

"With the George Washington
Battalion on a Spanish Front."

July 16, 1937.

Dear Minn,

Your last three letters reached me during the past ten days, and when one is busy chasing fascists, without time even to sleep, you just can't sit down in the face of a hail of machine gun bullets to answer mail. Now, when for two days our battalion is at "rest" behind the lines, to regain strength and reorganization, the past events, seems like nothing but a continuous nightmare. Only the fact that many of the familiar faces of the comrades whom we loved, are not with us any more makes me realize the reality of those seven horrible days.

You ask me, what does it feel like? I'll tell you as simply as I can. I never tried to be silly romantic about the heroic fight we were going into and I'm glad of that. I knew what to expect and so instead of filling my letters with political slogans, as many of the other fellows did, I minimized that part of it, and wrote mainly of our daily personal life, scattering anecdotes, and kibitzes here and there as much as possible. I hated fascism, and with a cool head, I gradually prepared for the task I came to do.

-2-

Ten days ago, we left for the front, and were initiated into some of the fiercest fighting imaginable in this type of warfare. There are practically no trenches - mainly open warfare, because from now on we are doing the attacking, and the fascists have to retreat. Remember those many war books we read, and how it used to turn our stomachs, due to the hand of a skilled craftsman. Well, multiply their descriptions a hundred fold, and you still can't capture it.

Who can describe that feeling, when you're lying flat on your belly, and black fascist planes drop eggs all around you; when artillery shells explode so close, that dirt and rocks fall all over your clothes, and you run but 10 yards before the next bomb explodes, because the gunner has an exact range on you? Oh, those shells! One would gladly run into a storm of explosive bullets any time, rather than face the fear of being blown to bits. Then there's the sun. The goddamn gosh awful Spanish sun that burns and burns for hours and hours, that pours the sweat into your eyes and burns them so that you can't see but five feet in front of you.

Yes, we're taking it - and taking it like we supposed to, like anti-fascist fighters. We lost weight and strength, because our food truck was bombed and

our mules were shot.³ For days we lived on nothing but marmalade and water. But our spirit kept on - no one cracked up and we took our objectives. And through this all we are satisfied - satisfied because the fascisti are going through even worse than that.

How do they feel like, when our cannon bomb them, when our planes strafe them, when our machine guns mow them down, when their planes are continuously brought down in flames, and then the aviator jumps out in a parachute, he usually commits suicide, rather than be caught? How do they feel like, when they are forced to retreat in the sun, giving up position after position? They are desperate, and at night they yell across to us and curse us, and the planes fly about blindly in the moonlight, dropping incendiary bombs on dried up wheat fields lighting them up so that in the distance it almost looks like lava park.

Oh, you bloody bastards! You know that your end is fast approaching and you are swinging out wildly like an enraged boyer eh?

I hate you fascisti, for you are responsible for this war, you are responsible for the death of my closest comrade; for the murder of so many thousands of innocents, for blood and

destruction and the return of barbarism I hate you with the most intense fever possible. What matter, sun and sweat, bombs and shells explosive bullets; nothing but dead muscles can get me out of this fight now. Our victory means too much, and victory is now very near.

Wim, I'm sorry for that last outburst. I didn't believe I had that much emotion left any more. But I hate blood and death. If I ever get back, I'll be a much harder, much more determined young man, but with more love and heart for my American comrade than ever before. They are doing a wonderful, brave job here - and at home they have never been as active as now.

I've been getting loads of mail these days, and though I haven't much time any more and can't keep up with answers, because you are so swell and write so often (I know how busy your work now can be) I'll always write you first whenever I can now.

Kid, pay no attention to rumors. My arm is in perfect condition, and haven't suffered a scratch a yet. So far I'm an expert bullet dodger. If you listen to rumors I'll probably be dead and buried a hundred times, before

this was ends.

-5-

Give my love to Sonia and Bladie. I have
not written them as I promised because I just haven't
the time. They at least get one day off a week, and
to Sonia I've already written twice, without an an-
swer as yet (shame!). I never remember tell-
ing her that I was already at the front at that time.
Where did she pick it up? So far I've done
but seven days of fighting (and what fighting -
enough for seven years), and in a couple of days
we go up again to break the back bone of the
fascist forces at this particular front. It may
take another week or so to complete this battle,
then a few days of "Zomie" in Madrid (Boy, ~~if~~
have I been waiting for that). If I'm sober, I'll
write from there. After that - up to the front
again to chase the sons of bitches in all
directions.

Salud

Harry

P. S.

[REDACTED]
is the best news I've received
from you as yet. Hold the
fort, baby.

(over)

Harold Malofsky
70 S.R.D. (Washington)
Plaza del Altozano
Albacete, Spain

P.M.S. Got a long letter from Jules Darfield
very nice one too, Got a couple from Rose
Kean in California. She seems to be
pretty lonely out there, also a long
gossipy letter from Izzy Singer.