

Exp. J. O. Lapone 11087793  
Hq. 12 W. X. Dyke.  
P.O. 650, 1/2 P.M. N.Y.

3 March -

Dear Miss McFlynn,

It has been some time since I've had a chance to write you - but I assure it wasn't due to "neglect" on my part. I've had quite a variety of experiences since my last letter to you - which have kept my free time for me to a minimum.

First off, & somewhat of a surprise to you I'll wager - I'm now doing a little teaching - after duty hours. It all came about when one of the "higher ups" decided that the soldiers in this area could use some sort of a school to enable them to obtain credits in some subjects & brush up on others. With this thought in mind the call went out for instructors to teach the subjects - which by the way were mainly high school courses -

The curricular was as varied  
as the instructors & we have Majors  
with M.A. - to Potts with L.B. on the  
faculty. I didn't think my BS was  
going to stand up at first - but I'm  
happy to say I passed the interviewing  
board & was selected to teach French  
Math (if Miss Stone - is nearly break  
it to her gutty - she will never believe  
you). at any rate things are going  
along quite smoothly & between planning  
the lesson & working on lectures  
I'm obtaining a world of valuable  
experience.

We are using an Italian Hi School  
as our school building & while it is  
lacking in some of the modern fixtures  
to be found back in the state - we  
are doing quite nicely. Our texts are  
Armed Forces Institute & are not too  
bad at all. Classes are fairly large  
& attendance has been very good -  
My class at the present time has  
about 30 students in it - which makes  
it just about fine.

Your volume V (3)

Since writing you last I've also had a chance to see a good bit of Northern Italy - notably Florence, Pisa, Leghorn & Lucca - I wish that you could see yourself how beautiful this part of Italy is. It is so vastly different in ~~so~~ many ways from what we had been used to.

The countryside north of Rome is mostly rolling land - with high hills as a background - until you reach the foothills of the Apennines - which I found to be very beautiful. Sperting the sea coast I found through several small villages where the inhabitants depend ~~on~~ on the sea for their livelihood. On the sea walls were the ~~fish~~ nets tied up to dry. I felt a little homesick then - I thought about some of the small cities met by Gloucester & near my own home - I don't think I've ever seen water so blue in color as this was. Some of the places were badly maddled - others barely touched.

It is the same all over Italy - where the Germans sought to make a stand the area is mostly in ruins. Speaking of ruins - it was surprising to note how much rebuilding has been done - since last I passed through some of the areas - even Livorno showed signs of new life - though it was still in bad shape.

Florence I found in fairly good shape except for the areas around the Arno. Every bridge but Ponte Vecchio was destroyed by the retreating Tedeschi - They did little damage to the famous old bridge but they mined, bombed & completely blocked both entrances - so it was just as effective as would have been the destruction of the "last mark". Don't sell these Germans short - They are a smart lot & seldom miss a trick.

The business part of the city was in good condition & the shop windows full of things to buy - & not too highly priced - The shop-keepers all speak fairly good English & there was little or no need to try my faulty Italian or French. Fact is I spent the better part of

half an hour talking with one of the  
young ladies in a shop & didn't once  
speak a word to her in Italian. Most  
of them can speak French fluently &  
have a good working knowledge of  
German.

I didn't have too much time  
but I did stay long enough to visit  
one of the old cathedrals & also the Palace  
of the Medici family - ancient "rulers" of  
Florence - which was still in good  
condition. I was truly surprised at the  
modern appearance of some of the buildings  
& dwellings they were eye openers to  
say the least.

Lycorn was in bad shape - fact  
there was hardly anything left standing.  
Civa was in about the same condition -  
& except for the "famed tower" there too  
was little remaining. I did climb the  
tower & spent a little time walking  
in the old buildings of the university  
which are laid out around the base  
of it. I talked with an old care-taker  
who told me much about the buildings  
which added much to the viewing of them.  
I think the most beautiful city  
I've seen so far in Siena. I think it

was the birth place of St Catherine  
at least they claim her as their own.  
I wish I could tell you exactly  
when I was there. I think you  
could then more easily see why I  
enjoyed it so much.

The town sits atop a hill. &  
from it you can look over most of  
the surrounding country. I notice that  
this was the case with most of the  
towns along the way - a <sup>high</sup> hill that com-  
manded a good view of the countryside  
usually was the place where you found  
the city. Protective measure?

The people in the northern part  
of Italy - are certainly better off than these  
people in the South. They appeared to be  
far better dressed - & shoe less garments -  
seemed to be the exception rather than  
the rule as in the south. Fur coats <sup>(from)</sup> were  
very where in evidence - & in surprising  
numbers & "places":

We had supper one night in a  
farm-house - & what a meal it was.  
Fresh eggs fried sunny-side up & fresh  
pork sausage - fresh cheese aka local  
beverages for the "weary travelers": After  
the meal we offered to pay for the  
food - but the people would have none.

of it - we came close to offending  
the man of the house by trying to  
press some money into his hand. a few  
bars of chocolate & a package of cigarettes  
were well received & I felt like the  
Stitch might have felt when they bought  
Manhattan from our ancestors.

I couldn't help wondering how these  
people would react to Americans when  
in a few months a "Yank" in uniform  
would not be a curio. & They get a  
chance to know us better. Would be  
interested in going back there in about  
four months & see what it would be  
like. By the way our host was an active  
member of the "Partisans" & had quite a few  
interesting stories to tell.

I had a surprise visit from  
Sammy Carke recently. Looked good - missed  
him on my trip - He was from Dad or Ed  
for a long time. Lido has written ~~from~~  
from Trice. & at last reports appeared to be  
mending well. I've never seen a picture  
of his wife - but from his description of her  
she must be quite a lady.

Had two letters from Priscilla -  
in the last couple of ~~months~~ <sup>months</sup> - she appears  
to like her new job.

Sincerely  
John.