

14 April 1945

Dear Mom:

Am back here in the home of an Italian friend for a night's rest. Left this morning for the rear to do some work, mainly to get some rest from some awfully exciting time that we had. Two or three times yesterday I thought I was a gone goose - but did manage to get out of it ok. To begin with the day was nice and peaceful - no guns booming too near - as if Peace had already come. We moved up, and as we passed the companies wondered if our guide knew exactly where we were going. When we finally established ourselves, found that we were just a few hundred yards from the front lines - I set up in a building and took it rather easily. Then the shelling began - several hundred rounds I thought as it came swishing and screaming through the air. I found shelter under the house in the basement like place - but when the shelling stopped I went back up stairs. We made some coffee and my assistant asked me whether I wanted some - it was a good thing as just as I said "no" a shell came zooming in the next room where we kept our hot coffee. Made a hole in the wall the size of a barrel - shrapnel buzzing around - and dust flying around - it was like a Movie Thriller. So my assistant and I decided that perhaps it was best for us to find shelter in a nearby cave - not far away from us, the shelling kept on all night but I felt very safe in the cave and slept - however, I woke up in the morning to the sound of machine guns. I crept out of the cave to look and darn if the Germans hadn't made a counter attack and one was perched right above the cave we were in. He couldn't see us and we couldn't see him but his machine gun reminded us how near we were to him. Meanwhile our men were shooting at him and bullets began to whizz all around us - I had a one man council of war then. We were armless although I didn't know my assistant had a gun - any moment the Nazi may decide to duck into our cave - I then decided that maybe it was better to make a break for our men's position, then die in a cave like a rat with no chance whatsoever. However, as our big guns were also opening up - the chances I figured was pretty lousy. We stalled around for about an hour, all through the fire fight - made sure that our armbands (red cross) were on both arms. Picked our blankets up and finally made a dash for it - guess the Germans respected the armbands but just as I ducked around the corner a bullet came swishing by. Later I found out that our men captured the two Germans that were above us - believe me I had my fingers crossed. Wasn't frightened so much as feeling frustrated by it all. I had a headache all day - and felt rather weak so decided to come back and do some work that had to be done some time. I also had my jeep shot through by shrapnel so decided to have it fixed at the same time. However, don't worry - daddy will make sure that he doesn't get into a fix like that again. Guess, the war near the end and the Germans giving up like flies made me a little careless - but not again.

See by today's paper that they hope to have the war end in ten days or so. Well, about time it ended but again its some body else's prognostication. Someone in a beautiful office

someplace.

The men are fighting hard and well and are pushing the Germans back and back and back. The Germans too seem to be giving up rather fast although they still do fight like the devil until their amunition gives up or something. This theatre ought to collapse with Germany itself in such a poor state - but one never knows.

Took a shower today - and it really felt good. Have fresh clothes on - and am typing this on the patio of a small country home - the family here is very nice to me, aged couple - we stopped here a few days ago so knew them from then.

Tonight I am going to have a nice rest and then move up. tomorrow - but not too near all the fireworks this time. Take good care of yourself Mom - love to the kids and kisses

love

Dad.

17 April - Just a word to say I'm OK -
still on the line, still pushing - still
going strong. Sending Pearl out.

love