

Nice, July 2nd, 1945

My dear Billy,

I am writing you while you do your physical training with Jany on the couch.⁷⁵ At this moment, you are happy but when you receive my letter, I am certain that you will have a very heavy heart. That's why I am sending you a couple of lines. I think that you will have a very good trip and that among your friends, you will forget your sadness very quickly. But I have to tell you how happy we were to meet you and how much we regret not having known you during your regiment's stay in Nice. However, we will keep the best memories of you. We spent some good days together and I hope that during that time you forgot your worries about military life a little bit. It is unfortunate that the wind prevented us from taking advantage of swimming in the sea which you like a lot. I hope that this is only a rain check and that very soon, during another leave, we will be able to spend again some good moments together and have good swims. Jany, at that time, will know how to swim like a fish and will beat you with speed. I am very happy that you enjoyed our company and I hope that you will have a very good memory of your stay with us. On our side, we will keep the memory of you as a very pleasant, very nice and very amusing boy. Know that we will remember you always for your impressions that made us laugh so much. Besides I will force myself to remember [them] in an attempt to redo them when the occasion presents itself. I only regret that you didn't do the imitation of Jany taking a swim because I don't doubt that it must be very funny. I also have to thank you for your kindness. You can't know how much your present pleased me. I am very embarrassed and don't know how to thank you. I equally hope that our cooking pleased you. It at least changed up the military cuisine and infinite preserves [that you are used to.]⁷⁶ Now my dear Billy, I will leave you in wishing that you had a good trip and that you are not too sad. Write us very quickly to give us some

⁷⁵Though Gilbert is most likely alluding to Jany and Billy kissing on the couch, physical training was a major part of the soldiers routines. Physical training is implemented into military training in order to adequately prepare the men's bodies for the circumstances and situations they may face in the field. The Army first introduced the Combat Basic Training Course in 1942. Most soldiers, after enlistment, complete basic military training and physical training which was very regimented during WWII. Soldiers would have to be able to perform a series of fitness courses regularly because it was never known when these skills may be of use. For example, the WWII fitness plan included pullups, squat jumps, pushups, situps, mille long runs and squat thrusts.

⁷⁶During WWII, there were two major types of rations for U.S. troops. The C-rations were for combat troops and the K-Rations were for airborne regiments and messengers. Most of the C-ration meals consisted of canned meats, beans, canned fruits, chewing gum, chocolate bars, coffee and cigarettes. Some of the soldiers were also able to obtain processed cheese and crackers. Whereas the K-Ration meals were divided for breakfast, lunch and dinner serving "4 ounces of meat and/or eggs, cheese spread, biscuits, candy, salt tablets and sugary drinks."

updates and to tell us how your trip went. And I hope that in two or three months, we will again have the pleasure of having you with us. See you soon Billy and good luck.

Sincerely yours,

Gilbert

All my regards

Gaby