May 10, 1945

Elmshraed, Austria

Dear Mr. Gist,

I have just received a letter from you and a Humboldt Newsletter for which I want to thank you very much.

Well, the war is finally over... here. Now we are waiting to find out whether we will be among of occupation or go to the Pacific... and when our next furlough will be! Of course about content to leave Europe - I've just about seen enough of it - France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Germany, Austria, and Italy are the countries I've been in and I've seen quite a variety of scenery - Rhine, Neckar, and Lambs River, Maggieot and Liegear Fried Lins, Bavarian Alps and Tyrol Alps and Vogler Mountains, etc. Our last stop in Germany was Oberammergau home of the famous Passion Play.
Chaplain talked to the widow of the man who played the part of Christ for 30 years and passed on many interesting facts to us. It all started in 1634 when the people's prayers for deliverance from the Black Plague were answered. Every ten years, the play is presented if possible. 1940 was skipped because of the war. It will probably be presented this or next year. As many as 1400 players may be on the stage at one time during the eight-hour performance... and after 50 to 75 performances are given in one season. It is said that at the conclusion of the play the audience can hardly believe that it wasn't the real thing! Hitler saw the last performance - in 1934 - and consented to let it go on. It was postponed from 1930 to 1934 to commemorate the 300th Anniversary.

Our division - the 103rd -
made history recently when they forged through Austria, the Brenner Pass and part of N. Italy to meet with the American Army coming up from the Po Valley.

I am enclosing some pictures from Oberammergau and Seefeld, two places where we stayed for a short time. Also enclosed is some inflation money printed for the town in 1921-22 when the German national currency was worthless.

Censorship regulations have been relaxed a little and that is why I can tell you that we are now in the very picturesque town of Chur, located in a little valley in the Tyrol Alps, half way between Germany and Italy, each only 30 or 40 miles away. Recently I rode to the top of one of these snow-
covered mountains via cable cars suspended in mid-air. It was quite a thrilling experience.

There's about half an inch of snow, so I'm going to stay in a hotel for a short time. Also, there's a mountain pass to the south near the town of Chamonix.

Yours truly,

George.