

IN REPLY REFER TO

FILE NO.

AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Milan, June 14, 1941

Dear Dad:-

I am sending you this by courier because there were a few things I wanted to get off my chest which cannot go by the regular mail. In the first place, I am enclosing a check for six dollars to cover the expenditure you made in paying my annual Masonic dues. Thank you very much for going to all the trouble, and I hope you will give Roe Francis and the other boys (especially Rudy Schenk) my very best wishes when you next see them. I think perhaps it would be a good idea not to send my membership card through the open mail in the future. As you know, the Masonic order is proscribed in all parts of Europe under Fascist and Nazi control. It appears that the lodges here took a much more active part in politics in Europe than they do in the United States. There were, and are, many charges of favoritism and political maneuvering against them which are believed by many people. The press in the Axis countries inveighs regularly against the "Capitalistic, Jewish, Masonic intrigues" in the non-Axis world, naturally ascribing to the Masonic order in other countries the same attributes which it is alleged to have had here. Taking all this together, I think it would be better just to leave the cards at home until I come back, or else send them over by pouch.

While on the subject of the pouch, the Department has recently kindly made a concession in its use. In view of the present emergency, they have decided to permit consular officers to import small packages by pouch. Previously, this privilege was confined to diplomatic officers who had the right to import articles free of duty. I have immediately taken advantage of this to order a few cartons of Spuds at the tax-free price, instead of the 35¢ a package which I have been paying in Switzerland. The requirements for sending packages by pouch are as follows: they must be not more than 12 inches in any dimension or weigh more than 5 pounds. No foodstuffs are to be sent, since the Department has arranged for the transportation of foods to Europe. (I may add that in this connection I haven't received any yet, although I hope to in the near future.) The packages are to carry the same postage as if they were going all the way by parcels post.

Taking advantage of this provision, I wonder if you would send me a few toilet articles which I have almost run out of? I would like about six tubes of Kolynos toothpaste, one dozen bars of Palmolive soap and the same number of Lux. Other supplies appeared sufficient for the moment. On the whole, I think I did a pretty good job of stocking up when I came over this time. The only reason I didn't have more toothpaste was that the drugstore where I tried to buy some only had a few tubes in stock, and I forgot to get more elsewhere. Besides, I thought that, being in Switzerland, I would be able to buy some there. Kolynos is also made in Italy, but I have tried it and find it different from the original product. I still have plenty of shaving cream, razor blades, talcum powder and after-shave lotion. I need more shampoo fluid, but the Department says that liquids and glass will not be accepted, and since this is both, I guess that is out. *Naturally I will send a check as soon as you tell me what you have spent.*

As regards soap, the local brands are getting pretty bad. I have some Italian Palmolive, made before the war, and it feels as if it had sand in it, like the mechanics soap we use at the store to remove grease. Toilet soap can still be purchased here, but it is of inferior quality and rather expensive, although probably no more than the American soap will be counting the postage. Laundry soap is rationed, and is included in the order we are supposed to receive from America. The Department asks that this temporary change in policy about the use of the pouch be kept as confidential as possible, and therefore I would appreciate it if you didn't mention the fact outside the family circle.

The supplies which I have mentioned several times were ordered last January by the Embassy and were shipped over on a Panama flag ship under charter to Switzerland. It was in the Mediterranean when hostilities broke out between Italy and Yugoslavia, and since the captain and most of the officers and crew were Yugoslavians, they hastily put into Marseille. After several weeks, the ship was taken under the Swiss flag, and another crew installed and the voyage to Genoa continued. When last heard from (about a month ago), the supplies that arrived in Genoa and were to be shipped to Rome to be cleared through the customs. All are addressed to the Embassy, since they alone have free entry, and will have to be re-boxed and reshipped to the consulates. Each officer has already put up \$200.00, and the clerks at least \$100.00 each so we all have very concrete reasons for hoping that they arrive safely. Among other things, there is 100 lbs. of flour per person, 20 lbs. of roasted coffee, sugar, beans, laundry soap, canned meat, two hams, and 10 cartons of cigarettes. I suppose the latter will all be Chesterfields, so I have ordered some Spuds extra. Since the whole business comes pretty close to being a fraud against the Italian customs, the less said, the better.

