

Somewhere in Luxembourg  
Jan. 5, 1945

Dearest, dearest family,

Again I have the opportunity to write to you. Though my hands are practically freezing stiff I do so. I am, as are all my buddies, hard up for writing paper. So I am using both sides of this V-mail paper. In this letter I thought I would tell you the hardships are living under.

It is unbelievable to me how much a man can take. We live in two man foxholes. We do have plenty of blankets, at least three per man. If we are lucky we can line our holes with straw. We make the holes small at the top so as to present the smallest possible target. The holes are any depth from two to four feet. They are of many designs, some with little cubby holes for articles such as rations. Usually we dig in at night after a hard day. The ground is never the best for digging, either it is all rocks or sloppy mud. Now there is no mud, it is all hard frozen ground. You cannot have fires after the sun goes down or when it becomes dusk. And during the day if you are at the front and within sight of the enemy only small fires such as heating units for warming food are allowed. Fires at any time must be kept without smoke. Actually it is impossible to warm oneself with the fires we feel safe to make. Almost steadily we receive two so-called hot meals a day. When they get to us they are usually cold. The rest of the time we live on limited rations.

I am having great days with my buddy. The last two nights we have prayed together as we got into bed. It is a great inspiration to me. I believe we'll have a large team soon. I have had good talks with several of the men. I have felt God's power very close these days and boy, do I pray that I'll stay on the ball at all times.

The urgency of victory in the war of ideas grows on me daily. The tempo and pace of the war of ideas must equal and surpass the war of arms. If we are to have a sound peace at the end of this war there must be victory in the war of ideas before victory in the war of arms. That is why I pray so hard that everyone of you is giving all you have to the work; that petty resentments such as kept me and \_\_\_\_\_ apart are non-existent, that everybody has committed himself unreservedly to obeying God's will. I pray that no one is putting limits to what he or she can do.

I think much these days of Lynn and Bill, Jerry, Frank Finch, Tom and Al. They are our hope of a pattern industry in the U.S. Along with their families they can create it.

It came to me how God created us all equal. It would help Labor if they would understand it too. When a poor or unintelligent man is giving all that he has to his job he is better in God's eyes than a rich or brilliant man who is not giving all he has. The answer for Labor and Management is for them to ask God what more they can do and out of their obedience will come the equality that a democracy assures its people.

February 8, 1945

Yesterday I received two of your letters. My how they answered a terrific longing in my heart to receive news from you. Bruce, your letter has been read to several fellows. Your way of expressing God's direction comparing it to the wise men's star catches hold quickly with the fellows.

No matter how bad the papers make it sound they can't describe by half the danger and misery of our life in the front lines. In my letters I've left out only descriptions regarding wounded and things of military value. Otherwise they give as accurate



a picture as I can give. Sgt. Bill Mauldin's cartoons with the humor taken away are very accurate. The principle thing the newspaper and radio can't describe is the mental anguish that accompanies the physical hardships. An infantryman never knows how long he'll be at the front. He doesn't know how long he'll be in a combat zone. He is sure that because of weather conditions many times he'll not have air support, and because of terrain features many times armor and artillery can't help him. He knows that he is the person who wins ground and then holds. He knows that the enemy will strike at him with more than he can take, but that he must hold or advance, for how long, he doesn't know.

These things all contribute to our mental strain. Only God can carry us through it victorious. You see physical hardships compare to the mental strain like a pin prick does to a stab. If we can overcome the mental strain it is no trouble to overcome, or at least endure, the physical tests. I know that it must seem terrible to you the job we have to do.

Our faith and trust in God is our strength just as it is yours. Above all is the bridge that brings us close together. It makes me feel your prayers and love keenly and your victorious spirit is like a jack under me. I know that if I am hurt or if I must die that God is with you as he is with me, and that He will make us victorious. Many people couldn't take the things I've said to you. We are stronger because you can. A wound is often like some of those bruises and cuts I used to get around home and school, most of the time they are. Shock is the thing that hits hardest. There again it is God and his effect on a man's life that determines the extent of shock. So you see that the principle thing that folks at home worry about isn't so bad. Many a fellow in the infantry spends his only rest in a long while in the white sheets of a hospital bed, and loves it.

