

NAME: Landis

RANK: Sergeant

ORGANIZATION: Fifth Army

OVERSEAS WARTIME SERVICE: Mediterranean Theater of Operations

- The following excerpt is directly from an original wartime letter written by Landis. This is one of several letters from Landis in the site curator's possession and more will be transcribed in the future.
- The following excerpt is presented under fair use provisions for educational purposes.
- No controversial material has been omitted from the following excerpt aside from an edited derogatory term for Germans, edited profanity, and an edited racial slur for the protection of younger readers. No grammatical or spelling errors have been corrected.

Landis writes a friend in the United States:

“Jan 14/45

How's things? From what I gather from my mail and in the papers it is a real tough ole winter back there. Yes I see where you have plenty of snow and plenty cold. I suppose the few cars that are running around don't help to clean up the snow off the roads. But I'll bet you fellows are busier than h__l at the garage...

...I was away over Xmas and when I came back I found a stack of letters and so now I've got to answer them. I was in Rome over Xmas and got to go to St Peter's for mid night mass. It was an event that I'll never forget. To start with there were 150,000 people trying to get in and fortunately I was one of them. But believe me it was lucky I wasn't killed in the crowd. I saw his Holiness the Pope but that was all I did see. It was really a thrill I'll never forget. The church itself is beautiful, even more than words can describe...

...It is plenty tough out here in Italy and I know it is in France and in the Pacific so perhaps it makes no difference. The way I look at it is, if we can get out of this alive it is all we can expect...

...Things out here as the same. The weather is as bad as ever and keeps on getting worse. Today they had the biggest snow fall of the year at the front. I feel sorry for the boys up there as it is plenty cold. Where I am, which is some ways from the fighting and the mts it has been very cold as we have been having rain and also snow. All told this lousey country can go back to the natives for all of me and a lot of other guys are concerned. If it wasn't for the war they could stick it - - - for me. Give me a view of the good ole U.S.A. or the "old country..." Here it is 20 months since I left American soil already and Id be willing to gamble that it will be all of 20 more before I get back. Yes and even longer. I'll be so godd__ned old and worn out that I'll be ready for the bone yard by that time. Any way I still keep on praying and hoping that it ends some day soon. It is hard to see the end especially the way things stand at the moment. I almost would be willing to bet that the Pacific War will be cleaned up before this does...

...I'll promise you this when I do get back. The first thing you and I will do is go up to the club and get so plastered that some one will have to carry me no doubt, 4 home. I never did drink much as you know but I sure am going to change for a while at least...

...Things in Italy are as bad as ever. Food is scarcer than cigarettes are back there. Clothing and fuel are also scarce. It is pitiful at times to see people, especially kids...you have no idea as to the conditions these people live under. At times I feel sorry for them but at other times I could kill the whole bunch. It is true the Germans did take every thing they could take and believe me they did. Every so often I get a chance to talk to people refugees, who come back from occupied places and the stories they tell are fantastic. Yet they are true because I have heard them before. The Germans really I believe, are not human at all. I don't think that any human beings could possibly do the things they do. Such as standing people, regardless who they are, up against a wall and just plain murdering them. I've seen several places where such instances have occurred...any thing you hear about what the Germans have done in that line you can believe I can see the Japs doing such things but I had an idea the "Krauts" were white people but I don't any more. I just hope that every one of them including women and children are killed so that the entire nation is exterminated. This way we will be sure of peace. It is a terrible thing to hope for and a terrible way to feel but that is exactly how I and, I know a lot more, feel...

...I believe this is all I have for now. Give my sincere regards to your family...and to the gang. So long and keep up the good work.

Your Friend

Landis"

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- Landis made it through the Second World War and passed away in his 50s.
 - **For visual context, this link connects to original wartime footage in the public domain that covers the Pope and the Vatican prior to Landis' visit in 1944 (viewer discretion advised):**
<https://archive.org/details/NPC-4280>
 - **For additional detail, this link connects to the Wikipedia article that covers Landis' wartime organization, the Fifth Army (reader discretion advised):**
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Army_North