Hello All of my Dearest Family:

I wish that you all could have been with me yesterday. I had a twenty-four hour pass and went to London for the day and enjoyed myself very, very much. Mother, especially, would have liked going along for she always was keen on English history, although I don't know just why. Anyhow, a very good time was had by one.

To begin with, I had applied a week in advance to go, but I hadn't been able to tell you about my future plans (security reasons) (censor wouldn't pass it) and then I was also afraid that I might not get to go. Also, I had planned to write to John Anderson and have him meet me in London, but I found out at the last moment that mail is even slower here in the UK (United Kingdom) than it is to the States, so I had to give that up as a bad deal. Accordingly, I had to go alone, for no one else could get a pass on short notice. It didn't bother me at all, though, for I was able to do what I wanted to do and go where I wanted to go, in the manner that I wanted to do it.

I got in London and took the subway up to Piccadilly Circus, getting there a little before noon. They had a valet service there and I got my clothes pressed and then I looked much better. Was getting pretty hungry, for I hadn't had time to eat breakfast and the ARC recommended a small Vienna Restaurant around the corner. Had very excellent food and it really hit the spot. Had crisp bacon, scrambled eggs, and French fries, with Boston cream pie (in some other name, of course) for dessert. Cost me 4 and 2 (84¢). Then – I had made arrangements as soon as I got in – I took a sightseeing tour around the city of London, and I think that I got a fair idea of the town. Of course, you can no more see London on a 24-hour pass than you could the city of New York, but at least I did glimpse the most widely known parts. We toured in taxis, five to a taxi, and had the top down although it was pretty cold. Cost each of

us 6 shillings (\$1.20). I didn't know the other fellows. Just happened to be assigned to the same taxi.



First, we went to St. James Palace, where all of the Kings and Queens originally lived and, if I remember what the guide told us, the Duke and Wally lived. Looked very antique-ish. Don't think I'd care much for it. From there – we went around the corner, a mere mile, to Buckingham Palace. Quite an impressive sight. There is something like 487 rooms in the joint. It's one block wide and runs back three. And, of course, we all know that it's very beautiful inside. The King and queen weren't entertaining at the moment, so we couldn't go inside. In fact, now that the war is on, one can't even go inside the courtyard.

From there – we saw Queen Victoria's Memorial, Westminster Abbey, Houses of Parliament with Big Ben, which did not bong while we were there, Scotland Yard, Downing Street (which we could look down but not approach No. 10), the Cenotaph, The Admiralty, the War Office (where we did not see General "Ike"), Waterloo Bridge, St. Paul's Cathedral, the Bank of England, the home of the Lord Mayor, the Tower of London by London Bridge (which is not falling down) (boy oh boy!). Living in the tower of London would really be rough. Kings used it as a palace for a couple of hundred years, used as a school and barracks for another couple of hundred years and then as a prison for the next three hundred hears. And it is still practically in its original state. One interesting thing they told us was that at the present time, spies are brought there and tried and, if found guilty, are executed on the grounds and buried there as well. They never come out. Maybe our country could take some lessons on efficiency there, huh?

Mistake. The London Bridge is not beside the Tower of London. That is beside Tower Bridge. Just to let you know that I'm on my toes. Anyhow, we drove down Fleet Street and saw Charles Dickens's Old Curiosity Shoppe; we saw the Law Courts, the Strand, Trafalgar Square, and back to Piccadilly Square, (or Circus as it is called now). I used to think Piccadilly Circus as a rather poor district, such as the Bowery in New York, whereas, it is the Times Square of London. Had expected to see stores and shops running for miles, such as on Broadway or Fifth Avenue in New

York. But, all there is are three or four commercial districts in the heart of the city, which seem to comprise all of the business district. All in all, I think that I still like Chester better than any city in the U.K. Of course, London is the only place that you can go and do anything that you want to do. You can find liquor there, if you drink, or go to lots of shows, all of which are not so ancient. Or are they? Pygmalion and Bebe Daniels in Panama Hattie. I don't even remember back that far.

Now, let's review. The tour lasted about two hours. The only places that we were out of the taxi were at Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's where we spent about 15 minutes at each place. The prettiest thing I have seen over here was the gold altar at the Abbey. It was beautiful. This main altar is used for two purposes only; (1) the Coronation of a King or Queen, and (2) the royal marriages. The altar is about 30 feet wide and all in mosaic work of gold. The center is made up of a picture of the Last Supper and the relief is very vivid. Of course, we could only come to the railing, but our guide told us that the closer you get the prettier that it becomes. And, in the wing, standing to the right of the altar, there is a huge window done in stained glass which, because of its circular design, is called the Rose. It's a gorgeous piece. And then, it was sort of awing to being told all at once "that slab of marble you are standing on is the grave of so and so" and you move down the line and have it done all over again. What isn't housed in the Abbey is housed at St. Paul's. This won't affect Mother and Dad, but as for Kay, just imagine that you are in Mexico City and are in the Church of Mexico. The old black walls, and old furniture, with the private chapels all around this place and the greatly worn floors. OK. Just put yourself in that church and add these things to it and you have Westminster Abbey. The people really prefer St. Peter's because they are free to come and go, whereas the other has the functions which are "by invitation or appointment".

Maybe I should add that in both churches the ones buried aren't just scattered at random. Here in this section will be the artists and over here the heroes, and over here the scientists, etc. It's no wonder that they have all of the famous men there. They put them all there so that they wouldn't miss any.

After we got back off the tour, I made a short shopping tour which was practically fruitless. Tried to find leather goods first. Too dear. Then looked for elephants for Mother. Saw some beautifully carved figures which were imported from China before the war, but thought I couldn't afford them. (Ran from 37s 6d to 45s). Then, I found a lunch set, which is made in England and is definitely an English product. So Kay hits the jackpot again and the folks get left out. Poor Dad. I refuse to buy him an English pip which can be purchased for much less and be much better back in the

States. Alden is out this afternoon looking for something and if he finds what I asked for, the folks will hit the jackpot eventually.

Had a couple of beers and then got cleaned up and went over to the Russian Bear for dinner. Had Borsch, Russian beef steak, potatoes, a vegetable which I don't remember, and a Russian doughnut and Russian coffee for dessert. Another very good meal. Did all right while in London.

Have had to interrupt this letter to write an official letter for the Captain to sign so that the truck will pick me up some supplies in the morning. Can't work without supplies. Then, I had to go out and drill for an hour. So now I'm back at the office and I'm ready to take off again for chow. Don't think it will be quite as good as last night's was.

Still later. Haven't eaten yet. It's raining pretty hard and I don't want to stand in line in the rain. So Condie and I are standing, or rather, waiting here for the rain to stop before going out. And by the way, Condie was hunting in a junk shop (or so he called it) and found a set of silver for six. Is a perfectly plain pattern, no design. Solid silver. Glad you're not his wife, because you'd have one hell of a time keeping it clean.

Supper is over and I'm back at the office. Just have to write to you all. Let's get back to London. And, by the way, in the meantime the mail has come in and I have two letters from Kay and a letter from Uncle Skip. One of Kay's letters has a card in it. Thank YOU.

After dinner, I went around to see if I could go to a play, but by shopping until 5:30 and having dinner, I was too late to go to a play (they all start at 6:15, 6:30, or 6:45), so I had to go to a show. There were no night excursions or tours. Geez – they want anywhere from 6s 6d (\$1.30) to 11s 6d (\$2.30). About broke me up, but I went to one of the cheaper ones and saw Pygmalion over again. There were several good shows, but I was just too scotch. After the show, went over and had a scotch and soda or two, and then just to be on the safe side got my gas mask from the ARC and went out to the railroad station and waited for my train.

The train was scheduled to leave very late at night and it left on time. However, it was delayed along the route somehow or other and then I got lost and accordingly came in late off my pass this morning. However, when I found out that I was not where I ought to be, I called in to the Captain and notified them so that I wasn't picked up as AWOL.

There's no fuel over here anymore for heat, so the train last night was very, very cold. And coming in so late after the train was delayed, I was about frozen. Therefore, I got very little sleep. So I'll have to get to bed earlier than usual tonight.



During World War II, Rainbow Corner, the American Red Cross Club near Piccadilly Circus in London, was the most famous in the ETO. For 24 hours a day, every day, it was open to American servicemen from 11 November 1942 to 9 January 1946. In addition to extensive recreation facilities and programs, the club offered excellent food service

Now, about the ARC. ARC, of course, stands for the American Red Cross. They have a large number of dormitories throughout London, where the soldiers may sleep. All that a soldier has to do is make arrangements through his local Red Cross director and a bed is reserved for him. This applies to wherever one goes. All of the dormitories are run by the staff of the main office at the Rainbow Corner. And, the Rainbow Corner is a paradise. I think that it was a hotel before the war and the Red Cross took it over. And it wasn't a slouch of a hotel, either. They have a very nice lobby, and have a large room in the basement which they call the Donut Bar. In case of a dance, there is plenty of room and they have an orchestra stand as well. They have a large writing room and telephone room, where you can call anyone in the U.K.; if you know anyone, that is. They have a large cafeteria and this and that. Makes it very nice for a fellow coming in from out of town. If it weren't for that, many of us couldn't go to these various towns. We used to not think much about the Red Cross because they always charged for their things, but believe me they charge only enough to pay their help, and it definitely is worth it. And, by the way, the ARC's are staffed by both American and British RC workers. You can donate to the Red Cross just as much as you like. We have never seen the Salvation Army but once when they were on the street trying for a collection. They must have stayed at home this time to take care of the home front.

I just got outranked on my typewriter. Gee, at the rate this takes up space I should have used it before, cause then you'd all think you are getting more.

Now to answer Kay's letters. I'm glad that you like the Crown and the bouquet holder. Hoping to hear from you that you've had the necklace or pin made of the

farthings. I want to answer some of my mail tonight so I'm going to click off on this letter and start another one. I noticed that my card was postmarked the 28<sup>th</sup> of April. Mother was supposed to receive the cards on that day – not me, but thank you very much, all of you, for the cards. It helps to bring a chuckle once in a while.

Just had a flash. I've got to get on the ball and get my clothes all marked. We are doing that periodically now, so I'd better sign off. Expect I'll hear from you tomorrow. I'll find time to write the first of the week.

As ever,  
Paul

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Sunday Afternoon  
13 May 1944

Hello Darling –

It's a beautiful sunny afternoon here, but rather cold. It was very nice yesterday – warm, but tried to rain. Really though, it has been abnormally dry for England. But of course, living in tents, that hasn't worried us at all.

First I've received the package with my shoes. Thank you very much. They came through swell and thank so much for the funny papers too. Boy, oh boy. I was swamped! Even the Lt. Col. Came out of his office and ordered me, no less, not to let the funny papers out of the office until he had had a chance to read them. So we are keeping them under lock and key. In other words, honey, you are quite a morale builder.

I've also received letters 51, 52, 53, and 55 from you and a couple from the folks written April 30, and May 4<sup>th</sup>, so I'm not doing so very bad, am I? Leastways I think not. Of course, if I could just be together with you .....

I had an afternoon off yesterday so I went to a small town not far away from here and had a very nice afternoon. Took off at noon and Cole and Bullock went with me. Of course, I haven't gotten to the place where I can tell you the names of towns, but I can still tell you that I went there, so I visited the town of \_\_\_\_, and had a swell time. It was a rather small town, not too many people and not too many GI's. Made it rather nice. Looked in all the store windows and saw things that we'd like to buy. Saw a lot of glassware that I know both families would like to have – some beautiful glasses at 2s 6d (that's 50¢) and some vases and ashtrays and things that were very lovely at 5s per (\$1.00). We played around and had a lot of fun and even forgot to look at the girls too much and went in and had our afternoon tea at a tea shop. Then we came back to

our own town and had some doughnuts and then went to the show and saw Jane Eyre. Enjoyed it. Then back home again, or should I say camp? Right....

Today is the same as every other day. Have to get up at 5:30 now and have my cot all made up before reveille because I have to come to work early and get off at the same time as everyone else. I eat late (about 8:00) then work the rest of the day, same as everyone else. We now have ½ day off a week and have a pretty fair time, considering. I caught hell yesterday though, for taking off the afternoon and taking Cole with me, for one of us is supposed to be here at all times and, of course, the Captain would have to have information at that time.

Once in a while I forget that I write these letters in carbon, and just rattle away as if everyone knows what I'm talking about. If you don't know what I'm driving at, the other parties concerned probably will. (Especially when I call someone honey.)



One of the boys just took a snapshot with his camera that he just got. Took a picture of several of us that were in the office at the time. It will take about four weeks to get the darned things developed, but I'll get you a copy after that. You may have to split it between you, but we'll see what can be done when the time comes.

I haven't had a chance to wear my shoes since I've had them. I could have worn them yesterday but it looked as though it might pour so I didn't, but think I'll put them on in a little while and wear them to the show tonight if I can get in. Want to see the Mark of Zorro. But what I started to say in the paragraph was that my morale is much higher than it was. I expect that I was rather depressed when you received my letter. I have had two or three spells of melancholy but I eventually get over it. Took me from Tuesday night to Friday morning to get over the last spell. We're busy, but if we'd only get to doing something – get it over with – quit all the waiting.

I'm looking forward to having the motion picture camera and with such an offer in the offing, believe me, they can plan to get it about nine months after I get home. I'm going to get caught up on my homework. Condie is the proud father of a baby boy.

Just heard. Baby was born the first, and it's taken this long to find out. Named him Condie Jackson. They'll call him Jack.

Ma Danner sure does have tough luck. So now it's termites. And they are so darned tough to get rid of. And expensive... sure wish you luck, you'll need it.

I want a job where I can stay in one town and settle down with a life of my own – not live in Anderson and then somewhere else and so on. Right now, I think that the nicest thing a fellow could have is a home of his own to settle down in. And, of course, I've even gotten so that I could walk since I came in the Army, so I guess that a yard wouldn't kill me. It is also my guess that an apartment building after living practically on the ground for so long wouldn't go at all. Does that sound logical?

Darling, there are a lot of us who are not good soldiers and everybody can seem to make the best of everything. As for myself, I don't like the Army either, but I'm in it, and as long as I am, I might at least try to make myself happy and make the best of it. Lots of outfits are much worse than others, and as we all know, my outfit doesn't do so badly, even if I do gripe a lot about things. They have things pretty rough and sometimes it gets impossible.

Eating dinner at the Hawthorne Room and at other places always sounds very nice. The next time that you all go out, someone eat a steak for me, hum? How about it? Of course, I eat out a good deal, but it's not American cooking and, with the rationing, which is so much more drastic here, the food just isn't as plentiful and as well prepared, although I've eaten some swell meals. I ate three plates of food the other night at the fish and chips place before I got enough to eat. I'll sure be glad to receive your boxes. And as usual, I'll put in a request for a package. Please send me some cookies and canned goods. How about some sardines and tuna and peanuts? We don't get anything like that around here and it's going to get worse. Can you send onions? If there are any, make a very small package and send me three or four, would you? Don't forget the candy. I'm looking forward to receiving your next package. Know it will be some time before I receive it, but I'm looking forward to it already. Since there is a restriction on candy, I miss it very much. It wouldn't be hard to observe lent over here.

I've run out of information and it is time I was out of here. Have to go stand retreat, even on Sunday so I'll have to get on the ball. Another interruption; guess I'd better quit. Have to go and put on my shoes. Write often.

Lots of love,

Paul

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Somewhere in England  
27 May 1944

Dearest Family –

Well, here it is Saturday night, and another week is gone. Fifty-two weeks ago today I was inducted into the US Army. How time flies. And Mother was recuperating from her operation, and Monday will be exactly a year.



Have had a letter from Kay---congratulating me on that “dark spot on my upper lip”. Ho, Hum! She seemed to like it too. Like beer and milk. And all those touching comments (both those written and those that I could read between the lines). Had been looking forward to receiving that letter for some time and viewing the little sarcastic remarks. Oh, well. It doesn’t bother me in the least. You’re right. What can you do about it? Am very anxious to receive a letter from Mother and Dad with their “comments”.

Today has been a wonderful day. The sun has been shining all day and it has been nice and warm. This was my afternoon off, but I didn’t have anything to go into town for, and I’m working CQ for one of the fellows tonight, so I went out in the sun and slept. Honest, since we get up so early and the sun stays out so late in the evening, I just don’t get enough sleep these days. This is the first day since we were last together that I haven’t worn a wool undershirt. I lay out in the sun in my pup tent and the sun she was hot. Probably did me a lot of good. At least I can stay awake long enough to write to you.

After I wrote to you the other night I wrote to Jesse Fouch, who had written me a very nice letter that I hadn’t answered. He said that Civilian Defense had practically come to a standstill since I left Anderson. And then I wrote to the Hipshers and to the

Galyeans. Have also written to the Williams, Earle Wm., and to the little girl that I write to in E. Orange. Want to get a letter out to the Schieszes and one to the Indianapolis Office. By the way, did the Smith's ever receive the letter I wrote to them?

Some of the 12<sup>th</sup> was just here this afternoon. Capt. Batchelor, Klucharits, Penkala and several of the others. Came over here to play a ballgame. Their camp is only about 35 miles from ours. I don't know just where, except that was what they told us. Col. Moore has developed some heart trouble and, I imagine, will probably go to a hospital and lose his command --- if the story is true.

Several of the boys have been to London. They borrowed blouses from one of the other units and got to go that way. Also borrowed a garrison cap. They are sort of particular about what you wear when you go into town, just the same as when we were in the States. The boys all had a swell time and I don't believe any of them did anything that I didn't do except get drunk and see some girls. Course, I looked but didn't partake.....!

Haven't anything left to tell you except that I may go for sometime without your receiving a letter from me, whenever we move. That, of course, will depend upon "D" day. If it will help any, we will be in a minimum of danger. As soon as our mail is released, we will be able to tell you where we are. We are stripped down ready for the move, but don't know when it might be. We could be gone before your receive this or might wait indefinitely. You probably have heard more rumors as to the actual date than we have.

I'm out of information, so I'll give it up as a poor job and will write later in the week.  
As ever,  
Paul

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V-MAIL – June 7, 1944  
Somewhere in England

Dear Kay, Mother and Dad-

Had your letter today. Was very surprised to receive it as ---- ---- ----. Don't know ---  
- ----- but one method may be quicker than another.

Yesterday the invasion began. You knew it 3-1/2 hours before we did. There's little change here, but we will eventually ----- ----- -----. The only difference here is the number of airplanes in the air.

I hope Edna Sedwick is feeling better by now. Know it's tough to be in the hospital.

I wasn't able to get any more Irish coins. Yes, they do have animals on them. Dad has a Father's Day present in the mail. Hope it reaches him OK. Kay's package reached me in 31 days, so yours should be here any day – unless it's still in the New York post office. Feeling OK.

As ever,  
Paul

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Somewhere in England  
Wed. 14 June, 1944

Dearest Family:

Mail censorship is lifted again so that I can write you again. I have had two letters from you and ten from Kay, one from Schiesz, one box each from you and Kay, and one envelope each from you and Kay containing newspapers. Thank you so very much.

The flashlight is swell. I got the batteries in town OK and am using it. Popped the popcorn the other night and what popped was swell, but I didn't have a hot enough fire. Will do better next time, so send some more in the next package. Haven't eaten any of the canned goods that you and Kay sent. Didn't want any on that particular day and now they are packed away. Enjoyed the newspapers very much. Call Strauss and tell him that I read "What's Cookin'" regularly and that it is also read by T/4 Gene Armstrong of Terre Haute and Gregg Appleby of Newcastle, PFC Ivan Hayes and PFC Nigerd Hayes, both of Indianapolis. We might as well have our names in too. Also from here it goes to CPL John Anderson, and he mails it to T/5 Chas. Smuck of Indianapolis. (Smuck Rug Company.) And by the way, I got a chance to go over and see Charlie the other day. Looks fine but had a broken finger and was getting out of a lot of work because of it. Call Edna Anderson and tell her, will you?

Housecleaning! Don't you ever get done? I sleep in a put tent and when it gets dirty just move over a little. And my desk is the back end of a truck so when it gets dirty, we pull the truck up a little. Sort of like trailer camp in Florida.

Had the V-Mail from Mrs. Gutermuth. Tell her thanks a lot. We all enjoyed her letter and all of us that had gone to London appreciated her description greatly.

It's the next morning. Mail will go just as soon as if mailed last night. I had to stop writing and go get messages and then had a chance to take a bath. Had a midnight snack (tomato juice and hardboiled eggs, which we swiped), and so to bed about 11:30.

Can't tell you how much we liked the package. The pecan roll disappeared at once. Managed to get several pieces myself, for I passed it just before dinner.

Can't think of anything else to write about this morning. I imagine that you've been uneasy twice now – once when the invasion started and this time. There will be one more period of no news but try not to worry too much, I'll be OK.

Mrs. Schiesz and Kay write that Earle Wm. is home. Boy that sure is swell. Hope they keep him in the States. You never know these days.

It's a nice sunny morning and I think I'll wash my field jacket. It will dry in 3 or 4 hours. Have work to do also, of course, but not too much. Just heard part of the old gang has arrived, so I want to investigate that rumor.

I'll try to write again as soon as possible.  
As ever,  
Paul

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Somewhere in France  
24<sup>th</sup> June, 1944

Dearest Kay, Mother and Dad –

The silence is over. I'm here in France. The weather is better, the days are nice and warm (nights very cold) with lots of sunshine. Where we are it might be any place in northern Indiana or Michigan.

The crossing wasn't too bad. I didn't get sick but I spent a lot of my time in a bunk where I felt some better. However, no one was really sick in our outfit. Don't know much as yet since we don't speak French or German, we don't have much to say to one another except a nod of the head or a wave of the hand.

Hope our mail will catch up soon. Haven't had anything since two days before I last wrote to you.

There isn't anything that I can tell you as yet except that I'm OK and am all right.  
Will write as soon as I can.  
As ever,  
Paul

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Somewhere in France  
July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1944

Dearest Kay, Mother and Dad –

We have a new APO 583. That post office is located here with us and until further notice, use that address. Things are very quiet here. We can hear the guns in the distance sometimes and occasionally, the Luftwaffe is chased out of the skies by the antiaircraft. Our planes are overhead most of the time. But we play safe and have our slit trenches just in case. Our life here is pretty rugged. It's not that we do so much, but we're out in the open 24 hours a day.

We've seen very little of France. All the towns and countryside are "off limits" to the troops, so that we can only see our fellow GI's. Last night we did manage to steal out and go to a certain farmhouse and pick up some cider. Also managed to get a piece of steak and some potatoes, which we fried today.

We had one amusing and yet tragic thing happen on our trip across. Condie, Alden and myself put our bags on the truck and traveled light. And then, unexpectedly we didn't come with the trucks. So we spent several nights without even a blanket or change of clothes. And did that work a hardship. Believe you me, never again. We just about froze and were so dirty.

July 8<sup>th</sup> 1944

I thought you might like to know what we are supposed to be eating over here. We always get some of this but very seldom do we get the quantities that we are supposed to. We know that part of the rations were used by the mess tents for barter, for wine and cider, and it is hard to tell how much or for what. Anyhow, for breakfast we have cereal, which is dry, with milk and sugar added, and to which you add either hot or cold water and have your cornflakes or shredded oats or whatever they are. There is canned ham and eggs, biscuits and jam, coffee (Nescafe) and canned milk. The coffee is pretty thin with cream in it, so it is a pleasure when we can have it black. For dinner, at noon, we have K-rations and you've seen them and know what they are. For supper on the particular day I'm writing about there was canned corned beef, peas, biscuits, and canned butter, a fruit bar and an orange drink. So they are very nutritious meals except there isn't enough to make a guy feel like he has eaten a full meal.

Tomorrow night though we are changing over to the other mess plan and we will have rations just the same as we had back in the UK. The menu that we like best out of these we've been having is breakfast. A can of breakfast bacon, which we fry and which is nice and lean, and to which we add our noon can of pork and egg yolks, which is in the K-ration. And the rest of the meal is the same. The noon meal is the K-ration and then the supper is canned roast beef, golden bantam corn, and pineapple rice pudding for dessert with the rest of the meal the same. Sure does taste good.

I'm out of information and it is after 9:00 and I'm ready to go to bed. It is quite light here and the sun is still shining, but I'll put a cover over the end of my pup tent and it will black it out good enough for me to sleep.

Well---the Army did give me two presents today (my birthday) but neither one of them was a set of stripes I've been wanting. This morning I went to the medical Supply Depot and got myself a pair of glasses and they are helping wonderfully, and then tonight we've just been paid.

I had the articles by Ernie Pyle that Mother sent to me. Anyhow Gladys had enclosed a nice little note, which will not get answered very soon I'm afraid.

As ever,  
Paul

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Somewhere in France  
2 July 1944

Dearest Kay, Mother and Dad –

Had your V-mail today saying you had finally heard from me on the 17<sup>th</sup>. The next letter will probably be slow too. Can't do much explaining because of censorship rules, but think it will be OK now.

Haven't seen much of France. We're confined to our camp all of the time and all towns and even the countryside is off limits. We do sneak out once in a while for cider.

Please send me a package with food stuffs. Everything. The only way we keep from starving is by stealing from the kitchen, foraging off the land, and packages from home. We really go crazy when someone gets a package. Everyone sort of grabs and the guy with the package sort of hopes, but as more and more packages are coming in, we're slowing down just a little. And we enjoy the funny papers very much.

Glad everyone enjoyed my London letter. I crowded everything I could on the paper. Who knows, someday I may write you about Paris and Berlin. Maybe even Russia. Probably Japan. Getting sort of wild now!

Those long wet days are still with us, but we have hopes that we'll have sunshine tomorrow, and get all dried out. My tent is nice and dry, but after awhile the ground begins to get pretty damp.

Lucky Theo. I imagine that he is pretty disappointed because he hasn't gotten to go to Australia, but how fortunate for Gina. And I had a letter from the Williams saying that Bill had gone back to Australia and that they had spent their six weeks traveling about the US to the various posts; but had spent the last week in California on a vacation. And his Lt. Col. hadn't come through yet. Guess it won't be long now.

Well – it's 8:15 and the light is about gone so I'll have to quit. Feeling rocky. I'll try to add more in the AM.

Monday morning:

Got to sleep in this morning. So it's 8:15 and I just got to the office tent. And the truck is here for the mail, so I'll write a better letter later.

As ever,  
Paul

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Somewhere in France  
4 July 1944

My Dearest Family –

They tell me that today was a holiday, but as far as I was concerned it was just another day on the calendar. According to the calendar today is Tuesday, but it might as well be Sunday or Thursday or any other day in the week because all of them are just exactly the same. You do the same things, follow the same routine, etc.... gets boring.

I've had several letters from you, but none today. Had hoped to have one today from Kay (have had two of the folk's letters since hers) but maybe better luck tomorrow. And best of all is when the packages start coming to me. I haven't had any for some time. Believe that they will start with the camera. Then I will send you some pictures.

I've enjoyed the letters from both of you so very much since you finally received mail from me. Your letters perked up and you sound much more cheerful. Yes, I wish that I could have had lunch at Blocks with you. I see in the paper that the American public is being made to suffer again – only one T-bone steak a day. How terrible. Don't see how you manage to get along. And lamb put back on rationing. See! We get most of the news. Wish we knew more about how the war was going. We don't hear very much about it here. We did hear that Hitler would make a startling announcement today, but haven't heard just what it was. Maybe nothing at all. A cinch that it was not a sue for peace.

Part of our fellows was in the newsreels today. The first American flag to be raised in France. Unfortunately I was at one of the battalions or I would have been in the picture also. Wouldn't that have been something? Bet you would have really enjoyed that.

