

7:00 Written Wed Night Sept 1, 1943
8:00 Mailed Thurs Morn. Sept 2, 1943
Beautiful day
Bright & Sunny – breeze

Dear Jean:

This morning I awoke rather irked at the thought of not going home. I guess it can't be helped. So now, I've got to wait, now. This morning they took all names of persons wishing to go out on furlough and when they wanted to go. I put mine in for the 15th. Rudy Lesko did likewise. So, did a great many others. As I told you yesterday only 10 were allowed to go out one time. Maybe I'll be the next, maybe I won't. If I get a chance, I'll see if Rudy and I can get off together. Maybe it won't be this month, perhaps next.

Well, I got over that in short order. I got in the swing of getting on my job, & was pretty busy all day. Tomorrow, "Thurs" the boys go on guard duty. I won't be out there with them unless there are changes in plans. I don't think I will be on. The Capt. told the 1st Sgt. To take me off guard duty and I don't think they will change that order.

Its pretty hard, to think of things, especially when things are the same and you follow the same pattern each day. But -.

We got a few cards in our barracks. One is the Sgt in charge of the section. He's rather short, about 5'4" tall & sports a mustache. He a real nice-looking person and full of real rich humor. He's full of hell, and you would die laughing at the cracks he pulls. What makes him so funny, is

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the fact that he demonstrates everything he talks about. He was just telling about a parade he was in at N.Y.C. He and some of the boys were on a truck and dressed up like the boys from Bataan. Bandages, mud & all. He was on the machine gun. He was showing us how he did it. He was on his knees, clothes all torn, mud & bandaged. How the nurse calls him cute & how he told them to stay away – while he learned acting. He's funny – all motion & expression. Every thing he talks about, he demonstrates. Someday, I will introduce you to him.

Then we have another Sgt. who is an impersonator. He's funny as hell too. He thinks he's pretty good, so do we. He acts about the same as the other.

Then we have a few others. So, between the bunch we have a pretty good time. I guess we've got the liveliest barracks of the bunch & the best gang.

Rudy is in the worst. He's got a tough Sgt & Corp. over him. I'm tickled I'm not in his barracks. They are really mean. They want to show too much authority. Nobody likes them.

Our Sgt. Tells us to do something & as I said talks & demonstrates. Right off the bat, you can't help laugh. IN that way, you do your work with pleasure. He keeps your sides splitting all the time.

Well honey I hope I see you soon & will I be glad to see Mamie.

Written Thursday September 2, 1943

Mailed Friday, September 3, 1943 – rain

Dear Sweetheart:

This morning I received a letter dated Sunday, August 29. In it, you stated that you just finished packing the camera. That's good. Maybe I can get some pictures of Douglas with it. Then you can see what kind of a place it is. Just as soon as I get to town again, I'll buy some film. The Post Exchange is all out. They are issued a certain allotment. When they are gone, that is all they can get till the next month.

Before I forget, don't tell Johnny Jurena's girlfriend about a furlough. He wants to surprise her. So, don't mention it to her. With me, it's different. I would like to surprise you and maybe I have when I asked you for some money for train fare. You will send it, won't you? If you don't, I won't be able to get home. So, I'll expect it soon, I hope. I still don't know when I get my furlough. It will be soon though. We ought to find out any day now. They are making up the lists now.

This morning was the same as usual, only I was busy building a shelf for the Capt.'s radio. That killed most of the morning. After that, I washed a few things. Every day I wash something. That's kind of a standard job with me.

Tonight, I walked to the Capt. We talked about different things and finally wound up with furloughs. He asked when, when was I going to take mine. I told him I put mine in for the 15th of September. He said, "Good, then you get your furlough then." So, expect me home sometime next week, maybe Sunday. Now that is arranged, I must keep reminded of finance. Cheap, isn't I?

Well honey, I went to the show tonight in town. Saw "Johnson of Lenn" or something like that, with Van Heflin? Pretty good. Wish I could have seen more of it.

On the way bac form show, I got a ride. Usually you can pick up rides. Just walk along the road and have no trouble at all.

Well honey, I better get this out right now so I'll shut my mouth and open my heart to you.

Your affectionate husband

Leo

P.S. I love you xxxx

Don't forget to say hello to Mamie

(2)

Sweetheart Jean,

I received Tuesday letter and camera today. I probably won't get a chance to use it this weekend. I'm on the alert tonight and on guard again tomorrow. So, it means I won't be able to go anywhere till Monday night. As you know, I was on guard. Friday night till this afternoon at 4 o'clock. So, you see, I've been pretty busy. Maybe if this sort of thing keeps up, it would be better if you didn't come down. I don't know what to think about it. But all the boys are working like that. Some are pretty disgusted. They wanted to get transfers but, they wouldn't accept them. They were told they were stuck here and that was final. Maybe when and if the other company comes in, it will be easier. We hope it's soon. So, in the meantime, we have to put with it.

I'll try to get some pictures of the town for you as soon as I can.

In spite of all the trouble, I still want you to come out here. Three nights out of 7 isn't bad. I as talking to one of the natives today. He said 3 years ago, it was 52* below zero. He said it usually runs about 20*. It isn't as bad as zero back home. The air back home is raw and goes right through you. This air here is just the opposite. It's all around you. It's not as bad as it sounds.

As for the car, maybe it would be best to sell it. Just for the heck of it, have Fred help you check on some dealer and see what they will offer you for it. Maybe it can be sold out here. I'll snoop around and see what I can get for it. Cars are pretty scarce in some places. And pretty valuable. I don't know how it is back home.

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One fellow out here in camp has a '41 Plymouth Coupe. Had 60,000 miles on it. The car was in bad shape. So, he says. I seen the car myself and it isn't very nice. Well, his wife got an offer of \$750.00 for it down around N.Y.C. Over here I think you can get a pretty good price.

