middle ages. The architecture was Italian pre-renaissance type, very quaint and picturesque. Narrow twisting streets, numerous tiny niches housing statues, ornately decorated eaves, quiet courtyards, massive arches, small public squares and massive wood work. While wandering through its cobbled streets we chanced upon a cabinet makers shop that displayed delicately carved boxes depicting Italian landmarks. Intrigued I tried to barter but I couldn't get the price below 1800 lire. I didn't buy the box but if I get a chance to go back I will. Erin would have loved to see Caserta.

Today we unsuccessfully attempted to procure passes into Naples. Heaven knows when we will leave, the red tape concerning our leaving gets more involved every day. I don't mind staying here as long as the weather is as warm as it is and the food stays of the same caliber. I also want to go to see Pompeii and a little of Naples before I leave, then theres that box to procure for Erin. We lazed away the day writing letters and joining in these endless Air Corps bull sessions. The Russian drive is very heartening to say the least. Forty miles from Berlin say the Germans. Fifty-five admit the Reds

At last we sucessfully procured a pass. And off to town Bob, Pete, Gronberg and I went. In Naples we boarded the Red Cross bus off to the train and our excursion of Pompei. Under the shadow of Vesuvius we were amazed by the extent of this ancient civilization. It was beautifully impressive, and with imagination it was glorious. The past beauty of the temples, the everyday ways of life. The water fountain worn by hands dead 2000 years, the ruts worn in streets by chariots long past, the beauty of the wall paintings. The paganism with their adoration of the "cock & balls" even whore houses with their stone beds. We spent a few hours looking at what could furnish years of study. Then the $4,000,000 Cathedral in modern Pompei and a Cameo bracelet for Erin.

We lounged around today soaking up the beauty of the Italian skies and relaxing in our easy circumstances. Gronberg and I decided to hump to Caserta to buy a carved box I previously mentioned. Arriving there we inquired about the price, fully expecting it to be £1800 but at our amazement it was quoted as £1600. I noticed one of richer carvings on the sides than the others and almost started an international riot getting across the idea that I would like that one and wanted to know how long it would take to obtain it. I tried sign language, I even tried to delve back to my high school Latin, but to no avail. A British

(CONT.)

soldier possessing a smattering of Italian finally saved the day. Then the two cabinet makers hastily went to work. One stained it while the other put on the hinges. To dry the stain they built a fire of shavings on the floor, and the one fellow heated some wax in gasoline solution in a can. Suddenly the can burst into flame. As a reflex the fellow put his hand over it to smother the fire. Naturally his hand being coated with fumes burst into flames also. A small panic resulted but eventually order was restored, no one was hurt, we all laughed over the near tragedy and my box was fini." Purchasing one for Bob, Carl + my.

self & got them for ₤550 each.

FEB 4 - We were alerted + restricted, but Gronberg + I on a whim went to Caserta to buy a "cock + balls." The real article proved too disgusting in daylight however so we returned empty-handed, and packed.

FEB 5 - This morning we boarded a C-47, flew over Rome, the Southern tip of Corsica and the coast of France to Le Vellon. Anxiously we looked for P-61's, a Chateau and what have you. Dejectedly we viewed Beaufighters, and rows of tents and nothing! We were a sad bunch tonight as it rained, we drowned our sorrows in Armagnac and I missed Erin.

A couple of P.I.'s put up our tent this morning and we got to work. I say work because an army tent comes without floor, heat or door. Lumber being the big problem we scouted around for same. Since everything procurred by the individual overseas is stolen we decided against some prefabricated German material in favorg a nearby pile of lumber. Thus ensueed a long continuous trail of moving "hot" lumber. Resulting in a cresendo of hammering amid the morning of sawdust. We laid the foundation for the floor also half of the floor itself, and plans for the best tent in camp began to formulate. The stream of wood flowed on.

Arising early we immediately continued work. The floor expanded and at last was complete. Then the wall braces were to be built. We made the walls especially high to afford more headspace, and a greater if not actual illusion of size. We called it a day when we had completed the floor, laid hidden gas lines for our stove (hoped for), finished the sides and the door jam. More ideas were formed and apparently our dejection upon arrival had lost itself in the interest of the work at hand. Unwitting we are tying ourselves in with the pride of the squadron fawd but I miss that wife of mine

Today resuming our labors on our abode we instigated a new policy, one of individual projects. Thus doing away with petty backerings and opinionated prejudices and acquiring the pride one has in his work. Gronberg having a glib tongue and a catching personality was elected the job of procuring a stove, Bob constructed the door, Bob the sky lite, and Pete we left to dream of running hot water and brass tubing. We used celli-glass to glaze the door and sky lite. The electricity was installed and inspired a built a table after dark. We now honestly have the best floor, door, sky lite, and table in camp. Bob and I, shivering, moved in.

