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A.P.O. 650% P.M.N.Y,

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Dear Miss McGlynn,

This is the first chance I've had since the early part of May to write to you I've received both of your V-mails and hope now that the address is clear to you - there has been no change and it remains the some ole 650.

A good deal has happened since I wrote you last - the most important to us is as V-E day - though for awhile here no one was sure just when anyone 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 though the northern most partition of the country. About two weeks ago the chance I was waiting for presented itself and we had orders to have on an inspection

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tour of our stations - that had moved along - with most of the forward elements of the 5th Army and 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 - and led us through Rome, Grosseto, Leg horn [Livorno] and Pisa on our first day out La Spezia, Genoa, and Milan we visited on Sunday - 20 May - with an overnite 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 [Railway] to Bologna approximately 30 miles from the Austrian boarder - on Wednesday afternoon I was riding a gondola down the Grand Canal in Venice. And that nite returned to Verona. Thursday we headed

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south visiting Modena, Bologna and 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 and one that has just about topped everything I've ever one 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 lights - women streetcar conductors and a carnival where we tossed balls at wooden milk bottles - rode the roller-coaster the scooter cars - and even event went in to see the tiny midget lady and "the being with the head of a man and the skin of a gorilla."

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Lake Gard - 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 and made a beautiful picture.

Bolzano - where the infamous General Wolf had his headquarters with German troops still in the city - German - M;P; directing traffic and guarding buildings that still housed army troops and establishments. Coming toward the city you pass convoy after convoy of German vehicles full of German troops who were being taken to Verona.

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

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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 and some of the other cities they still walked about the streets clad in nondiscript uniforms and armed with loaded sub-machine guns. They were still fasting out some of the Fascists.

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

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was one time when my Italian really came in handy. I was right up front and had two of the patriots has my “prompters, narrators and what have you.”

Getting back to the trial - the whole affair was or had the appearance of being all very proper and legal. The accused was asked his name etc. - the charges were read to him - and he was given a chance to explain his action. When the prisoner started to speak an angry murmur went through the court and when he had finished you could hardly hear him. A loud - “Silenzia” [Silence] from the “judge” brought order once more and this began as “cute” a bit of cross examination as I’ve ever heard. The commander - at times questioned softly, bellowed other questions - he was really making a play for the plaudits of the audience - as he had them laughing at some of his gulps, agreeing with his statements and “booing” or the Italian equivalent - the prisoner by the time he was through - he was a showman as well as a good lawyer.

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The whole affair lasted about an hour and a half and 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 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 companies that the man would

either be shot or hung. Justice swift and sure - a little harsh - but no better than that meted out by these some 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 - and the sight of a British M.P. in a motor boat - checking speed limits. The men on the bike riding down one of the hills

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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 and waved, shouted and threw flowers at us as we passed.

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

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

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

I had letters of late from Big Ed, Bob, Ledo and also from John Pineault. Imagine a lot of the fellows will 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 and that you will find time to write me a few lines - My best to the folks.

Sincerely,  
John