As for the furlough, I still don't know when I will get it. I was pretty sure I would get it September 15, but now I don't know. The Capt. said he would fix it up for me, but the way things have panned out, makes everything uncertain. I think the reason I'm getting all these details is because the 1st Sgt. has to take orders from the Capt. It the Capt. told him that I was going out on furlough the 15th, then that probably makes sense. He's just sore at me because I didn't go to him and beg for a furlough.

I haven't said anything about this to the Capt. He doesn't know, "I don't think," that I'm getting all these details. To hell with it. I'll just take it and forget about it and hope things will turn to better.

Maybe I sound like a complainer, huh. But honey, you said I could talk to you. I fell like talking or writing to you. I got to talk to someone. Maybe I'll see you soon – then I won't say a word. I guess I'm like that.

Right now, the radio is playing. We've got a couple of them in here. It makes staying in a pleasure. "Lucky Strike Program" at 1800. Can you figure out what 1800 is? It starts from 1 o'clock, 0200, 0300, 0400, etc. to 2400 or 12:00 the 24 hours later, army time. Let's do it over again. From 1 o'clock – 01:00- 02:00-03:00-04:00, etc. then 12:00-13:00-14:00-15:00, etc. 8:00 is 20:00, 9:00 is 21:00, 10 o'clock is 22:00 and 11:00 is 23:00 and 12 o'clock is 24:00. Dull, huh.

Well honey, it's getting along towards the end of the letter, so I'd better say goodnight. I love you – miss you- adore you – woo you.

XXXX Your husband

Leo

Don't forget Mamie

(2)

Saturday September 4, 1943

Dearest Leo,

Well, I see by your letter you will be home soon.

Here is the money. I hope it will take care of your trip.

Darling, I think you'd better wear your winter uniform. It's getting cold here. In fact, some days are quite chilly. You probably won't need a top coat.

I was dreaming I was in Douglas last night. I found a three-room apartment to live. If Ceil decides to go we would rather have about 3 rooms to stay in.

I went to the movie last night with her. We talked till about 12:30 this morning in front of her house.

Darling, I hope you get about a 15-day furlough. I would like to have you home at least a

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week. Maybe you can ask the Captain.

I sure have an idea what the town looks like according to those cards you sent. One is a picture of trees and mountain and the there is a cowboy and a horse. I guess I have a rough idea.

I hope you and Rudy will come home together.

I think I'll close for now sending you all my love. I'll have plenty when you come home for you.

Until I see you

XXXXXX Your devoted wife

Jean

P.S. Don't forget to let me know when you think you will be here.

(2)

Monday night September 5, 1943

Mailed Tuesday Morning.

Dear Jean:

Well honey, I get my furlough the 16th of September. It's been authenticated and posted in the barracks. So, it will be only a few days now. Honey, please send me the money as soon as you can. About \$45.00. If you don't get it, I won't be able to come home. Imagine you can send it by Western Union or Telegram or something. So please send it as soon as you can. I imagine you heard the same thing everyday last week and this. As it happened, I just received Thursday, September 3rd letter. Maybe you didn't receive my letter asking you to send some money. It will probably be in tomorrow.

As for guard duty, I just got off. I was on what we call the stockade gate. That's the gate that leads to the prison compound. Everybody goes through that gate. And are they fussy.

Nobody can go through except the Officer of the Day, Office of Guard and Provost Marshall and members of the immediate guard, that is without a pass. Everybody else has to present a pass. If General Marshall wanted to get through, he couldn't do it without a pass.

You see, the stockade employs many civilian and army personnel. They have to present a pass to get to work. Several trucks go through the gate. They also have to have a pass. You take plate number, time entered and time left. Then we have buttons for special passes. These people also have to identify themselves and sign a sheet. Then we compare signatures of those you have and the one they just signed.

When the prisoners go out, you have a guard with them. But before they get out, they have to go through about 4 channels. Inspected to the greatest degree

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of accuracy. When they come back in, they are all frisked or searched. Today we just heard about 2 German Officers who escaped from Trinidad. It was worth a little excitement here today. We had about 6 different forms to fill out and every once in a while, they would come around and see how things were. They seemed like wild animals. Before we only had 2 sheets to fill out and since the prisoner escape, they added 4 more—and what a complicated mess it is now. You gotta be a genuine bookkeeper to keep things straight.

Then on top of that, we had a big St. Bernard with dreamy eyes and big soul. Well he parked inside of our barracks which is about 6 by 6. He would go to sleep – snore? Never heard anything like it. Snore and groan. We, he laid down, you thought the post would fall apart. They're so big and clumsy that they just flop and sprawl. You see elephants like that. It takes a minute to turn around.

Well, honey, nothing exciting happened, nothing except getting a letter from you and that is exciting.

That's all for now, Jean. Give my best to the family and Mamie.

I love you

Your Sweetheart

Leo

(2)

Sunday September 5, 1943

Dear Jean,

I received your Wednesday letter this Sunday morning. In it you mentioned my watch. Don't buy me a new one till after the war. I don't think you can get any good ones now. The one I've got works fine and it will do for now.

And about my new job. I was mail man today. The regular mail man was sick or too lazy to get it himself. It seems that I've got so much to do now, that I don't have any time for anything. As you know, I've been on guard duty and on the alert. I will be on again today.

I don't know if I will be on all the time. I don't think so, but you never can tell.

Well honey, here's the news you've been expecting.

I'm going to start on my furlough the 16th of September. Rudy Lesko will go the same time that I am. Isn't that a break? How do I know? I snooped in the files and found the list. There was only 3 on for the 16th. Maybe they haven't decided on the others yet. They have 7 more to pick. So, I will see you all soon. I hope nothing changes between now and then. I'm kind of anxious to get home.

I can just picture myself laying down in bed and listening to the radio. My carcass sprawled out on the divan. A tub---. Just loafing. Just puttering – total relaxation.

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And giving you female a big hug. What are you laughing at? It isn't funny. And I going to be able to loaf? I hope I am.

So, the gas problem is fine with you. I'm glad you are getting enough.