I had the birthday card, or rather Father's Day card, from Dad. Thank you very much. Hope you enjoyed your pipe. I think that it is a pretty good one. I don't think I remembered to mention that I'm unable to cash a money order over here, so 'm returning it to you. I'll endorse it over so that it can be cashed. Monetary presents are out over here. No – don't send me anything more I have to carry around. My golly, I believe that I've doubled in junk since I left England. Don't know how I'll manage to carry everything. Guess the only way to get along is for me to steal myself a jeep and carry all of myself in it.

It is beginning to get dark here (10:30) and I've got to get cleaned up before I get into my hole. So I've got to quit. This is just a note, but I don't know of anything to write about. My thoughts are always with you – but I've been gone from home so darned long the idea is beginning to be pretty far remote. Our mail is slow enough coming this way that I can't even see you there in the room anymore. Of course, our living out in the field has something to do with that.

Please send me a package with something to eat. Anything at all. Meat, fruits, vegetables, anything at all accepted. And candy. I eat all of that I can get my hands on. So please send me a package. And enclose a washrag. My love to all of you. Take care of the home front and we'll be able to get home again someday. Find me a job besides SOCO. I definitely don't want to leave Indianapolis or Madison. How about that Automotive Supply?

As ever,  
Paul

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Somewhere in France  
7<sup>th</sup> July, 1944

Dear Kay: -

It's been two days since I last wrote to you both and two days without any mail here. Seems like the mail is getting just a little behind, but it will reach us in time, so we don't feel too bad about it.

Life in France! Boy, oh boy, is that going to be something to remember! At that, it's still better than England was, except that over here, things are so much more "down to earth" and I mean that in actuality, as well as a figure of speech. Yesterday and today have been very nice days. Most of the time. Yesterday the sun was out all day and managed to get our things all dried out and then it rained about all night. And today, it started out very badly – being wet from last night's rain, but the sun came out and, as I managed to get my work caught up for the first time in several days and nights, I took the afternoon off and proceeded to spend the afternoon laying in the hot sun taking a sunbath. But the rain started and I had to close up my pup tent and just be satisfied with sleeping. Did pretty well though. And then, tonight, we had another treat. We had our first movie in France. Used the new machine that we had gotten hold of just before leaving the U.K. Saw a couple of shorts and Tom Conway in "The Falcon and the Coeds". Didn't even complain because they didn't have a double feature.

Actually, this life in France is rugged. We're in the field, so we're field soldiers and, too, we work in OD's and conduct our office in a tent and are garrison soldiers, so we really have a time of it. But then, we're able to survive and I guess that's what counts. We're still doing no better on food, so please send me another package. If the darned things are starting to run into too much money, then I'll send you a check just to keep things on the ball. You can't realize how much a package from home means to us. And then, too, they are so slow coming that the only way to survive is to have them sent regularly.

Work is still the same as it was back in the States. Only more of it. For instance, the day before yesterday, the day started at 7:00 AM and I managed to crawl into my hole at 12:00 PM that night. And then up at 7:00 AM again and back to the same old routine. Gets monotonous, but I feel every so much better than I did since we have actually started our mission. I imagine that you can note the difference by the sound of the letter if nothing else, as I did in the letters from all three of you. (I usually say both of you, meaning (1) Kay and (2) Mother and Dad. So don't get the impression that some one is being left out of my letters. I wish that I could tell you all of the things that go on, but darn it, mail censors are so very strict over here that I don't have

a chance to say a darned thing. For instance, the V-Mail that I sent to you. I saw those after they had been censored so I know what they did in that particular case. Don't know what the base censor does, however.

The skies have been full of American and British planes for the last few days. We have never seen a German plane overhead in the daytime. They've fired at several during the night, but we haven't been able to see them and I don't know how many or how often, because I sleep right through the whole damned show usually. (Of course, I couldn't tell you anyhow. Censor.)

The French are beginning to get tired of the Americans. I can't blame them, for they have taken just about everything that the French people have. Not forcibly, but by the old system of barter. For instance, we were trading cigarettes and extra rations that we couldn't stand to eat for cider and wine, or food if it were possible to get. Mostly cider, though. One farm where we have been going had 7 barrels of cider, each barrel holding 400 gallons. The other night when she cut all of us off, she was on the last barrel, and of course, as you probably already know, that is what the French drink with their meals. The poor people anyway. So it was a serious proposition with them. Condie was in the back room and said that it was piled high with candy, cigarettes, and C-rations. I'm fortunate enough to have a French woman doing my laundry. Does a very nice job, but we overpay her badly. We pay her just as much as we did to have laundry done in the States and in England. It always costs us the same wherever we are. Should be less, but the Americans have so much money to spend. Yeh? Who is kidding who?

Monday is my birthday. Haven't had any of those packages which all of you have on the way to me, so maybe I'll be lucky and get something in the next day or two or three. We get mail on Sunday too, that is, if there is any mail to get. Wish that the Captain and Major would come through with a new set of stripes on that day, but such things just don't happen, and looks like the only way that I will ever get a promotion is for this outfit to be blitzed. And we don't want the stripes that badly. Wish that they would promote Alden and Bassett, though. They both deserve it. Good boys.

Just before we left the UK, I got a snapshot taken on John Fleck's Kodak, but we have to send them to a certain place there in England to be developed and they don't do work in less than three months. Who knows, maybe we'll be home again by the time that all of that comes about. And Kay made some cracks in her last letter about me and my mustache. And I was really concerned about growing a real set of handlebars... but just in case that you are interested, I haven't had a mustache since the picture was taken. And also, I have my hair cut down to about an inch. Was a

half-inch but it has grown out that much. So, you can carry on just all you like about it, but it's not bothering me at all.

John is hollering for this typewriter. Some of us are partial to this one, and besides, it's the one charged out to his department and mine. So, I guess that I'm forced to quit. We've started getting the French edition of Stars and Strips, so now we'll learn just what is going on.

Hope that everyone at home is well and that you all aren't too lonesome. Can't get over how fortunate Earle William is, the lucky stiff. But I haven't any complaints for he was overseas for a long time.

Looking for some mail from you tomorrow. Your letters have been doing swell until this three or four days delay and, of course, when we came over from -----.

I'll be thinking of you all Monday, for I KNOW THAT YOU WILL BE THINKING OF ME QUITE A BIT. And, I'll probably get my packages just before my birthday. I miss you all quite a lot too.

As ever,  
Paul

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Somewhere in France  
15<sup>th</sup> July, 1944

Hello All -

Gosh, how time flies! Doesn't seem that this could be Saturday and that I haven't written to you since last Monday, which was my birthday package. It's been a fairly busy week and a very busy end of the week. But, I've got a few minutes right now while waiting for one of the battalions to send in their reports, which are now two and a half hours late. Boy, will I read the riot act.

Well – it's very much later, afternoon in fact, and the afternoon half gone at that. As I wrote those last words, the reports that I was waiting for came in. So I had to get to work. And, lo and behold! Mail! In droves. I have the package you sent (Kay) on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May and the one that you (Mother and Dad) sent on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May. And I had 13 letters from everyone. Had one from the Galyeans, one from the Williams, one from the little girl in East Orange and two of her little friends who decided to write to me also and the rest from you folks. Enjoyed them all very much, although I haven't had time to read the "What's Cookin'" and the Indianapolis News column yet. Can't do everything at once.

The packages are swell. The one from the folks has cookies, a washrag, Vienna sausage, popcorn, and a newspaper, and the one from Kay has tuna fish, Pabst-ett cheese, candy (bar) and candy kisses (which did not endure the trip), the Kodak with one roll of film, and a book. Thank you both very much, all three of you darlings. Expect that we'll have a grand feed one of these next few nights for several of the other fellows received the same as I did, only Joe has had six packages this week. I seem to have so many on the way, and I'll have to thank so many in letters, oh me. I have such a hard time trying to get letters out to just you.

I'm looking for Cy in today or tomorrow. Sure will be swell to see them again. When we do get together I'll take some pictures of that whole bunch – Luther, Cy, Murph – and then you'll have to wait another eternity for them to be developed so that I can send them to you. And I have to have them developed over here. Army censorship again.

I enjoyed the pictures so very much of everyone. Of course they were the first that I had seen of EW and he sure does look swell. Wish that I could be there too, so that you could take of picture of me, but guess that Christmas will have to do. (Still hoping.)

You could have about pushed me over with a feather when I found a whole letter from Dad enclosed. Thank you very much. You usually let Mother do most of the writing, but I really enjoy hearing from both of you.

Since I started this last paragraph, I've had still more interruptions and it's now 5:10. Only six hours and a half to write two pages. Not a bad average at all.

That cherry pie in the oven sounds swell. I'm licking my lips just from the thoughts of it. UM BOY! Save me the whole pie. And made of fresh cherries too .... Wish that you could send those to me through the mail. No – you can't send me a Western Union message so you'll just have to let me have the fun from here. I've received the letter from Blanche Smith with the \$5.00 money order, which by the way I can cash now and have already done so. They were released the day that I received the letter from her. Think I'll enclose a dollar (oh, yes, I still have one from when I left NY) for you to send me an ordinary coffee percolator, do you suppose that you could find a cheap one, for it will be discarded whenever we start back to the good old USA. Some good coffee surely would be swell.... And while I'm thinking about it, Bess Gutermuth's name was on that box instead of yours. Was it from her? If so, better send me her name and address so that I can thank her. The weather is fair today. The

sun hasn't been out very much, but it has only drizzled once or twice and then didn't really get things wet.

And, I almost forgot, I took another trip yesterday. Made a round trip to various organizations which trip lasted all afternoon and I had a very delightful trip. And then again last night. And then again last night, I picked up a detail to go get some supplies and was joined by another for the same trip by the first Sgt. And I saw a lot of things I had seen when we first came over here. So it was a very enjoyable day. And I had gotten my work out before I left, too. France is very pretty country. Lots of green fields and gardens, lots of livestock, and the farmers are not too poverty stricken in this sector. Expect that to change as we change territory and that will depend upon what we can do to Shickelgruber's troops.

The people here are just as well dressed as the English were. The girls, or I should say women, have a little more appeal about them, of course, that could be because we don't even get off the trucks when we go through these towns (towns are off limits) and far pastures are greenest; but at least they don't have big, heavy, stocky legs like all of the English girls had. The towns are all close together and you have some kind of little village every three or four miles ... we have talked to some of the local people from the town next to us and they have told us various tales about the Germans and how they were treated, etc. We have several members of the company who can speak French. If I ever have a kid, so help me, he'll learn to speak French. I think more people in the work speak French than any other language.

There's a definite reason for having the towns off limits. You've seen some of the pictures that have been published and can realize the damage that has been done. Well, the only way to keep the soldiers from souvenir hunting is to keep them out of the towns ... and, while I think of it, I was awarded the Good Conduct medal, so now I have two ribbons to wear.

So glad Dad is enjoying his pipe so much. I was very lucky to get it as pipes are very scarce over there in the UK and I haven't seen any stores here to see if they have pipes over here ... But I intend to send souvenirs from every country that we manage to visit ... And I'm going to mail them all. I'm not going to lug an extra thing when we start going the other direction ... So glad for both Dick and EW... But then, they can have their commissions. I'm not interested in same. Think that I could have passed the exam for Warrant Officer, but I'm not even interested in that ... Ask Jerry for Kent's complete address ... I might run into him around here somewhere if I knew where to look. Drop a line to Florence and tell her that Cy is joining us... I don't do any new work, just a little more of it and that is not very much. Yes, I've always liked green

plants, too, and so now I'm in my heaven. My bed is lined with green --- grass and a few weeds --- and I even have snails in my bed, so that is still one more thing that you can start doing – having snails in your bed... We put salt on them and they melt away. If they didn't then they would be the variety that are good to eat ... uggh!!

We are getting our Stars & Stripes again so that we know all of the news – even that the Indianapolis Indians have won 21 games to date. What a team... their attendance will hit a new low. Congratulations to Chas. Welshans. Think that it is swell that he's been deferred. So many reasons for deferring him, but I begin to know how these draft boards work living among all these draftees.

Time out for chow --- Much later. This is Saturday night. Hope you're winning at Tunk and you, Kay, are winning in that bridge game. Hope I stay even in this Poker game going on beside my desk. I'll write as I let the hands go by. Just missed the pot with four eights .... Four nines won.

Had a birthday card from Aunt Ida and Dow, honey. Thank them for me. Dear – would you prepare me a fried chicken too? Would taste scrumptious. The boys have been having things sent from home sealed in these home packing cans so that they don't break in the mail. And they insure the pack with wax on the top. And things come through in swell order. Will you please send me one? ... Please??? Remember your Mother or Mabel gave us a jar of sausages, and how good they tasted? Well, figure us out here where we can't get those good things and think how we'll enjoy it...

I have had three letters from you marked 98 and two marked 99. Then the next one is 103 ... Shame, shame, eating the cookies that you were going to send to me. I don't blame you. But send them to me the next time. The cookies that Joe got today were perfect... so send me some... don't be talked out of it. After all, it's only about 60° over here ... Haven't received the sunglasses yet honey, but hope that I do very soon. Could have used them to great advantage yesterday. Did you mail them to me first class mail? If so, should see them in the next day or two.

And, don't worry about the stationery. I'm not saving your letters anymore anyhow, so it doesn't make any difference ... I thought that I had mentioned the dictionary but maybe I forgot it. I look at it every once in a while, and I do appreciate your having gotten it for me. It's just the right size and I can refer to it at any time ... And the folks mentioned something about my not having acknowledge the receipt of my cap... I received it about two days before we left England. Wore it two or three times only, but when the war is over and we start eh other way, I'll need the thing, so don't feel that it is just so much money wasted. I really wanted it. I'm glad that you liked the

inkwell; don't think Mother was so thrilled about it, so if you all decide that you want to swap something, OK. Or, if you really want it, I'll pick up something else for Mother. After all, I think is cost about a dollar only ...

Yes, I enjoyed the Tangos and Mounds too. Joe gave me a Clark bar just before chow, and Alden had Hershey last week. I'd like to have some of that country ham that you had at the Galyeans. Sounds pretty good. Wish that we could have some of that hot weather that you are having ... wish that I could have known that it was Karen's birthday. I would have sent her something from England. They had several things she would have liked. Expect that her Mother would have been as thrilled as much as Karen. I enjoyed the picture of all the girls very much. Made me think that tonight, if we were home, we'd be going on a picnic; wouldn't we, honey? OK, let's go. And here I am practically picnicking three times a day, seven days a week.

How is the gas holding out these days? Are you getting plenty? Or how do you manage? Maybe they have eased up on the gas situation. See by the paper that tires are easing up and that tubes aren't even rationed now.

Saw the "Uninvited Guest" the night before last. Enjoyed it very much ... except that the sound wasn't too good. Better now. I've still got my bathing suit with me. Haven't had any chance at all to go swimming but I'll just keep on hoping. May have some luck some day ...

OK. If you need a request, I'll send you one. Please send me a package with sardines in tomato sauce (chili), some cherries, and that chicken that we talked about earlier in the letter and a couple of flashlight batteries that you sent to me. Thank you very much. I would like to see the Courier Journal funnies, every one of them, but don't ever send them airmail again. I know how much the darned things cost. Oh, yes. Edna wrote that John is a Sgt now; Swell. Want to write him in the next few days to see if he is here too... I've run out of news. I've quit the game four times and I'm back in again. 'Spect that they'll clean me this time. It is late anyhow, so we won't play much longer. What a Saturday night. It's the first time since we left England that we've even realized that it was Saturday night. So I think I'd better quit. This letter has rambled on and the censor will get pretty tired working his way through it, but the Captain is pretty nice and will sort of just shake his head in disgust. So, hope to hear more from you tomorrow and the next day and so on, and here's hoping that the packages start catching up. I'm feeling much better since I got my glasses and doing very nicely other than that.

All my love,

Paul

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Somewhere in France  
21 July 1944

Dearest Kay, Mother and Dad –

I'm sitting here in my slit-trench in my pup tent tonight writing this letter instead of at the office, because I just wanted to get away from the office for a little while. I've been working evenings until 10:00 or 10:30 and being back again the next morning at 7:15; so it is just nice to be out for a little while, even if I do have to call a pup tent "home".

It's really been a busy three or four days since I last wrote to you. The first night I was out of the office for about three hours on one of our trips, but the rest of the time I've been right here in camp. Accordingly, with nothing to do, it makes it pretty hard to find something to write to you about.

The mail has been pretty good. I've had a letter or two, but better yet, I've had the package from Kay, one from Mother and Dad, and one from Kay's Mother. Thank you, everybody. Let's see. I don't even know for sure just what each individual package contained, but I do know that I got plenty. The most envied item in all was the onions that came from Ma Danner. You see, we have dehydrated onions here, and those Bermudas really filled the bill. Condie keeps me close at hand when there is a meal coming up and we are the envy of the whole bunch. Everybody wants a piece. (If I fail to acknowledge everything, don't think I don't appreciate it, it's just that I can't always remember quite so clearly as I should.) But there were sardines (swell), Vienna sausages, ham spread, Ritz crackers, bar candy, a can of apricots and I can't think of anything else. Oh yes, a can of Treet. We are able to space this food out now, for we are eating very, very well. The best since we left the good old U.S. We have a new mess Sgt. And he is doing a bang-up job.

I've finally finished "The Four of Hearts" and I'm about  $\frac{3}{4}$ 's of the way through "Enter the Saint". I've rigged me up a flashlight in my pup tent so that I go to sleep after relaxing over a book. By the way, Mother, please send me some batteries for the flashlight you sent to me. We can't get any here in France and I don't know how long it will be before we will be able to get anything. And Kay, may I have a pair of batteries for the little flashlight that you sent to me? I've used both lights quite a bit and the batteries are getting weak and I haven't any replacements. Guess I'll send to England for a blotter for my desk.

I had a letter from Fern and tell her that I'll get around to answering it one of these days. Mother, your figuring in your letter dated July 2<sup>nd</sup> was a little off. I'd suggest

that you sit down and try it all over again. And, while I think about it, we all enjoyed the articles by Ernie Pyle. Everyone has read them.

Hope you all are receiving your mail by now. I've written but I know there were only a few there for one period. Just don't have anything to say, and it gets awfully hard to write.

We celebrated the 4<sup>th</sup> here also. Guess I told you that part of the fellows was in town for a flag-raising celebration. The first American flag to be raised in France. I didn't get in it because I was out at one of the battalions working and just missed out. You may have seen it in the newsreels by now.

So my name was in "What's Cookin'"? Very good. Only you should have said in France. And I imagine that you had a pretty good idea that I was there. Yes, I knew that John was a Sgt now. Think it's swell. I think all of you are very scotch. Won't go to a show if it isn't a double feature. Huh! Just so it's a picture. We had a Leon Errol picture last night and we all enjoyed it – even it was corny. I think that I saw about 10 minutes of it for I was on duty and had to get the work done.

The weather is lousy again. I felt the rain coming two days ago and made preparations for it – Borrowed the Major's pup tent and put it together with mine so that I have four halves and, thereby, have the ends closed. Makes it pretty nice, and I wouldn't want to move back into a pyramidal tent and have to sleep on a cot again. What about it, Darling? Do you think that you can learn to sleep on the floor? Don't know what I'd do in a bed. That's too much to even think about, and this mud here is like goose grease.

Wish the folks would go ahead on their vacation. What the heck. They can't telephone me and I can't telephone them and I guess that they could stand it to let my letters lay in the mailbox for one week. Don't think that anything startling would happen.

I'm out of information and haven't anything else to write about so I'm going to call it a day and quit. Oh, yes. I guess I'd better request a package. Please send me a package with bar candy (no taffy) and cookies in it. No more cans for the present please. And no mints. And, I almost forgot. I received the sunglasses – in two pieces. Please send me another pair and pack them heavily and mail them Air-Mail. I need them badly. My GI glasses are swell. Bye now and I love you all.

Paul

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France  
2<sup>nd</sup> Aug. 1944

Dear Kay:

Well I'm in a much better frame of mind yesterday and today. Don't know just what has been wrong with me, but I've felt like hell and nothing has pleased me. I just simply couldn't get in a mood to write a letter and so I didn't write one. Hope everybody survived.

Haven't had any mail since the last note that I wrote to Kay. The mail is sort of slow and we sort of have to "sweat it out", but when the mail does come, then we have a regular field meet. The last mail I only had seven or eight letters, but one of the boys had twenty-two of them. Packages are slow again. Guess we can't always have an egg in our beer.

We have been both busy and slow. Things are very spasmodic here. We work like the very devil one day and turn out an honest day's work, and then the next day, we loaf practically the whole day. I'm usually sleepy right after lunch and nothing can keep me awake. In other words, I'm becoming a regular bum! I used to joke about retiring and letting Kay do all the work to support me, but anymore it isn't a joke. The more sleep a guy gets, the more he wants.

We still go to movies every other night and play poker on the opposite nights. I'm hoping that the poker game will stop. I'm just about even for last month (none of the money that I sent home was winnings) and I'm about 500 francs ahead this month, so I'm due for a big loss. Think we'll probably start playing free rum. Dad might like the poker game that we play, but I'm afraid Mother would sort of be out of place. Of course, we play dealer's choice, but we play for 5 and 10 francs (10¢ and 20¢). Some of the games around here are as heavy as 50 & 100 francs. Ouch!

We had a Red Cross show here about a week ago. And the USO shows are here, although it hasn't been shown to our particular unit as yet. Started to feed them yesterday, so think that we'll be seeing the show very shortly. We had a band concert last night which was pretty good. We now have an orchestra here in the 14<sup>th</sup> which is tops. It far surpasses the 12<sup>th</sup>'s orchestra. Anyhow, the keeping up of morale is playing an important factor in this war.



I've done a little more work on my tent. I've lengthened my slit trench just a little, so that it fits me more comfortably and I have to get in it in a hurry, as I did a while back. The standard dimensions for a slit trench is two feet long and two feet deep and the length of your body. But we all have ours nearer three feet deep and about 28 to 30 inches wide and long enough for all of our blankets and our helmets as well. I had to turn in the boss's extra blankets (not his doing) and was issued another one, so now I have three blankets to keep me warm. Most of the fellows sleep with their clothes on, but I usually sleep in my underwear and let the wool blankets scratch me as usual.

Of course, we're in the field. For a washstand, we use a cartridge case, which we found here. For a washbowl, we use our steel helmets. Works out pretty well. We have our drinking water in lister bags and go down to the stream for water to wash with, and we have brought in a large tank and have installed ourselves a shower. It only puts out cold water, but it really feels good on the days that the sun comes out and is nice and hot. If there is no sun then you don't take baths because you freeze you're a-- off, even when the sun is out. They are trying to hook up some method of having warm water showers now.

The food is still excellent. This is the best that I've ever had in the Army. Except for the time that I was in the kitchen and ate what I wanted and only if I wanted. We had steak three times last week and roast beef once. The new mess Sgt. is really on the well known ball. There is plenty of food and the quality is excellent. He's doing such a good job and we are praising him so, that one of the officers has taken to picking on him, just to keep him from getting cocky, I guess.

The newest item to ruin a man's life is chiggers – and fleas. You can say that a dog has fleas, but believe you me, we've got them too. We burned the grass in one of the office tents to burn out the fleas, but that doesn't help us any in our individual pup tents. We've used insect powder over everything, but that's just locking the barn after the horse is stolen.

I have just had a fresh orange to eat. Have had one once before. The previous time when we had oranges I managed to get hold of two extra, but I fed them to Condie and Gregg getting them over hangovers from drinking calvados. And that, by the way, is stout stuff. Haven't had any myself, but it is very powerful. It is distilled cider, which, according to Stars & Stripes is a mild form of Jersey lightning. They don't know from nothing.

I'm enclosing that money order that I told you I would be sending along last of the month and also one for the first of this month. Hope that you are getting them OK. And, by the way, send me some of those two-bit novels that you are holding up. We need them very badly. And please send me a package containing cookies and bar candy and mixed nuts. Put in anything else that looks and sounds good. Hope to have a letter from you tomorrow. And maybe a package before too long. Lots of love,  
Paul

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Somewhere in France  
26 August 1944

Dear Kay, Mother and Dad –

At last the silence is broken! We've moved inland. I am sorry that I haven't been able to write to you and let you know or warn you in advance that we would be moving, but that is not the Army's way. Our new location is a great deal better than our old one, it is quite a lot warmer here and the people are very friendly but, other than that, I can't tell you a thing. I did have a chance to visit the city near here the other day and it has hardly been hit at all, but I can't give you any more of a description at this time than that. Maybe later on.....because of the move we haven't had any mail for a few days. And, being on the move, we have not had the time to write. We had no facilities with which to do so, it rained most of the time during the move, and the rest of the time we did our best to get hold of souvenirs and drink all of the liquor that we could get hold of. (That wasn't very much.) I'm sending home a German helmet (Parachuter's) and a German gas mask. I'll have to find something to wrap them in, a box or something. We are sort of short of them right now. Being caught in the rain, most of our boxes went to pieces because they were left setting out in the open. Why didn't we put them under cover??? For the same reason we didn't get under cover ourselves – we didn't have the opportunity. Alden, Bill Bassett, Condie and I have our tents pitched in a little wooded area. This area reminds each one of us of home, and so we are calling it the Isle of US. We're making a bench and a washstand and making it just as livable as possible. Every little bit helps. Our food isn't as good here as it was before. We are eating C-rations because we can't get anything else where we are. I guess that we'll make out though. Right now, I'm

eating a piece of the French black bread and it is pretty good. I picked it up in one of the farmhouses.

The mail came in a while ago. I have a letter from Kay and a package that she mailed to me for my birthday back on June 10<sup>th</sup> and it has just now reached me. Seems to be in a very good condition, but haven't had a chance to try any of it yet. Also received a Stanolind Record. And, I still haven't written that letter to them at the office yet. Since I started this letter and got about halfway down the first page, I've made a trip to the battalions, ate dinner, been over to see the show that didn't materialize, and read my mail. I started this just four hours ago. And it is getting dark and time I was going to bed. There isn't anything that I can tell you anyhow, so don't feel bad. But I will get back in to the swing of letters again now that we are settled.

I've got to go, so thanks for the stamps, and for my birthday package. The book looks very good. Will enjoy reading them if I get to the tent in time to fix it up for reading. Bye now. As ever,

Paul

P.S. You probably want to know about our rations. Well, we were divided up into groups of five and were issued a combination of C & K rations. We cooked and ate in a group of five men and we (each group) had its own fire and cooked for ourselves. Thus, if we weren't hungry at one meal or if our group was working and wanted to eat ½ hour late, then we were able to still have all the food that we were entitled to. Later on we just had C rations. Those were heated for us, and when we came through the chow line, those were passed out to us hot. The only trouble was that the food didn't go far enough. Now we have B rations, which are dehydrated and canned fruits and vegetables and frozen and partially frozen meats. Yesterday's beef was the first beef that we have had since leaving England.

Paul

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France

28<sup>th</sup> August 1944

Dear Kay:

Well, a weekend is over and quite an enjoyable one at that. We were able to see more of the French people in the one day yesterday than we had been able to see in the two months we have been here. The weather is great and we have thoroughly enjoyed ourselves now that we have gotten ourselves settled, much more so than at our old location.

We came to work yesterday morning an hour later, being Sunday, which over here because of late sunrise, means 9:30, and finally managed to get our reports out around

noon. Had lunch, which was more C rations, plus dehydrated potatoes and went over to the railroad track to see the wrecked train that is on the siding. It's quite a sight. It is a freight train, about 40 cars, which was bombed and strafed by planes. It had been on this siding and apparently Americans had bombed it, although there were no direct hits. There were near misses, and pieces of shrapnel had pierced all the way through some of the steel on the cars – through wheels and rails and steel sides of cars. Must have been terrific. And then it had been strafed. Every single car was hit but the two oil cars. The damage was so bad that they had just left the train as is, and it still is just as is.

