

AMERICAN CONSULATE
Milan, Italy
October 5, 1940

Dear Sarah:

Your most welcome letter arrived October 2nd, having consumed twelve days in transit, which is certainly not bad. I was very glad to get the news from home, with the exception of that about Bill Barrack. That really struck me rather hard, for he has been doing my dental work for many years now. I had a very pleasant session with him just before I left – pleasant from a personal point of view, at least. Physically it was quite painful. It is a shock that such a young man should die. I had no idea that he had a bad heart, as he always appeared the picture of health.

I owe Janie a letter, but I have delayed writing it so as to learn of her new address in New York. I certainly hope that she will be successful, and I rather think she will, at least from the point of view of character development. She has always held back from assuming responsibility, but I think this came more from a lack of self-confidence than anything else. As I said in my last letter, we should all do our best to assist in her development. I rejoice with you in Betty's signal conquest over Pop Swank. I was always a little afraid of Pop, first because he showered all his favors on the pretty girls, and second because I didn't know anything about geometry, especially after the beginning of the second semester. I think he always gave me grades on reputation. Now, if Betty could arrange to vamp him, the 50% increase would be assured.

You would be surprised how often I think of the people around the High School. Every now and then some eccentric person comes in to the Consulate, and I think, "Why, she's just like Eunice Thomas". Whenever I force myself to do a hard job, I remember slaving over Latin for Carrie Allen. In spite of all the college professors and others I have met since, I have never ceased to have the highest regard and respect for Miss Allen. We were all too afraid of her at the time to realize that she had a marvelous sense of humor; she knew her subject well, and taught it thoroughly. She also had an eye for the larger implications of the subject matter, beyond mere grammatical construction. I guess that's all anyone has a right to expect. If she is still alive – and I haven't heard to the contrary – it would please me a great deal if you could just call her on the phone and say that I send best wishes.

I was glad to note your views on conscription, and I agree with them completely – including your desire to have a chance to substitute for somebody. There are quite a few Americans here within the age limits, and you would be surprised how disappointed some of them were to find that no provision has been made as yet for registering Americans living abroad. Many inquired hopefully about the government's paying their ways home if they volunteer for the army. I tell them the army is costing enough as it is.

Which brings me to the subject that has been praying [sic] on my mind for some time: the plight of these people who want to go home but haven't got the money. Perhaps you have seen recently how much the fare is. The ocean fare is now \$250 minimum, from Lisbon to New York, and a person with any amount of baggage at all would have to pay at least \$200 to get from here to Lisbon. Many people, who have been here for some time, have all their money in lire, which, of course, they cannot export, and hence they have absolutely no way of paying their passage. Then there are some who haven't even got any lire, and they are worse off still. One chap, whose Italian wife is expecting a baby, can't work here because he's a foreigner, and can't raise the money to get home. We have Written to his father, and cabled, and written to friends, trying to find some way of

helping him out of the hole, but to no avail. His father has cast him off because he disapproves of the wife, who is said to be a very low class – the wedding was of the shotgun* variety – and the friends simply don't answer either his letters or the Consulate's. We dole him out a little money from time to time from a relief fund contributed by the local American colony, but this barely serves to keep body and soul together. Even if he could get money for a passage, he wouldn't leave his wife in that condition, and, as an Italian, she can't go to the States without an immigration visa, which she couldn't get because he is not employed in the United States. So it is a vicious circle; I see no way out of it at all.

Even persons with no financial worries have their troubles. Most of them can't make up their minds whether to leave their property here or to stay and take a chance on being interned in case of war. In this connection, the example of the British and French who were caught here after the war started should be a lesson to them. While not all have been concentrated, many have, including those who were sure influential friends would keep them free. There are a few Americans here whom I wouldn't mind seeing interned for the duration.

You have doubtless read in the papers that we have some new rations for fats now. In my opinion, it is just a question of time until this is extended to meat and other articles. O tempora, O mores! I had small supplies on hand, which will augment a bit the allotment prescribed. It is rumored that the heating of private houses will not be permitted until November 15th, instead of the first. I hope it isn't true. Already it is getting chilly, and by the end of the month should be real brisk. I see my two sheets are coming to an end. I hope you all have good health this winter, and a good time.

I am always anxious to hear from you.

Love,

* *Lit.* short gun

(22M)

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THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Milan, Italy



PER VIA AEREA
PAR AVION

Mrs. L. M. Krieg

197 Hudson Ave.

Newark, OHIO

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PAR AVION
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Recd 10/23-40

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