

NAME: Dewey

RANK: Not Available

ORGANIZATION: 5th Armored Division

OVERSEAS WARTIME SERVICE: European Theater of Operations

- The following text is directly from three original wartime period letters about Dewey. These are the only letters related to Dewey in the site curator's possession.
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- No controversial material has been omitted from the following text aside from edited profanity for the protection of younger readers. No grammatical or spelling errors have been corrected.

Dewey writes some friends in the United States:

“JANUARY 28 [1945]

FRANCE

A little late, as a lot of things are nowadays, but present ~~with~~ now with all my appreciation of your wonderful Christmas box. It was a chain of surprises all the way through and I couldn't get over the ingenuity of it. Many, many thanks and God bless you all for your thoughtfulness. I received the box in Belgium just before X-mas, ate the candy in England, and am now using the tobacco pouch in France. Every single item is just as useful as you hoped it would be and if I didn't expect to be home by next X-mas (again) I would like to be here to get another box like that. But I'm going to be home. You see, its like this.

I laid down on my bed last night to relax a little bit and think the situation over. Things were looking mighty bright & shiny, I thought, what with the Russians traveling like a steamroller and heading right straight for Berlin, and before I could catch myself, I fell right into the worn-out game of calculating the end of the war. Not more than a couple of weeks, I thinks, if the Russians keep going. Two weeks?! My God! Then there's a good chance of going home soon. Holy smokes! What a picture that old Statue of Liberty is going to be. I'll probably feel so funny I wouldn't know whether to cry or laugh & I'll probably be doing both. Then getting off the boat. There'll probably be a couple bands playing and people crowded all around and everyone I will be hollering & yelling & crying and so excited & no one will know quite whats going on. I don't know what I'm doing but somehow I'm on the other end of the gangplank and people are crowding in so much I can't get through. ~~Suddenly~~ Someone kisses me on the cheek and both hands are busy shaking hands with the gents. No one knows anything except that we are all back where we belong and everyone's so happy they're all choked up inside & can't do enough to express their emotions. Blindly I stagger on. I'd like to stop & talk awhile but I've got to follow that man. Just a man in a line all dressed like myself. D _ _ n lines. Well, it'll be over soon & I'll never stand in another one. I get on a truck headed for a seperation center and ride. It all seems like a wild dream. I'm back where people speak English & drink & laugh & are happy. Everything looks good. That tree, for instance. It's in the U.S.A. and I'm right here with it. That bar – oh how I'd love to go in and order a drink & pay for it in good American dollars. Drink it straight down & get another one, then go out and feast my eyes on the scenery. Nothing to look at, just another street with old buildings which are dirty from age, just ordinary

signs hanging out, but its the states! The same ordinary looking people on the streets and the same cars running up & down & parked on the streets. Ordinary, yes, but Oh. Lord how good they look. These are my people, my streets and my way of living. This is my country!

France & all those other countries are away back in the past like memories of my early childhood. I don't want to remember them. I'm back where I belong now and I want to work & build & plan the future & build an even better country.

On the train going home there is nothing to do but relax and enjoy the countryside. I've seen it many times but never before have I had the feeling it gives me. Its a peaceful sensation and as it passes before me I think how wonderful it is, and how big, and free, and what opportunities. I review my plans of the future – sticking in an idea here and discarding another one. Finally the rails clackety-clack closes my eyes and I dream. I'm going home.

So you see folks, that's why I won't be here for another X-mas. What do you think?

Sincerely

Dewey

- OVER -

I wonder if you could print your box number in some standard place in every paper. I can't always remember it but I always have a paper on hand, and if there is anyone else with as weak a mind as mine, it would certainly help us ~~out~~. both out.”

Dewey writes the same friends again in the United States:

“XXX XX [1945]

Germany

Sometimes when there is a complete lack of anything to write about and I am helpless to say anything that would let you know how much I appreciate your paper, I have to resort to such lowly things as ‘gold vaults’ and ‘home-going dreams.’ Whatever you may think of them, please don't judge what follows in this letter by those others.