Today in my quiet time God made clear a parallel to me. I've been fascinated and thrilled by the story of Paul as he fought to carry out his guidance to go to Rome. Today it came to me that Paul's objective in life was to reach Rome and bring Christianity to the heart of the Gentile world. My objective in life is to bring God's directions to the industries of the U.S. and the world. Paul had to live through flogging, shipwreck, attempts on his life, hunger, mis-treatment and all kinds of physical suffering. I may have to do the same but I'll live to reach my objective, just as Paul did. That is God's promise to me. It is not for me to say whether I will live through this war, but I do feel this promise strongly. I will pray hard it will be so.

Yesterday one of my best friends and team mates returned to the company after spending a month in a hospital. We're both squad leaders, and what strength comes from working with him.

Give Mrs. G. my best greetings and ask her to send them on to Commander G. Many a day when the army gets kind of disgusting I josh along with all the rest of us landlubbers about the mistake we made in not getting into the Navy. The thought of a bed and kitchen always along side is very appetizing at times. We're sure a hungry and lazy bunch and we can prove it if we get a chance.

I must close now. What love I have for you all.

Affectionately,

Leland.



Somewhere in France  
January 3rd.

Dearest, dearest Family:

Still living in the coldest foxholes in the world. Today I am back of the front line aways, so I can write a letter to you. Naturally as the New Year rolled around I prayed especially hard that the parties and meetings you folks had were especially tops and that already great, definite, and assured plans for the use of MRA plays and dramas have been made. I pray especially hard for Frank these days. I firmly believe that this winter will determine whether we win in the race with time to remake American homes and industry.

I have been with my present buddy for six days and six nights. We have had to stay in our foxholes continuously, so we have had many fine talks. When I first jumped into the hole with him, he asked me if I was a Christian. I said "yes", and then he said: "we'll be sure to get along". That was exactly true. When men are close together, their qualities soon come out. When they are close to death for a long period of time, they know each other's qualities, spiritually, mentally, and physically, as well. Every day we read the Bible together and discuss it as we go along. We sing hymns and chaff up each other and our buddies. Yesterday we were reading of the Pentecost in Acts and of the miracle of the sudden wisdom and power and boldness of the Twelve. My buddy said he wished he could be a bold Christian. From there we went to a real surrender. His biggest problem is dreaming and weeping silently for home. He surrendered this and is certainly happier.

My New Year's resolution was to be a Revolutionary for God. I am not at all satisfied with just having protection from God - that is where most men in the front lines stop. I want to be so guided that all the men I come in contact with go back to the States with the answer for broken homes and strife in industry. That is where my buddy began yesterday. Now as a team we'll work with our squad buddies.

My conviction these days is that this war will not end until more people are willing to live by God's guidance. In our Army there are 10,000,000 men willing to sacrifice their lives, and yet in the whole world there are hardly 10,000,000 people willing to let God run their lives. Until this inequality is balanced up, I fear this war will continue.

New Year's Eve I had a "watch service" by myself. I was on guard for almost two hours in the coldest possible weather. I sat in our foxhole on a box with my head poking out of the shelter half-cover so I could just see the surrounding territory. For practically the whole time I prayed for all the people I know, for all they are doing and should do. I really found that passed the time and gave me a sense of closeness with you.

Something happened to me the other day for which I am very grateful. We seemed to be going to a dangerous position. I was disturbed - scared. I wondered why. I asked God. It came very clearly that my fear was not of being hit or killed: it was of not seeing you, my dearest ones, again. Then the Lord said: "You know that I am a bridge between you, and that over this long distance I bring you very close together." And I said, "That's right". I said, "Lord, look after my family, and I won't worry any more." And I haven't. I have found a new clear-headed courage, too.

My thoughts are especially with you, Dad, as your birthday draws near. May it be the best birthday you've ever had. My deepest love and affection goes to you.

I am always thinking lots about George, Polly, and Polly Ann. I am very grateful for them and pray that this winter George's vision for L. A. will come true. I pray he is totally inspired and an unforgettable leader.

I got a real kick out of reading Paul's letters. I wish I could write as good.

Lots and lots of love for you and the team,

Leland.