Anyhow, a small stove had been thrown off the train and Alden and I went over primarily to steal that stove. We took that back to camp with us and then went back to work. About a half hour late. Oh well ... then, about two I took a little walk to see what souvenirs I could find. Didn't find a one, but I ate blackberries and apples all of the way down the road and back. Stopped by a farm and wiped the sweat off and a girl came out of one of the houses and wanted to know if I wanted an apple. I said yes, and she came out and handed me one over the fence, and her Mother came out and handed me a couple more. About that time, I saw some tomatoes in the garden and I said that I wanted one of those, so they had me come in the yard and have a seat and the old man came out of the house and picked me eleven tomatoes. I gave them a pack of cigarettes and they in turn gave me some cider which the old man was very proud of. Got back to camp with the tomatoes about three, and when the boys saw them they wanted me to get some eggs too. So Tom and I started out again and went back to the farm and got another half dozen tomatoes and a half dozen carrots and a hat full of potatoes. Gave them three packs of cigs, a bar of GI candy, and a pack of gum. They were so delighted they opened up a couple more bottles of cider and brought out a rhubarb pie, and that needs describing. It was a poor crust, because of the ingredients available. Not too much flavor and tough. Anyhow they had cut the rhubarb in cross sections and had laid them on top of the crust one piece thick only. And then they had some sugar that some GI had left there, which they put on top. My piece was sour as hell, but I knew that sugar was very precious so I refused to take any more. We got back and I brought out a can of bacon which I had been hoarding and we had bacon and fried potatoes and tomatoes and French bread (made of whole flour). There was a show (stage show), which was very good, and all of the French people were invited to come and did. They seemed to enjoy it very much. So – we're back at work again today.

Hope that you sent me the money – there are now passes and furloughs which may be had anytime. So, I'm going to need some dough. And don't look for any money home

this month extra. I plan to spend it here. Too bad! Guess you'll make out. Maybe I will be able to go to Paris.

By the way, if you haven't sent those sunglasses yet, don't bother to do so. I've gotten by all summer without them and I don't think that I'll need them this fall. I mailed the German paratrooper helmet yesterday. It is only the outer helmet, the same as we have. I have to find a box to put the gas mask into, but I'll get it mailed in a couple of days.

The pennant enclosed in this letter (to Kay) is the same as our shoulder patches – a divisional emblem. This one is from the German 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. No value.

You might like to know also that all trains over here are GI and are run by GI's. The engines and cars are imported from the U.S. and since the Germans took everything that would roll with them, that is all there is. The roadbeds are being repaired one after the other, and so the freight is rolling. This roadbed by here is an excellent one.

We've always heard how the people and the stock all lived in the same house. Well, so far that hasn't been exactly true. All of the family sleep in one room. But, the stock all stay in the barn, or a built-on to the house stable. I'll admit it's pretty nice being an American though. Another thing, in England the people all wore drab colors, but over here the bright colors are the common thing. And lots of silk.

I saw the area where Jack Furnish was supposed to have been killed. I think that it is the worst thing I've ever seen. I'm just glad that I'm in a replacement depot and not in an infantry outfit.

I'm so sorry to hear about Mrs. Schiesz being sick. Hope that she's up and around long ago by now. I'll try to get a letter out, but I can't promise. Too busy doing nothing of any consequence.

Think that the show will be called off tonight because of rain. The weather has been grand, so we can't complain. Yesterday was really hot, and I did a lot of sweating on my walk. Expect it got as warm as 80°, today has been about 70°. That's good.

I don't know of anything to talk about. No mail today. Since I started this letter I've even made a trip to the post office with the mail clerk, but we came back empty handed for the second time today. Had a letter from Kay yesterday written on the 15<sup>th</sup>. It's about chow time now; they are feeding the early chow bunch now. So will have to quit and take off in a few minutes. Chow is important. Looking for a letter in

tomorrow's mail. 'Spect that you're looking in today's mail for something from me and being disappointed. You'll hear by this time next week. If the time ever arises again, and it will sometime, just sit tight and don't worry. It'll write as soon as possible.

As ever,  
Paul

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Somewhere in France  
2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1944

Dearest Family –

How time flies. Seems like I wrote to you yesterday, but I know that it was three or four days ago. And, of course, I was even too busy running around to write to my sweetie on our anniversary. I'm awful, but I'll make up for it.

Well, it has been a busy three days. Let's see. Thursday. We had a movie. And of course, that took up an evening. And on Thursday we started on B rations again. Good! We had roast pork. Mighty tasty. Think that it does us good once in a while to have to do without our good food so that we appreciate it more. And then too, we had a little snack after the show, which tasted mighty fine. Seems that all we do is talk about eating, or else doing the eating, doesn't it? Anyhow, that takes care of Thursday.

Friday was our wedding anniversary. And believe me, honey, I did think of it – plenty. And best of all, the mail started again, and I had two letters from you and one from the folks. That's not quite true either. The mail started the day before and I had your nice anniversary card. Pretty good timing, but to receive your letters, with the pictures in it, was really super. Thank you, darling, and thank you too, Mother and Dad.

Also, on Friday, and the reason I didn't write, one of the fellows and myself decided that we would try to take a break and see the city that is within driving distance of here. So, right after lunch, we started out and got ourselves a ride into higher headquarters, which is at the far edge of town. And then we got out and walked back to the Provost Marshall's office in town, for the PM used to be an officer here in our own organization, and we went to see him for official permission to visit his fair city. But we didn't have any luck, so we had to turn around and walk back to headquarters again. But, at least we did get to see a good portion of the main part of town by our four mile walk.

The town is quite old and the streets are very narrow. The people are quite a mixed crowd. You have well-dressed people with nice looking business suits on and pretty dresses, and then you have the tattered, dirty, and disheveled. We even got to see one trainload of children being brought back into the town, and don't think that we didn't get a hand waving by that group of kids. As is true in most towns, one church stands out among all the rest, towering huge and tall among the buildings. But this town has two of these, immense structures. One, the cathedral, is quite ornate on the exterior with tall, slim stone columns running up beside the building like a superstructure. I wish that I might describe it better than that but I can't. Couldn't get too close to it, for it was not on the direct path out of town. But I did notice that they even have a square named after Wilbur Wright. They have three or four large department stores, but there were MP's posted at the doors of each, and also were well distributed all over town. The store windows were interesting. The quality that was being shown was very poor. The prices were quite high for all wearing apparel, and it takes points to buy things, just the same as it did back in England.

Well, we got back to the edge of town, and the fellows wanted to go out to the 15<sup>th</sup>, so we started but weren't having very much luck, so I turned around and got back to camp at just 7 P.M. Had special reasons for rushing back, as I spent our anniversary with another woman. And it had been planned for two days, too!

Anyhow we were entertained with a USO show and the guest star that came to sign for us was Dinah Shore. No kiddin'. She was swell. Are you jealous, darling? What a sport. She had put on two shows in the afternoon, and our show was the third one for the day. But she was excellent ... and her voice is perfect. When she sings at a public appearance like that, she isn't as robust as she would seem. She has a delightful personality, and she was adored by all of the thousands of us that heard her. I was quite far back. If I had arrived from town sooner, I wouldn't have had a better seat for our seats were reserved (in the pasture), but just as I got there, the audience was told to fill up all vacant spots. So honey, our honeymoon was very nice.

Today we have had more mail. And some of this was some that we missed out on – some of that which is catching up to us. And I received a package with camera films and one with flashlight batteries. The fellows started to get the packages that have been delayed so maybe I'll get mine tomorrow, or the next day.

Tomorrow will be a busy day. We are moving into pyramidal tents. Will be much colder for us than in the pup tents. We will still sleep on the ground. I've become attached to my pup tent. When I get home, guess I'll just bivouac in the backyard and

move into it. I don't think that I could be comfortable any other way. Oh, me!  
Wouldn't a soft feather-bed feel good now.

I think that I've gotten most of my mail caught up. I still owe the Steinmetz' a letter, but think that everyone else is paid off. Wrote to Gladys and EW, and had written to the Galyeans just a short time ago, so the letter that I received from them today will go unanswered. Wrote to the Schiesz', Williams' and to the boys in Anderson. Anyone else? Don't want to hurt anyone's feelings. I'm out of things to write about, so I'm calling it a day and quitting. End of page, better quit fast. Bye, as ever,

Paul

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Somewhere in France

3 September, 1944

Dear Mother, Dad, and Kay –

Dad gets the head of the class this time, because it is his birthday today. Happy Birthday, Dad. Wish that I could be there to have some of the fried chicken with you, for I know that that is what you are having. I can see it now – fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, corn on the cob if it isn't too late in the season, combination salad, and angel food cake and ice cream. And iced tea – with real ice in it. Haven't seen ice since we left you. Boy, oh boy! That menu sure sounds good; my mouth is watering.

We aren't doing badly at all on food, though. Today at noon we had steak and potatoes, peas, white bread and butter, with pineapple for dessert. And, of course, coffee. Tonight, from the smell of things, we are going to have meat loaf, and it smells scrumptious.

After reading the letters from you, I realized that I failed to tell you the outcome of my commission deal. Hadn't intended to keep you in the dark, but anyhow I decided the next day against it. That I was pretty sure I would be kept over here longer than I would have been otherwise, so I said to heck with it. No – Kay couldn't have come over here. So we would have been apart just that much longer. If it would have been possible for her to come over here then that would have been for us and I would have jumped at the chance. Things in the Army just don't work that way.

As I told you, this afternoon we are moving into the large tents. I'm living with the "big boys" in our office, one a Master Sgt. (Condie), one a Tech Sgt. (Tom), and one a staff Sgt. (Jim Rio). Guess that I'll be doing the chores of our tent. But they are all swell fellows and we'll get along OK. We have ourselves, the four of us, two German double beds which are made of wood. (Double-deckers.) We have cut them in two

and each that way have the frame for a bed. We are using canvas or burlap, according to what one can lay hands on, and will suspend it from side to side and thus make ourselves a nice soft bed.

There will only be the four in our tent. Will make it pretty nice for us. We are taking the stove that we found and will still be able to do a little bit of cooking for late snacks. I've gotten a pair of carriage lamps out of the German train which are made for candles and we will take them along and, thus, have a light in our tent. Capt. Merritt is using one of them in his tent, and when we were in pup tents I could use a flashlight, but here the top is too high.

No, Mother, you're not doing so well on your guessing. All of that where you are guessing is British territory. We are only in our own sector. But then, of course, we are not there anymore anyhow. And, by the way, they say that we'll have two bronze stars to wear on our service ribbon when we get back home. Of course, that doesn't bring us any extra dough, so it doesn't amount to much, except that we sort of keep even with the medals of the air-corps. Gee, don't I pick on the air-corps?

By the way, the paper that this letter is written on is some that was captured from the Germans. I wrote to several of our friends and to the w. Lebanon relatives on it, so that I had sent them a souvenir.

The weather is dry here today, for a change. The rainy season is getting started and we're in for not too good a time. Yesterday, it blew very badly. Almost blew our office tents down. And some rain, but not much chance to dry things out. It's gotten much colder, and last night I put on a wool undershirt and still was not too warm. I've had the wool undershirt on all day today, plus a field jacket, and unless I'm out in the direct sun, I'm just comfortable. Wish that we had a little of your heat over here. It would be gladly received.

Dear – concerning those pictures. Everyone thinks they are grand – even many say that they are the best that they have ever seen taken indoors. But, on the table in front of you, and us, is a bottle of Paul Jones and a bottle of Three Feathers. Golly ... everyone claims that it's not fair to torment us in such fashion. The censor will probably underscore that for he was of the same opinion.

You tell Millie anytime, that is if she isn't prejudiced against writing to married men. I enjoyed the last note from her. And you tell her, quote: "All of the GI's around here are old married men that are planning on staying here in the Army of Occupation so that they won't have to go back to their wives. But just as soon as I can find an

eligible bachelor, I'll hogtie him for you and send him to you parcel post – collect, and you can have him. How will that be?"

The canned peanuts from Mother weren't too good. They hadn't stayed fresh, but those from the Galyeans were perfect. Don't know why the difference. In fact, the ones from the Galyeans were the only ones that came through fresh. Everything else has always been fine. Usually, the cracker boxers have the paper torn off by the time they reach here and they aren't as fresh as they might be. And I haven't seen the second pair of dark glasses as yet, maybe soon.

The afternoon mail is in but no mail from you. Some of the others were in luck, but I didn't do so well. So, I've nothing else to write about anyhow. Was just holding this open until it came. So, guess I'll quit and get ready to move into the big tent. Remember, if at any time you don't receive mail for several days, just don't worry, for I'll probably be too busy to write or unable to use a typewriter. The pasture is full of French men and women who want to see what is going on in an Army camp. So, I'll quit and write again as soon as possible.

As ever,  
Paul

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Somewhere in France  
9 September 1944

Dearest Kay, Mother and Dad –

Well, I think that it has been about six days since I wrote to you. There's nothing new and different – we've just had busy days and had lots of entertainment this week and, of course, we can't miss a thing. We've had three movies this week and a USO show and a Special Service show. A full week. I thought that I'd be able to get a letter out after the shows, but I've worked part of the time and put some of my things in order in the tent and last night we had a little poker game. Had one other session since payday but it only lasted an hour. And I lost 100 francs. But last night the boys wouldn't let me quit and we had to play until Gregg gave up at 1:00 A.M. It seems that I ended up with the money for a change, and so I have about 1250 extra francs to go on. Hope that I don't lose it all before I have a chance to spend it.

We haven't had much mail this week. I had the little package with the two Kodak films in it, and the package from Mother and Dad that also had one in it. The food tasted swell. And then, I've had another package from the folks dated July 28<sup>th</sup>. The first one was dated a week before, I think. Everything came through in swell order. Even the cookies were fresh this time. The devil's food cake ones tasted mighty fine.

And the cookies in the fancy package were all fresh. Thank you one and all. Oh, Oh! One of those packages was from Kay. Damn! Wish I could remember things.

I've been working hard all week. I got sort of worried about my work, so, darn it, I sat down and worked it out. And, by golly, I've finally completed it and I'm up-to-date again. Now all I've got to do is check a few dozen rosters and write six or seven letters. I'll get that done tomorrow. I'm CQ again tonight. Wasn't supposed to be on until Monday, but I changed with Gregg and he didn't mind.

The weather here isn't too good. That's either a mild exaggeration or a gross understatement. It rains every other hour for a few minutes, and then the sun comes out for about five minutes, but there's no warmth to it, and then it clouds up again and blows until it rains again. Day and night. And it is getting so much colder. They have issued us another blanket and I've got my bunk to sleep in so I'm not so bad off, except that it's still cold, even off the ground. Some of the boys are doing it the hard way due to circumstances beyond their control, but hope they come out OK. I've got a cold and have been doing some sneezing tonight. Won't have too good a night for I'll have to sleep on that hard table tonight. Still beats sleeping on the ground.

I should also add that I received some funny papers from you both that were mailed back in July. Also that I got my pencil back from the manufacturer and it works swell. Cost me \$1.69.

I don't think that there's anything else I've got to say. When you work and don't play, you don't have much to say. I won't get to write to you again until Wednesday because I've got some special details to take care of. So don't worry about me.

That reminds me. Have you seen the point system for bringing the troops home again? Don't count on me for Christmas dinner. We won't make it – outside of a miracle. But I'll try to make it for Kay's birthday. Hope that will substitute just as well. Can't even guarantee that. Oh well. Unless Bill Miler is just plain lucky, he'll see the inside of Germany for a long time or else will visit the South Pacific. Hope to hear from you tomorrow. It has been a week now. As ever, Paul

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Somewhere in France  
Friday night 15 Sept 1944

Dearest Family –

What a week! Things certainly have been rushing. Don't think that I've been so busy since we left England. I haven't stopped to catch my breath.

Of course, I wrote to you Sunday night. Then, on Monday morning, I pitched in and tried to get as much work done as I possibly could before I left here at lunch time on my special assignment. And then, I didn't get back here until after supper on Tuesday night and was so tired I could hardly make the grade. Had letters from all of you, and I even went to bed without opening my mail. Got up Wednesday morning and back to the office and finally, during lunch hour, managed to sandwich in the reading of my mail. I planned to write to you then Wednesday night, but I had to work to try and get my work back up-to-date again and yesterday, Thursday, was no better. But I was so tired that as soon as supper was over, I went right on to bed. Rushed all day today, and tonight I have things under control. Came in after supper to start my letter (about 7PM) and let Joe go to the show and then I had to receive and open mail, which I have been doing for the last hour and a half. Sure keeps me going.

Well, I spent \$20.00. Whee! Sure had a good time. I saw a lot of things and did a lot more. Things are beautiful over here. And believe it or not, I'd like to live here. If I had Kay here and could live in the capital I'd even like to stay for the Army of Occupation. How would you like that honey? The town is beautiful. I like it better than I do New York, and there's no comparison as far as London is concerned. I had some very good food in civilian restaurants, as well as excellent food in a GI restaurant. Yes, the Army has taken over hotels and restaurants. The hotels are wonderful, and the food, although GI, is prepared by French cooks, and they serve it to you at the table on china, just like you were in civilian life. Boy, oh boy! We even ate with some WAC's. And on Monday evening, I managed to get lost. It was after dark. Had it tough. But then, I managed to run into a night club and there I spent the rest of the night, practically. Just drank and drank Black and White scotch and soda. Boy! Was that good. And earlier in the evening, we had had ham and cheese sandwiches on whole wheat bread and real beer. Tasted just like Budweiser. Be sure and have some of that on ice whenever I manage to get home. But then, that will be a long time yet.

Christmas is early this year. I've purchased my presents for Kay and Mother and know what I'm going to get Dad, just as soon as they are released for sale. But as to Kay and Mother – I want you to open your presents just as soon as they get there. I know that will ruin it for Christmas, but I want to know that they came through to you in excellent shape. They're just a little fragile, so I'm sort of worried. Dad's will come through by slow freight, but it will be there before Christmas. And when it does get there, you'd better make use of what you get while the contents are good. Have to figure out the wordings here so that no one knows what they're getting. Have to have some fun in Christmas packages.

It's now an hour later. Dammit! I just can't get this letter out. Too many interruptions. As you may have guessed, I'm not allowed still to tell you where I am or to mention any towns. So ... there isn't a lot in this letter, but I haven't tried even to answer all or any of your questions. I just want to get this out and go home and get out of this mad house office. Too busy for me.

And, darling, think very strongly about this business of coming to Europe. I haven't said much but will later. However, how would you like to come over here after the war is over, if I am unfortunate enough to have to stay? The government would pay all of the transportation; you could bring the car, all of the furniture and dishes, etc. Then, whenever we might be allowed to return home, we'd sell the car over here and all of the other items that we would like to leave (furniture, etc.) and buy new when we got home. And being in the Army of Occupation we would be able to go just about everywhere and see everything. And I would like to know your reaction before such a question should be brought up to me by the Army. Of course, I'd have to get another stripe before that could take place. But we'll let that pass for the present. Think it over. I'm tired, so I'll write more to you tomorrow. All of my love to you all. As ever, Paul.

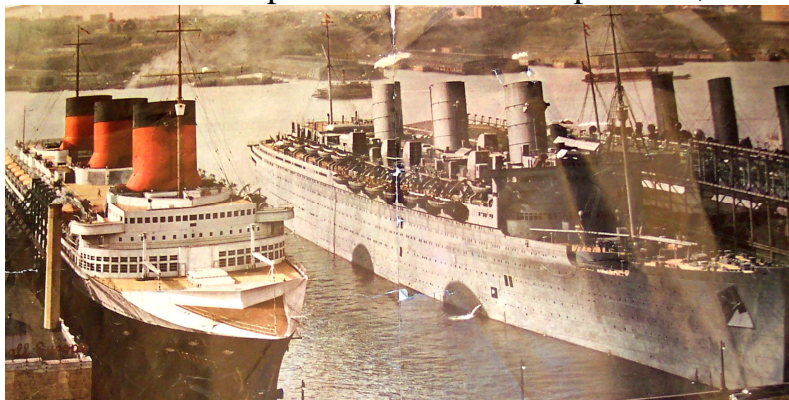
P.S. I bought some film for the camera over here, but haven't been able to get any developed yet.

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Somewhere in France  
21 September 1944

Dearest Kay –

Well, at last the story can be told. Everyone has wanted to know just how it all was and, at last, the censorship has been lifted enough so that we can mention things, places, and locations. So, inasmuch as everyone has wanted to know just what happened from someone that they actually know and not from the accounts of some war correspondent who is a little apt to dramatize the operation, here goes.



As you know, we left the States and sailed to the United Kingdom on the Queen of the Fleet. She's a grand ship and is huge. We were very fortunate inasmuch as our particular outfit was stationed up on the main deck. Others were as low down as E deck and, believe me, they had no picnic, for I was down there in the hold on occasions being on MP duty, and it was hot and steaming and smelling of a lot of dirty human beings who washed maybe once on the crossing from the States. But our quarters were very comfortable, considering what others had. We were in what used to be the main salon in the forward section of main deck. It is a space approximately 50 feet long by 85 feet across and they had hung the standard bunks from huge pipes that stuck up out of the floor in depths of three and four tiers. In this section we managed to cram about two hundred persons. In our own particular corner, we had an area which was 8 by 11 and in this square we had nine of us, together with all of our equipment, plus the typewriter and paper that I carried to take care of emergencies. A trip never to be forgotten.

We loaded aboard ship late at night. The ship was almost full when we came aboard. It seems that they first ones aboard were in the hold and that they had worked up, thus saving a lot of confusion of men and officers in the corridors. We were all dead tired for we had left the marshalling area at dusk and loaded aboard train and come down to the dock. And then dragged all our gear from the train onto the ferry and so across the Hudson River and into the ferry slip just beyond the Queen. And then, we did some more dragging from there all the way through the big municipal pier and up the two flights of stairs and onto the ship. We had to pause once or twice as they checked troops and rechecked troops and, while we were waiting, we came into our first contact with the American Red Cross. They fed us coffee and doughnuts, and they were most welcomely received by all. Everyone, including the officers, was exhausted. And when we got on the ship and quartered, we just dropped and slept.

The portholes were closed and we had been warned not to open them, so very first thing in the morning everyone was betting whether we were or were not in port, or whether we had sailed during the night. But, we were still tied up, and at 11:20 the lines were cast off, and at noon sharp the whistle blew and we pulled out into the river and left the US behind. Everyone did their best to try and see what was going on. I was fortunate to have a place next to the railing on the side next to the pier and so got to see New York City as we pulled out. It looked beautiful and there was a catch in many a throat as we wondered how long it might be before we would be back. I didn't get to tell the lady goodbye, for the boat passed her on the other side, and I finally gave up my spot so that someone else might get a final farewell look at home.

Nothing much happened aboard ship that first day. We were issued our badges – a tin badge bearing numbers one through five – which told at what sitting you ate, and in three colors – white on black, which stood for the white area in the center of the ship; blue on white, which was the blue area and the back of the ship; and white on red, which was the forward portion of the ship. The white area could go anywhere in the boat. The red area could go as far back as the blue, and the blue area was only allowed as far forward as the red area, so that the troops were distributed all over the boat at all times.



The morning of the second day, we had boat drill. At the sounding of the claxon horns, everyone was required to go up on deck and, at the multiple blowing of the horns, which signified an attack, everyone went back below again. It was nice to be on deck – those of us who were able to make it. The sea was pretty rough. Even then, an occasional wave would go over the ship, but having boarded her at night we didn't think much about it. The air smelled clean and fresh and invigorating, especially after being down in the mess hall, but I'll tell more about that later. However, some of us couldn't quite make the grade. We had one corporal with us from Terre Haute, Indiana by the name of Gene Armstrong. He was so-o-o-o sick. All he could do was lay there in bed, manage to get up and heave, and fall back in bed. Being in the bow of the ship we got all the up and down movement as the ship nosed through each wave and, also, the swaying as we changed direction every seven minutes.

Most pathetic sight on the trip was the MP's that had been posted. The first two days most everyone was sick, including those guards. Most of them guarding corridors where the officers and nurses were quartered lay on the floors and vomited and didn't care if you went through there or not. Of course, as they got their sea legs the situation became much better. But it's hell when you're sick as a dog and have to go on duty anyhow.

The main difficulty with the trip was the food. Being an English ship it catered to the officers, as they do in the British Army and Navy. We ate in the Grand Dining Salon and the officers ate in the smaller tourist dining room, but they had tables and chairs and we had benches. We ate out of our mess kits, which I had grown used to back in the 12<sup>th</sup>, but the officers ate off dishes and had tablecloths on the tables. The main

trouble with our mess hall was the odor. Being on C deck and being rough weather, they had no opportunity to air the place out, and the air conditioning was insufficient to handle the stale air. We had weak stomachs anyway, and that odor really fixed us up. And then we were served in true British style – kidney stew and fish for breakfast and very poor coffee. I may have not really liked coffee before, but at that time I missed it just as badly as anyone else. One morning we had an orange apiece. Many new faces showed up to get one of those. Before the trip ended, one GI had sold his orange for \$5.00.

Many of us refused to go to the mess hall after the third day. But we went down in the hold to see if anyone else had any food. On the fifth day the crew started selling to the fellows on the side. They got a quarter for a Spam sandwich or whatever kind of meat they had. Two of the fellows managed to get a steak for \$2.00 and got their money's worth, but I didn't hear about it until too late. By the time I got there, 20 pieces of French-fried potatoes were selling for a dollar. The last day aboard ship, I had a wonderful roast veal sandwich and some browned potatoes, which cost me 50¢. Well worth it. I managed until we got ashore.

We made the crossing in six days. It was a rough crossing for we had dodged back and forth hitting storms all the way. They hadn't used the stabilizer because that would give away the location of our ship to enemy submarines. The only time we had had the radio on was at 8PM each night to listen to the British Broadcasting Company give us the news. And Scotland was a welcome sight. Col. Armstrong, our Executive Officer at that time, had been the troop commander aboard this great ship before he joined our outfit, and we carried a lot of weight and got a lot of favors on that trip. Accordingly, when the first passengers went ashore, (nurses, by the way), fifty of our fellows went along as porters. It felt wonderful to get our feet on solid land again. And, first thing, the Scottish bagpipes paraded for us and then a Scottish Highlander band. And the Red Cross was there, too, with more coffee and doughnuts and pretty American girls. We had brought some of their girls over on our ship, too. But we had a grand time, and then we all came ashore for good the next day. We lugged all of our equipment again and cursed ourselves again and again for not having discarded more junk. We got on our first British train, and it was fine. It was much better than we had expected, having been moved in the States in the oldest, most dilapidated coaches the railroads have. But, these were modern in every respect, and we were very comfortable, for they put only three to every pair of seats instead of four, as in the States.

During the trip we stopped at a station for ten minutes and the Red Cross was on hand again with coffee and then, in the middle of the night, we landed at Beeston Castle.

Trucks were there to transport us to Oulton Park, which was our home for three weeks. We got there about three in the morning, but they were waiting for us, and we received a hot dinner before going to bed. It was there that we found out about NAFFI's and the GI movies. What a God-send those are. We were stationed about 25 miles outside of Chester, which was just an hour's ride from Liverpool, although I had no pass for there. But I ran into several of my officers who didn't have any passes either, so I wasn't too worried. I believe Chester is the loveliest place in England. I've written quite a lot on Chester right after we had been there and before the censors cracked down and we couldn't mention any towns outside of London. There were a good many times when you asked questions that I wasn't able to answer directly, and so I had to answer through something else. I remember one boy wrote that he wanted some Bristol-Meyers products, trying to tell that he was near Bristol, so the censor cut out the word Bristol, and his wife got the idea anyway, because of the one missing word.