And Bob Topp – "He's in the army no. He's not behind a plow. Don't let his old age and flat feet fool you, He's in the army now." You should see all the cripples up here. They are 8'fers if I ever seen one.

Oh, I received a letter from Corky. It's pretty good. I'll send it with this one, if I don't forget.

So, don't forget to send some money for my furlough. I guess you probably heard about it now, but your last letter didn't mention it.

So Long for now,

XXXX

Your Sweetheart –

Leo

Say hello to the rest of the gang.

It's getting quite cold. The old winter is creeping up on us.

Keep Cork's letter – It's a beaut.

Monday, September 6, 1943

Dearest Leo,

Well, it was 4 months yesterday that you are in the army. It really seems longer.

The summer went by so fast before you realize, it will be winter.

I dreamt of you last night as usual. I must confess I did dream about another man also, although I didn't enjoy it.

Freddie and Lovey are working today. Anne and I are just puttering around. Mamie is canning some pickles. You know Mamie's always looking for some kind of work to do.

George, my uncle, was asking about you. Remember Red the bus driver? I saw him the other day he was surprised to hear you were in

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the army.

E.J. are paying us for today's holiday so you will be getting a check again.

My Mother is going to make me a dress this time I am going to help her with it.

Are you still the Captain's orderly? Tommy Harter was telling Mamie that they pick men that are dependable for something like that. So, you are darling, I'm not the only one who thinks that of you.

Mary Kocik told me she wrote 8 pages to Bobby. I don't know what she writes but I never can write any more than I do.

Corky just came over, he is telling me he wrote you a letter. As long as I don't write too much. At least you get other mail. Anyway, darling you have all my love.

XXXXXX

Your devoted wife

Jean

(2)

Sunday September 6, 1943

Dearest Leo,

I got up this morning about 8:00 a.m. I couldn't fall asleep after that. I dreamt of you all night. I just couldn't get you off my mind. Yesterday and today I felt very nervous and excited. I guess I'm so thrilled to have you come home.

Rudy wrote Ceil and said that you would be home sooner than he would. I do hope that you will be home together. Of course, you

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can't tell the army what to do.

I am down to my Mother's. Monica and I are going to the movie. It looks as though it wants to rain.

Freddie checked our car. It seems to be alright.

Jimmy Sexton says that he knows where I could get some boot leg gas.

Don't forget to let me know when you think you will be home.

So, until then, darling, I love you as much as ever.

Your devoted wife

Jean

XXXXXX

(2)

Tuesday September 7, 1943

Dearest Leo,

I just received 3 of your letters, over the holidays I didn't get any mail so I was pretty anxious today.

Darling, I hope you don't have any trouble with your, 1st Sgt. just when you expect your furlough. Please darling, don't get too angry with him it isn't worth it. I know you can take a lot if you have to. Don't let him get you, he's probably just jealous.

Rudy called Ceil last night telling her about coming home so she called me at 6:00 a.m. this morning telling me you boys will be home the same time. I'm glad although I still am not sure whether she will go

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back with Rudy. It depends what he thinks about it. She has her apartment to consider and a few other things she has to straighten out first, where I don't have to bother about very much.

Darling I believe you were actually worried whether I would send you the money. You know I would do anything for you, no matter what it costs.

I getting to be an old topper. I had 7 beers yesterday and didn't even feel one.

Well darling, I'll keep hoping and praying everything will turn out for the best.

So, until I see you, I love you.

xxxxxx

Your devoted wife

Jean

(2)

Wednesday September 8, 1943

My Dearest Leo,

I didn't get any mail from you today. I usually get one every day. I hope your not in the guard house. Since the last letter I had from you, you mentioned how sarcastic your 1st Sgt. was to you. I hope you don't let a little thing like a Sgt. get you down.

I worked only a half a day, in fac that's just about all I work is half days.

Johnny Kascheck went by the house, he is leaving this Saturday for the army. You know he was going to some radio school. He finished his course and they sent him his notice right away. He told me he was quite nervous and upset about going. His whole class are leaving for

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Missouri. I told him I expected you home. He says to give his regards to you.

I can't think of very much to write about. My mind is blank. I just think of you coming home. If you should need some money let me know.

I am sitting on the porch, drying my hair. It's a little awkward to write.

On your way home, drop me a card when you change stations or a telegram. Perhaps I might be able to meet you at the train, if I have an idea just when you will be here.

I'll close for now sending all my love.

XXXXXX

Your devoted wife

Jean

(2)

Wednesday September 8, 1943

Sweetheart Jean:

Well honey, the money came today and so did my breath. I guess I wrote enough about it. So now that I've got it, my life is partially beautiful. To make things perfect, I would have to have you around even if you did gain weight and are afraid of doctors, and love me enough to be foolish enough to come out here. But you better come out or you will freeze to death this winter. When you mentioned cool weather down there, then we must have similar climate here, because it was cool enough to wear winter underwear and arctics this past week. To top off change of weather and clothing, some of the boys wore their winter uniform – home or to town. But, I've encountered a little trouble – I sent my coat to be exchanged and don't know if I will be lucky to get it back in time. If I don't I will have to wear my Suntans.

Hasn't Ceil made up her mind yet? She doesn't have to be afraid of Rudy. He keeps telling me he hopes she comes out. He might put up a little argument, but tell her not to pay any attention to him. Tell her to be firm..

Oh, so you got the allotment checks, or I should have said, Mamie got her check. You did too, but you didn't keep yours long. Maybe I can make it up sometime.

So, you've put on a few ounces. So, have I.

Today, I goldbricked all day or I should have said, half day. This morning I built a magazine rack and put a shelf for the C.O. So, I was pretty busy this morning. In the afternoon, I washed a set of Suntans and some small things.

Talk about meals. I'm telling you honey, I'm gonna put on weight and I don't mean maybe. You eat about all you want. This morning we had

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scrambled eggs, potatoes, cereal, fruit, coffee. And you get all you want. I just eat and eat. Tonight, we had spaghetti.

You should see the fellows tonight. It's so funny when you look around and pick out a fellow and watch what he's doing.

