Anlagen: Dear Mother and Father,

You have, by this time, received a letter mentioning that I am quartered in the concentration camp at Dachau. It is still undecided whether we will be permitted to describe the conditions here, but I'm writing this now to tell you a little, and will write it later when we are told we can.

It is difficult to know how to begin. By this time I have recovered from my first emotional shock and am able to write without seeming like a hysterical gibbering idiot. Yet, I know you will hesitate to believe me no matter how objective and factual I try to be. I seem find myself trying to deny what I am looking at with my own eyes. Certainly, what I have seen in the past few days will affect my personality for the rest of my life.

We knew a day or two before we moved that we were going to operate in Dachau, and that it was the location of one of the most notorious concentration camps, but while we expected things to begrizly, I'm sure none of us knew what was coming. It is easy to read about atrocities, but they must be seen before they can be believed. To think that I was stopped at Vottin's book "Out of the Night" as being preposterous! It's seen worse
Waffen-SS
SS-Standortkommandantur
Dachau

Dachau 3, den
Fernmel Dachau 293

The trip south from Rotten was pleasant enough. We passed through Donaumworth and Achach and as we entered Dachau, the country, with the cottages, rivers, country estates and Alps in the distance, was almost like a tourist resort. But as we came to the center of the city, we met a train with a wrecked engine - about fifty cars long. Every car was loaded with bodies. There must have been thousands of them - all obviously starved to death. This was a shock of the first order, and the odor can best be imagined. But neither the sight nor the odor were anything when compared with what we were still to see.

More Coye reached the camp two days before I did and was a guard so as soon as I got there I looked him up and he took me to the crematory. I saw 44 troops were scattered around the grounds, but when we reached the furnace house we came upon a huge stack of corpses piled up like kindling, all must so that their clothes wouldn't be wasted by the burning. There were furnaces for burning six bodies at once, and on each side of them was a room twenty feet square crowded to the ceiling with more bodies - on top stinking rotten mess. Their faces
pulverized, their eyes popped out and with alickerous grin
or each one. They were nothing but bones and skin.

Boys had assisted at ten autopsies the day
before (wearing a gas mask) on ten bodies selected
at random. Eight of them had advanced TB,
all had typhus and severe malnutrition
symptoms. There were both women and children
in the stack in addition to the men.

While we were inspecting the place, freed
prisoners showed up with wagon loads of corpses
removed from the compound proper. Watching
the unloading was horrible. The bodies
squashed and gzoged as they slid the pile
and the odor could almost be seen.

Behind the furnaces was the operation
chamber, a windowless cell twenty feet square
with gas nozzles every few feet across the
ceiling. Ashtrails, in addition to a huge
mound of charred bone fragments, were
the carelessly sorted and stacked clothes of
the victims — which obviously numbered in
the thousands. Although I stood there
looking at it, I couldn't believe it. The
realness of the whole mess is just
growing on me, and I doubt
if it ever will on you.
This is a rumor circulating which says that the war is over. It probably is as much as it ever will be. We've all been expecting the end for several days, but we're not too excited about it because we know that it does not mean too much as far as our immediate situation is concerned. There was no celebration; it's difficult to celebrate anything with the morbid state we're in.

The Pacific theatre will not come immediately for this unit; we have around 30,000 potential and eventual patients here. The end of the work for everyone else is going to be just the beginning for us.

Today was a scorching hot day after several raining cold ones. The result of the heat on the corpses is impossible to describe, and the situation will probably get worse because their disposal will certainly take time.

My arm is sore from a typewriter shot so I'm ending this for the present. More will follow later. I hope lots to write about now.

Love,

Harold
Dear Mother and Father,

I've told you before about the thousands of dead bodies here. They are not nearly so ghastly nor horrible as our patients, the “living corpses.” I mention, of course, thirty-day pots would still look like Heracles when compared with some of these men. They have no bodies at all, and on some their vertebrae can be seen rubbing on their stomach. It is unbelievable that they could still be alive. And the odor of a wound is nearly as bad as the odor of the crematory. All have raw, ugly bed-sores, pus-deepening infections, scabs, scales, ulcers, bites, plus typhus, beriberi, scurvy, T.B., erysipelas, and/or other symptoms.

