

Brown
Received 8/7/44
Last Ltr 7/4/44
Promoted _____
Class '41
New Name _____
Answd 8/8/44
cah

UNITED STATES ARMY

30 July 1944

Dear Gordon,

Thanks very much for your letter of 10 July. I shall take this opportunity to answer it and for the first time will be able to include information which might be just a little more than routine.

When I wrote my last letter I was safe and sound in England. However, just a few days later I found myself on a plane bound for France. Things happened quickly. We landed on one of those newly built landing strips. From there it was by truck up to the front lines. In fact, on the second day while with an outpost patrol, we were so close to the Germans that we were caught in our own artillery barrage. I ducked into a house on the edge of a village. The secured house away was really blasted and went up in a roar of flames. The shell evidently hit a hidden cognac supply for the bottles were popping and exploding like a regular arsenal. Needless to say we got the hell out of there as soon as the artillery was lifted.

All told, I spent two and a half weeks in Normandy, being on the front lines the entire time with the exception of the last two days. You see, ever since they landed, the paratroopers were constantly placed where the going was the toughest. These lads have it all over the other branches of our forces. I'll personally knock the block off of anyone who ever dares to disagree. Incidentally, this outfit received a Presidential Citation for its outstanding work. That should add a little weight to my boasting. That ribbon, by the way, is the blue and gold one worn on the right side of the chest, the only ribbon worn on that side.

My best experiences came as a result of leading 100 men 600 yards behind the enemy lines one night. We quietly dug in and waited for the fireworks with the coming dawn. But the first hour after dawn was very peaceful. It worked out that they escaped the trap by the simple expedient of sneaking out as we sneaked in. It seemed funny to us for we heard them around us all during the advance. But sure enough, they were gone except for the damn snipers which they always left behind. So there we were--600 yds. ahead of our lines. And in the next 24 hours we found that we were in a mighty hot spot for they came back at us three times in an attempt to get us out. They even sent a JU 88 over to drop a few bombs. This we considered to be a distinct honor since German planes over Normandy are rare indeed. One of the bombs landed about 30 yards from my CP, but emerged unscratched because at the time I happened to be at the extreme bottom of my foxhole. There is nothing like a good old foxhole, absolutely nothing. Everything turned out very well, and, as you can see by the papers, the Germans are very much on the move.

Random sidelights--French cognac will knock your eye teeth out. In fact, their cider is nothing to sneeze at. I never got to see a French girl of reasonable age. The darn Germans kept them behind their own lines. I sure had a lot of fun with the the French kids since I retained enough of Doc Corbin's grammar to converse with them in a somewhat intelligent manner(?) [author's question mark] They were all very healthy due to the abundance of dairy foods in this region. The kids certainly like "goom".

Right now I am once more back in England and was even fortunate enough to get a short leave. Half of this was spent sight seeing. The other half was spent fighting my way on and off trains. It beats anything we have back home. But in my travels over here I have yet to meet any old friends from Berg.

I'm glad you have my latest address straight. About four of your old letters finally caught up with me. I can assure you I read them word for word. Send my regards to the rest of the staff and the office force and thanks again for writing.

Sincerely,

Jim Brown