

Starnberg, Germany
13 June 1945
Wednesday

Dearest Shirley,

Hello, honey. I hope and pray that both you and Laura are feeling well and that all is well at home. I am feeling ok.

We moved again yesterday as I told you we were contemplating and we spent the day travelling. We got up at 5:30, ate, packed up what few things we had not packed on Monday night, and started out about 7:30. We arrived at our new location here in Starnberg, Germany on the shore of the Wurm Sea about 4:00 yesterday afternoon. We got the unit set up and unpacked shortly after chow time and began the job of cleaning up our quarters and putting our personal belongings in order. I did not get to bed until almost eleven and was quite tired after the moving, as usual.

We have a nice location for the vans under some tall pines which should provide adequate shelter from the hot sun and make it more comfortable for working inside. It is expected that we may be here all summer, so this item is quite an important one. Today was plenty cool, however, because we had rain again.

The quarters we got are lousy. They are dirty and in a poor building. The whole Corps headquarters has a good deal except us, so the Captain complained about us having to live in such stinking quarters. Our unit is supposed to get new quarters in a few days when some troops from another Army move out of this area (Third Army Area).

At present we have rooms with from one to five men in a room. I have a room to myself and have a radio in it that we picked up back in Gotha, Germany. So, in spite of the fact that I am alone in a room for the first time in my Army career I have the company of a radio. There are fellows in rooms on both sides of me, though, and I am not in my room very much except just before bed time anyway.

It is more or less understood that we are Army of Occupation troops for the next few months. Whether the 38th MRU will stay as a part of the XX Corps for any great length of time is not known at this time, but ~~probably~~ probably will be right here with the Corps all summer.

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Plans are being made at present for providing us with more recreational facilities and a day room with a writing room. Efforts are being made to obtain boats (rowboats and motor boats) for use on the lake, but we are forbidden to go swimming in the lake because it is contaminated. We are allowed to fish if we can get tackle.

As time goes on I will have more to tell you about what forms of entertainment and sports are being arranged for us. The 38th MRU may be limited somewhat in participating in all of the Corps recreational activities inasmuch as our overloaded unit is now to be burdened down with even more work. Also, it looks as if we will have quite a turn-over of troops within the next few months due to the fact that a good many of the troops we now have will be shipped to the CBI or the States and many others we will get in the next few months will also be shipped. The work involved in gaining and losing units and divisions is greater than the work involved in servicing the same units consistently. So, the problem of working and keeping the work up to date may prevent us from joining with the other men in the Corps in the recreational program. We lost two men today and already were short one man.

In addition to being shorthanded now, we know that as time goes on we will be given quotas for passes to Paris or the Riviera or both and possibly furloughs to the Riviera or London. While men are on pass or furlough the burden falls on the men who are left. Also, we have three men in the unit who have enough points to be discharged from the Army, but as yet they have heard nothing about being sent home. The day will undoubtedly come when they will be sent home and we will be even worse off for help than we are now. In an MRU it takes a long time to train men so that they are valuable to the unit or can even do a good job. Then, a good many of the men available now in Replacement Pools are not the high calibre of men desired for our type unit and the Captain has a hard time finding suitable men. Often he has tried to get three, four, or five men and finally came back with only one or two.

I, for one, do not expect much let-up on my job, either. If we get more men, I will undoubtedly be called upon to train one or two in my section on top of the additional work now coming through.

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I am not complaining, though, darling. I still think that MRU is a good deal. We have our work, but we have not had any fighting and we have had as good living conditions as could be expected in a combat zone. Now that the War is over, I would much rather stay over here for the three, four, or five months we are scheduled to stay here than to go to the Pacific direct as many units are doing. I have no complaint to make at all.

On the move down here (or up here) I saw the farmers working in the fields and noted some very interesting things that I thought might interest you and the folks. One was the fact that the man shortage is so evident. In every field there would be women or girls cutting hay with a scythe or working in the field. There were very few men. There were old men, young boys, and women of all ages.

There is a definite absence of machinery. Mowing machines are really scarce. The hay is cut by scythes and a good deal of the raking is done by hand with large rakes. Most fields had one rake with a horse, though.

The most interesting thing about the way they dry the hay was the item I particularly wanted to tell you about. They drive pointed poles in the ground with a point sticking up. The poles are about the size of fence posts. The farmers stack the hay on these poles a pitchfork load at a time until the post is loaded down with hay from about a foot off the ground up to about five or six feet in the air. From a distance the poles loaded with hay look exactly like the close cropped hedges that so many people have in their yards at home. These poles are spaced about ten feet apart in neat rows in the field and present quite a sight across a valley on a hillside.

In other fields hay is dried on wooden racks like snow fences. It does not look so fascinating or spectacular, though.

The rainy season here in the summer undoubtedly causes the farmers a lot of worry with the hay and they have to get the hay up off the ground where the hay will dry fast and not mold. Maybe this item will be interesting to you and the folks, maybe not, but it is a sight to see.

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Another thing I saw that would interest you ~~i~~ was a hideaway for planes. There were literally hundreds of bombers, fighters, and all types of planes hidden in the woods bordering both sides of the road. This was the second time I had seen just such a layout. The planes were rolled off the paved highway into the woods where the trees had been cleared for the fuselage to poke back into the brush and yet be covered by overhanging branches or easily covered by camouflage. In case of an alert, the planes could be rolled out onto the paved highway and the highway served as a runway for the take-off and for landing again. An alarm system extended into the woods and anti-aircraft warning stations were set up as well as anti-aircraft guns.

The hideaway I saw previously had been found by our planes and there was not a plane visible that our planes had not strafed or bombed. The planes on the ground bearing the swastika never got off the ground--apparently for lack of gasoline. The hideaway I saw yesterday had more planes and a good many of them seemed to have been mutilated by the Nazis themselves so that we would not capture the planes intact. Most of them apparently had not taken a pounding from the air as at the other place I spoke of.

It must have been an amazing sight to have seen the planes coming out of the woods from both sides of a four lane highway (divided highway known as the Autobahn or Super Highway) and taking to the air from the highway. Millions of dollars worth of planes are now only wreckage for a few miles along that particular stretch of road and the other place where I saw planes before. The swatikas on these planes show up like a sore thumb. Some of the planes are really beautiful jobs, too.

Well, honey, that is about all the news or gossip for tonight. Would you mind ~~reading~~ reading this letter to your folks and either reading it to Mother & Dad or taking it up to them, please. I do not have time or feel like writing to them ~~tonight~~ tonight, and it may be several days before I write to them. I do not feel bad ~~tonight~~ tonight but have had an upset stomach for about three days. I have a slight case of diarrhea but am better now. I will write to the folks in a few days, but would appreciate your passing this letter on so that

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they will know that I am thinking of them, too. Tell Relva and Joe hello for me, too.

Honey, you have not told me in months how much Laura weighs or how tall she is. Would you please include these items in one of your next letters. Several of the fellows have children and have recently gotten the latest dope on the height, weight, and latest accomplishments of their pride and joys, and it made me a little overcurious about Laura.

Well, sweetheart, that is all for tonight except the familiar but oh so true, I love you. You are always in my heart, in my mind, in my dreams, and in my prayers. May God bless both you and Laura and watch over you.

Lots of love to you and to the folks.

Goodnight, sweetheart. Remember always that I love you.

Your loving husband,

Cliff

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P.O.

Honey since I finished this mail call sounded you asked what I could use and if I need anything. My clothes are in pretty good shape now so I guess there is nothing in that line but I would like to request a box of cookies and candy. The food here is military rations & not so good.



*Thanks Honey
Cliff*