While we were at Oulton Park, the CO hiked the company around England to see the various places of interest and, to him; the interesting places were the two castles in the vicinity. One was fourteen miles away, and the other two miles further. So, the company hiked to those locations. I was on duty the whole time that we were there, both in the office and making trips into Chester to buy things for the office and individuals. The day after everyone went to Beeston Castle, I had a letter from Amos Beeson, asking about an old castle that had been passed down from his early ancestors. And that was it. I was unable to secure a description at that time and later I tried to get a copy of a book that had been published, but I had an answer last week from the publisher that there were no copies obtainable.

From there we shipped to Yeovil, which is located 25 miles south of Bristol. Yeovil was more or less a boomtown, but the townspeople were very cold towards us and we couldn't blame them, for there were an awfully lot of them there. But we went to see all of the shows (three in town and one on the post) and had a pretty good time. We stripped down and got ready for D-Day and lived first in large tents and then in put tents to toughen us up and had an outdoor mess and so on. When D-Day arrived, it didn't mean much to us. We did a little cheering and wrote letters home trying to tell you that we were OK and not to worry and that we didn't know as much as you did at home about what was going on. Other than that, everything was routine.

When we had our orders to pack up, I remained on duty twenty-four hours a day. The only time that I had off was to clean up and eat. I lived by that telephone. And after waiting for what seemed days, we were called and told to be ready to board a train in less than three hours. That was at 12:30 at night but we made it, naturally, with time

to spare and arrived in the marshalling area the next morning at Southampton, rather, near to there. We spent one night there and then we were motored to Southampton and loaded upon a small ship and sat in the harbor for three nights. Several of us, thinking that we were smart, put most of our things on the truck with our office supplies. All that I had with me was my raincoat, a change of underwear, and the issue of K ration. Then, our trucks didn't come with us. We were to wear our impregnated clothing over our OD's but mine was on the truck and I had to borrow a suit of fatigues from someone. And, then when we came ashore at Omaha Beach on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June, we really needed our things.

Omaha Beach was all that Ernie Pyle said it was. Even that long afterward, land mines and antipersonnel mines were still being exploded. Wrecked boats were strewn along the beaches. And the fellows that landed and took that beach far more than earned any credit that might be given them, for that bluff was torture to walk up on the road that the engineers had cut, let alone climb up the steep sides and fight your way through too. We left our equipment on the beach and climbed to the top of the bluff and marched a mile inland, and there we spent our first night in France.

No one had any blankets or shelter that first night. We would lay down on the damp, cold ground and sleep, if we could, for a half or three-quarters of an hour and then get up and walk and try and get warm; and if we had a cigarette, we had to bury it under a raincoat so that no light would show through. The second day we moved on to Formigny, and all the duffle bags arrived there; that is, all of those that had been carried. Mine was on the truck, of course, so I froze a second night. We three enlisted men and two officers were miserable. If we could have just built a fire to keep warm - ---. But this was warm. Two days later we moved to Trevieres, which is between St. Lo and Bayeau. We stayed there for a long time. That was our first permanent camp, and it really became home to us after a short time. Six days later we got our trucks and clean clothes and blankets. And just in time, too, for it began to rain.

We stayed here two months and then came over where we are now. I can't tell you where we are or where we are near, but we are far, far behind enemy lines. The people are nice and friendly and we have a lot of fun trying to understand them, what little we get to be among them. Our local city has now been placed on limits and the whole bunch of us are going for a visit Saturday afternoon.

While in England I managed to get one 24-hour pass to London, which was a feat – if you can find Yeovil on the map, you'll readily appreciate. I saw everything that could be crammed into one day and traveled both ways at night. But the highlight to-date was the one day that I had in Paris. I wrote you all about it, but failed to show the

dates and the name of the town. Things were doing, but I'd like to go back again before I come back from this war and sometime again before I die, but the next time with Kay. I could be very happy living there, if I could speak French.

I think this just about ends this letter except to say that Cy is in Holland, I think. Wish that I were with him. May be I'll get to see him somewhere.



Fleck,  
Appleby,  
Lewis, and  
Routzahn

I know that I'll not get any writing done until tomorrow night, and so I'll send this much on to you so that you'll know that I haven't forgotten you. I'll manage to add as much as I can in the next letter. I'm enclosing some pictures that we managed to get among the several of us, they were taken in France. I hope that you like them. I'm also sending you some postcards. Pass them around so that everyone gets to see them.

Hoping for an early return to the US.

As ever,  
Paul

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Somewhere in France  
24 September 1944  
Sunday Night 8:15

Dearest Family –

I had intended to write you individual letters tonight in longhand and do my writing up in the tent. But, as things would have it, just as I got started writing to Kay, I heard a movie beginning down at the outdoor theatre, and I went to it. I don't mind missing stage shows, but I refuse to miss a movie. And then, darn it, I had already seen it when it was here before. It was "A Coffin for Demetrious". A good show. And so, I'm back over here writing this one to you via the typewriter. It does a better job anyhow, because I put the new ribbon on this afternoon.

We had a mighty fancy supper tonight. Roast turkey, mashed potatoes, giblet gravy, corn, and chocolate cake. Very good. Enjoyed it lots and lots. And then, we had a game of volleyball afterward.

It's sort of been betwixt and between as far as weather is concerned. It's nice most of the time, but it blows an awfully lot again, and we are having quite a little rain. You never know just what to expect in the next hour. But one thing that we are sure about is that it is definitely getting colder. I'm going to put my long johns back on again tonight, and I'll have my overcoat laying over me on the bed, so I think that I'll manage to keep warm. It seems to not be blowing too hard right now, so it isn't so bad watching the show. But when that wind blows, it really goes right through you. Don't know if I told you that we moved the show out into the open since the change in time here and, accordingly, lots more people can see it. We have a stage that we can move with us whenever we move, so we are always prepared.

Yesterday afternoon four of us managed to take off and go to town. And we had one whale of a time. I think that I had more fun than when I was in Paris; mainly because there was a group together. We had some beer. But maybe I'd better begin at the beginning. First, we got a ride from camp into town. They let us out in the middle of the town and, first thing, we tried to find a store to fix John black stone's watch. They have jewelers over here that give 24-hour service, and so we finally found one. But he didn't have the parts to fix it, so John is writing back to the States to have the parts air-mailed to him. Back in the UK, it took three weeks just to get a crystal put in your watch. Anyhow, we saw some cocktail forks in the window, which sold for 200 francs for a set of 12. And they were solid silver too. But, of course, there was a catch to it. To be able to purchase them, you had to furnish an equal or greater amount of silver to replace what would be taken out of the country. Or without the exchange silver they wanted four-hundred francs, or eight dollars. Way too much. So we didn't buy. And again, for your information, a franc is worth approximately two cents. Actually, when I cashed that \$20.00 money order I received 991 francs. Well, I've just had a half-hour interruption. The Captain came in and talked. So, where were we.....?

We wandered on up to the main square of town and found the French ten-cent store. Can't say that it is much different than one at home, except that the signs all read in francs instead of cents. They have almost anything that you could ask for for sale. I bought myself five wooden coat hangers for the four uniforms that I have and for my overcoat and proceeded to carry them around all the rest of the afternoon. So then, we wandered on up to one of the large department stores and went through it. Very nice. It was four stories high and opened on a central court, so that every floor received some light from the skylight in the middle. Things were terrifically high though and we didn't buy a darned thing there. Came out of there and found ourselves a beer joint, and the beer was pretty good. That I had in Paris was better, however. As we

came out of the bar we found a perfume shop just across the street and we had to go look that place over. (I hope these carbons are readable. Just found another one curling.) So I bought Kay a small-sized lipstick, which I'm sure you'll like very much. Probably buy the same color at the same price in the same size at Ayres for 50¢, but this came from France and is a different manufacturer and it's a souvenir. I had two films that I wanted to get developed, and there is a place in the town that develops film. I found the place and left them and will get them in about ten days. Also bought two more films; maybe you'll get your picture after all. Tried to find Christmas cards, but couldn't find any. Too early. I'd like to send just a few.

We set out to find the cathedral, which is on the other side of town. On the way, we saw a window that had some pins of the various French regiments, so we all traipsed in and bought a couple each. Those are in the mail also. (Sorry, Ma, everything this trip is for Kay.) We went through the center of town and Bill Bullock was looking for a place that he and Alden Cole had purchased a piece of printed lace the day before. Finally found it. And I sort of took a liking to the stuff. So, my darling, in the mail with the same packages (two of them) you have approximately 10 yards of printed lace to make a formal, if 10 yards will do it. It will have to be pretty full, but then you can see for yourself for I am mailing it first-class registered, and it will reach you in a couple of weeks. And I want it understood that this is your main Christmas present. I don't know if you and Mother received the other presents that I sent to you or not. Pretty sure that Dad hasn't received his yet, for his came parcel post. But the package I sent to Mother is her Christmas present, and these things that I've sent now constitute yours. This is a very dark lace, a netting, that looks neutral and there is probably a cream colored rose in it in an intricate design. I think that it will make a beautiful formal, but if you want to use it for something else that you'd like better, that is up to you.

To get on to the letter. We had a lot of fun talking to the three girls in the shop. They were awfully nice, and we all bought something before we left. And then, we went down and saw this huge Cathedral that stands high in the air, towering over everything else in the city. I've noticed one similarity in Mexico City and London and here. They all have a catholic church that is a massive affair and they all look very much alike. This one is in the best condition of the three. The one in Mexico City had a dirt floor, the one in London, a floor that had been worn very uneven, yet this one is almost as old as the other two. Whereas the other two have no distinguishing marks around them, this one stands high on a bluff overlooking everything, and being very large as well, the whole thing looks immense. On the lawn next to the church, there is a clock on the bank, which is all in flowers and has the numbers 3-6-9-12 in colored plants, and the clock has hands, which work the same as any other clock. In other

words it is not an hourglass or sundial. From there, we headed back to try to find the new Red Cross. But, before we got that far we had to pass the lace store again and found some things in one of the windows that we hadn't seen before. So, back in we went. Joe Schreibeis wanted a little lace dress for his daughter, and they were lovely. So I bought one for Karen for a Christmas present too. Thought that if you liked, you could give it to her from the two of us, if you didn't decide to keep it for some future date for your own daughter. It cost me 230 francs (\$4.60). And we fooled around for awhile and saw slips and things and tried to get the salesgirls to model them for us, which they wouldn't do except over their smocks, and we eventually found some real lace blouses. John bought a pink one that was sort of nice, but I didn't like it too much. But, I did find one that is as delicate as a spider web that I think you'll adore. You'll remember that when your anniversary came around, I wasn't able to get to town to buy anything, and I told you whenever I did, you'd get your present. Well, it's in the mail to you also, my darling, and I hope that you'll enjoy it. It probably would make a beautiful blouse for a dinner dress, but I'm going to let you do what you wish on this one. And, in case you want to know, it cost 508 francs (\$10.16). And the lace cost 774 francs (\$15.58). So you'd better like everything that I sent you. Boo!

Went to the Red Cross and had doughnuts and coffee. And then started home. Wanted to get some dinner, but we were just a little leery about eating because we had been forbidden to eat in restaurants. Anyhow, just as we got about out of town, I spotted a nice looking French restaurant, and it was nice. You don't order by menu but, as in New Orleans, you take what they bring. So we had an entrée of a plate full of tomatoes, cucumbers, and cooked beets with French dressing on them, and the next course we had salami. And they brought us bread at this time too. Then, the main course was beef steak smothered in noodles. Talk about melting in your mouth, it was delicious. And we had endive with some kind of oil on it for salad. They were out of wine, so we had to drink their lemonade, which is lousy. And for dessert, we had two peaches. We would have liked to have had another helping of the same for dessert, but you can't have everything. Including the tip, it cost us 100 francs apiece (\$2.00). We were all very well satisfied. And then we walked back to camp. We were worn out when we got there.

Nothing new today except that I had my voting ballot, and have returned it. Voted straight Republican with one exception being Louis Ludlow. Does that suit you, Dad? I'll have to answer the mail from you in some other letter, for it is 10:15 now, and we have to get up at 6:15. Lots of love to you all.

Paul

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Somewhere in France  
16 October 1944

Dearest Family –

Things are definitely on the mend. I received letters from you all yesterday and today. A card from Mother, a letter from Dad and one from Mother, both on the 8<sup>th</sup>, a letter from Mother written on the 9<sup>th</sup>, and letters from Kay dated the 15<sup>th</sup> of September, the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28, 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup>. All yesterday and today. And a package that I don't know just whom it's from, for the writing was all washed off. It had a bottle of stuffed olives (good) a big box of mixed nuts (also good), and a box of very nice-looking candy, fancy stuff, only the package had been damaged on the way (water-soaked) and they were ruined. But thank someone and then let me know just who it was that sent them.

Since I wrote to you the cold has been extremely worse, and in turn, is now much better. I still sniffle a lot (instead of blowing) and do some coughing; but I feel OK again. I've been going to bed early every night. Two nights I've been in bed before 7 and the other nights I've been in bed by 9, with the exception of night before last when there was an unexpected show and I didn't get into bed until 10:00. It's just a little gloomy in our tents now, because we don't have our electric lights anymore. The special service battalion left us and took their generator with them, so now we're just the same as anyone else. Was grand while it lasted though. So last night we built a big fire and sat around in the tent and read by flashlight. When I come home I'll either be afraid of lights or else I'll be burning every light in the place all the time.

No, we haven't had any snow here yet. Not quite that cold. But it has rained a lot the last few days, and yesterday it never stopped for about twelve hours and then only for a few minutes. In the last 72 hours it's rained about 60. So you can imagine how wet it must be. We go around in mud to get to our tent that is ankle deep. So, when we get to our tent, it's just too much work to go out unless there is something definite to be done. So last night, we got our clothes all dried out but we couldn't get rid of the mud. Think that we'll try it again tonight. There's a show scheduled but I can hardly hope that the rain will stop long enough for the show.

Thanks for the stripes. I'll get them sewed on my uniforms as soon as they come back from my laundress. If they get back with all this rain. I want to trade overcoats first, so I won't sew them on that until I get a size 40 coat. My other uniforms are OK though. Not as nice as I got back at Ft. Harrison, but then, those were wonderful shirts and trousers that I got there.

Glad Ma Danner got her contract. How will this continuation of the war affect the manufacture of cars? Will it hold it up quite a bit? I think maybe I should have taken a commission job with the company, and then I'd still be a civilian too. On the other hand, I don't think that I'd have liked to stay behind.

Hope that the "Green Hornet" got the kids to Carlisle OK. Gee, I hate to see Bob come into active duty. I know that you didn't say Bob would help check the guys out of the Army, but if he goes to Devens, that's probably the job he'll be assigned to. So keep your fingers crossed. And I guess that Bill Miller will be heading for the Pacific instead of in this direction. Hope he gets into an outfit and doesn't just hang around as a replacement. Believe me, that's torture. Those poor guys really have it tough until they are assigned to an outfit.

No, darling, I'll not make it home for your birthday now. From the looks of things we'll still be at the same old grind for a long time to come. But I'm still hoping – an empty hope – that we'll be together before too long.

On my day off I want to go out and see where they used to have the automobile races here. I understand that they were quite famous, but I don't know whether they had a race track or whether they used to race across country. And I want to take some pictures of the clock in the grass and some of the gardens surrounding the Cathedral. I'm on CQ tomorrow, so I'll have a day off Wednesday. And our restriction is off tonight if we don't get restricted again.

Hope that my radio is on its way by now. Is it? It will be a big help to have something that can serve as entertainment and still stay in our quarters. I managed to find, or rather buy at a secondhand shop, a carbide lamp; but now I haven't any carbide. Hope that we can get some from one of the German dumps.

About the trip to Paris. No, it isn't a military secret. But I didn't get there until 5:30 one evening and left right after lunch the following day. And besides, there aren't such things as conducted tours and sight-seeing trips in Paris yet. And, on top of that, I can't understand a damned thing that these French say, so I can't get much help there. On top of that, there is a blackout in Paris, or at least there was at that time, so the night was lost to sight-seeing. I sent you the pictures, and that described the things as much as anything. I need more time there than I had, but even then there probably won't be a detailed account of the trip as there was of London, where everything fitted in like clockwork.

About the girls in France .... The first impression was very fine. But it sort of wears off a little after you get used to seeing girls again dressed like fashionable people ought to be dressed. And that first impression sort of wears off. For my money, I'll take the good old American girl every time. Especially one that lives at 602 Mulberry in a small town in Southern Indiana.

Yes, you are to open the package at once to make sure that everything came through in good order. I've spent a hell of a lot on presents and will probably buy more, but in won't be until the end of the month; because I'm flat broke. I owe 900 francs, but one of the fellows owes me 500.

I'm sending the folks a set of the pictures also. And too, a set of some that were taken by one of the other boys and I've had printed because I've been unable to take some as I didn't have a camera available at the time. Those are to go on to Kay. I won't even make comment on them except on the back of the pictures. The tough looking guy is me ...

Hello Again – Today is another day and not too bad a one at that. It stopped raining about supper time last night and hasn't rained since, and the sun has even shown for a couple of hours. It isn't too cold. We haven't had a fire in the office all morning, but we've all been just a little cold – mainly dampness, and we are wearing our long johns at that.

No mail again today. Thank goodness I got all that yesterday and the day before. Funny. It's so much pleasure receiving mail but so much work to write it.

We stayed in as planned last night. Was in bed by 8:30 and I was the last one in bed at that. They had the show, but I wanted to dry out my shoes and get on dry socks, etc., so I actually let a show go by. They say that it was very good, although a Class-B picture.

Inasmuch as I'm CQ again today, I'm sitting here in the other office answering the phone, and the rest of the letter I wrote to you is over on my desk. Btu, if I remember rightly, I was just starting to write a request. So maybe I'd better start over again.

Please send me some mixed nuts, stuffed olives, some bar candy, other than Hershey (we get that here in limited quantities) and only if you're not sending me chocolates, a can of tuna, a small jar of mayonnaise, some Kraft cheese spread – I can go on indefinitely but I know that you can't hope to get all of this in two boxes, let alone one. So I won't mention anything else.

I'd better quit on this letter so that I can mark up those pictures. And, they'll take quite a bit of marking up. Those that I have difficulty with I'll hold over for the next letter.

As ever,  
Paul

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31<sup>st</sup> October 1944  
Somewhere in France

Dearest Kay, Mother and Dad

How time flies. Here it is Tuesday night again, and I don't think I've written to you since about last Wednesday. But when you're in the Army, you do what the Army wants you to do. And so I've been working some of my nights. I know that I should have written to you on my nights off, but you just have to get away from it all and get off the post.

Last week, all in all, I worked four nights. And this week, so far, I've worked two. Sunday and Monday. Alden has been visiting in a very famous place both in the last war and also in this one – having quite a treat. So I'm having to do the work for both of us. Sort of rough, but the Major says that he doesn't think that I'm doing too much, so what the hell. I just work and quit worrying about it.

This week I've had a letter from Mother and Dad dated October 15<sup>th</sup>, one from Uncle Skip about the same date, and a card from Kay written September 18<sup>h</sup>, a letter September 13<sup>th</sup>, and letters from October 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup>. Sort of a mixed up affair, when you have to answer letter a month apart. But thanks everyone. I enjoyed all of them very much.

It's pretty cold here. The temperature is down around freezing and we still have just our three blankets. I have a piece of burlap that I've made into a bedroll to try and keep a little warmer, and I'm doing a fair job of it. We have been having a fire in the tents, but we have been censored severely for having them, and are now having trouble with the French for stealing their wood. They were here the other day and wanted 35000 francs (\$700) for the wood that we've used. And I guess that it's a pretty fair estimate. So now, we are having to do without the wood. My hands right now feel like two blocks of wood and my feet the same way. Of, of course, it rains almost everyday. And makes things all the more enjoyable.

The mud is getting deeper and thicker. I know now what it's like to wear strainers on one's feet, because my shoes turn the mud but admit all the water. I went up after we

finished work today and changed my shoes and put on dry ones, but I'm afraid that I'll have to put the ones I have on now back on in the morning and they are feeling wet. I want to get another pair but then that's another item to carry around whenever we move, and if I should ever be shipped out of the outfit, I'd have to discard an awful lot of equipment. Of course, it's been wonderful having the extra field jacket and the two extra suits of OD's that I drew, for I'm always able to look presentable. I've managed to get four pair of leggings now, and that is a big help with all of this mud.

Another thing, we got hold of some German boots that the German soldiers wore. And we've cut off the tops and split them in two and had them sewed onto the tops of our regular shoes and so make boots. I've one pair of shoes fixed up that way and they are very comfortable. Wish that my others were fixed too.

I've been to town the other two nights I was off; I went in after work and before supper each night and went to the GI show at 5:30, and then over to the restaurant that I like to go to and had dinner with an English gentleman that we had met. Makes a very interesting evening. And then, out of the restaurant about 8:30 and over to the Red Cross for coffee and doughnuts and back to the trucks and to camp around 10:30. One night we had croquettes of some kind and Saturday night we had steak. Very good. Served rare. And we had Brussels sprouts with it. The only trouble is that they don't use the same care that we do in preparing food, even if they do season it very well.

We have a visiting Captain here that is asking a lot of questions so I know that I won't be able to get a lot more done on this letter tonight. On top of that, I've had to answer the telephone three or four times and deliver a message or two, and they all take a little more time. That is the reason I hate to come back of a night, for it is always the same way.

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Wednesday Morning  
1 November 1944

It's 7:30 and if things go per usual, I won't be able to get this letter out before work. Of course, we've gone on C.S.T. and have to come to work at 7:30 every morning while the other sections come down at 8:00. We don't get cleaned up until noon, for it isn't light yet when we get up and I hate to take time to light the carbide lamp, since carbide is fairly scarce anyway. The civilians can't get any and ours came from a German dump.

We didn't leave here last night until 10:45. This Captain talked on and on and I couldn't get away. I'm sleepy this morning.

Your second guess wasn't bad. But that is still in front of us. When I say that we are back, I mean back. Suggest that you use the map on Kay's pins. That might help you some.

The Christmas presents sound swell. Kay writes that she has in two or three and one from her Mother and one each from Mart and Bob and Glenn and Fern. So, it sounds as if I might have a big Christmas over here. I hear that Churchill made quite a speech yesterday. At least that ought to take part of that egotism out of the American people and jolt some sense back into them. I also see by the paper that the British are releasing fliers out of the British Army to train as commercial pilots. What a war!

Thanks so much for the stamps. I appreciate getting them. We get mail about every other day and I didn't receive any yesterday, so we should have some today. It's after eight now. Nuts!

As ever,  
Paul

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HEADQUARTERS  
1<sup>st</sup> Nov 1944

AZ-4110.08 AZ (DEBGA)

TO: All Units in ETOUSA.

1. In compliance with current policies for rotation of armed forces overseas, it is directed that in order to maintain this high standard of character of the American Soldier and to prevent any dishonor to reflect on the uniform, all individuals eligible for return to the US under current directives will undergo an indoctrination course of demilitarization prior to approval of his application for return.
2. The following points will be emphasized in the subject indoctrination course:
  - a. In America, there are a remarkable number of beautiful girls. These young ladies have not been liberated and many are gainfully employed as stenographers, sales girls and beauty operators or welders. Contrary to current practices, they should not be approached with "HOW MUCH"? A proper greeting is "Isn't it a lovely day?", or "Have you ever been in Chicago?", then say "HOW MUCH?"

b. A guest in a private home is usually awakened in the morning by a light tapping on his door and an invitation to join the host at breakfast. It is proper to say "I'll be there shortly." DON'T SAY - "BLOW IT OUT YOUR -----."

c. A TYPICAL American breakfast consists of such strange foods as cantaloupes, fresh eggs, milk, ham, etc..... these are highly palatable and, though strange in appearance, are extremely tasty. Butter, made from cream, is often served. If you wish some butter, you turn to the person nearest you and say quietly, "Please pass the butter". You DO NOT say, "Throw me the GODDAM GREASE!"

d. Very natural urges are apt to occur when in a crowd. If it is found necessary to defecate, one does not grab a shovel in one hand and paper in the other and run for the garden. At least 90% of American homes have one room called the "bathroom", i.e., a room that in most cases contains a bathtub, wash basin, medicine cabinet, and a toilet. It is the latter that you will use in this case. Instructions should be given by instructors to make sure all personnel understand the operation of a toilet, particularly the lever or button arrangement that serves to prepare the device for re-use.

e. In the event the Helmet is retained by the individual, he will refrain from using it as a chair, wash bowl, foot bath, or bathtub. All these devices are furnished in the average American home. It is not considered good practice to squat Indian fashion in a corner in the event all the chairs are occupied. The host or hostess will usually provide suitable seats.

f. Belching in company is strictly frowned upon. If you should forget all about it, however, and belch in the presence of others, the proper remark is "Excuse me" - DO NOT SAY - "IT MUST BE THAT LOUSY CHOW THE DAMNED GOONS SERVED US."

g. American dinners, in most cases, consist of several items, each served in a separate dish. The common practice of mixing various items, such as corned beef and pudding, or lima beans and peaches, to make it more palatable will be refrained from. In time, the separate dishes will become enjoyable.

h. Americans have a strange taste for stimulants. The drinks in common use on the continent, such as under ripe wine, alcohol, and grapefruit juice or gasoline bitters and water (commonly known by the French term "Cognac"), are not ordinarily acceptable in civilian circles. These drinks should be served only to those who are

definitely not within the inner circle of friends. A suitable use for such drinks is for serving to one's landlord in order to break an undesirable lease.

i. In traveling in the U.S., particularly in a strange city, it is often necessary to spend a night. Hotels are provided for this purpose and almost anyone can give you directions to the nearest hotel. Here, for a small sum, one can register and be shown to a room where he can sleep for the night. The present practice of entering the nearest house, throwing the occupants out into the yard, and taking over the premises will cease.

j. Upon leaving a friend's home after a visit one may find his hat misplaced. Frequently it has been placed in a closet. One should turn to one's host and say, "I don't know what's happened to my hat, could you help me find it?" Do NOT say – "DON'T ANYONE LEAVE THIS ROOM – SOME SON-OF-A-BITCH HAS STOLEN MY HAT!"

k. In motion picture theaters, seats are provided. Helmets are not required. It is not considered good form to whistle every time a female over eight or under eighty crosses the screen. If vision is impaired by the person in the seat in front, there are plenty of other seats which can be occupied. DO NOT hit him across the back of the head and say, "MOVE YOUR HEAD, JERK, I CAN'T SEE A DAMN THING!"

l. It is not proper to go around hitting everyone of draft age in civilian clothing. He might have been released from the service for medical reasons. Ask him for his credentials, and if he can't show any, --- THEN GO AHEAD AND SLUG HIM!

m. Upon retiring one will often find a pair of pajamas laid on the bed. (Pajamas, it should be explained, are two-piece garments which are donned after all clothing has been removed.) The soldier confronted with these garments should assume an air of familiarity and act as though he were used to them. A casual remark such as, "My, what a delicate shade of blue," will usually suffice. Under NO circumstances say, -- "HOW IN HELL DO YOU EXPECT ME TO SLEEP IN A GETUP LIKE THAT?"

n. Air raid and enemy patrols aren't encountered in America. Therefore, it is not necessary to wear the helmet in church or at social gatherings or to hold the weapon ready, loaded and cocked when talking to civilians in the street.

3. All individuals returning to the U.S. will make every effort to conform to the customs and habits of the regions visited and to make themselves as inconspicuous as possible. Any actions which reflect upon the honor of the uniform will be severely dealt with.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

Dear Sgt: with best wishes for the New Year - Marguerite

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Somewhere in France

11 November 1944

Dearest Family –

Well, it's been a cold miserable day. It has rained almost all day and drizzled the rest of the time. But so far my feet are still dry. And since it's after working hours, I've got my typewriter on a desk in front of the stove and practically have my feet in the stove. Feels pretty good, too.

