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**XV Corps Headquarters Engineer Section**



*Shoulder Patches LEFT: Engineer Training School; RIGHT: XVth Corps*

**June 6, 1945 Letter**



Salzburg, Austria  
June the 6th 1945.

Hello, my dear Khatze.

I just received your letter from the 13th of May. Thanks a lot for it. You know I have been reading and rereading your letter and when I read between the lines I make a very funny discovery. I really think now that you must have worried quite a lot about me during all the time I have been at the lines, even so I can't remember that I ever wrote to anybody what we were really up against. Those dreams you always have are not true that is one thing I can tell you. The only time I ever was in a hospital was, when I got a slight skin burn by a bullet. But you really couldn't ~~it~~ call it anything since I didn't stay in the med. department for over 10 min. All that has happened so long ago that I hardly remember it. So we might just as well forget about it and let ~~be~~ be Begone.

You know tonight I am in the mood to write and before I get through it might be a very long letter. So, watch out!

It is rather late again, to be truthfull it is after one o'clock in the morning. Our radio is playing just the right kind of music. The great Waltz and all the music from Johannes Strauss. I guess you know how I love to hear that. Well, now let me light another ~~but~~ Cigarette and then I am all ready to write and give you the true story of what has happened around here and what I hope will be the future.

On the first of Nov. we came to the front which was at that time near Luneville in France. We were relieving another unit which had a casualty over 50%. The officer and S/Sgt were blown up by a mine and all they found left of them were a couple of bones and a



half a leg. Well that had happened a week before and our office was very anxious to send some replacement up. The team as a whole went out and the two boys from the old team were send back to Paris since their nerves were shot and their hand were not steady any more. The very next day we started out to the lines to see what it actually looked like and how it feels to be under fire. Well I guess we must have been a mile away from the infantry when hell cut loose around us. Two German planes were strafing the road. We all jumped out of the jeep and went to the next ditch. To hell with the jeep. After that we had enough and went back to our quarters, mighty scared. That was the only time I really was scared stiff.

A couple of days later we settled down to business in locating mine fields in front of the infantry and deboooy trapping some woods. You know in our line of work we were allowed only one mistake and that would have been the end. But fortunately that never happened and so we are all feeling good and healthy.

Then came that very cold winter were we thought we freeze to death. But that passed to and spring and the drive through Germany came. We had an awfull lot of work to do and got only very little sleep. Only once I got a little rest and that was when I went to Paris, And boy, did I need to go. I had the jitters and couldn't handle that explosive any more.

Those few days in Paris did it though and when I came back I felt o k again. I don't think I am able to go into details since that would fill out a book and who has time to write one now?

Now we are in Salzburg and taking it a little easier. And that is one thing I don't like. That makes me nervous and I simply can't sit still. You know how it is. That gives me to much time to think and that is no good for any soldier.

I am only glad about one thing and that is that neither one of you ever found out what we actually did. That way you didn't worry to much. You couldn't have helped me anyway and I thought that that was the best way to keep the home population in a peaceful state of mind.

After the war was over we really took to Schnapps. And let me tell you we drunk an awfull lot. I guess that was the reaction from all that excitement. We captured a German train near Bamberg and fou in that train a whole barrel of Schanpps. About a hundred litters. That was beside the wine, Cognac and Champagne we had. For one week long all of us were drunk. And let me tell you drunk. We wanted to forget everything for a while and just be happy. Well, .



we fergot everything for a while, but happy, no, we didn't get happy. After we drunk so much and so long, we simply couldn't stand looking at that liquor any more and we stopped drinking long enough to get sober again. Ever since though, I have been drinking a lot, until last night. Then I put a stop to it and haven't had a drink since. Now it is all over and I feel like a human beeing again. I guess, dera Knatze, now you will understand why I haven't written often during the last month. I just wasn't able to. You know a typewriter is a nice thing to have. You can't see if a guy is nervous or not since the type is always the same. Now I have to cut down on my smoking. Three packs a day is to much for me and all I allow myself now is one pack. Brother it is hard to do that, but I am determend to keep it up. In one of the letters to Dicky I mentioned that I would go to Dachau. Well, I have been there, As a matter of fact we went with the infantry and took the place. That is one thing I never fergot. I simply had to write it down and so told Joyce about it since I was afaraid that mother would get a hold of the letter when I send it to you. If you want to read that letter you can ask Joyce for it, I am sure she will show it to you. Knatze everyx time I think about it I get mad again and feel like going out and shoot some more Heinis. When you have ever seen 32000 dead poeple in a small place you will understand what I mean. We made pictures of the camp, and I show them to every German. As a matter of fact I force them to look at them, even if I have to use my pistol, so they can see what they did to the Jews and all the other poeple. There is only one thing I am proud to say and that is that none and I mean none of the SS guards got away alive. All of them offered resistance and were killed, not shot. I was sick afterwards for two days. Couldn't eat nor sleep, had to think about Rosa and Erna. and all the other poor poeple. I don't think the Germans have any love left for me now. I treated them just the way the Gestapo used to treat the poeple of Europe. The other big catch we made was, when by accident we captured a German truk convoy of 30 cars. It was heavily defended and it was impossible to make any PW's That made some more good Germans. That convoy had all the mps and details of all the minefields the Germans had ever laid. What a thing to find. By special air-



transport it was send to Paris and now the Germans have to  
their own mines. I hope that the mines are still good and ki  
a lot of those b.....

Now about my future plans. So far I haven't got any. I am loo  
for the fastest way home and that is the reason why I don't to  
AUG! I was offerd a commisson in it but refused to take it  
unless ordered to. And that they haven't done so far.

I rather go to the Pacific then stay in this country. I hate  
every part of it, even the air. So lets hope for the best.

Well, dear Khatze by now it is rather late and my eyes are clos  
After all it is two o'clock already and tomorrow we have to son  
work.

Khatze, there is only one more thing I want to tell you.  
Please don't worry abot me. I will come home sound and safe. Yo  
can bet your botton dollar on it. I am so convinced of that , t  
I start worrying about the future and what I like to do.  
Afterall I am not getting younger and have to look out for the  
future. Going to be 24 years old pretty soon.  
Take very good care of yourself and give my best regards to the  
whole family.

With all my love,

always yours

*Ruby*

Khatze, once in while I miss you more then anybody I can think  
of. We always could talk to each other and understand each othe  
well. I only hope that will be the same way for the rest of our  
live. Come hell or high water. What do you Think?