We don’t even think of them as human if we did we’d never be able to do the work. They look like wound beings from Mars—with their swollen heads (part of the de-borning technique) knobby joints, huge hands, feet, and popping eyes. Many are toothless. They lie curled up in the oddest positions, and when morning comes we go around and remove the corpses—still stiff in the flesh pig they held when they died. Most have dysentery of the “continuous bloody dribble” type—and of course we’re unable to drag themselves to the latrine. The alternative I’ll leave you to imagine. Certainly
am thankful I'm not a ward boy. Those that are not gibbering idiots are dumb statues. They shriek like flies while I'm giving them penicillin. To enter a ward at night is like hearing the "Inner Sanctum" radio programs. There are weird weeps, sobs, groans, rattles, grushling of teeth, and above it all the chant of men praying. I'll never forget it as long as I live. Those picked up complete bodies in a blanket with two fingers to carry them to the crematory.

This job could go on for ever; the number of patients for practical purposes is infinite. Normally we had 400-bed hospital. We're prepared to take over 1200 here.

I wear a mask, gowns, hat and rubber gloves all the time, but you can bet your life it will be just my luck to come down with something. The fellows are volunteering for infantry duty in the Pacific, but no such luck.

More later.

Love,

Arnold.
Dear Mother and Father,

If the numbers on my letter and the dates seem confused, remember that several of these are being written several weeks before they will be mailed. It won’t be until the 16th that we’ll have time to say we are in Dachau.

Today I talked to several Italian girls here (through an interpreter) who were kept for the amusement of the SS troops. I gather that the life they lead is beyond description. We’ve already had other evidence of the sexual organs of these troops. The Yugoslavs who was forced to dig the cemetery for the Germans is operating it voluntarily for us. He tells of having to go to the 44 branches to get the bodies of the girls after a particularly wild evening. Girls who refused to cooperate were burned alive before their companions—who soon decided to cooperate.

Tonight some prisoners formed an orchestra and held a dance with all the slave girls. Things are getting less morbid lately. 100 Belgians have already left for home. Several International Red Cross trucks with loads of candy, fruit and cigarettes have been but already and the corpses are being gradually collected and burned.

The enclosed picture is of the officer whose stationary I am using. He apparently had an excellent camera because we found a lot of
Dachau

Dear all.

The surprising thing to me was the normality of his life. There were pictures of his wife, his little girls, his dogs, his horses, motor boats etc. Yet within view of his office window was the mound of corpses beside the crematory.

Here the jeweller has a private office, complete with a brand new electric refrigerator. All the 12 wards have these now - since we found a warehouse full of them still in their crates.

I spent my 30 days in the hospital. The work at least 12 hours a day ever since we landed in Marseille. Now that the war is over I hope things will relax a little so that we can have one day a week off.

The patients are recovering and we're having regular food riots in the wards. They don't understand why we give them so little, but if we don't it all comes up within minutes of it going down because they haven't eaten for so long. You can imagine the bolting and confusion when one ward of 110 patients has about 8 or 10 different languages being spoken at once.

Love,

[Signature]
Dear Father and Mother,

German civilians are being used to help clear up this mess - the mountains of rotting corpses. They can hardly believe their eyes - exhibit every sign of genuine surprise, shock, and guilt - even to the extent of vomiting and fainting. I've talked with a French prisoner who was permitted to travel from camp to camp with an SS guard. He told of how the civilians on the train recognized his striped uniform, exhibited genuine pity for him and even offered him cigarettes. He insists that not one in a hundred of the German civilians has the faintest idea of what actually goes on in a concentration camp. Yet, I wonder.

The most interesting part of this camp that I haven't mentioned yet is its large female complement - the wives, mistresses, Russian and other girls, etc. that were kept here for the SS troops. They're all still here, plus lots of their children. The 127th Evac, which is also here with us, actually has a maternity ward.

Today I had a chance to read an official army report to the French government on the conditions of the camp at Buchenwald. This court, like Dachau, specialized in...
leadership personnel, but was an extermination camp entirely—exterminating 6000 a month on the average. The industrial efficiency of the slaughter house and crematory was described as being typical of the grim and ruthless determinations that has characterized all SS troops undertaking. One little innovation they had that we haven't discovered here was the special attention paid to tattooed prisoners. They were all shaven, the skin tanned, then made into lamp shades, wallets, and other leather novelties.

The patients each had an orange for breakfast the other day. Everyone was excited, but some were too weak to even eat theirs. More and more of them are beginning to look like people and less like animals. We have patien, or prisoner, ward boys to assist us now and things are going a little easier.

Perhaps you'll see much of this in the news reals. If so you'll miss the most grisly part. Our article in Stars and Stripes says that the Hay's office has decided you can't take it.

Love,

Harold