No mail again today. No packages either. Maybe tomorrow morning will bring something. Better, 'cause there's only one delivery on Sunday. I've got my past mail that I haven't answered spread out on the table here in front of me, and I'll be darned if I know whether or not I've answered it or not. Probably I did, but I forgot and destroyed the evidence.

Thank you so much for the pictures. I like the one of Bob in uniform very much. Hope I get one before long of Earle. Enjoyed all the other pictures too, but I had wondered so long how Bob looked in uniform. Quite the nuts! Remember how Sis Mancini used to run around with the officer's wives?



You know, I think you are pretty smart. My field jacket in the picture taken at the Arche de Triumphe was loaded. Underneath, I was carrying four cartons of cigarettes. I know that I looked like a horse and I knew that you'd make a crack about it, but I didn't dare wait until later to get a picture, for one never knows how the weather is from day to day. And I couldn't take the cigarettes out from under the jacket for I would have been mobbed. As it was, I was taking a chance to carry a carton of them under my arm. I was approached by two French people at one time about that carton, a

man and a woman, and before I had finished with them I had another six standing around, and before I had gotten rid of my cigarettes, I was a little worried about having so many around me. But, I got rid of them and looked better thereafter. Felt better too, for those cigs financed my trip around Paris.

I'll have you know that my hair was pretty well grown out at the time that picture was taken and it's back to normal now. No – you didn't get to see me when I was so shy of hair. I'm sending you some more pictures that finally came in. Those pictures of Dinah Shore who was here the night of our wedding anniversary. And I didn't write to you? Some various scenes that are both terrible and good. I only have the one set of these, so you'll have to share them with the folks. But, I think that you'll like them.

By the way, please send me some popcorn, some erasers for my Schaeffer pencil, some fruitcake and homemade cookies.

You know – Mart and Bob are pretty lucky at that. There they are at Carlisle with all their gang more-or-less still with them. And, if they receive any more training after they leave there, they may be lucky enough for part of them to stay together, although that is pretty far fetched. The only thing that bothers me is – I remember the medics that joined us in the 12th last year – just before the battalions left – and how they had been told that they would be in the States for a long time yet. Keep your fingers crossed for you're liable to have another daughter come home. Cheerful, ain't it? Mama's little helper ....

Dear, how about cooking me a dinner in our electric roaster and bringing it out for a picnic supper? You see, I know I can't have everything, so I'm not asking for a meal at a table or in a house – just that you bring it out and serve it to me. I don't want much, do I? If I could just have a nice pot roast of beef with potatoes and carrots browned around it and a nice salad, topped off with cherry pie (open-top) and ice cream and real coffee – I'd know that I was in heaven.

My letters are for you and not to be printed in a paper. I'd be mortified to hear of such a thing. So-do-not-let-such-a-thing-happen!

I wonder if you have located the pins on the map as yet? Haven't heard from you lately as to any guesses as to where I might be. Did you ever find about the clock on the lawn which is beside the Wilbur Wright statues? Well – keep guessing.

I haven't anything to say. I've filled up some pages rambling on so that you would know I'm not doing so badly. Got a good night's sleep last night and felt better this

morning. My bed was nice and dry last night, so it was warm. And I slept through. Cold this morning though. Sure hated to roll out.

Want to write some other letters so I'll quit. Hope to hear from you tomorrow. Got a box of Kleenex at the PX tonight so my nose will be a little better off. I'm CQ again Monday so I'll write then.

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10<sup>th</sup> November 1944  
Somewhere in France

Hello Kay, Mother and Dad –

Well, we have a new one today. Joe Schreibies, Ely Artenberg, Pinky and myself have decided to quit swearing. So this morning, effective when we woke up, it cost each one of us a franc (2¢) whenever that guy swore. And tonight at the present time, we have 55 francs in the pot. Oh yes, I've contributed my share, but it's worth it, because I'm thinking twice now before I pop off, and I was getting pretty bad. The other morning I even caught myself swearing while talking to the chaplain, so I think it's time I did something about it, don't you?

I had a box yesterday from Mother and Dad. No date on the box, so I don't know when it was sent. There were two packages of marshmallows, a box of hard candy, a box of pretzels, one of chocolate snaps, and one of vanilla wafers, a washrag – I think that is all. The package was in good condition. Hadn't been opened at all. Thank you very much. One package of the marshmallows is already gone. And everyone has had a box or two or three in the last three days. The day before yesterday, I had the envelope with the funny papers and Indianapolis souvenirs. Thanks a lot. I'll have a lot of fun with them one of these days.

I have Kay's card of October 23<sup>rd</sup>, a letter dated November 24<sup>th</sup> and one from the 25<sup>th</sup>. And a letter from Earle Wm. written October 8<sup>th</sup>. Glad that he had received the cigs. Wasn't at all sure that he would. I think that I had received the letters from Mother and Dad before the last letter saying that E.W. was home. Surely glad that he made his commission. Will get around to answering him in the next week. CQ is coming around again so I'll make up for lost time. We've just been to the show. My feet feel like two chunks of ice. We've just come in and built a fire in the office tent and it isn't too bad right now. We saw "Dragon Seed". Very good show. You've probably seen it already. But we're still seeing the shows out in the open and the open-air theatre isn't so good.

We are afraid that we are not going to move into the chateau. The deal has fallen through, at least temporarily, so we're still in our tents. But the tents aren't too bad.

If we just had a night fireman to keep the fire going and something to burn, we'd be all set. I've another cold. This one seems to be a lulu. But, I'm still going and will be OK again in a couple of days. This typing is hard tonight because my fingers do not bend and this is definitely hunt and peck system.

We went into town Tuesday afternoon. But results weren't so good, and I didn't find the items I was looking for. Don't know just when I'll be in again. I took a couple of snapshots this afternoon and then the film quit rolling on the spindle, so I don't know just what to expect.

I sent Mother Danner a birthday card today. Hope that she gets it OK. Also have sent some other ones. I got some Christmas cards for some of the kids and will send them out next week. Have also packed the other coach light and sent it to be mailed but understand that the post office wouldn't take it as is, so will have to start over again.

I'm going to have to find a warmer place so this letter will have to end. Not a newsy letter, but at least you will know that all is well and good. Wish that the war would end. Tomorrow is Armistice Day; wish Hitler would let it continue to be an Armistice Day and V-Day as well. It will be wonderful when we can all come home again and be with our families. Who knows when? Oh well, I'm not the only one who longs to be home. I'll write soon. As ever, Paul.

P.S. Just cost me another 2 francs. Now 58 francs in the pot.

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Somewhere in France  
17 November 1944

Dearest Kay, Mother and Dad –

This is a busy week. We've rushed all week, and it doesn't look like there would be any relief in sight. It's after 9 PM and I'm just getting this started. I had promised myself faithfully that I'd write to you last night, but I had to make a trip to town to get my other shoes fixed before it was too late and I had to hitchhike back, so I was dead tired before I made it back. I just fell into bed and slept.

The deal has fallen through. Cole came back and we didn't get to move into the buildings. But, on the other hand, by the time you get this letter I expect to be living in a castle. They say it's pretty nice, but we'll have to see what's what when the time comes.

I've received two letters and a V-Mail from Kay and a Christmas letter from the Steinmetz' with a money order for \$5 enclosed. And two packages from Kay and one

from the C.F. Shiesz'. What a time to receive them! But, we'll make out. I've finally gotten my work about caught up. I had been snowed under for so long a time that it is a relief to see daylight again. Alden has a lot of work stacked up to be done and I know I'll have to do part of that, but at least I'm in a pretty good shape. Hope that we have some mail tomorrow. The last that I've heard was the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

This letter is very unsatisfactory, but at least it's a letter. I'll get another out tomorrow unless something comes up. I'm mailing a package to Indianapolis for Kay (so that she can't open it until Christmas). Trying to get another package out, but I haven't been able to get enough to fill it.

All my love,  
Paul

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Somewhere in France  
21 November 1944

Dearest Kay-

Well at last we are in a building. We finally got moved in last night and today we got the office set up and have our cots in order and the beds made. About the best thing that we can say about it is that we are in out of the mud. Tonight I have my shoes shined and will put on a clean uniform in the morning.

Let's start with the living quarters. We (all of us) are in a large room 18 x 18. It has steam heat and running water with a toilet off to the side. The heat doesn't work and the water doesn't run and we have to pour buckets of water down the toilet to flush it, but outside of that, it has a roof overhead and a floor underfoot. We live on Army cots and have a light in the center of the ceiling. Joe Shreibeis and I have a wardrobe between us, so that we can hang up our coats, and I have my footlocker under the bed. We also have a large fireplace but it's been plugged up so I have my duffle bag setting in that. Our office is in the chateau proper. We are in the main building on the first floor and have what used to be the library for our office. All of the furniture has been removed before the Germans used this place with the exception of one room, which was slept in by Cardinal Richelieu back in 17--. The Germans used this place as a Motor School. There is the main chateau and three other buildings, each of which has a tower, and our room is in the top of one of these towers. The officers are housed on the upper floors of the main chateau, but the enlisted men are in the rest of the castle. We can't complain too much. It's better than living in the muck and mud. We didn't get any mail for several days before we left Le Mans. And I don't suppose that we'll receive any now for a while. One of these days I want to get a nice letter out to you – not a lousy letter like this, but a nice one. I hope that we'll get lucky enough to make a trip to Paris in the next couple of weeks. We hear that they now have escorted tours

in Paris like they had in London, so that would be a big help. Hope that we are lucky. We are supposed to be resting here, but I don't see any rest in sight for the morning report section. Namely me. The boys want to start a little game of hearts and are waiting on me to finish, and the ones that are not playing want me to quit this racket, so I guess that I'd better humor them. Hope to hear from you soon.

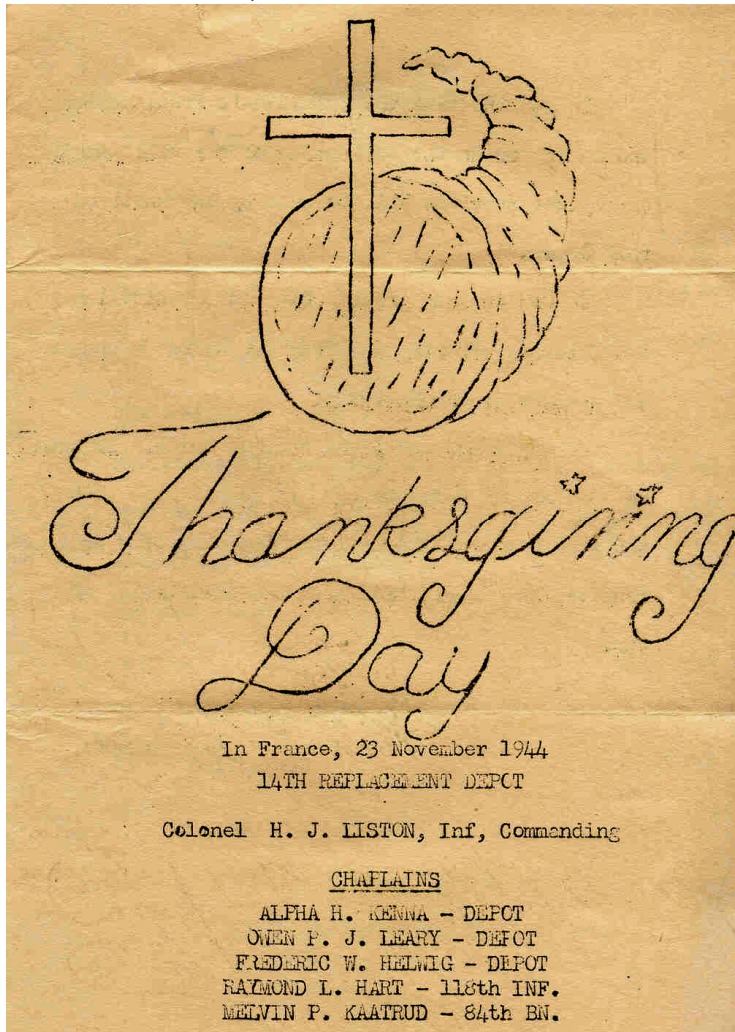
As ever,  
Paul

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Somewhere in France  
23 November 1944

Dear Kay-

Today was Thanksgiving. And needless to say, I'm very thankful that the war is going well again and that we are in a building where it is nice and dry and just for the fact that we are alive. We had a church service this morning and had a wonderful dinner this noon, and have had a movie this evening, so it has been a very nice day.



Yes, we had turkey for dinner and plenty of it. We had roast turkey, baked ham, mashed potatoes and gravy, creamed peas, dressing, asparagus salad, applesauce and cake, bread and butter, and coffee. Not bad, and then we had turkey sandwiches for supper tonight. I don't know how the church services were for I was on CQ again today. We pull it every eight days now. And remember how is used to bitch because I had to pull it about every three weeks? Anyhow, I'm sending you a copy of the program that we had today.

Well, it's pretty nice not being out in the mud anymore. We're getting used to being indoors again and getting housebroken and becoming garrison soldiers. Saturday we are having an inspection, no less, and of course we now have to have shined shoes, etc., so that we have to take the bitter with the sweet. We are not processing any troops at this station. We are here for a rest, so they say, but actually what it amounts to for me is that we will manage to get caught up on some of the work that we had let slide and bring all of our files up-to-date, etc. All of which is very worthwhile. We are having training, starting Monday, but I don't think that it will bother me because I have all this work to do. Hope that it won't anyhow. We will be able to get passes occasionally, too, to the small town that is near here, and I hope to get in to see it one afternoon this coming week. It will be the last part of the week, though.

I was up and saw the rooms that the Cardinal had when he was here and I managed to pick up a little more of the history of the place. He had a suite of rooms, to be exact, that he supposedly lived in while he was a Cardinal but before he became the great political power that he did. He supposedly lived here several years back in the 1600's somewhere during the reign of Louis XV, I think it was, but then I don't know too much about French history. Anyhow, the suite must have been very grand in those days, for it is in pretty fair condition at the present. The bathroom even had a bathtub and a lavatory but the Germans, while they were here, had installed a neon light over the lavatory so that changes the past into the present.

I was outside the chateau a little while ago and enjoyed the lights of our "home". We don't observe the blackout here. The rooms are all bright if there is anyone in the room, although we are very careful about wasting lights. The trucks run up and down the roads with full headlights, and they say that in Paris, it is the same story. There are a lot of lights and nightclubs, cars, etc. How this war progresses. Already the French are the same as in the U.S. – forgetting that there is a war going on and only too glad to see the last of us and return to normal and their own bickerings.

According to a notice received the other day, air mail service will no longer be dependable, so maybe you'd better start sending part of my letters on V-Mail. We are

hoping to receive mail again tomorrow. Surely hope that we are not disappointed. At least we will receive some by the day after tomorrow.

Sorry to hear about Kay being sick when she was up there. Guess the strain of seeing Earl W. was just a little too much. But honest, I think all of you are doing swell. I know that all of you think a lot about me, and you know that it is mutual. At least we can hope that by Thanksgiving next year we'll be together again.

I haven't anything else to say except that hope you all have had a nice day and that the weather has been nice there, which it hasn't been here. It's rained all day and will probably rain again tonight. (The building does help.) Time for me to go off duty and go to bed, so must close. Hope I hear from you in the next day or two. Surprised that you hadn't guessed Le Mans.

As ever,  
Paul

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V.....MAIL

Somewhere in France  
25 November 1944

Dear Kay-

Well, it's Saturday night and I've just taken in the 6:15 show and seen "Maisie Goes to Reno". A very cute show, lots better than we've had all week. They had a show last night, but I got in late and was tired so I just turned in and hit the canvas instead.

I had to make a trip to the hospital yesterday for refraction of glasses, and we had to make a trip to Paris to have it done. Three of us had to have refraction and Capt. Cooke went in with us. We got into town too late to eat at the hospital so we had coffee and doughnuts at the Versailles Red Cross. Very nice. And then, we cut out lunch hour very short and went to see the Versailles Palace. We didn't have time to go through the place so all we could do was visit the gardens and grounds surrounding the palace, but that was quite a treat. They are beautiful. It would have taken us an hour to take the trip through the palace, and the Captain said we wouldn't have time ...so... maybe next time. We went on to the hospital and had the examination and then the Captain had to go to another hospital, which was on the far side of Paris. So we got to go all the way through the city. Then to another place on the other side, so we did it again. And then crossed the city again to come home. More fun. And while we only stopped once at the Eiffel Tower, we did get to see quite a bit out of the rear window of our ambulance. Oh yes! Class! No trucks for us. We saw the Eiffel Tower, the tomb of Napoleon, the Grand Palace, the Little Palace, the Statue of Liberty, the Madeleine, the Opera House, Place Vendome, Montmartre, the Oblisque,

countless churches, with the exception of Notre Dame, and I've run out of things to mention. Of course, the Arche de Triumphe too. It was a grand trip and top to it off, I have to go back again next Saturday to get my glasses. Ain't it awful?



There still is no mail. But the post office assures us that it's quite probable there will be some tomorrow. Oh, joy! So I'll have to stay home tomorrow. On the other hand, if I can get a pass to town I'll go to see a very famous palace that is nearby. They run an excursion through it, or rather, a tour every 15 minutes, but darn it they speak French only. I wish that we could educate these ginks.

It's been a busy day today. I had no idea of going to the hospital at all yesterday but had to go on sick call to get my eyes treated. The worst of it was that I was holding a meeting of representatives of all our battalions and had to call it off and go on sick call. And having had the meeting, I hadn't gotten a thing done at my desk. So things just stood as they were. Alden won't do a thing unless he receives a direct order. He is sort of useless since he came back from his vacation.

I meant to send Kay some pictures I got yesterday, but since I'm writing this V-Mail, they'll have to wait until my next regular letter. Hope that you'll be able to read this. Get out your magnifying glass or you'll go blind. Oh, yes! One thing. There is a lot changed in Paris since the last time I saw it. There are cars and trucks on the streets and thousands of people. And, lots more beautiful girls. Of course, I only looked so that I could tell Dad what they looked like, but that will have to be told in private. Hope that everyone is well and happy. I see that the Allies are only 600 miles apart now.

As ever, Paul

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Somewhere in France  
27<sup>th</sup> November 1944

Dearest Kay-

Monday night and another day without mail from the States. That makes about 11 days without mail again, but we understand that we will have mail tomorrow without fail – we hope.

Yesterday I got the afternoon off and went to town with the boys to see the palace. As you know, I can't tell you just what palace we were lucky enough to get to see, but we did see an immense one. It was built by Francis I and was lived in by all of the Royal families and each one had left changes and buildings. Louis XIV had built an additional building and so had Louis XV. And Napoleon had changed everything that Louis XV had done to suit himself. We were taken on a tour of the entire palace and believe me, the palace is gorgeous. Everything is in gold leaf so you can imagine how that would glitter. When the Germans were here, all of the palaces were left strictly alone and everything is intact with the exception of a lot of the more valuable paintings which have been removed to Paris for the duration. But, most of the furniture was that which Napoleon had outfitted, or rather, furnished it with. He had admired Egypt a lot, for many things in the palace had the Egyptian touch and Egyptian insignias on them. On the other hand, there were things from almost every country in the different rooms. I, myself, fell head-over-heels for a pair of ebony cabinets which were hand carved and the most beautiful pieces that I have ever seen. I was a room ahead of the guide because I couldn't understand him very well anyhow, he could speak only a word or two of English and he conducted his lectures in French, and gave most of that to two Frenchmen who were in our particular tour. Anyway, when he came to this one room I was still there admiring the cabinets and they were the center of attraction as far as his lecture was concerned. Darn! If I only spoke French.....

The palace is covered with large murals. Every bit of available space is hung with paintings-not small ones, but huge affairs, larger than life-size in every case, and sometimes twice as large. And in many of the rooms, there were statues and busts. Lots of figures of children and of men and women too, and practically all of them in the nude. And all of the murals are in the nude, too, or in near nude. The reception room was a very long room, maybe 50 to 75 feet long and 15 feet wide, and all hard wood floors, as in all of the rooms, and the pattern in every room was different, and the room was alive with color, dignity and warmth. We saw the grand ballroom, which I thought was the most beautiful room in the palace. And on the front side, on either side of the huge fireplace, hangs the portraits of each of the King's mistresses. Believe me, in those days it was an honor to be the mistress. Anyhow, we saw Marie

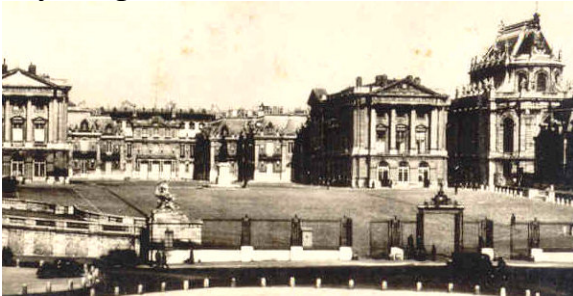
Antoinette's room which was beautiful and right next to her suite was Napoleon's court room. It had been the bedroom of Louis XV and was a much smaller room than the others, but I suppose that he could be nearer the Queen that way. The most valuable part of the palace was the library, which is valued at three million dollars, and we were allowed in one end of it only and were all herded along at that point. There were several pictures and busts of Marie Antoinette and she was certainly a very beautiful gal. Josephine was very homely and if she didn't have the clothes to wear, would have been a more than ordinary person. But the clothes make the man, I mean the woman, in this case. I have never seen an exhibit of so much nude in my life. But none of it was vulgar and it is so beautifully done that I want to go again on another tour, so that I can just study that magnificent art work and heavens knows I don't know much about art. But, of course, everything here was the work of masters and masters they were.

They were selling some folders of the palace done in third dimension. Some of the boys had purchased them the day before and we all wanted to be able to send them home. They had them as we went in but darn it they ran out before we came out, so we didn't get any of them. I was lucky enough to get a postcard and a large colored picture of the palace which I'll send home to you whenever we leave this place. After we left the palace we wandered up and down the streets and found one or two places open for business. I bought these cards at one of the places. At another, as I walked in, a girl grabbed me by the arm and too me over to the perfume counter and I mean dragged in every sense of the word. Then, with one hand she hung onto my arm so that I couldn't take off and with the other hand she proceeded to wave stoppers of the perfume under my nose on after the other trying to get me to buy one. After she had tried 12 or 14, and I still didn't like any of them, another girl came up and grabbed the other arm and started the same routine using the same method. Oh me! Too bad for the gals. I didn't buy any of it. They were sort of disgusted. But I got to join the fun a little while later when she cornered another fellow. We didn't wait to see the outcome.

Yesterday really was a red letter day. If they would just let us in town more, morale would really swing way up. While we were in town and walking down the street, we came past a shop that had what looked like parfaits in the window. So far be it from us to pass anything up. We went in, and by golly, they had ice cream. Actually it was an ice, apricot and strawberry ice, and they served us a dipper of both. Cost us 15 francs. And then, we decided that we might as well find out what the parfait was and we tried that. It might have been beaten up egg whites, I'm not sure but they had prepared it in true parfait style-syrup in the bottom, then ice cream (imitation) and more syrup and more ice cream, etc. Sort of tasty. The syrup was made mainly of

cherries, and some of the fruit in it as well as cooked grapes, currants and it was hard to tell what else. So then we left that place and while walking down the street I suddenly stopped and pointed through a window past a showcase and on a table inside was a dish of chocolate ice cream (three large dippers) that someone was just starting to eat. And when we looked just a bit higher, there was one of our officers laughing at me. So we all went in and had Melba sundaes. The ice cream looked better than it actually was, but boy, oh boy I can stand a lot of it!

Tonight we just had a stage show by our own special service section, and it was a very good show. I went to the early show as usual so that I might write this letter to you and still get to bed early. Want to get lots of sleep this week, for I think that the latter part of the week I'm going to get to go to Paris. Four of the fellows from our office went today, and a couple more will go tomorrow. I imagine that we will all be awakened around midnight when today's bunch return. Hope they have found a lot of things to do. Anyway, I expect to have quite a time, if I get to go. Haven't very much money, buy then, everything is sky high in Paris anyway so I won't even plan to buy anything.



I'll enclose the pictures of the Versailles Palace Sort of funny-describing one palace in the letter and sending you pictures of another. Too bad that I haven't had this kind of paper to write on all along for they would have made a swell diary.

Got to quit. It's getting too cold here in the office to be comfortable, so I'll go up to the room. One of the fellows was just in and said they had a fire in our stove up there and it was pretty comfortable, so...hope to hear from you tomorrow.

As ever,  
Paul

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Somewhere in France  
28 November 1944

Hurray! Hurray! The mail's in and there's mail for all!!

Dear Everybody-

Mail from everyone. Letters, V-mails, pictures, funny papers. Morale – Superior.

The Schiesz sent me a picture of Mother and Dad in Minicolor which is wonderful. I've been all over the office showing it off and everyone thinks they are wonderful. And Kay sent pictures too, which were swell, and I'm not belittling them one bit, but these of Mother and Dad are really super. No foolin'. Want to get a letter out to the Schiesz yet tonight thanking them for the picture. In fact, you might get the idea that I'm thrilled. P.S. Kay – why couldn't you have been there too, to have one taken of you?

Now to enumerate – Let's see. I can understand why I couldn't understand what you were talking about from time to time for I wasn't getting all of your letters. I've got a letter from Kay dated October 6<sup>th</sup>, a V-Mail dated October 13<sup>th</sup>, and letters dated October 18<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup>. And a letter from Mother and Dad dated October 1<sup>st</sup>. And the letter from the Schiesz dated the 6<sup>th</sup> of November. So now you know why I've been whining for some mail from you. I knew that you had written just as you've kept hoping that I was writing but not having any results. Hope that by this time, my mail is coming through to you also.

The pictures taken down home are grand. Bill Miller sure looks like a sad sack in his new uniform, as who didn't when he came in the Army, including yours truly? Bob looks grand. And everyone wants to know who those good looking girls are. Everybody whistles at the pictures of Mart, (especially the one you sent me a while back of Mart in shorts) and several have eyes over Millie. I keep telling them that that would be just the gal for them but trouble is that our crowd is old married men. So there you are...you can't win. Offer Millie my condolences and tell her that I'm going to keep right on trying to find her a good husband to bring her home as a souvenir of the War. How about a Boche?

What's that sporty jacket that Chuck is wearing? Oh boy! That has really taken everyone's eye. That is kind of classy...don't you think? Bo dear, don't send me one for Christmas, for I'm afraid that the Colonel and I would have a slight discussion on same, with me on the quiet end of the conversation. I see it is even got leather buttons on it.

And that picture of Mother and Dad is wonderful. There is one trouble getting letters like this, a guy writes so damned many letters and receives so many old letters, that he doesn't have the slightest idea if he has talked about a certain thing or not, if he has

automatically answered a question before it was asked or not. You know – that letter from Mother and Dad which was dated the 1<sup>st</sup> of Oct. is almost two months old, and that's a heck of a long time. On the other hand, if you can stand the drive I can dish it out, so hang onto your hats. Here we go.

By the way, I think my trip to Paris has been temporarily postponed. Oh well, I've got to go back to the hospital the end of the week anyway....

You know, there's one thing about it – you can't say that I haven't written to you this week. This is either the third or fourth letter this week. Of course, it's just the convenience of the things, more than anything else. I go to the early show and then write you a letter afterward. We got many a good laugh out of it. And especially thinking about how it would be for any of us to come home to a small town after having served overseas in a replacement depot. Wouldn't we make heroes? Amen.....