I might also take this rare occasion to say just a few words on the situation here. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that Italy is already out of the war as far as any independent fighting is concerned. The people and, according to post reports, most of its army, are sunk in indifference, broken only by fits of anger against the regime. The shortages of all the basic foods has become alarming, and the cold, wet spring has ruined, probably, the wheat crop in northern Italy - one of the most fertile parts. A large number of people hope that England will win, and the majority certainly hope that the Germans will not win, because they dislike the Germans much more than they do the English. The lower classes blame the food shortage on the fact that Italy has to send food to Germany. The manufacturing classes resent the penetration of German capital and control which is becoming more and more evident. The Army officers resent the patronizing attitude of the German officers and the fact that they have been placed in control in many places - as in Libya, for instance. In comparison, the English seem much the lesser evil.

On the other hand, and for the same reasons, there is, in my opinion, no possibility of a revolution in Italy or a separate peace. The Germans have adequate forces and could occupy Italy more quickly than they did France, according to the prevailing view, at least. The leaders, both Fascist and anti-Fascist, will do anything to avoid open occupation by the Germans. This policy is utterly futile, since the Germans are taking over the country anyway, but there is here the same fatal tendency which ruined France and has brought England to the brink of disaster: the hope that, simply by avoiding the worst temporarily, something will happen to prevent it. I understand there are people at home too who take this point of view, and I think it would have been too bad for us if we had not had a president who recognized the danger and was ready to combat it. It now seems a tragedy that we didn't do more, but we might have done much less. The president has had to push public opinion for years, and it seems unfair to blame him because the public didn't wake up until France fell.

I hope now that there will be no slacking on the national defense program. I read in Time that there was a feeling of complacency in the country, and the leaders have been complaining that the public is still not awake to the dangers and the urgency of the situation. I do most sincerely hope that you will combat this feeling wherever you find it. If you were here for a while, you would not need to be convinced of the desperate urgency of the situation. A difference of one week and the arrival of a batch of airplanes might spell the difference between defeat and victory on an important front. You can appreciate, then, how it hurts me to read of the continual strikes, and you can believe that the Axis press loses no opportunity to publicize them. They must be stopped. Management and labor must be compelled to forego the luxury of a good fight every year. We must get together now; "it is later than we think".

With love to all,
William

[On reverse of first page]

Address for the pouch

William L. Krieg,

American Consulate Milan

c/o Department of State

Washington D.C.

No insurance necessary: the Department accepts no responsibility in any case.



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William

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Dear Sir:

I am sending you this by courier because there were a few things I wanted to get off my chest which cannot go by the regular mail. In the first place, I am enclosing a check for the balance to cover the expenditures you made in...

Address for the check
William L. King
American Consulate Milan
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C.

No insurance necessary. The Department accepts as responsibility in any case.

While on the subject of the horse, the Department has recently kindly made a concession in its use. In view of the present emergency, they have decided to permit consular privileges and to continue to diplomatic officers who had the right to import articles free of duty. I have immediately taken advantage of this to order a few cartons of goods at the tax-free price. Instead of the 35¢ a package which I have been paying in Switzerland, the requirements for sending packages by post are as follows: they must be not more than 12 inches in any dimension or weigh more than five pounds. No foodstuffs are to be sent, since the Department has arranged for the transportation of foods to Europe. (I may add in this connection that I haven't received any yet although I have to in the near future.) The packages are to carry the same postage as if they were going all the way by parcel post.

Taking advantage of this provision, I wonder if you would send me a few toilet articles which I have almost run