

AMERICAN CONSULATE
Milan, Italy
December 2, 1940

Dear Folks:

I am writing this in a great hurry in the hope that a courier will put it on board a ship for me at Lisbon. I haven't received any letters from home since October 19th, but I know that this is probably not your fault, since no one has received mail since the first days of November - about a month now. We do not know exactly what has happened to it, but it is doubtless held up somewhere along the way.

I wrote recently to Janie to ask whether she had received the money I asked Carl Ankele to send her. So far I have had no confirmation that my letter to him was received, and in the event that it was not, we will have to take other steps. I would appreciate it if you would ask him about this.

There has really been nothing of importance to write about since the last time. It's amazing that so much time could pass and so little of importance happen. I went down to Rome on Daddy's birthday, driving with one of the Secretaries of the Embassy. In that way I got to see a great deal of Italy the I had never seen before. Rome was very lovely. It seems a rather incongruous city: some sections spanking new, and then suddenly you come out into a place overlooking the excavation of a Roman forum. It was also most interesting for me to see the Embassy and meet the men there. I think it will be a big help in my work, since I have to write letters to the Embassy all the time in connection with the representation of French interests. It is always a help to know the personalities in question. Besides, in conversation, they could tell me things they wouldn't have wanted to write. On the whole, I received a very favorable impression of the Embassy staff, and especially of Mr. Dowling, the chap who drove me down and then put me up at his house for the two nights I was there. I also met Mr. Reed, who has been Chargé d'Affaires for several months, in the absence of the Ambassador. He is returning to the U.S. soon, and will be replaced by Mr. Kirk, who has been in Berlin.

We still have plenty to eat here, although the restrictions are multiplying all the time. The greatest inconvenience is that there is hot water at my house only three times a week: Sunday, to wash the people; Monday to wash the clothes; and Thursday, whether you use it or not. We are now heating the water to shave with in the old-fashioned way. However, I shouldn't kick. A woman who has been interned in a small town in the South writes that she hasn't had a bath for three months, and I'll bet she will have to be deloused before appearing in polite society again.

I had intended to stop at the bottom of the last page, because I am running out of time. Things are very quiet here now, as far as the air raids go. We haven't had one in several weeks. This is probably due to the fog which closes down over Milan regularly every night, and which makes it impossible for pilots to aim accurately. Since they have demonstrated their ability to cross the Alps, I believe this shows an unwillingness to drop bombs at random. It is regrettable that both sides do not take the same view point on this matter. I suppose that next Spring will be a different story. I look forward to some fun in May.

The raider[s] aren't the only one who can't find their way around. The natives also have plenty of difficulty, since, when the fog is really heavy, you can't even see the dim blue lights which are still functioning. That makes it rather hard to find your way around, and I have the feeling always as if I were about to walk smack into a wall. My maid did one night, but it hurt her feeling[s]

more than anything else. I hate to go out at night, really. The best thing to do is to call a taxi, but it is often hard to find one. Home was never so pleasant, especially since I am well equipped with magazines, which continue to arrive - in time - by pouch. I suggest you might write that way once; perhaps I would get it. The Department requests that all letters be submitted open, since they are anxious to prevent any abuse of the privilege.

I really must stop now. I hope you all will have a grand Christmas, and it goes without saying that I would give anything to be there. Bob Pallucca has asked me to come to his house for Christmas dinner, and I was glad to accept since he has two kids, and Christmas is always more fun where there are children. However, his are still too small to know what it is all about yet. You may be sure that I will be thinking of you. (Or was thinking, depending on when this arrives.)

With much love and best wishes to all,

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