Well, I've just answered all of Kay's letters and now I'd better make a slight pause and answer yours. And it is the same old story. We're not with any Army. We supply troops from here to all of the armies. We're just so far back that the limited assignment WAC's are in front of us, although I don't know what they do with the general assignment ones. I've been doing quite a bit of steady work this week. While we are on our rest period, I've been bringing my files up to date, and have them about half done. Alden and I will both be here to work tomorrow, so maybe we'll be able to get quite a bit done, although Alden won't come to work until 9:30, for he has to fall out at formation and take physical training. You know, this is a rest camp...we pull all of the details and train, etc...

Hope that by this time you've decided just what you would like to send me for Christmas. Don't suppose that you had any luck with the sleeping bags, and I didn't ask for anything else. Oh, well, it's too late to ask for anything now, and I don't know what I'd ask for if I could. I do know, that I don't want any food stuffs for a while except cookies and candy and such. No canned goods. I'm not going to get to write the Schiesz tonight, but I will the next time that I wrote for sure. Can't get over how good the picture is of both of you. Wish that I could put two extensions on my desk, one on each side, about 3 ft. by 6 ft., to put all of the pictures I have from home. Still, everyone that comes over to the desk stops and wants to look at all of the pictures. Not that I ever look at them – not much!

It's raining cats and dogs but I've got to make a run for the barracks anyway. When ya gotta go, ya gotta go, and I've gotta go, and have for the past hour, but I didn't

want to go out in the rain. So, signing off until the next chapter, which will be written at the next convenient chatterbox hour. I don't think much of this makes sense, but guess you'll skim through it. As ever, Paul.

P.S. Kay was asking about what I thought about Christmas. Glenn and Fern were saying that they weren't going to celebrate this year, and although she had planned to and wanted to and was going to, she was wondering if she were right to do so. And I told her that she most certainly should. That everyone should celebrate Christmas just the same as usual, because that is what we are fighting over here for – individual freedom and personal enjoyment. It would be a mighty bleak Christmas over here for us if we weren't able to visualize Christmas Day at home and wonder just what the family would be doing at the particular moment. There's going to be a lump in every throat as it is, without adding a bitter taste to it as well.

Enough of all this. As ever,

Paul

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Somewhere in France

3 December, 1944

Dearest Kay-

Well, I'm going just back from the hospital and have a new pair of GI glasses, and they are very nice, look much better than the old pair and I think are going to give me a lot of satisfaction....They found a difference in my eyes. My right one is now 20/30 instead of 20/20. The results of poor lighting under field conditions. Too bad that I didn't put up my set of lights that I bought in England sooner and save them. But at that, it probably would have been just the same anyway.

Contrary to expectations, we did not go to the opera today. The Captain went in on the pass truck instead of the ambulance; we just made the routine trip in and back. But this time we ate at the hospital so I didn't get back to see any more of the Versailles palace. And wanted to get some more bracelets like the one Kay has raved about in her last two letters. Did not think that they were so hot and hadn't bothered to mention it in a letter, but maybe I'd better say that I jewed a Jew down on the street in Paris when I was there a long time ago, and I finally paid about 40 francs for it. But unfortunately they cost much more here in this town where we are stationed. I had seen them near the palace when we were there the last time and had wanted to get some more, but no luck.

From the ridiculous to the sublime. After having had mail trouble for so long a time, now we are receiving mail for the 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup> of November. And

you can't beat eight day service, can you? Thank you for the letters and for the funny papers. I've received both letters and papers from both of you. Papers as late as the 24<sup>th</sup> of October. Maybe we'll have packages tomorrow.

Well I've been beating around the bush here, keeping away from the main subject – my trip to Paris. I went yesterday – Saturday – and had a wonderful time. We got into town about 10:30 and got ourselves oriented and found the nearest bar to get the day started. Had a time finding one open so early, but we finally had success and started the ball rolling with cognac and beer chasers. (Boilermakers.) John Klein and I went together from our office, and the officers on the trip were Lt. Carroll and Major Snow, both of whom are pretty nice guys. (I'd say more about them but Lt. Carroll is the one that censors my mail.) I can't give him too good a build-up ..... Anyhow, the four of us had a couple rounds of drinks in a hurry and the officers went their way and John and I ours. First I went to a picture studio where I wanted to have two pictures made of myself to send to each of you, but I couldn't get the pictures taken, and they wouldn't be able to do so until sometime in January. I know that you would have enjoyed them, for the pictures are done in third dimension – the only studio in the world that does this kind of work. Of course, they would have set me back a few dollars – for the two pictures - \$27.00 – but I was planning on a squeeze play of two cartons of cigarettes. No dice, no pictures, no expenditures. Think what you missed.

OK. To get on with the story. We went to the Red Cross and took the tour of Paris at 12:45. While we waited for the sightseeing bus we made a trip to a restaurant and had dinner, and a very excellent dinner it was, from soup to ice cream for dessert. Klein, Fleck and Sirota, who we ran into at the café, had the usual cheese, but I had to be different. These French are all excellent cooks. Anyhow, it cost us 170 francs apiece. Our trip around Paris cost us 80 francs. And for two hours we kept on the go around Paris. We saw everything and went into very few places. We stopped at Notre Dame and Luxembourg Palace, but other than that we just rode. And I don't think we missed a thing from the Arche de Triumphe on one end to Gare de la Bastille on the other. I'd say that was roughly ten miles apart. But it was well worth it, even if I had seen a lot of it before. After we came back from there we did a lot of window shopping and just looking around for ourselves. Had ourselves a few beers on the way and really enjoyed ourselves. Just more or less relaxed and let our hair down. We had been told to go to this night club or this show or that one, but we ended up meeting some WAC's who were very nice and they took us to a night club that was overflowing with GI's and WAC's and, honestly, last night was the best evening that either one of us had spent since we left the good old USA. The only ones in the place that weren't American were the help, and they spoke a lot of English. And just to sit there and listen to songs from home and everyone talking in good old US and girls

mixed in that we could understand – community singing – it made us feel like we were actually home for a short while. It was darned nice to be included in the gang, mostly fellows from the combat area that were there in on a pass the same as us and the WAC's who are stationed in Paris. Then, at the last moment, we left the bunch in the nightclub and raced back to the truck. And I was feeling no pain. We had drunk cognac, beer, red wine, rosy wine, white wine, blackberry brandy, rum, and champagne. But I didn't even have a hangover this morning. The only thing is, I'm awfully tired. Going to work this morning as usual and not getting in until late last night after having a very big day makes one big guy just a little run down at the heels.

One thing I don't know if I mentioned sometime back or not... I've changed the bond allotment here. I am now sending home a check, Kay, and you can buy a bond over there if they have a good war bond drive program on, you can take it in by purchasing the bond from them.

My mind is beginning to haze over. No wonder. After being on the go since noon Friday. Oh, yes. I went into town here Friday afternoon. Have I got to buck down! So, being of an unsound and feeble mind, I'm taking myself off to bed. Have to get up early too. I'm CQ tomorrow. As ever,

Paul

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Somewhere in France  
8 December 1944

Dear Family –

Have you ever been a hobo? Have you ever hopped a freight? Have you ever ridden all night on the floor of a boxcar with your fanny to sit on only – with four flat wheels on the car – none of which hits the rails at the same moment, so that they go clicketty-clack, clicketty-clack all night long and the train does so many leaps and bounds you wonder when it is on the tracks and when it isn't? Well brethren and sistren, whether you is or whether you ain't, take it from me – don't, 'cause you'll catch cold.

As you may have guessed we've moved again. I talked to Cy last night and I'm meeting him tomorrow. In fact, I plan to eat lunch with him tomorrow noon. It will sure be a treat to see all of them. It'll be the first time that I've visited them since back in the States. Of course, I saw Cy the once in England, but I couldn't get away from the office long enough to go on out to see the outfit. So I'll be with them tomorrow, provided something doesn't happen.

I'm sending you, under separate cover, a picture and a booklet on the palace at Fontainebleau, which I described to you before. We were unable to get the third

dimension booklets before we left there so you'll have to take what there is. I haven't found anything of interest here and don't think that there is much in the whole area. We are in the backend of the area occupied by the third Army, but we are not attached to that Army or any other one. We are just a rear depot, still supplying other depots further up.



We haven't had any mail again now for some time. In fact, since I last wrote to you. It will probably be another three or four days before we do have any. But at least the mail and package for Mother went out before we left the last station. I had wanted to get out some Christmas cards but things have gotten completely out of hand and so, no cards. Cole is a pretty good artist, but darn him, he's too temperamental. Have to wait until he gets into the mood.

I found out I was in error about one thing. Cy is not in Belgium. When I had previously located this town on the map, I had found another town with the same name spelled the same way up very close to the border and they were supposed to be just outside of this town, consequently in Belgium. How stories do get started. My, my.

Did I tell you that we got to visit the Chateau Fleury at Fleury on Biere? It was a large chateau that Cardinal Richileau used for his Headquarters for a long time before he became the great political power in France. They still have his bed and furnishing supposedly the same way as when he lived there. But almost every military organization has had an officer sleeping in that room.



There isn't much that I can tell you. I'm OK and the cold isn't any worse that it has been for the past ten months. I got quite a bit of sleep on the train so I don't feel as tired as I did. Hope that I get the morning off as scheduled so I can go see the gang.

I'll write again not later than Sunday night.

As ever,

Paul

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Somewhere in France

10 December 1944

Well, I was just interrupted and told to end this letter and go on home, but heck, I'm just getting started and I want to finish it tonight, so here goes until I'm thrown out physically.

Dear Family – Mail is good tonight for a change. We have mail. And it was most unexpected. We went to the show and while waiting for the picture to start, one of the fellows came in and told us that we had just received mail – to keep our fingers crossed in hopes that we wouldn't receive any – and so when we came back – I had two letters from Kay, and two letters from Mother and Dad, and a Christmas card from Kay. They all had been written Thanksgiving weekend and were most welcome. The eraser came through in good order and it is the right size. Thanks so much. And don't let them sell you artillery braid.

Monday morning

11 December 1944

Hello – you can see how far I got on this letter last night before we were thrown out bodily from the office. It seems some of the higher ups wanted to have a drink but didn't want the enlisted men to see them. Hell, after all, we see officers drinking darned near every day. But we still were booted out.

The show last night was very good. "Our Hearts Were Young and Gay" ... enjoyed it ever so much. And then the letters from home as well. Just think – two weeks from this morning is Christmas morning. And to think that I thought I'd be coming home for Christmas. How wrong I was.

I'm glad that you didn't send me the sleeping bag. The Army has promised every man over here will receive one, but the front line troops come first. All the front line troops are supposed to have them first and by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, but very few have them yet and, of course, it will probably be next year (next winter) before we get them. They are the blanket type also. I don't think so much of them for they weigh a

lot more and also the kapok ones are a lot warmer. But, by hook and crook, I now have an innerspring mattress which I sleep on and don't have any trouble keeping warm now. I have it on top of my cot, and it works pretty nicely. Wish though that I could get a bed as well. But, I had forgotten how nice it was to sleep on a mattress. Now I just sink in and feel like a bug in a rug.

We went (as I told you) to a show last night. The depot here, whose place we are taking, had taken over this very old theatre, or rather, opera house. I have no idea just how old it is but it is as old as most things in this town, and they date back to the early 1800's. We sat in the stalls, or first floor. I think that there were around 70 seats. Then the first balcony was the boxes and the gallery above that. It fairly gleamed with old-fashionedness. The lobby and entrance was as deep as the section for the audience and the stage about the same size. It must have been quite a thing in those days to see a traveling stage show or opera company. Remember when we used to go to Keith's?

I had to work yesterday afternoon, but most of the fellows took the afternoon off and went on a little tour of the town. It is a pretty small place, but there are several interesting things to be seen. Of course, every town has its statue of Joan de Arche, and a statue to the soldiers in the last war, etc. But one of the most interesting places has been found. It is the chapel out at the chateau here. In the center of the chapel, in the front, is a large stone ... a gravestone. And the chaplain was there at the same time the fellows were so he showed them around the place. He lifted up the stone and there underneath was a flight of steps which lead down into a crypt in which were all the graves. There was even a sarcophagus, and when they removed the lid there was a mummy inside, all the features were distinct and the hair silvery and flaxen. It was covered with glass and the body in oil. What a place. The chaplain was just in here and said that the chapel at the hospital dated back to 1261. Also that Joan de Arche was born very close to here.

As planned, I had the morning off Saturday. Had planned to go up by truck to Cy's outfit, but nothing was going so I was advised to just hitchhike. I asked the MP on the corner just how far it was and he told me it was about 45 miles. So I had a hell of a time getting there, and it was a good deal farther than that yet. The troop movement didn't show up so I had to hitchhike back. Made the trip OK though and thoroughly enjoyed it. Will mention them in another letter. All of the gang is OK. Cy is a 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. and I saw Luther and Roy and lots of others. Was such a pleasure to see the old gang. First time that I had seen most of them since about this time last year. Remember?

The boss is giving me hard looks so will quit until time for lunch. Will eat fast and write more. Ta-ta.

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Somewhere in France  
17<sup>th</sup> December 1944

Dearest Kay, Mother and Dad –

I started a letter to Kay Tuesday night but I didn't get it finished, for I had to stop and clean my carbine. We were expecting a visit from Gen. Lee who didn't show up, but we had to be prepared just the same. And so, after I finished cleaning the carbine, I had to go to bed. I get so darned tired so easily anymore. Can't figure it out. I get enough to eat, and seldom have anything to drink, and I get plenty of sleep, but I just can't seem to make the grade anymore.

Since I started the letter Tuesday, it's been a very busy week. Something doing at the office every minute and we've moved into our new headquarters that we had planned to move into as soon as the 17<sup>th</sup> moved out. We have a great deal more room now and by the time we get a stove up, will be pretty comfortable. As it is, we are the best off that we have been to-date. The building itself is a private home and a small town department store on one side – a separate building that may be entered through doors from the house and is being used by Operations.

And again we have mail. I have lots of mail. Very encouraging. No kidding. And again they are spread out over a whole month. First, there is a letter from Aunt Pearl dated November 8<sup>th</sup>, and a letter from Mother dated the 9<sup>th</sup>. Then a letter from Kay of the same date. One from Mother dated the 11<sup>th</sup>, saying that there was no celebration there, and a letter from Dad the next morning telling me about the parade. Screwball. Then, a letter from Mother dated the 27<sup>th</sup> together with artillery braid. This is plain red. What I want is dark blue piped in scarlet. A letter from Mart, a letter from Kay on the 26<sup>th</sup> sending me a Paris address to late, for I won't be able to get back to Paris for a long time. Too far. A letter from Kay dated the 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, December 1<sup>st</sup> and December 4<sup>th</sup>, a card and letter from Ma Danner, together with a check for \$10.00. A Christmas card from Kay – and a Thanksgiving card from Mother and Dad. Really on the beam there. All of that and a package from the Hodsons in Anderson. And a very nice package too.

I've gotten a new bunch of pictures and also some that the Colonel has taken which we fellows were able to get hold of because his were so much better. Part of mine have yet to go to be developed, and some of them I let John have to send to his wife, so will send them on as soon as we have the reprints taken. But, I'm sending these on to you. I'll send the pictures to Kay and the listing to Mother and Dad, as we cannot

write on pictures. So Kay will have to put the information on the back of each one for me ... Please?

Well, if I were home now Kay and I would probably be working very hard on some Christmas presents here at the last minute. Kay would be sewing on something and I would be making a glass table or something else. Just think – Christmas Eve is just a week away and we no more have the Christmas spirit here than I can fly. As yet, we don't have any snow, and the rain has stopped for two or three days. It's really too cold to snow. But at any rate, the weather is much better than it was. The Red Cross Director was in the day before yesterday, and we are going to throw a party for the orphans of this town. And there are quite a few. And this calls for another lecture. You know, when we came to France, we were amazed at the amount of food that the French apparently had. Everyone was well fed and fairly well clad and so they gave us the story that when we got to France we would find out how tough it was, that they had really felt it there. So we went to France, and as Life Mag has already run the story, only the very poor were not well off. Everyone else was getting food and having a very good time, considering. But, when we came inland, up near where some of the bitter fighting has been going on, we began to see what it means to have the Germans as overlords of the French. For these people were not doing well and hadn't been doing too well. Most of them are clad fairly well and there are a lot of wooden shoes, but there are many who were close to starving. Each meal we are surrounded by men, women and children with pails, buckets, cans, or anything, who beg for just a little from you who (especially the children) circulate among the tables and point at the food and say something and the unsuspecting soldier, thinking that he meant that that was bread or something in French, would therefore nod in agreement. And, accordingly, the child would grab and snatch the item right out of the mess kit. That hasn't happened in our own mess, but did happen here just before we came. And then they are at the wash cans. And they carry away the swill for their own consumption. And I gave a little girl on the street a D-ration bar, and she was very much elated and her Mother was very abundant in her thank you's. It makes a guy stop and do a lot of thinking and really thank God that his family is in the United States where we have so many things and can do so many things. Thank God I'm an American!

We stopped having to carry our arms again Thursday. That was quite a pleasure. Now if we could just go back to helmet-liners and overseas caps again, we would be sitting pretty. But that won't be for awhile yet.

When we got here, as I've told you before, they were running a show each night. And so we're doing likewise. I didn't go tonight, for there was a stage show and I felt that

I had better write letters while I felt like it. Last night was “San Diego I Love You”; it didn’t amount to much.

We have several examples here of sweatshops. We have several small lingerie shops here where they make the very cheap items. Mostly of the 5¢ and 10¢ store variety. And they work the girls in the shops from 7 AM until 6 PM. We see them in the morning and again at night. And they eat at the place, I guess, for we don’t see them quit at any time. All of the good lingerie is made at Lyons, but I doubt if I ever get there.

Each letter you ask about the cold. Well, it’s a little better. I felt very bad earlier in the week, but I’m a little bit better now. The main trouble this time is the cough. I think that is what keeps me so well worn down to a nubbin. I was just thinking back, I’ve never gotten rid of the cold I got on the train ride from Camp Butner to the POE. Nine months of colds.

The package from the Hodsons was very nice. Had a big can of salted nuts and a nice assortment. Mostly pecans. And six bars of Candy, four packs of cigarettes, six boxes of Nabs, and two cans of Vienna Sausages. Was very much surprised to receive it. So now I have another letter to write.

Yes, I have my out of humor moments. Last night, I was feeling very blue and even sorry for myself, homesick I guess, and I felt like crying myself to sleep. But fortunately, I fell asleep about as fast as I hit the bed, so I wasn’t tempted too long. Wish this war could end and we could come home.

We’ve read about the V-2 bombs in the magazines and papers but so far that is as much contact with them we’ve had or likely to have. You see, they’re made for such high flying and for so far a distance they couldn’t do much this close in. They’re too inaccurate.

I was quite interested in hearing about Mrs. Smith’s brother. There are so many casualties these days. When I was in Paris getting my glasses, I had an opportunity to talk to a lot of the boys there and hear their experiences at the front. Most of the GI’s in this particular ward were suffering from shrapnel wounds. All of their conversations ended up with that gun. And all of them had the same things to say about it. Doesn’t sound at all good. News sounds pretty good though, tonight.

The stationery I sent home is not very good. But it is some that was captured from the Germans. Thought it would be a souvenir of the war, and then too, things aren’t so

easy to purchase over here, and they made a very good thing to send. Your Mother and Mart have both raved about them, and I'm glad if they do like them, but they are really not so hot... how about asking me over for waffles and having ice cream with chocolate sauce for dessert? Sounds pretty good to me....

Hate to hear about Bob going on bivouacs and such. It's much too soon to be doing such things. But I'll bet the kids are having fun the same as we did in Durham in our \$8.00 per week room. Didn't we? Oh, boy! The eraser that Mother sent me is OK but the two Kay sent are too small. Thanks just the same, honey, and thanks so very much Mother....

So glad that you liked the little cards I sent home. Of course they are all hand work and I thought they were lovely.... What's the latest on Bill Miller? You haven't mentioned him for awhile. Glad to hear that June Miller is being discharged. That is some encouragement to others of us that have about given up hope of returning to civilian life.



I think I've rattled off enough. Several pages, and I've got to work on the pictures yet. So will have to sign off. I'll write again before the week is out. As ever,

Paul

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Somewhere in France  
Christmas 25 Dec 1944

Dearest Kay, Mother and Dad –

Merry Christmas everyone! Here it is a beautiful day. The sun is shining and there is no wind. There's no snow today, but there still is a small amount of snow from the one day that it did snow. It's just 12:05 so I know that all of you are still in bed – I hope. Anyway, I would be if I were home. But then, I'm not home.

A fine husband and son I turned out to be. I haven't written to you since the first of last week, and all of you write me so often, but hones, each day has been so full and our one bit of relaxation is going to the show, and of course, I've gone every night but one this last week and I worked that one night. On top of that, we now have to be in our quarters by 8:00 PM each night, and I don't have a typewriter there and, anyhow, after listening to all of the Joes bitching in the barracks, a guy loses all desire to write because he doesn't want to tell all of his troubles.

I've had a couple of letters from Mother and Dad and a couple from Kay since I last wrote. But the most recent one is the card from the Galyeans which was mailed Dec 15<sup>th</sup>. I have finally received another package, the one from Kay marked from Ma Danner. Thanks, honey. Everything came through all O.K. I had opened the present (that I had received from the Williams so long ago) just the other night so that I could feel that I was receiving something too. They had sent me a set of the Middleton tobaccos. They are very nice. Guess I'll get energy to write them a letter very shortly.

Last night we had a stage show by our own special service unit. Alden and I didn't go for we both wanted to write some letters and it's so hard to do so. Alden started the fire and I headed for the office to get the writing material. Only before we got underway, the 1/Sgt. came through the warehouse looking for a detail, as he said, for an hour's work. But we've seen his details before, so we knew that it would take a lot more time than that. So we both headed for the office. On the way, being disgusted, we stopped in at the bar for a beer and found the rest of the outfit there. So, we stayed until we were run out to go back to the warehouse at 8 PM. And being run out, as usual, caused more griping and it was the same old story.

Yesterday afternoon we had a party for the French kids of the town. In fact, two parties. One at 2 PM for the kids up to 10 years old and another one for the kids up to 15. And was the place packed. We gave our rations this week that they might receive Christmas presents from us – candy, soap, toothbrushes, no tobacco. And did the kids have a glorious time. We were requested to go to the 4 PM party and everyone, including the parents, had one whale of a time. It was very interesting to stand around

and watch the expressions on the faces of both old and young. You could find a little bit of everything there.

I don't know just what is wrong with me. This was to be a happy Christmas letter, but somehow I'm not in the mood for it. We even had fried eggs this morning for breakfast. But we're all down in the dumps. I'm not kidding myself. I know that we've got a good outfit, and I personally am treated very well, and I try to retaliate by turning out a good day's work each day. I have sufficient clothes to keep presentable at all times, I usually get enough to eat, I have a warm office now to work in (I don't even wear my long johns to work anymore although I do still wear a wool undershirt), and I have a German bed and an innerspring mattress on it. I work hard each day, seven days a week, with no time off, but I am able to go to the show almost every night. But even so, I get that funny feeling in the pit of my stomach when I hear all of these fellows complaining; and I do some of it myself too, I'll admit. And a lot of the complaints and gripes are legitimate too. As for instance: the men live in a cold, drafty warehouse which, while it is dry and keeps a lot of the cold out, is quite a firetrap. The officers live in a hotel, which has steam heat and every man there lives on a mattress. Of course, the boilers are fired by GI's and the EM's keep warm by small stoves in the warehouse. The EM's are restricted to the warehouse at 8 PM each evening, while the officers may drink each night as long as they wish. You see, the main bar is located in the downstairs of the hotel.

General "Ike" put out a letter to all commands that the distribution of liquors would be equal between the officers and GI's, but what do you think? The GI's are being allowed to have some wine for the dinner today (which we chipped in for gladly) and we are getting two bottles of American beer today (the first that we have had), but the officers have always had a quart of Scotch and a quart of Gin each month, and now in addition they received this week a quart of Champagne, two quarts of wine, and one quart of Cognac. See? Equal distribution. The men are expected to naturally do without but the bar on the shoulder absorbs the liquor ... The men in the office are expected to do all of their regular duties each day and, just because he is put on details and has to be taken out, is not reason that his work should slide. Each man in our office has a full day's work to do. Each of the men from Tec5 on down have to pull details at least once a week and sometimes two or three times. Yet, they seemingly can't understand why the work isn't out on time. We are running about 75 hours behind at the present time. Leave us alone and we can make the grade. But, for instance, Alden and I do the work that is being done by five and six men in the other depots. The fellows have just received new instructions that all men will look like a million dollars at all times. Clothes clean and pressed, etc. Yet, up until today, the PX hasn't had any shoe polish, and we aren't allowed any time off to wash clothes

and press them. There isn't any hot water anyway, so we couldn't wash the things ourselves if we wanted to, and no place to press things, so all that we can do is have our clothes washed continually by the French and, believe me, it gets to be quite expensive. My laundry runs me about 100 francs each week (\$2.00)...

I think that I should mention also that the officers, or at least the commanding officer, had American beer ahead of the enlisted men. We, three of us, were over at the colonel's living quarters, which is a large house which we first used as our headquarters before moving into this place and in which he lives with colonel Jones and Major Merritt, doing some work and when we got done the Major gave us each a bottle of beer out of their case; so they obviously had it.... Just so that you can get a gist of what we are going through, let me give you a description of our commanding officer. He is huge, ponderous. Selfish, egotistical. Arrogant, boorish. When the Colonel arrived at Butner, he immediately began telling us about the wonders of his old command – Camp Phillips Reception Centre, and what a wonderful enlisted men's organization he had there. What a wonderful time they were able to have and what all they did. AND, that we were going to have either a non-com's club or an enlisted men's club in our organization. That was months ago and we are still being told about the same old things and that we are going to have the same things, etc., not only that, but as Kay knows, and I may have told Mother and Dad, although the cadre was formed from the 12<sup>th</sup> depot, the Colonel brought another cadre from his old command, thus making our unit overgrade in rank and filling up the key positions with rank who were unqualified for the job.

Several of the fellows that he brought with him, although nice fellows personally, were entirely unsuited for depot work, being carpenters mainly with one photographer and one mess Sgt. and his orderly. The photographer, a M/Sgt. holds down the rating which belongs to the supply Sgt. who is only a staff Sgt. Maybe that wouldn't be so bad but, in the meantime, the spec number of this fellow has been published as one of the most desired and essential in the operation of the war, and all units possessing such personnel should report them at once. So, was he reported? Hell, no. The colonel refused to part with him. (He takes the pictures for the Colonel.) When we were at Butner, the Colonel had a run-in with Colonel Moore of the 12<sup>th</sup>. And then, when we were at the staging area, he had another flare-up with Colonel Moore. So we came to England. He had a run-in at both camps where we were with the commanding officers. He had a run-in with higher headquarters. And so it has been all the way down the line. We have had it just a little tougher all the time because of the animosity between himself and higher headquarters. And especially so when we arrived at this location because of the dissention between Col. Liston and Col. Brown. It even went so far as to be forbidden to go near the other headquarters when we got

here, for the feud was carried throughout both depots. At the present, we are working seven days a week, even working today with a full office, with no time off. One of the fellows asked the Colonel about it. He couldn't understand why any of us should want a half a day off, that he didn't have a half a day off himself, that he got along OK. Of course, he didn't mention that he now has so many souvenirs that he has a trailer hooked onto the back of his recon car to carry them around. Or that he was minus about one out of three days when we first came to France, being out on a sightseeing trip around Normandy. And all of the time gas and tires were at a premium.

