



1945

[1945-01-18]

Envelope to:
Miss Anne Carter
900 - 19th St. N. W.
Washington, 9
D. C.

18 Jan., 1945

Dearest Anne,

Hi - Elusive! Just a quick note to tell you Hello & that God is still taking care of me altho - sometimes I've wondered in my Faith was going to hold out with my luck. Haven't heard from you in ages - no mail much from anyone - have no heart to write to anyone, either - damn this confusing chaos!!

Can tell you now that things didn't go too well for my lads on Christmas Eve and we had more fireworks than I've ever had before on a Holiday season!!

How I'd love to have a bath. One month, same clothes - and I can hardly stand myself!! Still - I'm alive, so what the Hell!!

If I ever meet you in Washington (that is for more than a few days), as soon as the "preliminaries" are over - there's someone I want to entangle you with for a long discussion. Mood of the moment - so don't be surprised it falls through. By the way - heard from Billy Wilkins at Christmas - or did I tell you? Well, this is it for now - will write you again when I get the chance & time.

Bon chance,

Johnny



[1945-02-16]

Envelope to:
Mrs. Glenna Goodin
RFD#1
Erwin, Tennessee

Feb. 16-45

Dear Mom,

Just to let you know I understand the "German bulge," and I got your Valentine - in time!! Everything is going well with us for the present and I'm sleeping in a bed, having hot meals, and getting a bath once in a while. The pen Sis sent me is doing pretty well. We have the winter licked, I think. Tell Mrs. Swingle to keep George's Purple Heart for him - but like the rest of us, he probably won't wear any of them when we get back. Write as you feel - to hell with whether its "cheerful" or not - if you try to color things, you waste your time in writing. I may have some pictures soon. It's too cloudy right now.

Love,

Johnny

16 - Still

Just got another letter from you and Dad - of Feb. 7th so it's good time, plus. A few questions - I'm still in 1st Army, 3rd Armored Division - I can't tell you where I am except by country, there are four men in my tank. What I do: In summer time I break out in a cold sweat, in winter I freeze, and still sweat - same difference. I try to tell 4 other tanks when to go, tell my gunner where to shoot, my driver where to go, my company commander where I am, and shoot my own gun - all at the same time.

No - I don't know who I am - and I do know what you're thinking



about.

Took a few pictures late this afternoon - maybe they'll turn out all right.

Spring is here - the flies and mosquitoes are buzzing around the dung-hills, and the sun is shining - but there are no birds, no rabbits, no animals - nothing left but waste and destruction - and armored vehicles and grim men who ride in them.

Must close for now -

Love,

Johnny

Am mailing you my Purple Heart tonite.

[1945-02-18]

Envelope to:
Mrs. Glenna Goodin
RFD#1
Erwin, Tennessee

18 Feb. 1944
Germany

Dear Mom,

We all laughed when you wrote "What do you do in a tank?" I gave you a short idea of what goes on in my last letter, but there are many things besides. One rides for hours in blinding snow, or spends miserable nites - so cold that the blanket wrapped around you freezes to the top and sides; and one makes hot coffee with a wee gas-stove, carefully shutting off the light from the periscopes so the enemy doesn't shoot you; sometimes one writes letters in tanks, and eats K rations; and many a letter has been read and re-read in them, and many an oath is sworn at many people - a wife unfaithful, a family



fight, a sweetheart marries someone at home, someone dies, someone else pulls a crooked deal, or hometown news and gossip comes home vitally to someone. In a tank, it happens to me, or I listen to 3 others who have some part, or all, of all these things, happen to them. You listen to wild stories, true because they are human nature, and because no writer can penetrate the souls of man deeply enough to print them, or you listen to drama, as real as any that ever comes over a radio at home - it's action you hear on your own radio, as at the end of a hard day, a company commander calls his lieutenants for reports, and one of the sheep is missing, and a voice half-choked, calls in, identifies himself, and steadily, but for other stations breaking in, tells the details of "the lieutenant is dead, sir, and this is _____," and the rest got out of the tank, and the hurt of the C. O. revealed in his voice when answering. And sometimes no one answers, and the next morning a bellow booms out and the last sheep have their radio fixed and everything is well, and the C. O.'s voice is cheery when he acknowledges the call.

Being in a tank in safe territory, one may ride on the turret, flaunting a helmet at all women, in much the same manner as his wicked daddy might shake a ham at a passenger on his trains. Or yell at his driver to stop, and get eggs, or delicious cooking beer, and even wine or champagne. And maybe, in some sections, buckets of hot milk from hoary men, and red-faced, buxom, girls - who in the states would be labeled "cornfed."

And sometimes one stops overnight, and gets one's back scratched, or head washed (Marie-José must be that girl!); clothes washed and mended, or a hot meal. But too often one is in Germany where one must remain aloof to the enemy, smiling at their discomfiture, pitying God's children - for even He said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me," and seeing the incurableness of a nation gone mad with perversion and regimentation. And one thinks, but but because one is a soldier fighting for freedom, one is like one's Mother who was like Mary who "kept these things and pondered them in her heart." And so - about some things, no one ever knows what one thinks.