On the morning of XXX XX about 9:30 o'clock I was riding down the road leading from __ to __ in a jeep, fully conscious of what a beautiful spring day it was and slightly excited at the ~~possibility~~ thought of what might be ahead of me.

Only a half hour before I had stood in the CP nervously wondering whether the CO was going to give me the transportation I had asked for. When he gave me his decision my hopes rose once more, almost like they had so many times in the past. In the past though, it was different. I had never had such definite information as I had now and this was by far the closest I had come. It was similar to hunting. You catch a glimpse of a rabbit in the brush way ahead of you & then set out to sneak up on him, hoping he won't get very far away before you get there.

The previous night I had been thumbing my way through ‘Yank’ magazine, reading what interested me and passing over that which didn't, when with shocking suddenness one phrase in small print seemed to stand out from all the rest of the page. ‘With the XXX Div. at ____.’ I stared at it for a moment trying to grasp the possibilities. Then I threw down the magazine and walked over to the map

tacked onto the wall. I found the two places I was interested in, marked off the distance between them on a piece of paper, and applied it to the scale below. Twenty miles. ‘Whattayuh looking for?’, someone asked. ‘H _ _ l, I’m only twenty miles from my brother!’ I said.

Small wonder that I noticed the beautiful weather as we rolled over the countryside. But even a rainy day wouldn’t have dampened my spirits any. Not that day.

As we came to the outskirts of the city I noticed with some misgivings that it was quite a big place and likely to give me some trouble in locating the XXX __ IF it was still there. It was, because an MP said so & gave us directions how to get there. The next stop I had located the band which he is in and then I found myself in front the building. I was excited – no doubt about it - . My heart was beating faster than it should and when I made inquiries I talked in short quick phrases besides being well on my way when I said ‘Thanks.’

Upstairs I found the room with his name on it and opened the door. What a reception! The lights were out, blinds drawn, and altogether as black as midnight ever was. The reason became clear when I heard the long, drawn-out labors of someone industriously sawing wood. I was supremely happy at that moment because I knew I had found him. I struck a match, found the light & turned it on then stood there wondering how I should wake him. I decided to try the way I used 3 years ago back home, and mustering all the disgust possible, I said, ‘Aw for Chrissake, wake up.’ I don’t think I sounded very disgusted but it worked. His face clouded up in a frown for a second, eyes closed, then he muttered ‘Oh my God!’ and sat up trying to grasp what was going on while still in a sleep fog. The following moments defy description. Only those who have had similar good fortune can know what it really means & feels like. A multi-millionaire couldn’t buy happiness like that and it didn’t cost me a danged thing. There’s absolutely nothing I wouldn’t have given though.

Since then he has been up to see me and we have had some awfully long talks. We even had our picture taken together, which is something we can brag about to our posterity.

That is – when we get back.

Very sincerely

Dewey”

Dewey’s grandmother writes the friends Dewey had been corresponding with above:

“May 20, 1945.

Your kindness in sending the papers is so much appreciated. Many thanks. Any such messages are hard to receive, but the sympathy that comes with them helps to some extent. All of Dewey’s relatives and friends may feel very proud of him – but the ‘finality’ of his death is the part that brings the grief that stays...

Most sincerely –

Dewey’s Grandmother.”

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- Dewey was killed in action in the Second World War.

- **For visual context, this link connects to an original wartime newsreel in the public domain that covers the above time period and Dewey's type of organization (viewer discretion advised):**
https://archive.org/details/1945-03-26_Allies_Drive_Across_Rhine_To_Victory
- **For additional detail, this link connects to the Wikipedia article that covers Dewey's wartime organization, the 5th Armored Division (reader discretion advised):**
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/5th_Armored_Division_\(United_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/5th_Armored_Division_(United_States))