For one, we have a fellow named Hodge – tall dark and pious looking. The first impression, you would get would be that of a minister. At 2nd glance, you'd know it was a minister, but he isn't. He is an insurance man. Every minute that man has off, he lies in his bunk, a cigar in his mouth and a paper in his hands. Nothing bothers him. He never gets mad and always willing to carry a conversation. We call him "mother." It seems to fit better than anything else. Why it fits or how it fits, I don't know. He is kind of

careless about his equipment. His complexion is clear and fair and if he missed a day's shaving you wouldn't notice it, in spite of his 30 some odd years. He looks neat, but that's as far as it goes.

Well, honey, I just put that in just to fill in space. I've been trying to think of something to write, but to no avail. So I say, I love you and miss you, forever you are mine. Period.

Your husband

Leo

(2)

Thursday Night 2330

September 8, 1943

Dear Jean

I don't know exactly what to say or write about. I went to the show tonight and saw "Something of 1943." J. Carol? Do you know what it is? I ended up here at the Service club. It's rather new, but it's a hang-out for here. They have billiard table, nickelodeon, pinball machines and magazines galore. IT's quite a large place. At the present time the hostess is playing the piano and some soldier is jiggling. There aren't very many soldiers here now. Probably a dozen and a half or so. I could count them. I will. Fourteen of them.

I did start a letter back at the barracks, but didn't finish it. I don't remember what I wrote in it.

Oh, Lesko was on the alert today, and hung around all day. So, he up and ironed a couple shirts for me. I washed them this morning and hung them out on the line. When I got back, they were gone. I wondered what happened to them, until one of the boys told me he had them. I went over and there he was, busy as a little mother, ironing my shirts. And a pretty

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good job too.

Perhaps you don't understand what alert he was on.

Well, we except a carload of prisoners today, and he was one of the gangs elected to bring them in. About 3 o'clock this afternoon they came in, and what a sight. All sizes, all types of uniforms. A couple even wore civilian clothes. Some in shorts too.

He did that today, but tomorrow he's a prisoner chaser. So am I. All we do is spend the day with them on some detail, like digging ditches or something like that. These prisoners volunteer for these jobs. They are not compelled to work. They're just anxious to get out and stretch their legs.

Another thing they like do is, go to the hospital for treatments and such. And the dentist too. Some of the boys who have been here prior to our arrival said that they like to eat in the prisoners' mess hall. The food is good and tasty. There prisoners themselves cook their own food. The boys who told this happen to work in the stockade. They really praise their cooking. Just as I've often praised yours and Mamie's. Also, your Mother's.

I wish I had your letters, 2 of them today, so I could refer to them, but anyhow the time is getting short now. Before long, I'll be home. Maybe Saturday or Sunday. IT will only be for a few days.

About 6 or 7. So, until then, I'm glad you're dreaming about me just as I dream about you. Honey, we can't stay apart for very long, can we.

I love you and miss you.

Your husband

Leo

P.S. Don't forget I asked about Mamie

(2)

Wednesday, September 8, 1943

Dear Jean:

No doubt you heard about the unconditional surrender of Italy. It means that we are closer to the end of the war.

As usual, I goldbricked today, but this morning's news was great. At the time I heard it, I was in the Captain's quarters listening to the radio. There was a station interruption at 9:47. Then is when I heard the good news. At the time, I wasn't sure I heard correctly, so I waited for the 10 o'clock news cast. Sure, enough it was true. They did sign an armistice September 3 and some of the Italians were already fighting on our side.

I bet you all were pretty happy about it all. Bet there was a lot of whooping around. You know you civilians have a tough life and a think like that is bound to stir up some commotion. Even the boys here are pretty well stirred. It's the main topic of conversation here. Wonder if the prisoners will hear about it. And today, sometime, we get another batch of prisoners. About 500 or more.

Tonight, one of the boys told one of the prisoners that Italy gave in. He didn't say what the reaction was, but he shouldn't have said anything about it. I imagine if the C.O. got wind of it, he might get court martialed. You aren't supposed to talk to prisoners except

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when you give orders or direct them on some detail. I guess the prisoners don't care much. I bet that news will spread like wild fire through those prisoners' compound. This fellow is an Italian, that is, the one who told the prisoner the news.

Rudy Lesko is going to iron a couple shirts for me today. (Wed.) I still can't iron. He showed me how well he does it. He's right on the ball. I was going to iron my shirts, but Rudy's iron wouldn't work. I wasted a couple hours trying to fix it. Then to top it off, I lost a blanket, which I hung out on the line. I'll find it around somewhere.

Jean, I hope you would kind of decide what you want to do. About the car and trip, etc. Is Ceil going to come out? Where would you leave the car. Leave it in the garage and let Freddie take care of it? Or drive out with it. Four people couldn't very well ride out here. IT could e done. Take plenty of time. I wish you would think about that. I probably won't have much time at home. Maybe 6 or 7 days. What do you think?

I think maybe you will like it out here. It's nice and quiet. Three shows a week and maybe a dance weekend. The rest of the time we will have to stay in. I'd like that. I want to get you in a corner. Gee honey I love you, but I'm afraid maybe because I love you so much. I wish things would be different so I could go back and live normally again.

I guess that's all sweet

Good Night

September 8, 1943

Dear Pal Leo.

Just got your address this a.m. Here goes. How the Devil are you. Wish I would see you this minute. I heard you are O.K. with those western boys and girls. When you have time from your regular duties guarding those devils I have read about so much----- got the good news today of Italy surrendering over.. We are all praying for a quick victory.

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[unintelligible]. We are the same at 50 Court. Same bunch and so jolly as ever. Always something to keep things moving. Business has taken a chop although we are expecting new more rationed shoes \$2.49 \$3.49 any day. I bought around 700 pairs left soles only leather on the heel lift. Old Bingo very quiet no boys here to stir things up. And I cannot take care of all the girls as I promised you. Guns getting too old although I can still sell shoes.

