

Africa  
Nov. 27, 1942

Dear Folks,

Yesterday was Thanksgiving everything considered we really had a lot to be thankful for. After being here but a few weeks I'm really thankful that we live in such a country as the United States instead of a country like this.

Going back to Thanksgiving Day we had a big turkey dinner, the first real meal we have had since we left the ship. We have been eating canned goods and dehydrated

(2) vegetables. Hard tack for bread. It really isn't so bad, the bread I mean, it looks and tastes like an extra hard graham cracker only not quite as sweet.

Enough for the food. What do you think of the stationary? This is all they have here, and my supply was getting low so I had to replenish it with this French paper.

From a distance as you look upon these plains <sup>in</sup> this country, it does look very similar to that of Wyoming or Eastern Colo. From a distance the vegetation can be taken for



(3) for the few clumps of grass and cactus we have in Wyo. or Colo. It is very damp and cold at night, and rather warm in the daytime.

War has hit this country rather hard. Everything is rationed. There is very little of anything. These people haven't had candy for over two years, sugar is a real luxury, gasoline is a thing of the past. Most vehicles are ~~run~~ charcoal burners. Most of them have an attached trailer with a contraption looking like an upright water tank heater, or the contraption

(A) is on the roof of the vehicle. This contraption is used to burn the charcoal for the fuel. The method used is beyond me.

Here you will find the height of poverty, filthiness and ignorance. The intelligence of the natives is hardly more than that of an animal.

For example when the fighting was the heaviest — tank cannons and machine gun bullets whistling all around us, we dug in fox holes wishing they were several feet deeper, expecting any minute for a shell to land in one of our



6/ fox holes — yet they would walk from fox hole to fox hole, in the full face of all that firing, asking us for cigarettes and candy. Walking straight up never flinching when one landed unusually close. That is what their ignorance ~~that they need to~~.

When in town both the French and native (Arab) kids pester a fellow for chewing gum, candy & cigarettes. I feel sorry for them, but we don't have enough to give them all, for we get little sweets, so we just try to ignore them. It is hard to do

6/

These people seem to like American cigarettes much better than they do their own, so they will give almost anything for a package of cigarettes.

We are not permitted to sell them anything. For they would then willingly spend money that they need for bare necessities, <sup>what</sup> on, they consider real luxuries yet to us are nothing.

We are not allowed to buy anything in their restaurants. The exchange of money is 75 French francs for an American dollar. Wine and beer can be bought for two francs, just a little



^, better than two cents. But  
their beer is very flat, it  
sort of gives you a let  
down when you drink it,  
their wine not very good.  
However many of the  
boys manage to become  
quite inebriated.

Our task was that  
of ~~the~~ [redacted] and  
vicinity.

Folks, I'm going to  
ask a favor of you. I've  
asked Jo. to send me some  
magazines and a newspaper.  
If you I'm going to ask  
a box of candy now and  
then. Not a large box just  
something to fill our  
sweet tooth with. It

8 / will be greatly appreciated  
by us, if you do. We  
get very little sweets to  
eat, and could sure use  
some now and then.

This year I'm afraid  
there will be no Christmas  
present from me. There  
is hardly anything over  
here one could buy as a  
present. However next year  
I'll make up for it.

It also brings up  
the question of wishing  
you all the Merriest of  
Christmas and Happy New  
Year. For it is very possible  
that you will receive this  
letter very near Christmas time.  
You might not receive any-



2, more, because it is hard  
telling how long it takes  
for mail between here and  
the States. Some is going  
by ~~mail~~<sup>air</sup> other is going by  
water. Mine will probably  
go by water.

There are many Spanish  
speaking people in this vicinity.  
So I should get along fairly  
well. Everyone seems to be  
happy to see us here. The  
Army is giving work to  
many of the natives.

Yesterday I went into  
town had a shave, haircut,  
shampoo, and tonic all for  
35 francs, about 45¢ American  
money. Not bad, but they  
are starting to get wise and

10/ boasting their prices all  
over town.

Where we go now  
is hard to tell, and no  
one dares to guess. If  
at all possible I'll try  
to write once a week.

It is now Nov. 30.

I started this letter several  
days ago and was unable  
to finish it until today.

Write to me often.  
So that it won't be so  
long between letters.  
The last letter I received  
from you was post. marked  
Oct. 10, well over six weeks  
ago.

Note the new address.



11 They grow large quantities  
of citrus fruit in this part  
of the country. At the present  
we are in an area with  
nothing but cork trees. The  
cork, which is the bark, is  
from four to eight inches  
thick.

I'll quit now so  
I can have something to  
write about in my next  
letter.

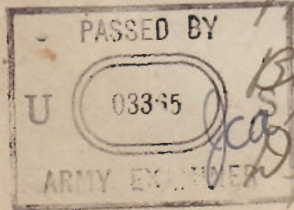
Tell me, Junior, are  
you doing any ice skating?  
If so do a little extra <sup>skating</sup> for  
me. I'd sure like to skate  
for awhile.

That is all!

As ever  
Bito.

Send back.  
Please

P.F.C. Rito Hernandez  
Co "A" 60th C.T.  
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New York, N. Y.



Mr. Everett Hernandez  
Box 6  
Dines, Wyoming