

AFTER 5 DAYS, RETURN TO

Lt. John H. Ryan 36957996

Co. K-320th Infantry

APO. 35-4 PM-N.Y., N.Y.



VIA AIR MAIL

Lang

Mrs. John H. Ryan

3943 Riverside Ave.

Chicago, 47, Illinois

Wm. L. Larned

*7328
Rec'd May 31st
Lang*

Letter #228 'Somewhere in Germany',
Thursday - 17 May 1945

Dear Alice, Martha, + Gang,

I haven't written a 'gang' letter, for quite some time now, so I am going to devote this afternoon, or whatever part of it is required, to getting one off. - We are still resting, and living comfortably; and, at the rate I have been eating, I'm afraid I'll be losing my 'girlish figger,' before long. For a while, last winter, when K-rations made up most of our meals, I was wearing trousers with a thirty-two inch waist. Imagine that, if you can. The last civilian pair I bought, were forty-fours. Am now wearing thirty-fours. - Don't have any idea what my weight is. Only weighed once since I left the States and that was while I was in England. I weighed 12 stone 12 pounds, which was 180 lbs., (one stone = 14 pounds), then. That was last October. Over here, they use a

different system of weights. Weight, is measured in grams, and kilograms, (Kilos), one thousand grams equal one kilogram, which weights two and two tenths pounds. I'll look around and locate a scale, and find out what I weigh, in kilograms. - Went riding yesterday afternoon, on a good horse, which is a part of the setup where we are billeted at present. I don't know just what the civilian setup was, here, but it reminds me somewhat of a 'share-croppers' arrangement, back in the States. There is one large house, (in which we have our quarters), several small houses, and three or four huge barn. There are Hungarian, Polish, and Russians, (slave, or forced labor), who apparently did most of the work; and are still doing it, while waiting to be repatriated. They work under the

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supervision of an old German, whom they refer to, as the inspector. He, apparently is sort of a general manager. I don't know how much land is connected to the farm, but there must be quite a lot, judging from the amount of equipment, and stock there is. - For their plowing, etc., they use both tractors, and horses, as well as oxen. It's not uncommon to see both a horse and an ox, teamed together. The work horses, mainly, are of the Belgian draft horse type, big, and heavy. I'm not much of a farmer, but they look good, to me. - There are about a hundred cows here, which don't interest me. I've tried, several times, to drink some of their milk, but it just doesn't taste right.

Maybe that's because it doesn't come

in cartons, or ⁽⁴⁾ bottles. - There are plenty of chickens, and that means eggs for breakfast, as regularly as we please. When we first got to where they were available, in quantities, I've eaten as many as eight at a sitting. You'd have to eat some of the army's powdered eggs for awhile, to appreciate why. I am now, just about egg-full, and three or four, are enough. - So much for, 'My day, in Germany', and, now to switch over to a subject that's got me scratching my head, and if it weren't for the feather-tick on my bed, would probably keep me awake, nights. -

By now, no doubt, you are as familiar with the point system (the army's, not the OPA's), as I am, and probably just as confused. As nearly as I can figure, I now possess a round twenty-five points. Fourteen months in the army, and eight

months, overseas. ⁽⁵⁾ So far as I know
now, I am only entitled to one
bronze service star, that, for the Germany
campaign. There is some talk of there
being another, authorized, for our
participation in the breakthrough,
at the 'Bulge', last December and
January. But, even with that, my
score would only come to twenty -
eight, which is a far cry, from
eighty-five. Those battle stars aren't
passed out promiscuously; in ten
months of combat, the division only
rates three of them, and if the 'Bulge',
goes through, that will be four.
All that remains, for me to do, is
sit, with my fingers crossed, and
wonder: "What next"? - Nearly four
hours have elapsed, since I started
this letter, and I am going to
have to close it soon, so it will

go out in today's ⁽²⁾mail. - So, hoping
this finds you all in good health,
and enjoying life; and hoping to
hear from you, soon, I close,

With love,

Johnny