When we had the air raid back in England, that first one, the Colonel was then in the prone position in the bottom of the trench, and he had the Major, then Captain, sit up and look out of the trench and tell him what was going on... I think that will give you a picture of what the commanding officer is like. And then, to have us pulling details that we are now pulling since we left our old regular station for the rest camp and then to here and being made to live like garrison soldiers in the field – all of the boys are bitter. And they have the nerve to say that morale is excellent. I really wish that an inspector general would come into the unit and look around. What a thought. Then there's the case of last night in the warehouse on Christmas Eve. A couple of the fellows were feeling good and were horsing around, as fellows will, and accidentally bumped into a steel door. It seems that a cabinet was setting against the door on the far side and when they bumped into the door, it knocked the cabinet over. And Lt. Miller, who was in the next section, for some unknown reason, came in and proceeded to cuss out the whole section. It wasn't aimed at anyone in particular for there were so many swear words and so little other said that it couldn't be taken personally. But it definitely was not an act of conduct becoming an officer. If disciplinary action had been taken, he would have had his wrists slapped and it would be forgotten. If an enlisted man, he would have been broken and court-martialed.

Well, my darlings, lunch is over and what a meal it was. All of the food that we could eat – turkey, ham, and all of the trimmings. And to boot, when we got back to the warehouse, I found six packages from all of you. One was from Glenn and Fern, one from Mrs. Gutermuth, two from Mother and Dad and two from Kay. Thank you all so very much. Everything came through in grand shape. Only next time, please don't send any soap, shampoo, or cigs. We get plenty of them. Thanks so much for the candy and cookies. The butter cookies from Mother and Dad look grand. And all of the candy. And that box of Clarke bars. Yum, Yum! We'll have a party tonight.

I'm out of things to say or gripe about. So guess I will have to sign off. This is the first blue envelope that I've used in about seven months, before I was altogether used

to the censor. I know I should write cheerful letters on Christmas but it is more or less of a mockery over here. We even work as usual. But then, there's a war on. Hope to have a letter from you tomorrow. Haven't received the letter with the \$25.00 yet but probably will in the next mail. As ever,

Paul

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Somewhere in France  
2 January 1945

Dearest Kay –

Well, I'm on CQ again today so I have to slow down and write to you – since I can't be out gallivanting around. But it isn't that bad, but I have been busy, but-but- and so on.

Let's see. Saturday night, I went out with Joe Schreibeis, Alden and Emerson Diebler and drank a little beer. We got back to the warehouse about 8:00, of course, and then sat around the stove and ate from all the different packages that we've all received. And so that busted up at 11:00 P.M. when we had to turn the lights out.

Sunday night was New Years Eve and I did my best to try and figure out just what you would be doing. Decided that Kay would be with the girls in Madison, with maybe Mart and Bob there too. And Mother and Dad out at Marge and Bob Smith's. Right? As for me, well I did something that all of the boys didn't get to do anyhow. Chas Muschell had an invite to some French people's house between the hours of 6 and 7:30 and asked me to go along with him. And I did. Charlie speaks pretty good French, at least enough to get along (and he's learned all of it since he's been over here, but then he's smart. Used to be a high school principal before he was drafted into the Army) and he did all of the talking and I just sat back and listened and a great part of the time wondered just what was being said. But I did enjoy myself and was glad that I had gone.

Mama Lilli, which is as near to her name as I can get, is roughly in her 60's. She has a granddaughter that lives with her, possibly 19 or 20, and the two of them live in this quite large house on the very edge of the business district. She is a very intelligent old soul and Chas had the time of his life talking to them, in French of course, and they were patient and he was able to get everything that was said. They brought out their traveling visas for the time they were traveling in territory occupied by the Germans, as was all of this place, and it was very interesting to see the questions that were put to them by all of the different ones and the answers given by them. At the time of this passport, Christian had been 15 years old. 1940.

Anyhow, the 118<sup>th</sup> was throwing a dance and we two decided that we would try to go too. Crash it, in other words. Which we didn't have too much difficulty in doing, as both of us are well known throughout the depot (you'll have to surmise whether good or bad, I ain't talking) and we stayed until it was over at 11:00 PM. And then, we had the problem of getting through town and back to the warehouse without being picked up by the MP's. We were really sweating, as if that was going to help any. Anyhow, we decided to put on a very bold front and walk back through the town with all of the French people who had been at the dance (the girls and their Mothers and Fathers who chaperoned) and we escorted Mama Lillie and her granddaughter home. We had a pony-size glass of cherry vasser, or something like it, and then made it back to the warehouse undetected. And in getting in we found out that all of the other boys who had been out had been picked up. Were we lucky. We were in bed by 11:45.

Then, yesterday, New Years Day, we had ham and eggs for breakfast and had the same dinner that we had Christmas Day. Very good. In fact, better than we had on Christmas, for the turkey was sliced this time, and I couldn't describe it before. In the afternoon there was to be a USO show and I out flipped Cole to go in the afternoon. So we went, but the show failed to appear and so we saw "Till We Meet Again". Enjoyed it a lot. And had planned to go back last night to see the USO show, but when I came to the office things were in such a snarl that I sat down and worked until 9:45 last night. Didn't hurt me, though.

Night before last I received a package from Mother and Dad with the fruit juice and large candy bars in it. Thank you very much. Think that maybe I'll bring some of the popcorn down here tonight and have some as the fire down here is a little hotter than those at the warehouse. And I'm on duty all night, so I'll have plenty of time. Yesterday, received three letters. One from Kay postmarked December 21<sup>st</sup>, another the 22<sup>nd</sup>, and one from Uncle Skip postmarked the 23<sup>rd</sup>. He gave news to us, as we didn't hear that the drive was stopped until Christmas Day. And you tell him that he was right about the Maddox Warehouse, that it is about a round trip to Madison and back again. Also that I enjoyed hearing about Earle William's black eye. There were a lot of heads being shaken around here when I read that little item aloud. We are 100% in not believing the story.

I think that I have about recited my little piece, so I'll give the typewriter to Alden and let him get started on the afternoon's work. He's got a lot to do, but then I have too. Thanks so much for all your letters. I enjoy them a great deal.

As ever,

Paul

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*(The following letter was not actually included in the bound book of letters saved by Memaw, but was a carbon copy of a letter found in a box of photos.....)*

Somewhere in France

2 January 1945

Dear Hodsons—

Christmas and New Years are over over here, not that we had much chance to enjoy the holidays, but at least we knew that our families and friends back home were enjoying the holidays as usual and, after all, that is what we are fighting this war for – the pursuit of happiness. But we had a good dinner both days, large dinners with plenty of turkey and baked ham for all. We even had ham and eggs for breakfast on New Years Day. (Bacon and eggs on Christmas morning.) Other than that we worked right straight on through. We are fighting a war over here, and holidays are something for you folks back home.

We are quite busy over on this side of the pond. We are working seven days a week with no regular time off. I managed to take the afternoon off yesterday afternoon to go to the show, but I stopped in again after the show and found my desk buried under loads of work to be done, so didn't even go to chow, but worked until 10 PM last night. Today, I'm on CQ. I came on at 7 AM this morning and will be on duty until 7 tomorrow morning, and then will come in to work at 8 AM tomorrow morning as usual. As they say in French, "C'est le guerre", or in other words, "it's the war". Whenever these French can't answer a question over here, it's c'est le guerre.

I want to thank you so very much for the package that I received from you for Christmas. I was very nicely surprised to receive it, and we all enjoyed the contents very much. And I actually received it on Christmas morning. I had been getting cold feet for my packages weren't coming through, although the other fellows were receiving theirs OK. And then I got one package on Christmas Eve from Kay and then received six packages on Christmas Day, so the day was a success.

Mail is very spasmodic over here. First there will be no mail for several days and then we'll receive some old mail – quite old. Next we'll have to wait another three or four days and then we'll have some very new mail and then the process will be repeated again. I have had one letter dated the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December but the next mail will in all probability be dated back into the early part of December. Oh, well ....

They captured a few German prisoners this evening and marched them through the town to the lock-up. They aren't very fierce looking as long as someone else has the power, but the French didn't seem to like them at all. It seems to make a great

deal of difference which one wields the whip. And the Germans used it plenty when they were here.

I went to a dance that one of our battalions gave Sunday night. And one of the stories that some of the people told me was about the time that the Germans threw a dance here and invited all of the girls in the town to attend. And of course the girls could not refuse without bringing a great deal of wrath down upon all of the town. So they went to the dance and wouldn't dance with the Germans. When the Germans wanted to know why, they were told that the girls were all domestics and didn't know how to dance. And so the Germans, raging, sent all of them home again. Fortunately we don't have that kind of reception.

I'm going to have to go to work in a second, so I'm signing off until the next letter that I manage to get written. Do write to me. Your letters are always welcome, and I enjoy hearing about home very much.

As ever,

Paul

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Somewhere in France

12 January 1945

Dearest Kay –

It's Friday night again and another week is almost gone. Don't know just exactly where time goes but it certainly does fly. This week has really taken wings.

I've received a card from Kay mailed the 12<sup>th</sup> of Dec., and another one that was written on the 28<sup>th</sup>. So glad that everybody had a nice Christmas. So very sorry to hear about Millie's father dying. And especially on Christmas, too. I understand about Christmas. If I had been home, we would have probably done the same thing that you did. But you're right on one score. When I get back home again, we'll go back to having Christmas on Christmas – not on Christmas Eve. Remember – you and I – sort of wanting to sneak a look at something on Christmas Eve like two little kids and so compromising that if I'd let you see one little present I got you, you'd do the same for me? And then, Christmas morning in Madison, with Mart and Bob and Glenn and Fern, maybe, and your Mother and Ida and Dow and Doc and maybe someone else and all of the presents that could be gotten under the tree and the tree ablaze with lights and everyone opening packages and me finding them for everyone under the tree and, of course, holding back and distributing them as evenly as possible so that everyone could have the fun of opening them at the same time? And before it was all over, the room completely covered with paper and Doc in the middle of everything, having one whale of a time, just like a little kid, and doing his bit to open

a package for someone too. And your Mother – the last one to get all her packages open and we'd all stop and wait on her. And then Bob and Mart's house for Christmas dinner and you and I to Indianapolis to our house or the Schiesz'. Don't worry, darling, those times will come again, and we'll make up for lost times.

Have I told you in the last letter or two that the ground is covered with snow and that it is cold here? We have had quite a lot of snow in the last ten days. The streets and roads are very slick, and it's around zero. Doesn't feel so cold, but there's very little wind, and you don't feel it until the cold really sinks in, and then you darned near freeze. I've thought so much lately about the register in the dining room at Madison and could picture you standing on it and could picture just how good those heat waves could feel. We have central heating in the office, but it doesn't do much good, so we have small stoves in each room, and thus heat the office. It's been cold all day, and I've had on my sweater, and tonight I'm sitting out in the middle of the room right under the light near the stove and I'm about to burn up. We don't stay in the warehouse anymore than we have to, so accordingly the place is ice cold. But it isn't bad, for we spend most of our time here, and that is the most important. And we have our beds to get into and keep nice and warm.

Another thing. We turned in one blanket the other day and, in return, drew a comforter – you know, like you and I had in the back of the car at Durham, and it makes it much warmer for us. There's one thing that I'd like to have though, if it can be purchased and doesn't cost too much. I want a light flannel sheet for my bed. It would be nice to sleep on and then too, it would afford me another blanket to put over me. But if they are up in price, don't get one.

Our Red Cross club opened the other day. We have three girls here that are nice. One is from Seattle, one from Florida and the other is from Brooklyn. The first two are very nice, but haven't met the latter yet. The one from Seattle talked to us for about an hour the other night. And the coffee that they serve is super. They don't have any doughnuts yet, but the machine is being set up and we expect to have some within a few days. Think we're really going to have something there.

Also, we have formed a new enlisted men's club. It will be for all the enlisted men in the HQ and HQ Co., but in order to keep outsiders out and also so we could get started, we have put up a membership fee of 150 francs. We'll have beer and wine and will be able to stay open until 10:00 PM each night, compared to 8PM at all of the local bars. So it will be another place where we can all gather to keep warm and sort of get together.

Thanks to each of you for the funny papers and the book. The funny papers have been read by everybody, but even I haven't read the book as yet. Thought I'd read last night because I was CQ, but my eyes were hurting so badly that I gave it up as a bad job. The papers were all from the 19<sup>th</sup> of November. And both Thykeson and myself got a bang out of the clippings about the candle works at Whiting. He had been there too, so we enjoyed it more than a lot of people.

I still haven't mailed out my Valentine for Kay. If I could just find a small box. And I've still got Fern's birthday present, and her birthday was several days ago.

There are so many things that I think of from time to time that I want to mention to you, but I always forget them when it comes time to write. It never fails. For instance, I always want to try and tell you about the trucks over here. They're immense affairs and very clumsy. Most of them remind one of our moving vans of the larger type, very wide and the cab large enough for four persons to sit in the seat comfortable. Very few of them use gasoline. Most of them use charcoal, which they have in a combustion chamber on the back or side of their cab or on the car. It doesn't do too good a job. The power is weak and they go rather slowly and they all have a hell of a pull up a hill. When we were back at the old camp, I got to ride in a Renault, which was a combination of Ford and Whippet. They had more window space than any car in the US, and they also have an opening in the roof like the taxis in New York, which would be very nice, especially for the unmarried couples who want to sit and look at the moon.

I'm wondering what kind of assignments Bob and Earle got. Have you heard anything yet? Of course, I won't know for another two weeks yet, but I'm keeping my fingers crossed for both of them in the meantime. Here's hoping.

My cold seems to be a little better. I'm not suffering so much from a running nose as I was, but the cough hasn't subsided one bit as yet. The spells are further apart, but when I do have a coughing attack, it's just like pulling the outside inside and vice-versa. I get weak all over. I've had a headache for 36 hours now, but maybe that will be gone by morning.

Anyway, Doc Jones is keeping an eye on me to make sure that I don't go overboard. And I'm taking medicine. So I'll be all right again soon, I hope.

Hope to hear from you tomorrow. Almost forgot. Had another package from the Galyeans yesterday. Grapefruit, shrimp, fruitcake, and something else. I forget what. Came through all OK. Joe and I can't seem to find any room in our locker. Between

the two of us, our locker is full of food. And so are the lockers of all the other men, so we can't have a party and get rid of part of it.

As I said before, hope to hear from you tomorrow. Haven't had the letter with the money order in it yet. But no hurry. When it does come, I want to hold it to see if there will be a change in the ratio between French and American currency. Don't want to lose too much. Say hello to everyone for me. As ever,

Paul

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Somewhere in France

Jan 22, 1945

Dearest Kay – Mother and Dad –

It's been a very busy week. We had a large fire in town Friday night and all of us worked like troopers putting it out. Did a darned good job of it, too. They have a volunteer fire department here and they operate much the same as they do in Madison. But with the Army directing the proceedings, there was a minimum of damage, although it consumed all of an evening.

And on Saturday night, H.Q. and H.Q. Co. threw a dance. Had a lot of fun. Were a lot of girls and civilians there, far more than there had been the week before, and all of us had a darned good time. And we were able to stay out until 11:30 – so you can imagine, it was a gala night. Curfew is at 8:00 P.M.

Had another package from the Schiesz. Tell Mrs. Schiesz that the chili sauce is super. I had kept my fingers crossed every package that I received from them in hopes that she would send me a bottle. Don't be conservative with the thanks to them. Go overboard. The chili sauce is wonderful. (Of course, I always did say that she makes the best chili sauce in Vessay Street.) And the cookies and shrimp arrived all in good order too.

Dad, I hope that your pipes are as good as they look, but they probably aren't. I have one for myself but I haven't smoked it yet. I also have a Dr. Grabow deluxe which I've only smoked a few times and a curved stem Frank Medico which I've smoked twice. I still prefer cigarettes. I passed out a box of Phillies Christmas Day – ten cents at that, and a box of Havana Nuggets when I got my promotion, so I'm having to economize on smokes. But do not interpret this as meaning that I want cigarettes. I don't. I have about two cartons on hand at present.

It's about time to go over to the Red Cross and get a cup of coffee before they close. Don't suppose there will be any doughnuts this late in the evening but at least the

coffee will be abundant. It isn't so good as when they first arrived here but it still draws GI's like bees to honey.

I've given up finding the pepper grinder for Mother. Even if I could, I couldn't afford it, for when the last one purchased over here cost about \$5.00, now the same thing would cost \$20.00.

This afternoon I received the 1945 Esquire Varga calendar from the OA, MA, P.A. group and all of us are enjoying them very much. Of course, as someone remarked tonight, the calendar is pretty small, but then, who looks at the calendar??? Tell them I'll write them a nice letter as soon as I can get in the mood. All that I can think of these days is the end of the war may be in sight and really pitching a whangeroo celebrating it. It's time to go home to bed, so g'night everyone.

Paul

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Somewhere in France  
Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>, 1945

Dearest Kay, Mother and Dad –

The weather has been quite warm again today and most of the snow has gone off the streets. We are back to the place where we can again see the cobblestones and walk to the office without having to wade. What a difference.

We had a good dinner this noon, and I managed to eat too much again. We had our usual canned chicken, which isn't bad as stewed chicken, although some fried chicken would be wonderful. And we had dumplings, peas and carrots, mashed potatoes, with cranberry sauce, and vanilla custard for dessert. And I was miserable all afternoon, but it was a comfortable uncomfortableness. Then, tonight we had braised beef, macaroni and cheese, and pineapple for dessert. So we ate pretty good. Yesterday morning we even had a pair of eggs fried to order!

Thanks for "What's Cookin'". I enjoy it so much and so do the others. You may think it's slightly humdrum, but to us over here, it's home. The common little things like a record for consecutive days of snow on the ground, the Boy Scout week, and the additions to the American Legion Headquarters – That's Indianapolis.

One of the things that is getting the most use is the coffee percolator. It is continually on the stove, making pot after pot of coffee all day long. And we all manage to make a trip back to the publications room to have a cup of coffee in the morning and one in the afternoon. Imagine, I'm a coffee drinker. We have to use some "peculiar" means of getting enough coffee to take care of everyone, but the best pots are when we have

some Maxwell House coffee from home. Everybody has to have a cup. And it really tastes good.

We had all thought that this was just a little unusual weather over here and that we would soon have snow again, but now we find out that we are having spring, that there won't be any more snow. So we think that will be pretty good as far as we are concerned, but we would much rather had six weeks more of snow and had the tanks have good traveling. As "Up Front with Mauldin" says, - "One good thing about winter is the Germans don't stink as bad as they do in summer". We will stay here, so far as we know, for a long time, but the Army moves in mysterious ways, so we are never surprised.

I'm trying to start a savings over here for a furlough, for when they finally approve them. I don't particularly want to go back to Paris, and I doubt if I could anyway. I could maybe go to England, but I have no desire to do that. So what I have in mind is to take a furlough to Marseilles, if and when I am able to do so, for I think that is the only way I'll ever get to see the southern part of France. If the war is over by that time, and I think it will be, I want to go by way of Switzerland. On the other hand, the Army tells us that after the war they are planning tours to visit the various countries over here. And if I am here, I want to, by all means if possible, take one of those tours. I want to see as much as I can, for while I may come back some day and bring Kay with me, at the present time if I could get home you couldn't drag me away with a team of horses. Southern France is supposed to be so beautiful and many of us are hoping to see all of it that we can. So I'll start building a nest egg and keep away from poker games!!

Kay – go downtown and buy yourself a Staff Sgt. pin for your valentine from me. Mother – go do the same. Remember, at Durham you didn't want one for you wanted to wait until I made Staff? Funny the things you can remember on and on. Many thanks for my valentines. I enjoyed them from each of you. Doesn't seem like it can be that time already. We just had Christmas.

W.P.B.'s Krug sure is the soldier's friend! Says who? Why is it that the war workers should have a bonus for everyday after V-E that they stay on the job in a war plant? Isn't there still a war going on in the Pacific? And aren't the boys overseas who have given more than anyone else entitled to a bonus too at that rate for everyday we remain on foreign soil after V-E Day? Sure we're going to get a bonus for all the time that we've been in the Army. On amounts already stipulated. But in the meantime, we've been overseas without our families making but a small amount of money, getting gypped on the rate of exchange from dollars to francs, sleeping out in the

open, living in mud, fighting the common enemy, some dying on the battlefield, and others maimed for life. These war workers are back home, living the life of Riley with more money and luxuries than ever before, having their families and living better than ever and spending every cent as fast as they get it, apparently. We see by the magazines that war plants are swamped with men wanting to go to work so they won't have to go to war. We don't blame them for that. We would gladly come back and work in the war industries at the same wages that we are making now and feel that we were lucky to do so. How about sending guys like Krug out here to sweat it out for the duration and six months? We know we'll still have to foot the bill when all this is over.

The small parachute I sent Mother is one they use to drop flares. They take quite a long time to fall, for they are dropped from quite an altitude, and this one dropped flares which lit the country for quite a time one night. I'm sorry the strings had been cut off, for you could have seen what it really looked like. Of course, you've seen other parachutes. Remember when we lived back on 44<sup>th</sup> Street and for a publicity stunt they dropped Baby Ruths out of airplane by small paper parachutes? And how two of us reached one at the same time and I gladly let him have the candy so I could have the parachute? I think you can hem this and make a spiffy handkerchief.

I'm glad that you like the wooden shoes. You don't know how long I tried to get them. Of course, they are strictly a souvenir item, and the shoe man carved them out for us. Made two or three pairs at a time. I had tried to get some much earlier but couldn't do so. I was just lucky to get these to send home to you.

We're still living in the warehouse and I sleep on a steel cot and an innerspring mattress. Pretty wonderful after the months out on the ground. Of course, by this time I've found out that the mattress isn't as good as I thought it was, but it sure does feel heavenly, and I am very much able to sleep soundly on it. Beau coup. The warehouse isn't as cold as it was for we put the enlisted Men's Club downstairs right under us, and we get all the heat from the stoves down there. And the weather is much warmer too. We managed to go take showers right after lunch today while waiting for some reports to come from the battalions. The water was nice and hot too, for they had some coal again, and I really thrived. But it won't be the same until I can come home and take a shower before going to bed and put on clean clothes each day and sleep between sheets with a down comforter over me again. Ah me! Such dreams!

All my love,

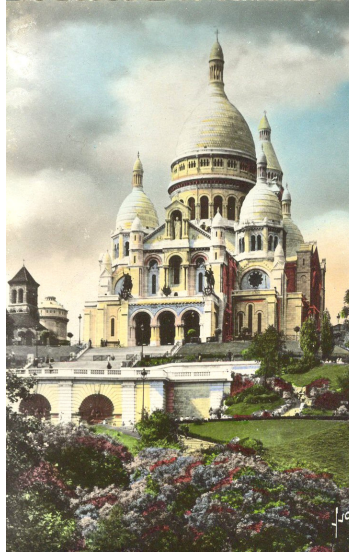
Paul

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Somewhere in France  
17 February 1945

Hello Everybody –

So, you got cheated again. For the first time since the trip to Paris in November, I had an afternoon off. And the same for the other boys in the section. Anyway we got off at noon and have had a very wonderful time. We made a trip to the birthplace of Joan de Arc and, while we are very tired right now, nevertheless, we are more than pleased that we made the trip.



We were lucky enough to get to go through the house where she was born and see the museum there and to go through the church where she worshipped and which has been changed into a monument for her. And then we walked up the long hill to the place where she saw the vision which told her to lead the French troops into battle and saw la Maison de Joanne d'Arc, L'Eglise, and La Basilique dug Boid Chenu. It was built by the French in 1939 and 1940 and I think this cathedral, which is about what it is, is one of the most beautiful things I've seen since leaving the US. The only other thing that I thought could compare in beauty was the altar at Westminster Abbey in London, and that is so much different than this.

My power of description is so poor. I wish that I had the ability to tell you the things just as I saw them, to be able to express myself adequately, but unfortunately I don't. Maybe if I'd done a little more studying in school and less horseplay<sup>7</sup>, I might be able to do a better job. And if I had studied my French history, I might know more about what I'm seeing from time to time.

In the Basilique, the walls are covered with murals which are gorgeous. I made an attempt to take pictures of them but I had some bad luck trying to take time exposures of three of the pictures, so I know they won't come out, but if the last one does come

out I want to go back and try it again. At any rate, everything in the place is perfect. The altar, the stained-glass windows, the murals, the round dome with the murals on the inside, and the place in general. I don't know when I've enjoyed seeing a place so much.

Well I rushed all morning. I probably would have rushed more if I had known that we were going to take the afternoon off. And then, only half of us could be off. But I slept until 8:30 and the work that I had to do this afternoon will wait until tomorrow afternoon. I'll get caught up in time.

I had a package tonight from Mother and Dad that had the potato chips in it. And they came through perfectly. They are all whole and just as nice and fresh as the day you bought them. The half pound sack of marshmallows is gone already, and I suppose the other will go just as fast as I bring them out. The candy is OK too, also the cookies. Thank you so very much. We were getting pretty low on things. You are really swell to me.

The war news is much the same. We hear a lot of rumors, but then, every outfit in France thrives on them. Most of them can be traced down to wishful thinking and a lot to the official organs that set them up for softening up of the troops. So we take everything in and believe everything that we hear and, accordingly, we have our ups and downs.

I'm on CQ in a couple of nights so I'll write you more then. Awfully tired tonight but after a relaxing afternoon I should feel good in the morning. Bye now. Thanks a lot.

Paul

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V-MAIL 19<sup>TH</sup> March, 1945

Dearest Family –

Time seems to slip by so swiftly and yet so slowly. Each week seems to pass individually like greased lightening, but it seems so darned long since we left home, or even since we came to France. Mail has been rotten, but I did have a V-Mail from you yesterday and dated March 2<sup>nd</sup>. First mail I've had for several days again. The latest that I've heard from anyone is March 5<sup>th</sup>.

There's nothing new here. We are practically a garrison now. We keep our shoes shined, wash the walls of the office, and police the streets. And expect to be wearing ties and blouses in the next few days. Will be awful to have to subject our necks to ties again, we've had freedom for so long a time.

No, I've never had a Christmas package from the Crawfords. All that I had from them was a card. Yes, I had two packages from Gil and Grace. I had a package from Kay, while I was sick, with a jar of Mabel's chili sauce and some other things. Haven't tried the sauce yet, but the jelly is very good.

I seem to always be busy and never get caught up. I don't do much physical work, but the mental strain at times becomes pretty great when the pressure is put on. That's the reason I'm always so tired. Everything is always wanted right now. And they get it right now if at all possible.

The difficult we do immediately, the impossible takes a little bit longer. And that's the way we work.

I'm feeling much better. Am getting out in the sun at every opportunity. As ever,  
Paul

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Wednesday Night  
March 21, 1945

Dearest Family –

I had two letters from you tonight and was so glad to get them, and they had made excellent time in reaching here. One, the V-Mail, was written the 9<sup>th</sup> and the Air-Mail on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Just the two letters. Enjoyed them very much and the new clippings.

Kay said, in her letter I had from her yesterday, that the gas plant had been flooded so that they were gasless. And that the water plant was under and the city had plugged in on Croppont's water supply and that they were boiling their water. My, my! What these civilians have to put up with.

I think your reasoning as to where we are is very good. No we are not at Campiegne. You have the right place. We were to have gone to Campiegne, but plans were changed and we came here instead.

Today is the first day of Spring. The sun is so nice and warm when it is out, but the air, except in the middle of the afternoon is pretty brisk. Last night, though, was practically balmy. Bet it's nice down in the Riviera.

I'm glad to hear that Mrs. Schiesz is feeling better now. I've sent her several cards of the V-Mail type. Thought that it might cheer her up. I got a couple more tonight to

send Kay's Mother. Kay said that she was sick in bed with a cold and, when I feel bad, I feel terrible, so I always do my best to try to cheer everyone up.