My golf has been rotten this summer not played as much as usual. Now young man you went West tell me about it and I will come. Mr. Feek, Doug, Jane Ann are fine. You know Jane Ann went to Boston for treatment. A [unintelligible] treatment. She was the 27 one in United States to have it. They think she is cured. We hope so though. We all miss you so much. Our love will never cease even if we do not write often.

Your Old Pal,

Pudge

(3)

Thursday, September 9, 1943

Dearest Leo,

Believe it or not I worked all day today. I received 3 of your letters. I didn't know which to read first. According to you letters you have been quite busy. Guard duty and all. Anyway, I'm glad you don't gripe about it. You're taking it like a good soldier and I'm proud of you.

I'm glad you tell me everything that goes on. You guys have quite a time trying to get your clothes pressed. Isn't there any laundry or cleaners to get your clothes pressed?

Some of your letters you forget to put the date on. I suppose you don't pay much attention to what day it is.

Today, I got some work back. I got so disgusted I felt like quitting. I have so much on
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my mind that half of the time I don't know what I am doing.

I feel better now, I guess it was just one of my bad days. I don't let it worry me.

It's getting cloudy outdoors. I think it will rain.

I got a card from Tommy Harter from Texas - was I surprised. Mickey Yacko was home yesterday for the day. You know he does convoy duty. When he gets back to New York, he has about 36 hours off. Then he comes home. He didn't know you were in Wyoming. He might get a chance to come home again when you will be on your furlough. Joe says he is anxious to see you and so am I.

Well, darling, be a good boy. Until I see you, I love you very much.

XXXXXX

Your devoted wife

Jean

(2)

Fri., Sept. 10, 1943

My Dearest Leo,

I received one of your letters today, according to your letter you are still coming home. Again, you have mentioned the money. I see you are quite anxious. I hope you don't think that I wouldn't send you the money. You know darling everything your heart desires you may have.

I worked only a half a day. I just finished cleaning up a little. Ceil and I are going to the movie. Last night we had a parade over town over the 3rd War Bond Drive. I didn't go over town – it was too cold for me to stand and watch a parade.

I don't know what I'll do

(1)

when winter comes. I guess I need you a lot.

Do you have any German prisoners at your camp?

I'm afraid this letter will be rather short. I haven't much to say this time. I hope you forgive me for not writing very much this time.

There's all my love darling.

xxxxxxx

Your devoted wife
and sweetheart

Jean

P.S. IF you didn't receive your money please let me know right away. I sent it Special Delivery last Saturday it's just as long as a letter.

Sat. Sept. 11, 1943

My Dearest Leo,

I received your letter telling me you got the money alright. I was getting a little worried. I thought maybe it got lost.

I see you are also getting winter pretty early. During the day the sun comes out so it isn't so bad but at night or in the morning it's quite cold. You know how cold I get sometimes. Last night when I got I bed I was thinking how your used to keep my bed warm and have me cuddle up to you. How I miss that.

I just filled out a form applying for more sugar for Mamie. She's canning tomatoes now.

You had a letter from the

(1)

"Blind Work Association" to donate some money. I am sending the book back with no money. I hope you don't mind.

Really honey, I haven't much to write about. I guess I'm all excited about having you come home.

So, until I see you, I love you and can't wait to be in your arms.

xxxxxx Your devoted wife,
 Jean

(2)

Written Saturday Night September 11 Bright

Mailed Sunday September 12 Sunny

Sweetheart Jean,

The time is getting short now. Before long, I will be home. As I stated before, I should be home about Saturday. If and when I get closer to home, I'll send a telegram.

I received a letter from the store today. There were about 4 letters in the envelope. One from Mr. Feek, Louie, Mary and Leona. I think you remember them all. It was good to hear from them, even if I don't believe them about missing me. I may be wrong. Anyhow, I'm going to try like hell to keep away from that organization when I get out of the service. When I think of what a cheap organization I worked for, it makes me boil. Anyhow, I hope things turn out better for me. But, anyhow, when you see them, throw a little gravy at them. They ought to like that.

By the way, I was fortunate enough to get my blouse or suit coat, as you would call it. You remember, what I'm talking about. It's the one I mentioned changing. It's still a little large and needs taking in, but I don't think I'll touch it till I get home. What I need now is a hat and belt. Then I'll be all dressed up with my one stripe.

Remember this phone number, 2-6646. One of the boy's wife lives down in Binghamton. He asked me to ask you if she could come over here with you. She is coming out alone and wondered if she could come out with you. I told him I

(1)

didn't know what you were planning to do but if it was possible, you would be glad to. His name is Oliver, George Oliver. That's his phone number. I don't know if you want to call her or see her, but he did mention you to her. He's a nice fella and if she's anything like him, she'll be o.k. Do you figure on coming out here with me?

Now, I'm running out of dope. Nothing unusual. I was on mail duty tonight or today. The mail orderly was out of town. I'm on guard duty now and I've been loafing, the rest of the time. This time, I go on the tower. Four hours on and four hours off. Two of us change off every half hour. One walks around for a half hour while the other rests. It isn't a bad job.

Let's see. I get guard duty 2 times a week. Once, maybe on the alert, so that will mean 3 nights out of the week, I'll be busy. What do you think? Those nights you will have to be alone. Maybe after the furloughs, I won't get any guard duty. I think I'll ask the Sgt. to relieve me of Capt.'s Orderly. If he thinks you like something, he will do anything to make you miserable. I won't say anything yet. I'll wait

awhile. I'll just tell him that I've been getting stale on guard duty and marching and that Orderly takes up too much of my time. I'd like to get in some of the classes. What do you think? Then the Capt. will wonder why, and if the Sgt. tells him the truth or asks me, I think things will change. I don't think the Capt. will want to get rid of me, but you never can tell.

Well honey, I'll write more again tomorrow, so until I see you, here's a million kisses.

Your husband

Leo

Say hello to Mamie.

Maybe you better not write anymore, I won't get them.