And, on lonely nites, during the long hours one is on guard, one thinks out many things - and despite harassing "whys" to



questions asked of one's elders, those questions are still unanswered, and one thinks out his own thought of why and someday if one lives to have grandchildren and they say why - they'll get an answer that has no booby-traps of birds, bees, flowers, storks, sin and shame, and hell fire and damnation to permanently injure either (or both) mind and body. And one reaches strange conclusions from one's thoughts - how life is so different from an ordinary sale where one pays for goods and then gets them. In life, as a youth one is happy and carefree, and then one suddenly becomes responsible for others - that their youth must be the same - carefree and absent of serious thoughts. But in life too one finds another bargain - one sometimes gets a double-reward - a second childhood of carefreeness and self-satisfaction as one sees one's grandchildren in that glorious age - or again - one may not see that, and go sorrowing with a black cloud over them to their graves. And one pictures one's self in all those stages, and the present battle is a child's-play when one realize one has so much to do, and so little time to do it in. So many fields untouched, some few fields known, but unexplored, and the ones explored so full, so big that a lifetime cannot fully encompass them.

And, too, one dreams - of waking up in the morning and having a warm arm around ones neck, and a voice saying "I love you," and a confidence and love that helps carry one through the day, which might, and not sacrilegiously, take the place of the confidence one gets from a nightly prayer of one to the Good Lord to take care of one for one more day and night. And one dreams on and on - sometimes it's high mountains, or prairies, deserts, snow and ice, or cars, and people and maybe log cabins and streams - to say nothing of memories which once might have been real - a kiss which prompted a lecture on promiscuity which aroused curiosity which wasn't evident in the innocence of a kiss so unashamed it was in full view of a loving mother. And another kiss - years later - not so innocent, in the presence of a new laughing understanding MOM, and I'm afraid - a slightly deflated POP!!

One thinks of so many things Mom - how one can move and direct 19 men so none get hurt, when to be bold & aggressive, when to be cautious, when to be reckless, and when to cower like a



beaten dog. All of them come, one time or another. When to be patient, when to explode, who to praise, who to condemn, tucking incidents in the mind to be brought up later - when to blame others, when to accept the blame. Realizing at all times you are expendable, that you are not indispensable - and yet a sense of loyalty and devotion giving you more than dispensability - giving you a responsibility for a mother's son, a wife's husband, a baby's father, and just an average man's friend that can't be discarded like a worn out coat.

Well, Mom - must say good morning - it's now 2 a.m., Feb. 18th - will write you another long letter sometime. If this one doesn't make sense - well, you know and understand what I'm trying to say to you.

Love,

Johnny

[1945-03-03]

Envelope from WAR 7 NAVY DEPARTMENT

3 March 1945
Germany
Vmail

Dear Mom,

Just a note - everything is O.K. with me, and still O.K. got a slight scratch again - you may hear from the War Department on that deal.

Am writing you an airmail along with this - so don't get worried about it!!

Love to all,

Johnny



[1945-04-16]

Envelope to:
Mrs. Glenna Goodin
RFD 1
Erwin, Tennessee

4 April 1945
HEADQUARTERS THIRD ARMORED DIVISION
[letter is typed]

Dear Mom April 16
[letter is typed: Germany, Explains about the "scratch"]

30 April 1945
HEADQUARTERS THIRD ARMORED DIVISION April
[letter is typed: Battle Honors Letter, Aug 10 envelope M/M TE Gooding]

[1945-05-17]

Envelope to:
Mr. & Mrs. T. E. Goodin, Sr.
R F D 1
Erwin, Tennessee

17 May 1945
[letter is typed: Dear Folks, says war is basically over - turning in gear]

[1945-06-04]

Envelope to:
Mr. & Mrs. T. E. Goodin, Sr.
R F D 1
Erwin, Tennessee



4 June, 1945

[letter is typed: Dear Folks, mentions nightmare easing]

[1945-06-13]

Envelope to:

Miss Anne M. Carter

900 19th St., N.W.

Washington, 6

D. C.

13 June, 1945

[letter is typed: Dearest Anne, Expresses disgust at the way things are run- is concerned U.S. is headed for a fall]

[accompanying newspaper article]

[1945-06-27]

Mr. & Mrs. T. E. Goodin, Sr.

R F D 1

Erwin, Tennessee

27 June, 1945

[letter is typed: Dear folks, preparing to come home]

[1945-07-21]

21 July 1945

[newsletter clipping of Bronze star and photo of Goodin]

First Lt. John D. Goodin, former East Tennessee State College student, University of Tennessee law graduate and practicing attorney in Johnson City, has been awarded the Bronze Star medal



for heroic achievement in action against the enemy, Army headquarters announced.

Lieutenant Goodin is holder of the Purple Heart medal for wounds received in Belgium and Germany. He has been in the 32nd Armored Regiment since June 25, 1942, and fought in the battles of Normandy, Northern France and Belgium, through the Siegfried Line, in the Ardennes, and into Germany to the Elbe River.

The lieutenant is a tank. . . (article cut off)

[1945-08-14]

Envelope to:
Miss Anne M. Carter
900 19th St. N. W.
Washington, 6
D. C.

14 August 1945
[letter is typed: Dearest Anne]

[1945-08-15]

Envelope to:
Miss Anne M. Carter
900 19th St. N. W.
Washington, 6
D. C.

15 August 1945
[letter is typed: Dear Folks]

[1945-08-28]

Envelope to:
Mrs. Glenna H. Goodin



R F D 1
Erwin, Tennessee

28 August, 1945
[letter is typed: Germany...Still, Dear Mom, I'ma coming I'ma coming!]