

April 13, 1945

Dear Ted,

This is going to be brief since it's written during a period which is something like a cross between a brief lull & actual combat. I just had a supper of hot rice, chicken & beans (there was so much spam in it that at first I was wondering what sort of chicken I was eating - which shows how much my taste must have deteriorated), something of a rarity which incidentally has unsettled my stomach for the evening.

The other day I went off on OP group (the Partisans carried my heavy radio yet I couldn't keep up with him. An indication of the stamina these natives have). there's a town where we were the first Americans. Needless to say, our welcome was royal. The whole citizenry turning out to cheer us. Since the terrain did not permit any prompt delivery of rations we were caught red-handed. (I had even gone through my usual extra rations tho I still had my chocolate bars left) and made a chance remark about food. The response was amazing! We were led immediately to one's home where the mistress had prepared some food for her children. She insisted we eat everything. The mainstay was a thick starchy soup (rather flat because of a lack of salt), excellent wine, bread & an odd type of concoction which looked somewhat like cornbread with fish oil & grated cheese. that night when we returned for sleeping quarters she fixed us up for the best room in her home. We repaid her, when our rations came in, with ample chocolates & the dinner K rations which none of us can stomach. We ran into quite a few Partisans who are quite a gay bunch. They are dressed in a motley uniforms. Some completely garbed in Jerry uniforms except for the Jerry cap which is partially replaced by a red cloth. When I was with them, I was afraid to smoke my cigarettes since I hadn't enough to go around.. I went the whole day sans smoke which was quite a trying ordeal. I forgot to tell you that my job is no longer that of runner. I now pack the heavy radio along which is far more interesting than my former job tho this present one is exhausting work. I work together with Fred Dobana, who sends his regards. In this job Dobana and I work under the communications sergeant and we alternate on the carrying. Our work isn't at all like your former job and had Yap-Yap used you as he should have your job would have been far easier. At present, I am trying to learn all I can about communication angle at the company since you realize I had no training in this so far and I don't wish to be deadweight.

Ted, I may begin writing to your sister. I received a Xmas card from her and since I have her address, this is a good a time as any to become acquainted with a Nisei girl. I've never known any girls near my age and often wonder what they're like. Perhaps I shall be able to enjoy Italy far more than I did the first time since England & some books I read have made me tremendously architecture conscious. A short time ago I saw a beautiful patterned more or less after the basilica but it's appearance was marred by a hideous dome and sacristy, destroying all the unity of form. The church in his village is a plain, whitewashed affair and the architecture as a whole has nothing of note. This interest in architecture I find highly satisfying since it has a stabilizing effect on



my mental equilibrium. Even when I am completely exhausted, I find my spirits raised when I chance upon an interestingly designed church tho much of it may seem stereotyped. This is slightly off on a tangent but didn't you see the pictures in Time showing with this Cologne Cathedral in the midst of all the ruins. No, it had no profoundly religious effect on me but for some unaccountable reason I ;had a sinking feeling at the pit of my stomach. Somehow, pictures of ruins had never affected me as much as this single one did.

Yours,

Bob

Wishing you all the luck in the world Ted - I know that you'll make an excellent officer

"Hello" from Fred Dobana, the "Black Boy"