(2)

Beautiful Day

Sunday Night September 12, 1943

Mailed Monday September 13, 1943

Dear Jean:

I'm awfully sorry my mail isn't regular. I do try to get them out at the same time. I don't know what holds it up, unless it is mislaid around camp. But then sometimes you get a couple letters. Yours come like that sometimes.

Last night at 2030, I was assigned to Tower #1. These towers as 7 of the others, are located around the stockade. In these towers are machine guns, Thompson machine guns and carbines. With all these three weapons, we ought to be able to handle any break. Now, all these weapons have to be checked by the new guard. See that they are in proper working order. Then again, there are two 24" aviation searchlights, which are used in case the electric power goes off. These searchlights work by battery and have a longevity of 100 hours.

Now, the way we operate these towers depends upon the guard mount. Some walk the catwalk for a half hour, then the other takes over. They do this for 4 hours. We worked it on the hour basis. Four shifts. I thought that would be better.

Each ½ hour, you turn in a report to the Sgt. of the guard. And that is done by phone, in this manner. Pick up received – operator, as usual, asks for no. "No. 83," the guard house number. The Sgt. of the guard usually answers. Somebody else might.

(1)

"Sgt. of the Guard. Sgt. Cooper." That happens to be his name. Then I come in big and strong. "Tower #1, P.f.c. Skorko reporting." "Everything O.K.?" He says meekly, "O.K." I hang up. He hangs up. Exciting, huh. All this has to be carried out to the letter.

And then when the time comes for the new relief to come on, you relate all special orders, regardless, if he's heard them. So, you do all this stuff over and over again. The night shifts are the worse. Through the day, it's a picnic.

Tomorrow, I go on guard again. Same tower. Same time.

Tonight, I had off so I went to the show. Saw "Airface." Pretty good. Then, I went to a little coffee shop and had a sandwich "hamburger" and coffee. Johnnie Jurena was with me and a couple other boys. It is now 2300. Can you tell what time it is?

Jean, don't write anymore letters, because I won't be here. I'll be heading for home, sweet, home. As I said before, I should be home about Saturday. Maybe sooner. It's still 11 days. Boy, am I anxious to crush you in my arms.

Have you decided what to do?

I'm anxious to get home, but the time that I will be there will be short.

So, honey, until just a few more days when I'll be seeing you.

I remain your anxious husband

XXXX

Leo

Say hello to Mamie

I'll be able to tell her myself soon.

(2)

Monday Night September 13, 1943

Mailed Out Tuesday Morning September 14, 1943

Dear Jean:

Believe it or not, I'm on guard duty tonight. Same place – Tower No. 1, different fellow. And you guessed it, when you said I was busy. From morning till night, but then I goldbrick in between. While the boys are out on the field, I'm hanging around taking it easy. The only time I'm busy is when I'm on guard duty. Then I don't seem to mind it too much. No place to go anyway. I won't like it though, when you are here. But, not seeing you for a couple days is better than not seeing you for weeks. Don't you think?

So, Red Harter is in Texas. How long has he been there? That's a foolish thing to say. I'll be home to get that answer.

And, Mike Yanko. He seems to get home quite a lot. He's pretty lucky. I'd like to see the old jerk again. Maybe I will.

Well, I'm kind of improving on my laundry now that I've got a bleacher. You ought to see me wash clothes. Get some hot water from the shower room and wash the clothes. Then I rinse clean. Maybe a couple times. Then I get some more clean water and put in a few drops of bleach and let it soak for about a half hour. How am I doing? Then I wring, how do you spell wring, and hang
(1)

out to dry. My clothes are no longer tattletale gray or grey, not since I begun to use, Hi-Pec. They are really beautiful. My linen and cotton fabrics are treated the same. Just rub gently, otherwise your material will disappear.

As for the laundry, I don't think they do such a good job and besides, they are rather expensive. Much too much for me.

Ain't that silly? But then I can't think of anything to say.

Oh, got a hair cut today. Just a little trim, but, I've still got the G.I. It will take a year before my hair grows out.

I'm going on duty now, so I say

XXXXX

So long for now

I love you

Leo

309 Front Street
Owego, New York
September 18, 1943

Dear Jean:

This will be somewhat of a surprise to you, but isn't life full of them?

I've been sort of going back in thought today to all my old friends. Wondering what they were doing, etc. You'd be surprised how much fun it is, especially if you can sit down and write them a letter, it sorts of brings you back to the days when we were out carousing.

I suppose my sisters told you I was married and very happy now. This week will be two years. It doesn't seem possible, but it really is. I also have three grown children, all in High School. They are good kids, devilish like any others, but when you take everything into consideration, they couldn't be better.

We just bought our own home here, of course we think

(1)

it is the tops. It has 16 rooms, but very easy to keep up. Do you suppose some weekend you could come down with one of my sisters to stay? They come down quite often to spend a weekend and I would love to have you come. Why don't you plan to? My sister Jean is due for a visit here, so you could probably plan a trip down with her.

At any rate, drop me line or so, it would be nice to hear from you. Right now, I couldn't think of anything with more fun attached, than to reminisce with an old friend.

Let me hear from you soon. I shall be patiently waiting.

Regards –

Most Sincerely,

Margo Jamieson

(2)

Wednesday September 29, 1943

Dearest Leo,

According to your letter, you boys had quite a trip. I have the saddle pins you sent. You're very thoughtful darling and a wife appreciates those little things.

I looked through your drawers for your keys. There nowhere around. Maybe they were in the box you mailed.

I also looked high and low for the slip to have my tires checked. I was sure it was in that little drawer. I remember you were puttering around and probably threw it out. I guess I'll have to have a new one made out.

I had my tank filled with gas. Bob Topp brought Freddie some Prestone. I bought another gallon from him. He isn't allowed to sell it for cars, only for trucks. It's pretty hard to get. It only cost me \$1.75 a gallon. He says some

(1)

people will pay as high as \$5.00 a gallon if they could get it.

I wish you wouldn't make fun of Rudy's teeth. He really might not like it.

