

Pierre F. O'Hare
424/1 BN/HQ

February 22, 1997

The following is a letter written by Staff Sgt. Pierre F. O'Hare, 33 726 598, 1st Battalion HQ Company, 424th Combat Infantry Regiment, 106th Infantry Division, United States Army in March of 1945 to his Mother and Father as he recuperated at Camp Butner, Durham, North Carolina. - P.Frank O'Hare



March 18, 1945

Dear Mom & Pop,

How's the folks today. Fine as ever, I bet. Well, I can't complain either. As I have often said before, I am a man of leisure now. Nothing to do all day but loaf. But believe it or not loafing becomes very monotonous after a time. I get up in the morning, wash and shave, make my bed, and sit around the remainder of the day. I've found a textbook on calculus which I study to pass the time. Bookworm O'Hare they call me. But no kidding, I really do not have anything else to do, and this passes the time away. We have very little entertainment, a movie once a week, and that is about all. But in a few days I expect to obtain a suit of clothes, then I will be able to visit the nearby town of Durham on pass. Gosh is will feel good to get loose again.

I have very little to write you. You asked me when I entered the hospital. I can tell you now. If I remember it was Christmas Eve. How well I remember that day. On the 23rd of December my unit mad an orderly retreat from the German border into Luxembourger (I can't spell the dam country). The Germans had us trapped on the night of the 23rd. I can tell you now that we never expected to get out. But the next morning we managed to escape. How I do not know. This was on the day before Christmas.

What was left of our unit withdrew behind our lines. On the 23rd when we retreated (I should say withdrew, the American Army never retreats - at least they tell me.) well as I was saying, it was necessary to hike approximately twenty miles. God what a hike! I was completely exhausted but to drop out was suicide. The Jerries were on our tail. Well we hike thru mud and snow. When we pulled out on the 24th my feet were killing me. Of course I supposed I had blisters from the hike. I went to the aid station and the Doc said I had trench foot. The first hospital I was sent to was in Liege, Belgium. From there to Paris then I flown to England.

I have seen war at its worst. I am sure that Bud Albaugh is dead. Of course I never wrote his mother this fact, in fact I haven't wrote her yet. When I do write I'll tell her what you told me to say. I was not with my section when they met this mishap. Lt.

(Jarrett) Huddleston and myself were on patrol that day and had been cut off. I did not reach my unit again before this happens. It is too long to explain here. I'll tell you all about it when I see you. The fellows in the section were surrounded in the battalion command post or headquarters by the Germans. Paris, the Colonel and few others managed to escape. The others did not. You see the Germans did not take prisoners. Men who were unfortunate enough to be captured were shot. They also shot our wounded. The fellows in my section must have met this fate. Of course it is terrible. But worrying about it will never help bring the boys back. The best I can do for them is tell the truth. If the people at home could only realize how horrible war is, things like this would not happen. If people at home fought the Germans, they would realize their true character. You can not trust them. I can cite numerous instances. This one makes my blood boil. The Germans shot our medics. There is an international agreement against this but it is usually a gentlemen's agreement between the two forces. The medics are not armed, they cannot fight back. The only way to beat a German is to beat the hell out of them. Kindness is unknown to the majority of them.

Now I know you and Dad may be worried, and do not wish to mention a word about the war to me when I get home. Well you can forget them. The war hasn't effected me to that extent. the only effect it has had is to make me realize its horrors. If the boys coming home would only tell the folks what it is all about, by folks I mean their friends, we would go all out to insure our future peace. To dam man people see too many movies. People at home sit in their comfortable arm chairs and read about the advances in the headlines and clap. They feel proud of themselves that they are Americans. But do they ever stop to think what it costs, a squad, a platoon, or a company in lives to make that advance. They never endure the hardships, they never see their pals blown to hell. What I am driving at is if the politicians, the rabble rousers could only realize what they are advocating we would have no future wars. If we need a large standing Army and Navy after this war to insure peace, I am all for it. It would be worth it. The families of the service men realize how horrible war can be. But do others? I intend to tell whoever will listen the truth. This method is the only means I have to repay those kids who died on the line. I believe this is what they would want.

Boy once I got started I really let loose. I hope you and Dad do not think me wrong.

I sure am looking forward to your box of candy. By the time this reaches you, I guess I'll have it.

Gosh, it really is swell to talk to you and Dad on the phone. Your voices sounded so doggone good.

Say hello to Mrs. Kennedy and Uncle Bert. It is after bed time now, therefore I'll say goodnight.

Love,
Son

The letter was given to me by my mother, Dorothy Reynolds O'Hare, who received it from my Grandmother O'Hare. Grandmother O'Hare wrote the following on the outside of the envelope:

Dotty and Frank please read. It is interesting of his experiences when almost captured.
Mom

Source: Son, P. Frank O'Hare, 05/16/2011



Page last revised

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