

Friday 13, Mar. 45

En Route thru Germany

(Read April 30, 1945)

Dear Tish:

I am writing this as we are moving forward in convoy deeper into Germany. At the present, we are somewhat in the rear of our advancing front lines.

Sending and receiving mail has been very difficult the past few weeks, mainly because of our fast moving advances. There have been times when we were out of contact with the main parts of our division and at times my platoon and squad have been separated from our company for days. Seldom do we make a stop long enough for writing or receiving mail. We'll stop in a town overnight and push right off again on another mission early in the morning. We are either traveling forward or engaged in cleaning up on those who choose to resist.

Yesterday was one of the longest stops we've made in days. We actually stopped in one place for two nights and one day. Between duties and other things, I managed to get one letter off.

We certainly did some traveling and pushing against the Heinies. Our Division, part of the 3rd Army (Patton) had been, up to a few days ago, at the front end of the spearhead right behind the armor. We were in that spot all the way from Saarlautern, a distance of 135 miles east of the Rhine. We went right on thru to Mulhausen; perhaps you have read about us in the papers by now. Sometimes we are, and other times, not mentioned at the time of a push according to security reasons. After Mulhausen, we were pulled off the line and replaced by another outfit. Thinking it meant a ~~xxxx~~ rest, we pulled back, only to find ourselves on another mission in a different direction. Here I'd like to tell you that combat today is not quite what it was a few months ago. Then they were in their fortified lines and pillboxes, etc. and every yard of ground gained was counted and paid for. But once we busted thru the Siegfried Line for sure - then the chase started. The Nazis would not stand still and fight in the open. Now gains are counted by the mile and towns taken. It is not easy. When resistance is met, it is tough, but our army is tougher and the resistance is broken. I shant go on because you must read of our progress in the papers and hear of it on the radio.

I cannot tell you of our present mission, but it ~~ix~~ brought us thru a town in which we stayed a short while as I mentioned above. Near that town lies the town of Ordruf. At Ordruf is one of the famed concentration camps of the super race Nazis. What I am about to tell is not pretty, but I tell it with the feeling you shall believe what I say. What I tell of - I have seen - and have had my picture taken on the spot by buddies of mine. Much has been said and printed of Nazi beastiality and inhumanity, but I think the strength of the stories waned some thru either a tendence toward misbelief on the hearer's part, or failure of the writer or observer to paint a true picture in strong enough words, not alone to tell of it all, but to make you smell it at the same time.

Near Ordruf, as I said, is this camp I spoke of. Outwardly, it looked like an army camp, but with extra strong barbed wire entanglements and very numerous gun posts for sentries. Two beautiful swimming pools stand near the entrance - a large PX and Recreation Hall is on the main road near the entrance - the soldiers (SS) quarters are nice buildings on the main drive into the camp.