

22 July 1944

Dear Mom:

Hope my letters are reaching you ok. The last few days I have had chances to write to you but do not worry if at times my letters are spaced quite a bit. Everything is ok - and still healthy and kicking. Have managed to keep away from shell fire - although they do give me a scare once in a while. The fellers are out in the orchard picking plums and peaches - which surely adds to our diet.

One of the drivers told me this morning that the radio announced uprisings in Germany. Hope that is true - for it must be the beginning of the end. With Germany on its last tottering legs so to speak and Japan rooting out old Tojo - it sounds like Peace should be just around the corner. Once the war is over, no one is ever going to get me away from my wife and family ever again. I am going fishing quiet a bit and rest for some time before working again - we'll go on those picnics we were always planning on and have lunches for a King's feast. Lately I have learned a few twists about cooking which ought to come in handy then.

It has been easy and quiet for the past few days - but one can never tell. Sometimes we think it is peaceful - when all of a sudden shells begin to rain around us and then we know war is on. The Germans however do not really have the materiel that we have - and seem to be short of everything from machines to men. We are just sweating out the end of this mess and hope it comes very soon. Some of these days I am going to wake up to find war ended - wouldn't it be great.

Received a letter from Mrs. Crowell addressed to Shelby. I lost her address so when you write her next - please thank her for the letter and tell her where I am. It was nice of her to remember me.

It's really a wonder how we can go without the comforts of Home that we thought were indispensable. We just carry along the clothes on our back and a jacket to sleep on - no baths - canned rations and always the shovel. No punee, no wash basins, no hot food. I have met Italian families of the better class here who had lost everything but the clothes on their back - with no immediate sight of food - no cloth - no shoes - just life. And yet they keep going - it must be tough and sometimes I admire their stoicism. I guess I told you about that night I was taking refuge in a building from some heavy shelling and this Italian mother came in scared to death and crying. I made some coffee for her and talked to her which must have helped her some. She was the wife of the Italian Colonel - about fifty or so years of age and quite better class. Ever since then she has more or less adopted me as her son - whenever I am in the vicinity. Don't know where she is as we move along so fast but she was one of the people who lost everything she owned. What was not bombed out were stolen by the Germans.

My Italian is improving a little. In a few months I ought to be able to teach the darn language in Italy.

Did you read the article in the Reader's Digest on Naples City of Plague and Famine. In the short time I was there - one could easily see how true the article is. Just imagine what is going to happen to the rest of Europe when the war is over. These Italians expect America not only to feed them but to rebuild the darn place for them - they must think America is in this for humanitarian purposes. They should suffer through this themselves and perhaps they will eventually learn that war mongering does not pay. Old Mousso should rebuild it for them and there is a lot of rebuilding to do.

Passed through a town not long ago which was nothing but rubble - and looked as if it was going to take years to rebuild the place. Multiply that by many times all over Europe - Russia and England and what an engineers holiday it will be. What will this country do for an existence with trade and industry wiped out - surely they lived on imports and how will they live. It is sad to see these little youngsters come to our kitchen and beg for "mangiari" (food) - food, food, nothing but food. They hadn't seen coffee, tea and chocolate for four years except the facsisti gang. They had everything.

The Germans before leaving had grabbed everything - even clothes, shoes and jewelry. German mothers and sisters and sweethearts are probably wearing nice clothes today - stolen clothes from the backs of these disillusioned peasants. Just high classed robbery I call it. They steal the oxen to pull their artillery with - the Germans first had automobiles, then horses and now oxen to maneuver around with. The more I come across German brutality - the less I like them and wish they were really wiped out of the map. They are really brutal - Dillinger in his hey day had nothing on these blood thirsty heinies. Just hate to think of what would happen to Germany if the Russians ever got in there first - and perhaps it would be a good lesson for them to learn - to have whole villages of people lined up and mowed down like so much wheat.

Am still thinking of writing to Dunny about my postwar plans as I outlined to you the other day. What do you think - I hate to be working in one church - worrying about membership - finances etc - it isn't too much to my liking.

Give my best regards to Shinso and the gang. Tell them I am ok and will be ok for the duration. Ask them to save their pin money for the day I come home and we all will have that Chop Sui dinner I dream about almost nightly - the last good chop sui I had was in Shinso's office, remember? - just before I left for the boat. If I knew it was going to be the last for this long - I would have eaten more - Please thank Kenneth Mau for his letter.

Haven't seen Takeshi as yet but presume he is ok - he has had many very, very close shaves - but guess God does take care of "nonki" people like Tak and myself.

love

Dan