

London England
June 11, 1945

Dear Bob

I'm so excited about being able to contact you that I hardly know what to say first. The Germans took my address book (among other things) when I was captured so I didn't know your home address and I was wondering how I would get in touch with you. The problem was solved today when I received your present address in a cablegram from home. I've tried to find out where you are located through the London Control here and they seem certain you are in Paris. It is too bad I didn't know that while I was still at Camp Lucky Strike in France for I would have certainly come to see you. Now I'm on the last part of a seven day leave in London. From here I will go directly to the states for a 60 day furlough. I hope that there will be mail waiting for me from you by the time I get home. Write to 1552 6th Ave Los Angeles.

Be sure to tell me all that has happened to you since that infamous day in Holland. I've been worried about you ever since then for I never found out how badly you were hit. Time and time again I have prayed that it wasn't serious, and now I hope to hear from you that my prayers were answered. I've thought so much about what happened then that I remember every detail just as though I were seeing a motion picture of the events.

And afterwards I was the most downhearted fellow in the ETO. It seemed like a dirty trick of fate to separate us. We had been such close companions in everything we did from Camp Carson all the way to Holland that I was lost without you. Things just weren't the same. Honestly, Bob I've never enjoyed anyone's companionship so thoroughly as I have yours, and there is no friendship in the world that I esteem more highly than yours. I certainly hope it won't be long before we can see each other again.

You are probably anxious to know what happened to me after we were separated, just as I am anxious to

hear of your experiences so I'll give you a summary of the events. If there are any details you want to know be sure and ask but for the present I'll leave you with a hasty review.

It wasn't long after you left that our mission in Holland was completed. We didn't have any bad times until we went into action in Germany. Trucks took us to an area east of Aachen and for a while we just waited for the big drive to commence. The weather was bad for air support so we had a few days rest while waiting for the sun to shine. I was switched to Sgt. Belcher's squad and was a scout with Melan. When we finally did move out we ran into stiff resistance. By nightfall our company was in the lead and we wandered into the enemy's rear lines. Machine guns opened up on us from three sides when we were in an open field and it was dawn before we could get out of that trap. We had about 20 casualties that night including Lt. Moore and Lt. Levin (both killed). What a night that was! The next day P47s bombed and strafed the enemy and B company was able to advance afterwards. Nothing too exciting happened for a couple of

days. Then A company was caught in a similar trap and were thrown into confusion. (at least C co. had an orderly retreat). Nelson and I volunteered to go out for A co.'s casualties. It was a black night and we had a stretcher ~~had~~ to carry through a steep rocky canyon with a stream rushing and dashing among the rocks. It was so steep that the stretcher had to be hauled up the side with the aid of two ropes. I rode back to the aid station in a jeep in order to ~~hold~~ keep the stretcher from falling off. It so happened that the aid station was about two miles back and it was impossible for me to return to C company's area that night. When I went up the next morning I found that they had moved out during the night and were cut off from the main body. It was two days before I could rejoin them. I could hardly believe my ears when I was told of the casualties. Nelson and Petit were killed as was Turk, the aid man. Several others were wounded. It was incredible. The company was dug in (of all places) in a grave yard when I joined them.

The next move from there took place on Thanksgiving. We attacked a hill with the support of tanks, dug in, and repulsed two counter attacks during the night. We were shelled heavily all night but suffered only two casualties. An 88 shell landed directly in the fox hole that Acosta & Phelps were in and killed them instantly. I had quite a scare when a dud came in the side of my fox hole.

The next day we had our Thanksgiving dinner and received mail & packages. I got a box of candy then which was the only package of the many Christmas packages that were on the way for me. Two days later I was in German hands. At the time I was captured I was about 100 yds ahead of the company acting as scout (as usual). The Germans were well dug in and let the scouts get within 40-50 yds. before they opened up. I dived behind a large beat pile and watched the battle go by from both sides. I could look back and see our fellows firing at

the ferry and I could see German tracers stream by toward our boys. The scouts on either side of me weren't fortunate enough to have a beet pile to stop Jerry bullets and they were so close they didn't have a chance. It wasn't long before we were shelling German positions and the Germans were shelling ~~us~~ us. I was in the middle of everything praying like a fiend and to this day I don't know how I could have escaped being hit by something. Our men had to retreat finally and I was stranded so close to the Germans that I dared not leave the safety of the beets. I was hoping to wait until night time and if I was still alive I would try to get back then. Unfortunately it wasn't long before the Germans came around both sides of the beet pile and told me the war was over for me. To tell you the truth I was so happy to still be alive that I was quite relieved. The front line troops treated me fairly decently although they didn't feed me anything.

They moved me behind their lines with a wounded fellow who said that I had shot him in the leg when I was firing from the beet pile. I said to myself (he understood a little English) I wish his head was where his leg had been.

Well to make a long story short-

I was a prisoner from Nov. 26th until the Russians liberated our camp

April 23rd. Needless to say it was an experience I wouldn't want to ever undergo again. It was a

bad winter for me - both a cold and a hungry one. But that's all over now and I've gained back the weight I lost already and more.

I've had some very unusual and amusing experiences with the Russians. It was almost a month before we reached American lines after we were liberated and during that time we had the freedom of the conquerors at our disposal.

We were flown from Germany to France where we were re-clothed and sent to Ramp Camp no. 1. I was there for a week or so before electing

to go to England for a short leave.
Soon I'll be on my way home for
a long awaited furlough. Well, that's
about it.

Do you still write to Jean?
I did drop a line to ~~Marilyn~~ Marilyn
but I really doubt if she still lives
at the same address.

It has been a real pleasure
to write to you, Bob - one I've been
looking forward to for a long time. I'll
keep in touch with you often and you
be sure and do the same.

So long for a while.

Yours,
Herb