We finished the clothes closet this morning, that is without hack or doors, and built four benches to go with the table. Pete + "Gron" went into the air craft dump at Salone to get some copper tubing for the proposed water system. Upon their return Gronberg hastened out to the lake to supervise the building of the stove. Periodically he would mysteriously appear in a jeep, or one truck or another. After dinner he arrived with this massive creation and immediately we borrowed some gasoline and inaugurated it. It works so well that Pete + Gronberg moved in. We have a mighty nice + comfortable tent!

We lazed away the day just being comfortable, unpacking, and enjoying our tent. Also today I finally surrendered at the end of a two day pursuit. The medics breathing hard on my neck with a hypodermic in hand. It seems as though my annual typhoid and small pox injections were a bit overdue. It was with glee that the Sgt. jabbed his seemingly foot long needle into my arm. It is also with glee that the thousands of microbes now race about my drowsy body. I keep bedtime and heed its call I will. I just wish that I were able to heed the call of my heart.

John Dowd, an old buddy of mine from Boca Raton, and who just returned from the Hospital as a result of shooting his hand with a flare gun, and I set off for Church this morning in a jeep. We went to the Cathedral at Salon. The Bishop (or Vicar) presided over the solemn high mass. Salon is another typical quaint hundred French rural town and the cathedral was very ancient, very musty, bleak and rather cold. At Camp it was announced that "Frenchy," the enlisted man who had mistaken carbon tetrachloride in a cognac bottle for the nearly as deadly liquid, had died as a result of drinking same. Bob & I made some shelves

What characters these French are. Modesty between the two sexes seems unheard of. Everywhere one finds the public urinals and men think nothing of walking down the street buttoning their pants. In cafes men and women use the same toilettes at the same time with no outward concern. Every hotel room has its douche bowl, the French finding this more often practical than a toilet. In Marseille there is a reputable Turkish bath in which a girl leads you to the dressing room, stands by nonchalantly while you undress and leads you stark naked to the steam chamber. Every French woman seems to have a price and deems it natural

no bounds in love, certainly should be unlucky at cards.

An Aviator's Prayer

Valiant Saint Michael, be my guide
As through the clouds I swiftly glide.
My silver wings keep firm and strong;
Make sure my motor's droning song.
You who hurled Satan far below,
Aid me to vanquish each winged foe.
Keep through the star-lit paths of night
Smooth as an angel's wing my flight.
Perils of air, of sea, of land,
Help me, Saint Michael, to withstand.
Grant me a safe, swift flight, and then
A happy landing home. Amen.

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Undergoing a stimule of some sort I was inspired to paint a sketch of our life in our tent. Now that we are settled life is beginning to drag and the hopeful rumors of the P-61 even became monotonous. It is eight months since my precious little Jean and I vowed ourselves to each other for life. How I'd like to go back to any one hour of those wonderful days we shared so happily. When I think of the sweetness, the patience during those long hours while I was airborne, the consideration the love that adorable creature showed me. My luck knows no bounds in love, I certainly should be unlucky at cards.

AVIGNON

At Noon with the pioneer spirit of America goading us we took off, with Avignon as our destination. We did rest in the quaint town of Salon before we were successful in securing a ride. Off to Avignon we went in an open G.I. truck - 35 kilometers away. Thinking we had jotted again we arrived at the beautiful city of Avignon. Its ancient wall, the usual shops, picturesque streets and overall beauty seem fairly overflowing with history. With difficulty we secured a room, the difficulty being the language. We spent the evening learning about wines, how to parlez and French people. There is a world of difference between these people and those in and around Marseille.

A discrete knock and a mumbling of French awakened us and we were off to see the Palace of the Popes. The castle sets on a hill overlooking the Rhone and its massive walls form part of the wall around the-

1100 we were supposed to go through the chambers but we came back too late. Accordingly we went on a tour of our own. Down the halls where once had paced, in meditation, 14th century Popes. Through huge vaulted chambers.

MILITARY POLICE U.S.