I had a little more work this week. I'm glad it will give me chance to put it away for the trip.

I think I'll run over to Ceil's tonight and talk things over. Mamie says to thank you for the pins.

All my love to you

XXXXXX

Your devoted wife

Jean

(2)

Monday September 27, 1943

My Dearest Leo,

Well, it's back to writing letters again, the first thing I looked for when I came home from work was mail. I really didn't expect any but I guess its just habit.

I suppose you are still traveling. It sure is a long trip, isn't it?

Yesterday I met Ceil's brother, the one you got gas from. He says I can come down for gas any time. I feel better now that I know him. At first, I sorta hesitated to go. The gas problem is solved for a while anyway.

While I worked today, all I thought of was Wyoming and you. It won't be too long before we will be together again.

The week that you were

(1)

home just flew by it seems.

Everyone was quite surprised that I didn't go back with you.

I think I'll run over to the hospital to see Ondrajko's wife tonight.

Rudy forgot his do tag. Ceil sent it out yesterday. I hope he gets it alright. I was looking around the room to see if you left anything. All I found was your medal so far.

I guess Shrak's wife is going to have a baby alright. Julia was telling me. She is only 3 weeks gone and Shrak told everyone.

Well darling, it was wonderful having you home. I also have something to look forward to.

XXXXXX

All my love

Jean

Mamie is feeling pretty good

(2)

Monday Sept 27, 1943

Dear Jean:

I finally arrived at this town, called Lincoln, Neb. Rudy and I arrived here, about 1030 this morning. So, this morning and afternoon we hung around town shopping in the 5 & 10. Right now, I'm at the Service Club on 13th St. It's quite a large place with plenty to do. I forgot to tell you we have a lag over of about 6 hrs.

Maybe I better start from the beginning.

We got seats when we left you. There were plenty of them there. As we went along we picked up more passengers. Then it filled up. I finally got to sleep & slept all night & woke up about 9 o'clock Sunday morning. Then we had chow. We ate so much that we combined our lunches in one box & Rudy made carry the box. He's awful. So am I. I had to laugh when he started to eat the chicken. Rudy is such a sensitive lad, almost to refined. He held the chicken between 2 fingers, the other 8 sticking way out. He bit. His

[1]

Uppers almost came out with the bit. He stopped & looked at me.

"Tough, ain't it?"

I said it was. Perhaps I didn't exactly know what he meant. Tough chicken or tough about his choppers.

Well, he finally got in the groove, and you couldn't stop him. He wanted to eat everything. I told him he shouldn't over eat. He said he was hungry. I still wouldn't let him eat. And he didn't. I was firm.

Well, we kept traveling at a very slow rate of speed & finally reach a little town of Keaton. There we were derailed. A derailment occurred about 14 miles up the line. No one hurt. Nothing serious. We lost a couple hrs. there, and finally got rolling and arrived at Chicago about 8 o'clock. Then we got the Parmalee, that's the cab that takes you to the connecting station, "free," then to the Union station. We arrived at the Union Station about 8:15. This is at night. We inquired about train connections. One was leaving at 9 o'clock that night. That was a fast express. The other about 10:15. We took the fast one at 9 o'clock. I went out & bought a paper & magazine. Rudy waited. I was gone longer than I expected. The crowd & Rudy went through the gate & waited near the train.

[2]

I came trucking along. We got on the train & found to our surprise that they had only one car for passengers. And the seats were filled. We walked to one end of the train & then back. No seats. Then a woman grabbed my arm.

"Want a seat?"

"Please madam, I'm not accustomed to talking to strange women." – My name is --, How do you do Miss Westcott. "Thank you"

I jumped in beside her.

Now, what about Rudy. No more seats. I was foiled, until this kindly "Old Maid" as she called herself suggested that Rudy take the coach at the back of the train. This coach was going only a short distance & would be disconnected in a couple hrs. It was the only thing to do anyway. She said she was going a little way further and that Rudy could get off the coach & come to our coach, wait about an hour & take her seat. That worked well. About 1 o'clock at night they disconnected the back coach & Rudy came in ours. And so finally got a seat with me. That was levels. All the way from Chicago, passengers sat in the Isles. It was crowded.

So, all, this Old Maid & I talked all nite.

[3]

I didn't realize I could talk so much. We had a good time.

When she finally left, Rudy & I went to sleep & I woke up about 8 o'clock Mon. Morn & as I said before got in hear about 10:30. In a way I was glad we took that fast express & got here when we did. We had a chance to shake our legs & see the town. The other way we would have to ride till this afternoon, other jumps to make the other connection to [alliance].

Now, we stopped & had coffee & pancakes. We roamed around. So, it was better this way.

I sent a couple or am putting a couple of ornaments in three letters. Take what you want & may be give Ann or Mamie. I bought them in the 5 & 10 [cent] store. They only cost \$7.50. How do you like them?

I guess that's about all for me.

I love you

Leo

P.S. I left my locker keys home. Maybe you can send them in an envelope. There are 3 of them on a double chain. There was a loose one too. Use tape so that won't rattle.

[4]

Mon Sept 28, 1943
Sent out Tues. Morn Sept 29

Sweetheart:

Well, Rudy and I finally arrived at Camp, with only slight changes in Camp schedules and operations.

So, I'll try to relate incidents that occurred after that.

We left the club about 1500 & went to the theater. Saw a couple 3rd rate pictures.

About 1700 Rudy & I returned to the Station. We got there a little early, so Rudy & I went to a beer Joint, I had a beer – I felt it. Rudy can take it better than I.

Then one of the boys came in with his wife – along with another chap. So, the four of us got on the train, which came in a half hr. late. We were fortunate to get seats near each other. The other boys didn't show up. Then we proceeded to eat & finish most of it. The rest we finish later. In the meantime, we stopped at a station for about 25 min. Rudy & I stopped in a little restaurant – had coffee & pancakes.

Then came the dull part of the trip – 2 handed pinochle with Rudy.

