



AMERICAN RED CROSS

Nov. 1, 1944

Dear Mom & Dad,

I guess you have been waiting for one of those long letters for some time so here goes.

First I'll describe the place I am writing this from. I am in an old stone farm house that has been hit about ten times with artillery shells. Two days ago a shell hit the barn which is attached to the house and killed one of the cows. Most of the roof to the house is gone and one wall is shot up pretty bad. There is only one room in the house which can still be used. That is it still has four walls and a roof. Luckily it has a fireplace and we keep a fire going all the time. We do all our cooking over



this fire. also we dry our cloths and shoes. There is a mine cellar below the room where some of the men sleep when they are not out on guard. we get shells in around at various times day and night but we haven't had a direct hit since the com was killed. This is a better setup than we ~~are~~ usually get. There are plenty of chickens and rabbits around, in fact there is a rabbit on the fire now.

Last night was Halloween so in the true spirit of things I went out to play ~~some~~ pranks in the form of a few booby traps. There is a path leading to our house from the German position. Last night I went out and stretched a piece of string across the path and tied one end to a hand grenade. If someone comes along the path he will pull the string which in turn will pull the pin out of the hand grenade





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and the grenade will go off. I'll keep you posted if I get anybuddy with my booby trap.

By the way I finally got some mail from you people. #35 from Dad a birthday card from Mom also a paper. You said you had never seen anything about the 34th Division in the paper. I guess the reason is most of the news is about the whole Fifth Army and not just a part of it. You see the 34th is part of the Fifth Army. In fact the 34th is the Oldest Div. in Italy and has seen more action than any Div. in this theater. Whenever you hear about the 5th Army pushing a spearhead someplace and there is a map showing the push just look at the very tip of the point and that is where I am. It's been that way



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for the last couple of months so I don't see why it should change in the next couple.

I received a couple of letters from S. Anne Snyder's wife, it seems she does all the writing for the family. I hadn't written to her in some time and she was a little bit worried.

Mrs. Snyder is afraid when I get back I might marry any old gal so she is looking for a suitable wife for me. It's more or less of a standing joke with us. (Am I wonder?) S. Anne is in England, he had trouble with one of his feet so he is out of the Infantry (why couldn't I get something wrong with me) He and two other officers have a private apartment. Boy what a time they must be having.

I guess I'll have to write to Pt. Virginia pretty soon. I wonder if she will be coming over seas soon. She better hope she comes over here and not the S. Pacific if





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she does ship overseas. I'll look her up  
if she does come over.

Took a ten minute break, cooked  
some breakfast and read our propaganda  
newspaper "The Stars and Stripes."

That fishing proposition of Dad's  
sure sounds good, that is one thing I  
want to do plenty of. I've could go for  
one of those blue fishing trips we used  
to make, sure was fun. We pretty soon  
we'll be able to do it again.

We've got a German medal I took from  
a Kraut I captured. It's a pretty good looking  
medal, I'll send it to you the first  
chance I get. You know most Luftwaffen  
are just like highway robbers. Wherever  
we capture Germans we take every thing  
from them we can use, matches, pens,  
pistols and money. They use the same  
Italian money we do. It is actually



comical to see a bunch of B.I.'s searching  
a prisoner. The first thing they do is  
see if he has a pistol on a watch.  
Then they see how much money he  
has in his pocket. One day we captured  
69 Germans and they must have just  
been paid, boy did we rob in the  
dough.

I often wonder how its going to feel  
when I get home to walk out of the  
house without a rifle in my hand.  
I know its hard for you people to  
realize what is almost ~~and~~ an every  
day occurrence over here. You walk  
around the hills here and never  
know when you are going to shoot it  
~~out~~ with someone. I walked around  
the corner of a farmhouse one day  
and ran smack into 7 Jews. I don't  
know which was more surprised. I  
was a little faster in opening up on  
them so they were finished. I was about





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Ten feet from them so I couldn't miss. I sure did my heart good to see them scatter. I got six out of the seven. Killed three wounded two and captured one. The other one got away. That was the closest one I ever had and believe me I'm going to peek around corners before I walk around them from now on. You can't win all the time.

I'm just about run down I better sign off. I'll write again soon. I'll be looking for those packages.

Tom  
John

P.S. Notice my new address.