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-AIR-MAIL-



John D. Goodin

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Dec. 6th, 1944.

Dear Mom,

A nice quiet evening in the ETO and I'm sitting around waiting for heaven only knows what, and just enjoying the feeling of being alive, enjoying the most excellent of Christmas presents and packages from my Mom my Sister, and from a few friends... I have eaten on fruit cakes, devoured candy bars, have melted cheese sandwiches, made tea and stole sugar for it, and have really enjoyed the packages that come to us just once you know when. As you know, we have been billeted in houses over here.. and the fire goes merrily on, keeping me warm..and must confess I have a bottle of champagne with which the fruit cake of my Mom and the delicacies of the Christmas package have gone down most excellently with. (You needn't tell our good friends and neighbors that I have gone to the dogs by indulging in that famous, though expensive drink!!)

As it is, though..Mom is it not good to be good and feel alive, and confident??? I heard a sermon last Sunday, which I enjoyed very much..it was on the subject of fear..and said that the more good a persons life had been in the past, the less he would fear when bombs, shells, buzz bombs, etc., began to fall...and after thinking it over, decided that that was the most practical sermon that I have heard in a long time. For, though, I have been scared literally to immobility at times..I have never felt the fear of dieing so much..rather, I have always felt that if the good Lord wanted me..well, He would take me in the way that he best saw fit, and that there really is nothing I can do about it anyhow. And still...I feel that confident...though so called "luck" may last a long time, that the good Lords angel s...wherever they are and I know they are around...do look after me, and that they will see that I get back to my Mom and my Pop and My Sis and my relations, and my football team, and all those Carters..and the gals that I have loved from coast to coast and back again (not bragging...just dreaming a little bit)

And so it goes..day in and day out...it is muddy, wet, sloppy, and yet Fate has me sitting here in a house where I can keep dry..where I can even write a letter on a typewriter if I want to..and where I can eat in fairly good peace and quiet, and God has been good enough to me to allow me to keep most of my boys with me. I now have added a few more to my brood...9 more to be exact, and although I may have a little more work to do, and a little bit different type of mission from now on..it is much safer than my former positions and missions.

I got your Nov. 16th letter last night..and in good time..now that the front has opened up again, our mail doesn't come thru so fast as it did, but nevertheless, I am getting mine in good time. Have to laugh about that football team of mine..Anne Carter wrote me that her mother would have to pass permission on Lou before I got married to her, and maybe she is right!! I'm afraid that I know what you mean by the Carters and their ruggedness like the mountains, the trees and the roots that sprout when the tree has been cut down...they are solid..and

as I have told Sis..it doesn't make much difference who she is, if she makes me happy, if she loves me, and my family..that is all that is necessary..and she has to love my friends... the Broyles, the Browns, the Overtons, Morgans, the Carters... and the people that I've grown up with and learned to love for one quality or another..and so...she'll have to do that.. but I'll kill her if she is two faced about it.

By the time this reaches you, it will be almost Christmas, with probably snow on the ground, at least a good frost, and there'll be no rabbits in the ice box, and no birds laying on the back porch for the cats and dogs to fight over and for me to kick them out for eating my birds..and there'll be a big chicken for you, and maybe Reg will be home, and Tom and his "brood" will be out, and you all will say only if Johnny were here, and I'll be thinking the same damned thing and swearing at Hitler, and God will look down at all of us and say what fools we mortals be, and then we'll be humble and be thankful that though spread over all over the whole creation, we are all alive and happy and have enough to eat and a place to sleep, and a place that we can call home that we all will gather in sometime and someplace...and above all, that with all of our own little petty insignificant cheap, trashy faults that each of us have in our makeups...still and all, we are one family, and regardless of who comes along.. we'll fight for that family and love them. And I'll think back to all of my Christmases that I can remember so well... my aviators suit, my rifle, my shell vest (back in the ~~XXXXXX~~ depression when money was really scarce..and amazingly it took very little to make us happy), my shotgun, my bicycle, this that and the other as down through the years, we had our Christmases..and how darned lazy I used to be, and then at the last moment suddenly get a burst of enthusiasm, and from somewhere or other, here would come a tree, and old trimmings would come out, and lights would flare up, and there would be a big fire, and wood would be chopped and the fire would be blazing..and well I remember the night when 4 couples were cozily wrapped in each others arms, enjoying the warmth and glow of the fire, and Love Broyles telling the story of the first Noel..and how well pleased a lot of people would have been had they known that little bit of gossip..but My MOM was understanding and knew that though we might be a bit indiscreet we wouldn't be disgraceful and left us alone; and how when she didn't let us alone..no one minded, because she was one of us, and if there were some few kisses stolen under her nose..she didn't say anything, or pretended she didn't see it...and we were all happy and everybody loved to go to Goodins. And I remember the happiest crowning glory of my life...the tremendous dinner that you had for my New York friends and our girls as we came back from a dance set at W&L..Betty Fippin and George Vanta are having a baby in Feb.. by the way....

Well, Mom...must be closing for tonight..know I love you all, and I'll be with you at Christmas whether I'm there or not.

All my love, Johnny