DATE Feb. 14, 1945

[illegible] HAS PERMISSION FROM THE PROVOST MARSHAL TO SECURE A HOTEL ROOM IN AVIGNON ON THIS DATE.+

PROVOST MARSHAL

PER Pfc Williams

A discrete knock and a mumbling of French awakened us and we were off to see the Palace of the Popes. The castle sets on a hill overlooking the Rhone and its massive walls form part of the wall around Avignon. We wandered around this ancient (built 1316 under Jean XXII) abode of the papacy, through the beautiful gardens, the terraces, and viewed the swollen Rhone from the heights. Directly below us was the Pont St. Bénézet. At 1100 we were supposed to join a tour through the chambers but we came back too late. Accordingly off we went on a tour of our own. Down the halls where once had passed, in meditation, 14th century Popes. Through huge vaulted chambers.

and up narrow twisting stone staircases built into the very walls. There were many places we saw not included in the tour. We had wandered like this for an hour when a Frenchman guided us. We were so concentrating on the history, the art before us that we had become lost. Obligingly we were led out. We then ate and walked to the edge of the city and hitched a ride from a seemingly mad Sengalese to Salon. Thence to camp and the Generals.

FEB 16 – Today the DFC's and Air Medals fluttered merrily over the heroes as the General dealt with generalities. Some day perhaps Bob and I will stand in that honored row, that is if they ever get P-61's in.

I was supposed to get my first ride in a Beaufighter today, riding with Woody Grange and Perkins on their N.F.T. Accordingly I prepared for this supposedly courageous ordeal. The British outcast, the Beaufighter, is looked upon with more misgivings and termed to be more dangerous than any operational aircraft. As the British say – "It's a bloody ground hopping bastard!" The British seemingly lack all respect for human lives when building aircraft. I didn't fly however as the plane had just been warmed up and the engines were too hot to warrant a flight. Only I miss that luscious rebel of mine.

It being Sunday a group of us went into Church in Salon. It's strange the way the French seldom receive Communion. So far I have only seen one person receive Communion while in France and she was a very old woman. Returning to the Squadron I discovered that again I was scheduled to fly with Woody Grange and Perkins. We got up this time and I found the infamous Beau not too bad a ship. We buzzed Aix and I could see a nearby church steeple above our wing. We also buzzed a lake at 10 feet but this to check our altimeter. This buzzing is not for me, I love my wife too much.

Today as boredom pursued me and also a cold along with a sore throat I read a book entitled "Donovan's Brain," hardly a best seller but a unique manuscript to say the least. It dealt with a brain filching scientist, a vague associates that produced artificial life in a brain, which grew in size and potency until it overpowered him. It was interesting in a dull sort of manner. I'd be much more interested in a letter written by Erin. I daresay I have enough combat, I'm ready to return at any time. This life is droll and I wouldn't say very necessary to the war effort.

It seems as though the luxuries of a shower in private homes in France is a thing unheard of, as almost every community boasts a public bath house. The one in Mouries has been taken over by the army and this is certainly appreciated by the men in the army at least. It is a modern building and the showers are individual and private including an adjoining private dressing room. This place shows more than the usual discretion for the French in that it provides divided sections for men and women. We have access to this shower every other day and that hot water is certainly a blessing. Regardless of what is said, I find it a bit difficult to bathe in a G.I. helmet.

Again I was inspired to paint, not a scene found here, but a nude, nevertheless. Why I picked a subject I rarely complete I don't know. Perhaps is a reaction to the availability of French women or perhaps it's the effect of reading this ribald tale of John Smith. It's surprising how different present day life here is so little varied from the ways customs and philosophies of those days shortly after the passing of Columbus. These people take at life first as strangely according to American eyes as they did then. Yet such was the vision of the people who started our wonderful land of America. And indeed I can say it is wonderful. It and a thousand times.

I finished the "Great Smith" this morning and continued the work on the painting of the nude. A fitting title, if it is worth a title, might be "a French Whore." Tonight we had the Squadron Party on the 2nd anniversary of its activation. The officers turned over their months ration of liquor to give it stimulation. Visual stimulation was attempt by a French Group from Marseille. One girl has a nice voice and a thick body, another had a fair appearance but a poor voice. A magician did unexceptive tricks and a pagan looking creature attempted "tumps and grinds" and a vague strip. She was almost frightening her appearance was so savage. Oh for my little lovely lady, Erin!

Every night they have a show here on the field. A huge tent, wooden benches, a projector, and films through the Special Service. We have a different film every other night. It was an old class B murder mystery but it certainly hit the spot, as its the first one I've gone to since my arrival here. The hero and heroine were a commercial artist and his blonde wife. Oh Happy memories! Also last night another first since our arrival here occurred. Namely Martell "pranged" a Beaufighter, a "Good Man," when his landing gear collapsed on landing! The cheers were loud and long as no one was hurt and the Bear will probably be scrapped.

