

c o p y

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V Mail -

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Censored Lt. Chapman

Dear Mother and Dad:

This afternoon I spent several hours in the warm rays of the early spring sunshine - my thots in spite of the past several days experiences, were of you at home. Your letters just arrived softened the restlessness in my heart for a loving word from those whom I hold dearest. The outfit has just completed very successfully the seemingly overwhelming task of taking a clifflike wall that has been the "monkey-wrench" in the advance of this sector. When I say "wall" I mean just that, for every principle of mountain work the men ever learned was brought to play in the operation. The basic task for the operation took place at night - so up the wall they went, taking the enemy by surprise. Heroes all. My part was small and due to an accident of a pack mule petered out. Myself and a fellow operator had instructions to operate the (telephone) board up front just behind our own lines. We followed the packtrain up that was carrying the switchboard. However, the mule fell over a cliff and took the machine along. Upon arrival at the top and after so much labor in making the top we decided to stay should a second board be sent up. We set about digging our emplacement that afternoon. Work continued the next morning when we found ourselves completely exposed to enemy rifle fire from the flanking higher peak and from mortar fire from the main front. The situation was amazingly queer. Later we witnessed the heavy artillery and the final patrol action that secured the peak from the enemy. On the evening of the second night I was further instructed to string some wires from the present point to the peak just taken. So with the aid of several men from the company we started out. Descending from our peak to the ridge - the saddle between us and the peak in question - all went well. We disconnected trip wires leading to mines - advancing down the ridge laying our wire. We suddenly saw a group of the enemy huddled, as if in conference, in the gully before us. We put our guns on them and took them prisoner. They came forward. Previously, it had been suggested, I investigate a body of a dead kraut believed to have been hit directly by either machine gun fire or artillery - so while the rest of the team disarmed the enemy, I proceeded alone toward the corpse. Separated finally from the rest by a sharp rise in the ground and being a good distance from them, I found myself under some enemy fire. It was in fact a single gunman shooting several times at me. I returned fire and presently he walked out of his hole in surrender. This is my first German prisoner. As he came forward I ordered him to throw his pistol belt to the ground and having secured it sent him back with an escort from the wire team. I have now his P 38 pistol. It is a beautiful weapon rated as the best in its class. It is shaped similarly to the German luger but does not have the odd breech action. Today as I was sitting in the warm spring sun, I wasthinking of you at home. How wonderful it will be when this is all over. Away from these cold mountains - strange natives and hostile enemy. Tonight our support artillery continues its perpetual pounding of enemy fortification. I'm glad it is ours now - not Jerry's. Much love to all

relieved?
(word
not
clear)

Jim