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1 June



This is the first chance I've had since the early part of May to write to you. I've received back of your V-mails & hope now that the address is clear to you. There has been no change & it remains the same old 650.

A good deal has happened since I wrote you last. The most important to us was V-E day. Though for awhile here no one was sure just when any one was going to declare that the end in Europe had come.

Soon after the end of the war here in Italy. I was able to look forward to a trip through the northernmost portion of the country. About two weeks ago the chance I was waiting for presented itself & we had orders to leave on an inspection

Tour of our stations - That had moved along with most of the forward elements of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army & the Tactical Air Force. It was strictly a duty assignment but what an assignment it turned out to be.

To give you a general idea of our trip we "jeeped" 2200 miles in about a weeks time - averaging anywhere from 300-400 miles a day for the time we were away. The trip itself started here from Caserta - & led us through Rome, Grosseto, Leghorn & Pisa on our first day out. La Spezia, Genoa & Milan we visited on Sunday - 20 May - with an overnight stop in Milan Monday - Lake Garda where I spent a little time with Russ Lodi - thence on to Verona - Tuesday north along the Brenner Line to Bolzano - approximately 90 miles from the Austrian border - on Wednesday afternoon I was riding a gondola down the Grand Canal in Venice - & that night returned to Verona - Thursday we headed

3.  
south visiting. Modena, Bologna &  
Florence - leaving for Caserta on  
Friday morning where we ended  
our trip about eight o'clock that  
nite.

You can see from the route  
we took that we covered quite  
a bit of territory - also you can well  
understand that I consider myself  
a very lucky fellow to have had  
such an opportunity - it is a trip  
that I will not soon forget & one  
that has just about topped every-  
thing I've ever done over here.

I don't begin to think that  
I can tell you all about the  
trip itself or the things we saw -  
but some of the things we did see  
I think will interest you.

In Milan - traffic-light - women  
strutted conductors & a carnival  
where we tossed balls at wooden  
milk bottles - rode the roller coaster  
the scotch-cars - & were even able  
see the tiny medall lady & the  
being with the head of a man &  
the skin of a goretta.

Lake Garda. a picture post card scene. if ever I saw one - The high alpine hills completely surrounding the blue waters of the lake - some of the peaks were snow-capped & made a beautiful picture -

Bolzano. where the infamous General Welf. had his headquarters with German troops still in the city - German M.P. directing traffic & guarding buildings that still housed enemy troops & establishments.

Coming toward the city you pass convey after convey of German vehicles full of German troops who were being taken to prison.

Venice with its unique transportation system - where instead of waiting for a taxi you hail a passing or in it a "cruising" boat - bus service - furnished by motor launches & the only way to get about in the old city unless you walk through its very narrow streets, which seemed a good deal like the streets of Capri - except that walls were the sides of the houses & shops which were crammed very close together.

The Piazza di San Marco - with its huge cathedral was about the most interesting thing to see in the city.

We had a few opportunities to come in contact with some of the Partisans - In Milan & some of the other cities they still walked about the streets clad in nondescript uniforms & armed with loaded sub-machine guns. They were still ferreting out some of the Fascists.

In a little town outside of Verona called Vellefranca - I attended a trial of some Fascist party members. These men were charged with various crimes & were being tried by the partisans. The leader of the partisans - seemed to be acting judge, prosecuting attorney & jury - although there were six other <sup>sated</sup> members on the stage at a table. The prisoner was brought in & made to stand before the commander of the patriots. By the way the whole affair took place in the town movie house & played to <sup>N.S.R.O.</sup> audience. I was fortunate to get in - & it

was one time when my D. Talion  
really came in handy. I was right  
up front & had two of the patriots  
has my prompters, narrators & what have  
you.

Getting back to the trial - the  
~~only~~<sup>whole</sup> affair was as had the appearance  
of being all very proper & legal. The  
accused was asked his name etc. -  
The charges were read to him. & he  
was given a chance to explain his  
action. When the prisoner started  
to speak an angry murmur went  
through the crowd & when he had finished  
you could hardly hear him. A loud  
"Silenzio" from the "judge" brought order  
once more & then began an "interrogation"  
a bit of cross examination as I've ever  
heard. The commander - at times questioned  
softly, belittled other questions - he  
was really making a play for the  
plaudits of the audience as he had  
them laughing at some of his quips,  
agreeing with his statements & "boasting"  
as the D. Talion equivalent. The prisoner  
by the time he was through - he was  
a show-man as well as a good lawyer.

The whole affair lasted about  
an hour & a half & when the prosecutor  
had finished - he stood up & asked  
if any one in the crowd had any  
thing to say either for or against  
the prisoner - a few shouted some  
remarks - that I did not quite  
understand - but on the whole all  
appeared satisfied that it was  
a ~~good~~ job well done. The prisoner  
was led out by two guards - The  
sentence I learned would be given  
later - but I had it from one of my  
Italian companions that - the man would  
either be shot or hung. Justice swift  
& sure - a little harsh - but no better  
than that meted out by these same  
men only a few short weeks ago.

all the trip wasn't as grim  
as that - for example. I think you  
would have enjoyed the "No Speeding  
signs" on the Grand Canal - & the sight  
of a British M.P. in a motor boat -  
checking speed limits. The man on  
the bike riding down one of the hills

outside La Spezia with the  
branch of a tree held over his  
head for shade - the youngsters  
who stood on the side of the road  
& waved, shouted & threw flowers  
at us as we passed.

The overall picture of the north-  
west was that it had suffered little from  
the war - they had things to buy here  
that the people south of Rome &  
Florence had not seen for years.  
Of course there were portions hard  
hit. The port areas of La Spezia &  
Genoa - the rail yards at Verona -  
the all along the Brenner line north  
from Verona - rails were cut & trains  
& vehicles lay smashed by the  
roadside - hardly a bridge was  
standing anywhere. The cities hardest  
hit were Verona & Bologna - & in  
Verona or some of the wrecked  
buildings were written in Italian -  
"This is the work of our Liberators"

Enough of my travels - I imagine  
by the time this arrives you will  
be looking forward to a good

long rest - you know to the prospective  
teacher that is one of the most  
alluring of aspects of our profession  
the summer vacation. By the way  
if you intend to travel at all this  
summer may I suggest you stay  
away from "jipsi" - I'm still taking  
my meals from a standing position.

I had letters of late from Big  
Ed, Bob & Leo & also one from John  
Creswell. I imagine a lot of the  
fellows will be heading home soon.  
Some of them deserve every break in  
the world as they have certainly been  
through a good deal.

I hope you will enjoy your  
well earned rest & that you will  
find time to write me a few lines -  
My best to the folks.

Sincerely  
John.