I wrote to Kay last night and this to you tonight. Thought that each of you might enjoy a more personal letter for a change. I'll bet you'll have a heck—of a time reading this, for I'm so used to a typewriter. But, anymore, the only way to relax is keep away from the office at night, there's just too much work to be done.

One of the morning report Sgts. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division was in last night. Just back from Paris. Told me that he heard I was to go in for a four-day orientation. Boy! Would that be nice. Hope I'm not disappointed. It would give me six days away from the office. You would have to do six days without letters.

There's some news, but I can't divulge at the present. But as soon as it happens, you'll hear from me. How are the Steinmetz?

In the Star Record this month, I see where another of the boys was killed in action. Navy. It will be so wonderful when all this is over and we can return to civilian life and be normal human beings again. I can't think of anything more wonderful than coming home and getting in my own home again. But I expect the first thing will be another honeymoon.

It's almost 9:00 PM, think I'll go to bed. Jim Rio and I are both writing our letters at the Red Cross. Played a game of ping pong even before I wrote this. Downstairs, there is a seven-piece orchestra beating it out, and in the next room the radio is blasting away. Anyhow, guess this will do it. No, I don't want a camping trip up north!

As ever,  
Paul

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Somewhere in France  
March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1945

Dear Kay, Mother and Dad –

I have a long distance telephone call in to Bob. Just talked to the OD at the hospital and they will locate Bob and have him call my back.

Somehow or other I missed receiving your letter with the rest of the B.B. clippings about the finals. So Evansville won again? And Broadripple went a long way too. She must have had a powerhouse this year.

Yes, the war news seems very good. The radio had a report today that all of the U.S. was in a wave of hysteria yesterday.

Well – I just talked to Bob. Had a good connection and could hear him perfectly, although I had to talk pretty loud. Should have just stuck my head out of the window. He sounded fine, said they hadn't gone into actual operations yet, but expect to very soon. Talked about meeting him where Joan of Arc is buried. He said he couldn't get away for three or four weeks, but he would sure enjoy doing it. So, at least two of the family is in talking distance, and talking with one's family in a foreign country doesn't happen every day. Do hope we can get together.

Mailed a package to Kay to Indianapolis today. First class. A gift for each of you, and I know Mother is going to rag me plenty for sending American merchandise purchased in France, and I'll admit I didn't realize it until later. Anyhoo, I think you'll be pleased.

I enjoyed Kay's letter about the travel talk by the lady on Mexico. I enjoyed your retelling it, and I hope we can go back down there some time. Right now though, I just want to get home.

I'm glad the war bonds and bank balance are growing. I still haven't received the booklet with the bond numbers and amounts. Wish it would come. And the present amounts in the various accounts. I like to feel we will have a good credit standing although guess that is assured with Dad at the helm. But anyway, it is nice to know it is building up, and someday we can have a home. And a baby. And don't forget about that moving picture outfit that is to be your gift to our firstborn.

Five of us playing hearts – more fun. I lost.

As ever,

Paul

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Somewhere in France

April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1945

Dear Kay, Mother and Dad –

At long last, a letter. We've moved, although we are still in France. I did manage to scribble out a note to Kay and she has probably passed the information on to you.

Friday was a very busy day. We went to the show Friday night and when we came back from there, I started my letter and the Major walks in and tells me to pack up. Case closed. On Saturday, we worked as usual in the morning and loaded the train in

the afternoon, so I didn't have anything left to write with. On Sunday I was on C.Q. and I started a letter twice, only to have to give it up as a poor job.

Since I was on C.Q., I managed to work myself on the baggage car as the guard. I had lots of room and had a comfortable trip. That's when I got my note out to Kay. And on Monday we rushed like mad getting unloaded and the office set up and, when we got done, I was so tired it even hurt to lie down.

Our new place is grand. We are in a much larger town than Neufchateau. The school that we are quartered in is surrounded by apartment houses. All of the buildings are well built, with the exception of those that have been bombed out or shelled. The people speak more German than French here. The civilians who work here in the building for us speak Polish, being conscripted labor from Poland. And the tales they tell us aren't pretty. They don't feel too friendly toward the Americans for they think the Americans are too easy on the German prisoners!!!

Now, as to quarters. We are located in a large school. A University, co-ed. There are five stories and the basement. We have our office on the second floor, and we live on the fourth floor. It is nice and light and, most of all, clean. We have forty-five civilians who take care of the place, from firing the boilers to serving food. The upper three graders are in a room and I will share a room with a T/S who hasn't arrived yet from the old location; so, for a few nights I have a room to myself. It is a room 11 x 17 and has a private lavatory off that. I think I'll make the grade. Hot and cold running water, steam heat, and good lights. And the theatre where we have our shows looks much like the Zaring, only not as large, and the seats are much more comfortable. Our only problems now is whether the war will be over with soon enough for us to remain here or whether we will move on forward. The headlines on our papers just now say 67 miles to Berlin. Maybe we'll beat the Russians in yet.

I had a letter from John Anderson. He had taken a seven day furlough and had gone to Scotland and Ireland and enjoyed it very much. Aberdeen was as far north as his train could go because of snows, and a day or two in Glasgow. And in all the time in England, and he went before I did, he had never been able to see Charlie Smuck. And lo and behold, over in Ireland he runs into Charlie and they had a lot of fun together one night. He had bought Edna a piece of Irish linen, but had found it darned expensive. Said his base is a B-17 supply depot and he describes it as "much like Gibson's on Capitol Avenue".

Well, I've had a lot of excitement since I started this letter Thursday. I've done a lot of traveling. Have been in Belgium and Luxemburg. And best of all, I got to spend

Thursday night with Bob. And I mean Bob Zink. I had to stop work, due to an extreme emergency in the middle of the afternoon, and make quite a trip. And since my destination was only about fifteen miles from Bob's hospital, we went on to it. Reached there about 11:30 and woke him up at his quarters at 11:50. We stayed until 8:00 AM with him and the other officers in the officers' quarters. By the time I got back here I was about exhausted. Drove part of the way and, of course, I seldom have a chance to drive and I sure enjoyed it. Before we left, Bob gave me a fifth of Scotch. We have just opened in and had a little sip.

Had your letter tonight dated April 1<sup>st</sup> saying you had received your bracelet. And Kay received hers the 30<sup>th</sup>. Glad you both like them. I didn't expect them to get there quite so soon. Hope you will enjoy them. I also had a box from you last night with marshmallows, popcorn, candy bars, and potato chips, all in fine shape. And tonight I have a Christmas package from Kay – not in such fine shape, but it has a bottle of Coke, olives, cheese spread, and pabsette cheese. No – I still haven't received the package from the Crawfords. Here's hoping the war will be over by the time you get this letter. Yours,

Paul

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Somewhere in France  
22 April 1945

Dearest Kay, Mother and Dad –

Time seems to fairly fly. I never seem to get anything done, but am always in arrears on something. Usually work and always letters, and those to the family included. I owe so many letters again but can't seem to make the grade getting them answered. I had a nice letter from Ma Danner and another nice one from the Williams and I owe everyone else, but at least I have the conscience to know that I ought to write the letters.

It's now 8:15 and I just put the finishing touches on a requisition which has to go out tomorrow. Now all I have to do is get Major Merritt to sign it. I think he will be back in a little bit – I hope. Got the Lt. to grant me the morning off to go and see if I can get it filled. Hope that goes through too. But I'll have to work again tomorrow night to make up for it. It will be worth it.

I've had several letters this week. The latest one is dated April 11<sup>th</sup>. That is only eleven days. But the most unusual thing was my receiving the funnies from Mother and Dad that they had sent regular mail dated the 15<sup>th</sup> of April. They reached here in six days. More recent than any letter, and yesterday also I received two packages from Mother and Dad, both sent on March 5<sup>th</sup>. They arrived in fine shape. One had

coffee, soup, popcorn and marshmallows and the other had candy bars and a money belt (which I am going to return in my next package home) and I can't remember what else. Thank you so very much. And don't send me any more candy for awhile. I've got about 24 bars on hand. And that is too much. And don't waste your Kleenex, for I have two boxes on hand. The PX got some in again. Thanks anyhow.

Yesterday I took my first afternoon off since we came to this town. And I went out and hitchhiked to Luxembourg City. All of us have done so. Only one man in the section who hasn't been. Man! What a city! Honest, it is the closest thing to being home I've seen since the Queen Mary pulled out of New York harbor. The city itself, for the most part, is older buildings but the streets are American, the stores are American, and lots of the people speak American – not altogether – but a lot of it. And that sure makes a grand feeling. Two of us were going, but at the last minute, Jesse couldn't go, so I went on alone. When I got there, the first thing I did was go into an ice cream parlor and have a dish of ice cream, or glace, as they call it. And it was real ice cream and very delicious. After having had three dishes, I started out and did some window shopping and saw some very nice things, but nothing I wanted. Tried to get Kay a pair of gloves, but they didn't have just what I wanted so Kay does without the gloves. However, I did get a little stick pin which, if I can find some way to fix the end, will send in this letter. And for Mother I got a souvenir handkerchief which I'm sure she will be showing to everybody, for I think it is very lovely. Very original. And, of course, they have a different rate of exchange there. They use their own money combined with Belgian and the rate of exchange on that is 44 francs on the dollar.

Ran into some of the boys from one of the battalions and ran around with them for awhile and saw some of the sights, bought a couple rolls of film for my camera and had a good time in general. We went to another store and had chocolate éclairs and chocolate chip ice cream and then looked around some more and then I left them. Had one more dish of ice cream and then hitched a ride back to camp. We played poker last night and I lost, but it was only their money, so I don't feel so bad.

Didn't take time to go to church this morning. Had planned to go but got busy and had a late start on the day's business, for I was sleepy this morning and had to go back up and make my bed after breakfast. I have some work which I want to get out of the way yet tonight, not very much, but it will ease the pressure in here in the morning for Perry, especially if I'm not here. Probably fall through.

Thanks so much for the stamps. I was almost out of them. It takes so many when I write as many letters as I usually do (not this last three weeks) and I've been buying

two books at a time. That way I always have some on hand although, as it is now, the post office is right downstairs on the next floor. This typewriter isn't doing so well, I must get it looked after.

Mother, Saturday is your birthday, and I'm a rat for not writing you a letter for that day. But in order to make up for it, I'm going to send this to you Air mail, registered, and it's just possible that you'll get it on time. I'm going to try anyhow. I want to wish you a most happy birthday and hope that we can all be together to celebrate your next one, (the one in 1946, in case you aren't counting them anymore). At any rate, the best of health and happiness for the coming year. I know that this isn't going to take the place of a very personal letter, as you deserve on your birthday, but I hope you will forgive me. How's about it, huh?

It is too bad that you didn't have the letter telling about my talking to Bob before the girls left. That would definitely have given them something to talk about on their way home. It was a thrill getting to talk to Bob and to actually see him in person. And it is so grand that Mary Bebe's husband is coming home. Find out what kind of job he's got lined up and I'll apply for the same thing.

That letter telling about Earle Wm. gave me quite a start. Especially so until I read on down the page and saw where the orders were revoked. Those things aren't nice at all. And I think that he has had plenty of service overseas. Just think, I've got in 14 months already. But then, there are lots of guys that have in 36 to 44 months. I didn't know that Gordon Kirkshandk had even left Columbus air-strip. So he's in England? Yes, do send me his address just as soon as you get his APO number, and get his whole address. That is the only way I have of chasing people down. Is Bill Miller coming this way or is he going to the Pacific? That's a fur piece. Hope I don't make the grade, but I won't count on anything.

As to the Lessons, when the war is over we are supposed to do something. The idea is that we won't be allowed to lay around and loaf. And they don't want to give close order drill like they did in the last war. So studies are the next thing. So far as I can remember there should be lessons 36 and 37 and 38 – 40 and also another book with the next ten lessons in it. I'm not eager to start working for I've got all that I can do at the present time as it is, but there will come a time and I don't want to have to do it the hard way. So if you will send them (if you can find them) I'll appreciate it.

Morale. Now that is a real, live, honest-to-goodness subject. I'm glad that Doc is helping to keep yours up. I need something. That is one reason I haven't been doing so much letter writing lately. Just don't feel like writing and nothing to write about.

But yesterday's trip really gave me a new aspect on things, and I seem to be doing much better now.

Change No. 2. I'm sending you this Air-Mail Special Delivery to both of you 'stead of registered. The P.O. thought I'd better do it that way. Just now saw them down at the Coke machine. Did I tell you that we are now having fountain Cokes? We get all the comforts of home – except home and our families.

I'd better get this in the mail so I'm quitting to mail this, if I can get Lt. Carroll to sign this tonight. So my dear family, I'm signing off until the next letter when I will tell you more interesting news, if there are such things, and spread nothing over several pages. So goodbye for now. As ever,

Paul

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France

10 May 1945

Dearest Family:

Well, the war is over, or at least V-E Day has been and gone. And that's about all that it meant to us here at the depot. We knew that the war was over, but we also knew and still know that there is fighting still going on over here, as well as in the Pacific, and there's nothing to cheer about until all of the needless deaths are over.

From the amount of mail that I've written the last few days, you must have thought that I was kaput too. Honest, I haven't been so busy since we left the States. My reports from the battalions have been running very late, and so I've been having them send their work in to me and I've been doing it for them. Night before last, for instance, which was official VE night, I worked right on through until 5:20 yesterday morning, and I had to miss the party at the club, too. Free champagne and everything. I took time out to go over and have a couple of glasses and then back to work. And last night, I quit at 1:45. Have hopes that tonight I can go to bed like a human being.

I've wanted to write you for two days, while everything was still fresh in my memory, and tell you some of the things that went on here after the announcement that the war was over. But I couldn't do everything. Anyhow, we knew in the middle of the afternoon that the war was over, and that Churchill would speak the next afternoon. So did the French. And you never saw so many patriots all of a sudden. The windows and buildings were fairly covered with flags – French – American – Russian. Everybody was carefree. The boys that were out said that the French were giving the boys drinks and were very friendly for a change. Along about 6 PM, the French started to form a parade downtown with a band and everything. And they marched

over to the biggest hotel here and the Mayor came out on a small balcony and made a speech to his people (I couldn't understand it for he was speaking French, and besides, I wasn't there anyhow) and the band played and everybody sang and had a good time in general. So then the parade moved back to the main corner of town and they proceeded to have a large fireworks display. And then started the parade. And if you have ever seen a small town torchlight campaign parade, you know just exactly what we saw, except that this was on a much grander scale. The parade wandered all over town and finally came down past our headquarters. When it reached here, it was only about three blocks long, but I think that only a small part of it came down our way, for we saw it between the buildings about three blocks away as they were headed for the French caserne, and it was going on for block after block. The parade didn't come past our place until 10:30 and the band was still playing when I went to bed about 11:30. I had just gotten to sleep and was sleeping soundly, when --- it was 3:30 in the morning, outside it was still dark except for the glow of the torch that someone was carrying on the street down below. From my window it sounded like all of one side of town was converged there, but actually, upon getting out of bed, I found that we (the GI's in this building as a whole) were being serenaded by a group of six fellows and six girls. They sang several songs and then wandered on down the street, still singing. Just about the time that everything got quiet again, here came another group with the same routine, and then another and another, and so on for the remainder of the night, so far as I know, for I didn't bother to stay up and keep track of them.

On the following day, actually VE Day, or the day that the President and Churchill spoke, they had another parade that morning and yet another that afternoon and still more going on that night. I don't know where in the dickens they get their energy, but they never seem to run down and are continually on the go.

They are bringing a lot of the French soldiers in here to the French rest camp. And those soldiers had one whale of a time too. They had all kinds of weapons and they proceeded to fire each and every weapon that they had and kept on firing until they ran out of ammunition. But it was quite a pretty sight to see rockets being fired up in the sky. It's something which a fellow never forgets.

Have I ever described a French soldier? He is one of the most nondescript pieces of baggage I've ever seen. When they arrive here, no two soldiers look alike. They have on part uniform and part civilian duds. They carry blanket rolls of all sizes, shapes and description, which will have a straw tick in it and which will also have a small stove wrapped up in it. Then they will have their packs and mess equipment and, lastly, they will be carrying their worldly possessions which are stored in two or three suitcases, according to how many he can carry. And, added to that, his weapon and

you have a French soldier. Dirty, unshaven, nondescript, and loaded down. Yesterday morning, two such came past on their way to the railway station, loaded down as usual. They got opposite to our place and must have been talking things over between themselves for all at once they took off into the small park across the street and, upon opening their suitcases, they proceeded to put on civilian clothes, put their uniforms into the suitcases, and took off.

Time to go to work.

Well – it was a very busy afternoon and it's been a long afternoon. In fact, right now it is 2:15 AM and I'm just finishing my day's work. Thank goodness. I hope that that is my last night of such carryings on.

From the point system that has just been announced, it looks like I'll be home for Christmas in the year 1973 and no sooner. All that I can muster is a total of 53 points, and that's far from enough. We have quite a few that will come home right away, provided they aren't declared essential and held or sent to the CBI anyway.

Dearest family – I'm awfully tired and I think I'll go to bed before I fall over. I've even got to go upstairs and bring my blankets down here for I'm on CQ as well. Never a dull moment. So, if you'll pardon me, I'll say goodnight all and I'll write again as soon as I have time. Just as well that I had not gone to bed.... One of the battalions just called in and wanted some help. So it is now 20 till and I'm off to bed. 'Night.

Paul

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Thionville, France  
21 May 1945

Dear Gang:

My correspondence is getting to such a poor state that I'm taking this means of writing to all of you at the same time. For many of you, this will actually be the first letter that I've written to you since I came overseas and, for others, it will be the first since last Christmas. It seems that there's always something to be done, and I'm always the one to have to do it. Consequently, this long delay.

The good old United States wasn't the only place that had false peace rumors. The French positively live on rumors, and they had told us all of the news days ahead of the actual publishing of the stories, and this end of the war was no exception. They had told us while we were still stationed back at Neufchateau that the peace was being made, and they were still so happy about it then. And each time they told it, they

became very jubilant about it and would remain so for a couple days at a stretch. And then the peace actually did come, and they were deliriously happy. For they all most definitely want their “men-folk” home again. They’ve been without their families for so long a time....

When VE Day was announced unofficially, or that war was over, the celebrations started and continued for three days. I don’t think that the people ever slept. For instance, we first heard about the surrender about 4PM on the evening of the 7<sup>th</sup> and by 6PM there was a parade forming at the far end of Main Street, complete with a band and soldiers and boy scouts and their equivalent of campfire girls, and all of the labor parties, etc. The band was from the Cacerne Joane de Arche, which is located here (a French garrison), and if you’ve ever seen a political rally parade back in Anderson or Madison, or even Indianapolis, with all of its torches, then you magnify it by several times and you have this one. At seven, the parade marched down the street and went directly to the Hotel de France, where the mayor came out on the balcony and spoke to his people. It went over big with the French, but our fellows who were there didn’t think much of it, for he spoke with a French accent and our bunch prefer that Brooklynese, and I didn’t get to hear it myself for I had to work as usual.

Anyway, after the mayor had given the people his blessings, the parade moved on to the main corner of town where they had a band concert and a fireworks display, which they say was quite an affair. These French never wear down. After all that they have been through they have to have a fireworks display!

After the fireworks the main parade started. I managed to finish up my work pretty early and had just gotten to bed at 10:30 when we heard a great clatter and commotion and a band playing and found that the parade was honoring us by coming past our headquarters. So we all climbed out on the edge of our windows and sat there in our undershirts and shorts and watched the parade go by. And it was about three blocks long when it came past our place. But we noticed that when it had turned back toward the cacerne after going back to town again, that it had increased in size until it was about ten blocks long. And the parade finally ended up at the cacerne, and we could still hear them playing until after midnight. Finally I went to sleep.

The only trouble was I didn’t get to sleep very long. At 2:30 we were awakened by a group of French outside composed of both fellows and girls, all of them in uniform, who were serenading us. And they and their songs had more pep and enthusiasm and energy than I could even muster during the day. They sang songs and yelled back and forth to the ones of our outfit that spoke French and sang more songs and finally they departed. In another five minutes we had another group about the same size, this time

some in uniform and some civilians and the same procedure. And then another and another for the rest of the night. I don't know just exactly how long it kept up for I finally fell asleep again.



Here at our headquarters we had no celebration. We were far too busy and were still replacing men who were still being killed on our own fronts and we preferred to wait until it was all over. But the French kept up their celebrating all of that day and the next, making a total of three days of celebrating. They even closed their stores. They fired every weapon that they could lay their hands on from carbines and rifles to burp-guns and bazookas and fired them until they ran out of ammunition. It's a wonder that there weren't any casualties, but we didn't hear of any.

We moved our headquarters here to Thionville the first of April. Prior to that we had been at Neufchateau, which is near Domremy, the birthplace of Joan of Arc, and prior to that had been at Le Mans and Trevieres back in Normandy. Thionville is located halfway between Metz and Luxemburg. All three are lovely towns. I have been in Metz twice just to ride in and out but have been to Luxemburg three times (two afternoons and one night). Thionville is just a small town with a population of 4000-5000 persons. The shopping district is about half the size of Madison, but the town itself is built like a large city. The people live mainly in apartment buildings with one section of large homes. I don't know what the homes look like on the inside, but the apartments look better from without than from within. Due mainly to the lack of paint and further upkeep during the German occupation. But the apartment houses are mainly modernistic and would do credit to any city back home. One strange thing about the town is that there are only two churches in the whole town or, at least, that is all I can find. And I've been in lots of them, dating as far back as the 1400's. But on the other hand, there were a great many prep schools and colleges, of which eight were quite large, and we have our headquarters in one of those.

Our headquarters is a large five-story school building which was some kind of coed

college before the war. It was built in 1933 and was built well. An Evacuation Hospital was here before we came but it moved on up toward the front, and we were fortunate enough to get it. The offices and mess hall and the post office are located on the first and second floors and the enlisted men live on the third, fourth, and fifth floors. The officers are housed in a wing entirely to themselves, so that the enlisted men can't bother them, or beat their time. We have steam heat and running water and shower facilities, etc. The men all live in squad rooms. I live in a small room with a Tech Sgt. and we have the room to ourselves. The room is about 11 x 22 so we have plenty of room for ourselves. We even have a private washroom to ourselves so we don't have to rush to get a wash basin in the mornings. We also have iron beds with innerspring mattresses and a wardrobe in which to hang our clothes and footlockers for our other things. We even have an armchair to sit in if we have any spare time, but so far I think Jess and I have each sat in it once. We both have irregular hours. He works in troop movement and if I'm working late, he's in bed when I get in and I wake him up. And he, being a farmer boy, gets up each morning at 5:45 and wakes me up. Or, if I get a break and finish up early, he invariably has to work and, in turn, wakes me up. What a routine.

All of us over here think that Luxemburg city is grand. In my opinion, it is the nicest and closest to the United States of any place we've seen since we left home. All of the stores have been copied from the U.S., and all are light and airy and clean. Most of the people speak English and talk to the GI's readily. None of us has ever found anyone that couldn't speak enough English to understand us and be understood. The people have welcomed the GI's and the GI's have, in turn, readily welcomed Luxemburg. One thing – there aren't too many rich people in Luxemburg and, on the other hand, there are no really poor people. Some of our boys were there when the Duchess returned to her people and they had a parade with all of the trimmings. I was there the next day, and they had gone all out in decorations of windows and signs and things. The citizens adore her and, from the looks of her land, she rules her people well and wisely.

One of the main questions that everyone asks is, just what is a replacement depot or, as they are known over here, a reinforcement depot? We have what is known as a replacement system, about which there has been a great deal printed from time to time in Life and Time magazines. The replacement system is a chain of depots which serve to place personnel to the front lines and other organizations needing replacements for their casualties. Our depot receives, processes and forwards to the forward depots, and to some units, replacements that are coming from the United States and from rear outfits going to fill vacancies and also handles casualties who were injured or wounded

and are now returning to their units on the continent from the hospitals and rest areas. It's been a very big job to do. Redeployment.

In the redeployment setup, we will do things primarily as we did going the other way. We will be forwarding troops to the United States and to the Pacific and to the Army of Occupation here in Europe. And it's going to be some time before we finish our job. According to figures released by the War Department, we are to have all of the troops out of Europe by the end of one year. We expect our job to be over in about nine months. Logically, by that time there wouldn't be any use for such an organization in the Pacific and they should need more organizations to open up more separation centers in the States. Trouble is, the Army doesn't do logical things, so no telling just what will happen to us. Anyhow we won't be home for Christmas this year.

I tried to call Bob Zink, my brother-in-law, the other night to see if we couldn't manage to get a few days together. But when I got the hospital they told me that Bob had been transferred to the First Army. Fortunately I had to go on an emergency trip to Oise Base Section headquarters about a month ago and Bob was located very near there so I managed to spend the night with him. I got in there at 11:20 at night and left at 8:00 the following morning, but at least I got to see part of my family, and that's an awfully big morale builder. It makes a whale of a difference.

Cy Robare is at Gotha, Germany. Or at least he was until very recently, and I don't think that they've moved. That's not too far from Berlin. I imagine that by now they've sneaked off and been there and he's written to Florence and told her all about it. His outfit has been much closer to the front most of the time. We were the first over here, arriving on the continent on D-16 Day, but they passed us as soon as they arrived with the Third Army, and we've never caught up with them since. I got to go up and see them when they were here at Conflans, which is about 20 miles from here, when we were at Neufchateau.

I enjoyed your letter so much, Pa, MA, and OAW. I enjoyed hearing about everything that is going on and some of the gossip. So Bill is still in New Guinea. Sounds like he's really a big shot these days. I can remember when you married a 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. and lived in Louisville. I even called you up once when I was in town. Remember? I was just a little civilian then. Oh, Happy Day! I'm so glad that you enjoyed the cigarettes. I especially enjoyed your "freshening" process. That really intrigued me. One day last week, I had the first piece of ice that I had had since we left the States almost 15 months ago.

Oh yes, we've received lots of nice things recently. We have now had 16 oranges since we came overseas and 13 of those have been in the last 40 days. We now have American beer, or rather beer made by the GI's from American recipe in the German and French breweries, and tonight for supper we each had a fresh tomato. I had a nice piece of steak tonight about the size that Kay would eat in normal times, but these aren't normal times, and I was tickled to death.

Your chili sauce is grand, Mrs. Schiesz. All of the boys have enjoyed it so much. We have taken it to dinner with us once in a while when we knew what we were going to have for dinner and we have used it for cocktail sauce for our shrimp. I hope that you are feeling very much better by now. I've been deserting you. I haven't sent you a card for a long time. But, you know you have to get well by the time I come home, for I hereby invite myself and Kay out to your house for dinner. I've turned down too many invitations from you, but now it's time to catch up.

Yes, that Termination of Contracts is quite a deal. Ted Campos came home on that back at Christmas time, and was stationed in Chicago. None of us saw the darned thing until too late. Ted had sort of buried it, for he figured that too many cooks spoil the broth. One of the fellows took as much information as he was able to find from Ted's letter of application, but it was returned as being too late. It's swell that Ernie was able to make it. If anyone hears of any more such deals, I will be delighted to give up my 20% overseas pay and return to the States.

I understand that there's a pile of work coming up for me to do, and I can't write letters and do work too, and this does not have the priority. So back to work shortly. Thank you very much, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, for the present toward my desired travels. I still have hopes of going to Southern France. It is open to us now, but of course, on a quota basis. And we have a slim quota and are drawing out of the hat for it. My name was the one that accidentally fell out of the hat when the other guy's name was called. Usual luck! So long, gang, hope to hear from you soon.

Paul

*(The letter above was the last one in the bound book of letters saved by Memaw. However, it was more than seven months later when Paul returned to the USA on 5 Jan 46 and was ultimately discharged from active duty on 31 Jan 46.) The illustration that follows was the handmade card Paul had purchased for Christmas 1945.)*