Once again we visited our cinema but not with as pleasant results as last night. Life sometimes is very dull here. We get reports from fellows in the South Pacific and they become operational almost immediately and really pile up the combat hours. We go on, occasionally going up in Bean's, seemingly to stimulate overdoubt in Mark VIII Radar, while our pilots don't even think about cheating out. This squadron is becoming very stale. The only true interest is new methods of pranging the hated Bristol. I go on missing and loving Erik more every minute and not getting any of that time in, 175 hours of which send me home. Gawd, I love that Gal!

The food is becoming rather ominous as we start our third week with the 41TH. Spam becomes tiresome in its frequency on the menu. The cook varies it, sometimes cold and plain, sometimes as stew, or fried, or meat loaf, even hamburger, or boiled. But it is decidedly spam nevertheless. Dehydrated foods, regardless of the vegetable are similar in that they always taste awful. The coffee at least is usually good. I think the cook tries but I think he is also bored and a bit fed up with the foods he has to work with. Milk is what we really miss! That is other than my perfect little wife, and her meals, I miss milk.

LETTER #65

Today found me very happy, indeed as I received eleven very succulent letters from my wife plus two cards, also two letters from home and one from Joe Corlett. Once again I was amazed at the potency of uplift mail from the right people mail has on morale. And that lovable of Rebel Wife of mine certainly is the "right people"! Life otherwise was uneventful today but that many letters after such a long fasting certainly fills the days. I certainly am a mighty lucky character to have such a wonderful wife. She very definitely makes life worthwhile. Rather she certainly very definitely makes life! I need but I love her.

Today found me in one of those depressing moods in which I become strongly aware of the flaws in my drawings. If I could only see the work as a whole during its execution I would know those flaws before completion rather than several days after putting it aside. I need training in anatomy tone and presentation. As is the difficulty with too many artists & sadly enough, my painting technique is far in advance of my rudimentary drawing. One look at Erin's picture though, dispelled this mood, not the fact which is the cause, but instilled a determination to overcome this fact however long it may take. Her inspiration to me is wonderful.

Missing breakfast seemingly set me off in a bad frame of mind this morning, and I carried it through most of the day. I believe the everlasting inactivity here is getting on my nerves. I find my self one minute decidedly unsociable and the next self conscious. Gronberg and I started sort of a friendly rivalry in ping-pong and slab around occasionally at baseball on the new diamond that has been built. If those P-61's would only arrive and we started flying I think we would all feel better. To top this off I went to the show and it was a morbid fantastic affair called "Man of Half Moon St." What I really need is Erin.

Our squadron seems to have a great love for love and a forgiving soul. When Southern France was invaded the women who collaborated had their heads shaven and were ostracized. She couldn't follow the Germans so our squadron took them in. In fact it is reported that the majority of the officers and men had women living with them. A reported arrival of General disrupted this however and now they are kept in Salon by a noble few. The enlisted men especially seem to have been a prolific lot as many of them have "produced young" and a few want to marry these young mothers. Personally I think they are being taken in by women who merely want a way to get to America. - For me I miss Erin.

	JUNE	X	X	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	X	15	16	17	18
19	X	21	22	23		25			
29	30	JULY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
X	9	10		12	13	X	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	X	23	X	25		
28			31	Aug	1.	2	3	4	5
6	7		9		11		13		X
16		18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31 SEP	SEP	1	2	3
4	5	6		8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27		29	30	Oct.	1	2
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13	14	15	16	17		19	20	21	
23	24	25		27	28	29	30 31	Nov.	
2	3	4	5	6	7			10	11
12	13	14	15	16			19	20	21
22	23			26	27	28			DEC
	2	3	4	5	6	X	8	9	10+10
			14						

LETTERS - MAR 1 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,(14,16,) 5
V-MAIL - MAR 2, apparently ship wrecked

LETTERS - 16, ,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,
V-MAIL -

LETTERS - 28,29,30,31 APRIL 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12, 3 11
V-MAIL - 4

LETTERS - 13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29 27 29
V-MAIL -

LETTERS - 30, MAY 1,2, ,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12+13,13,14,15
V-MAIL - MAY

LETTERS - 16,17,18,19,20,22,22,23,X,25,X,27,28,29, ,31 28
V-MAIL -

~~LETTERS - MAY 1 [illegible] 12~~
~~V-MAIL - [illegible]~~