(1)

As usual, I don't fare so well. Rudy won 5 games – I won 1. "No gambling" [*unintelligible*] Well we finally arrived at Douglas 2 hrs. late. We hung about for a while, then proceeded towards camp. "Hike – No buses at that time, but no mater, we got a ride to the camp. Alright, eh.

Do things happen quick in the Army.

1st were going to get a new Co.

2nd Guard hours changed.

3rd Quite a bunch of the boys, "possibly I" are going to escort prisoners to farms for harvesting. They say it will take about 6 weeks. Maybe, this will change our plans.

4th We will have a new Co. Who – I don't know. Haven't seen him yet.

5th We have regular movies at the Camp

6th A new Company Came in.

7th A bunch of the boys had their furlough taken away. Glad I had mine when I did.

8th Boys had extra guard duty. Why? I don't know -- yet.

That's all I can tell you now. The boys tell me I've gained weight. You all feed me too well. I feel fine & hope you all feel the same.

So, until tomorrow. I remain your husband.

Thank you & Mamie for everything & the rest too. The meal was swell.

(2)

Tuesday September 28, 1943

Dearest Leo,

"Happy Birthday Darling." I believe you are 31 today. You don't look a day over 27. I received your card from Chicago. You probably are in Douglas by now and pretty tired I imagine.

I worked till 4 o'clock today – it almost killed me. I seemed to get lazier every day.

I went to the hospital to see Ondrajko's wife and the twins. They look like Steve. One weighed 7 lbs. and the other 5 lbs. 9 ounces. Steve is coming home Saturday for 9 days; his wife will be home from the hospital by then. She says it was nothing to it.

I am enclosing those pictures you took at camp. They're not much good. You fellows were probably kidding around and forgot to hold the camera still. Otherwise they would of

(1)

turned out pretty good if they weren't blurred.

It is very warm today. It must be Indian summer.

Everyone at home is just about the same. Bob Topp was over last night. He was wondering whether you were there yet. I told him you would get there sometime today.

Well sweet, I can't think of anything else to write except that I love you and think of being with you.

Your devoted wife

XXXXXXXXXX

Jean

There's a few extra

kisses for your

birthday

(2)

Written Wed Night Sept 29, 1943
Mailed Thurs Morn Sept 30, 1943

Sweetheart:

I don't exactly know where I left off in the last letter but:

Rudy Lesko & Johnine Jurena went out on the farm detail, I told you about. So far, I've been exempt. Another bunch is expected to go out St or Sunday. I still don't think I'll go, but you never can tell. How long they plan to stay out, I don't know, perhaps about 7 weeks, may be less. They will be there as long as the crops are there, which may not be too long. May be that will change all plans. The fellow who came out here with his wife has to go out. What a break. He's the one who came back when I did.

The day went by as days usually do, only I was a little busier. As you know, I take care of the mail to day and for a couple weeks more, "I think,"

And this morning the Capt. told the Lt & 1st Sgt to send me up to his quarters to help him straighten up. I got there before he did and what a wreck. I finished up, without seeing him, as soon as I could, because I had to get the mail. I haven't seen him yet. I don't know where he hangs out.

(1)

Today, sometime, we were supposed to get another flock of prisoners "About 1000 more" Maybe, they will be in late tonight. Anyhow we got a skeleton crew around.

My package hasn't arrived yet. I'll will probably be in before you get this letter. I put up both pens in the box, so I have to write with a regular dip pen. It works o.k.

I hope you haven't sent my keys special delivery, because I opened my lock with a master key, so now I using another lock.

Tonight, I used my iron for the first time. IT works swell, and looks like a new iron. I ironed about 4 shirts, 3/[unintelligible] trousers and some other small things. Maybe I get the hang of it in time.

I've still got a few of the cookies left, I'll finish them tonight.

Oh, we had a beer party during supper time. All you wanted. Most of the fellows got to feeling pretty good. Half bottle is all I wanted.

I guess thats all for now honey, so until something new turns up.

I remain your Husband
Leo

Tell Mamie I'm fine.
I get paid tomorrow.

Written Wed Nite Sept 29, 1943
Mailed Thurs Morn Sept 30, 1943

Sweetheart:

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I also looked high and low for the slip to have my tires checked. I was sure it was in that little drawer. I remember you were puttering around and probably threw it out. I guess I'll have to have a new one made out.

I had my tank filled with gas. Bob Tipp brought Freddie some Prestone. I bought another gallon from him. He isn't allowed to sell it for cars only for trucks. It's pretty hard to get. It only costs me \$1.75 a gallon. He says some

(1)

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I wish you wouldn't make fun of Rudy's teeth. He really might not like it.

I had a little more work this week. I'm glad it will give me a chance to put it away for the trip.

I think I'll run over to Ceil's tonight and talk things over. Mamie says to thank you for the pins.

All my love to you.

XXXXXX

Your devoted wife

Jean

(2)

Wed Afternoon. Sept 29, 1943

Sweetheart:

I guess I told you about the Day room being converted into a Theater. Yes, we have three pictures in as many days. All for 15 cents. Last night they showed "Above Suspicion" Crawford & McMurry. It was good. The beauty part of it is – the Day room is directly in back of our barracks. The picture I took – "if it turned out," is the tall building toward the rear. I supposed you already sent those pictures out to me. A few of the boys are anxious to see how they turned out.

This morning, I took over the mail call & will for about 2 weeks, until the regular mail clerk comes back. I've been pretty busy so far. The Capt. is away for a few days. What a wreck his room was I don't think I'll go on the farm with the rest of the boys. This Mail Clerk job will keep me here. Don't think I'll get any guard duty either.

Oh, don't send a scarf. We were issued a scarf. "All wool" plain color. 2 prs of mittens and hoods. So, I'm all set.

Another thing. Take this check & use it when you come out. Its another one of their stinkin checks. I'll have to notify them of change of address.

I guess that's all for now. I just wanted to get the check through

Your sweet heart

xxxx "I love you?"

Leo