

[May 1945]

Last evening we received the news of the surrender of the German Armies in Italy. It was great for us to know that at least a portion of the VE [Victory in Europe] had been obtained. The news did not come as a complete surprise to us here - because we knew just how much of a pasting the enemy forces were taking or had taken since the push here in Italy began about three weeks ago.

You can well imagine the joy of the Italian people. Church bells have been ringing at a steady rate since the news was released. Last nite eve we went into town - I wanted to see and hear just exactly how the town folks were taking it. I think you will be interested in what we saw.

On every street corner were gathered knots of people - every one seemed to be talking at once - Some were smiling others had tears in their eyes - Italian flags and banners of all sorts were flying from almost every balcony and endeavors

[Page 2]

of the dwellings. A group of young men carrying good sized flags were leading what we would term a victory parade back home - They were all either singing or shouting Viva Italia. The parade grew larger as on-lookers joined in the marching. It was a boisterous but orderly display of joy mixed with relief and sadness too - because many of the women dressed in black could feel no real joy.

Two things I noticed that will give you a fair idea of the way the people felt. First although it was quite late - whole families were out in force including the young children - the first time I've seen any youngsters out after dark - except for a few waifs - since I've been here. Secondly there are four boys crossed in front of a machine and forced it to slow almost to a stop and as they passed I heard one say - "After the Italian pass then the machine may go on" Imagine a good Irishman would say "its a great day for the Irish."

[John D. Capone]