

Dec. 8, 1943

Dear Mother:

I hope this letter will reach you before Christmas as I am afraid it will about be my Christmas message and gift. As you know I have been moved and am now [redacted] While the process of moving was erratic - sometimes by freight car other times by air - I had little opportunity to write or think much about Christmas. Now suddenly I realize that the days have flown past and the end of the year is approaching. So I know you will understand that had circumstances been better I ~~so~~ could have perhaps sent something or a telegram. Anyway I want you to know that I will be thinking of you and the rest of our 'group'.

I expect that I will be here. I am at present living in the home of the vice-consul here in the town. It was his permanent home before the war and is very attractive. It is located in the center of the Arab section of town and the approach is through dark and dirty alleys. However when the door is opened it reveals a long archway through which may be seen a rather large garden surrounded by a high white wall. There are orange trees, grape vines and almond trees among other things. It is now the orange season and all we have to do is reach out to get a juicy orange. The grape season is past.

The house itself white stone, typical arabic,



N. african style. There is a patio where we have wine before dinner etc. My room is rather big and airy but the bed is soft and I sleep wonderfully.

There are two servants, an Arab and an Italian girl. We eat very ~~well~~ with a combination of native and Army food. Even regular field rations taste good when cooked by an expert cook in unusual ways.

As part of the household there is a 3 mos. puppy dog. "Kini". He is a mongrel spaniel with big ears and is chewing up my clothes, hands and shoes all the time. I love it. Also there is a big white cat. a bottle named veteran of some eight years. He returns at meal times and brings with him a trail of other cats worthy his various off-spring. ~~the~~ He is unapproachable and the real master of the house as he was its sole guardian during its occupation by the Germans. There ~~is~~ also "Horace" a big white pidgeon, and a lovely love-bird whose note has "flowed the camp."

So you see I have plenty of animal company. The human company is varying - there are usually Army people dropping in and other civilian friends of my host. He is at present away so I am the master of this establishment. ~~at present~~.



There are no women and it would  
be lonely here at Christmas. [REDACTED] will  
will be away. However I feel that something  
will turn-up.

The main drawback to the thing right now  
is the lack of heat. The weather is really quite  
cool and due to the scarcity of wood or coal  
it is rare that we have any heat. It is about  
65° or so I would judge, which is not bad  
but chilly when the sun goes down.

The town itself is rather attractive - modern  
and not too big. It is quite well stocked and  
there aren't too many troops - mostly English.  
It rains only about once a week which is good.  
It is really about the best place available at the  
present time. In the summer though it is brutal.  
Oran on the other hand is considered to be  
cool in summer, which for the most <sup>part</sup> it was. So I  
seem to have hit it lucky as far as weather goes.

However I don't expect to stay here many months  
as the front is getting further away. But as long as  
I can I might as well appreciate my good  
fortune.

The mail situation is going to be rather bad  
as I am of course further away but also because  
I am alone and away from my unit. I wish



you would address a letter <sup>to me</sup> to The American  
That address will  
probably be quicker but if I should be moved  
it might not be forwarded so easily.  
My other address. (on the envelope) is safer  
but never to send anything important that  
way.

As yet I haven't received packages # 3 + 4  
the other I received in Ovar. Thanks again for  
all their contents.

anyway the most important thing to have  
is a good job, interesting and instructive.  
The mail will eventually get straightened  
out.

Please give my best to anybody you  
might think would appreciate it and  
of course all my love to you, Julia,  
Vivie & the rest of the family.

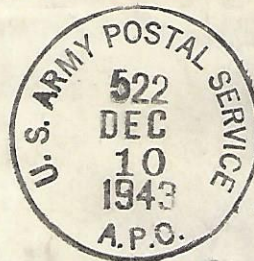
Just.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

~ JOYEUSE NOËL ~

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Mrs. W. I. Bochelder  
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Written Dec 8  
Received Dec 31

