

Sir,

I have the honour to report some good news. You should be able to read this report just a couple of days after I have written it. That speaks volumes in itself. Good to have you back sir.

I regret that your good news is tempered by some bad news. Regrettably Heart found our last country hike a little too stressful and will not be joining us in the future. He has retired, from life.

Er, I have a small confession to make. I dropped you in the river while crossing the fallen tree on the way back. Good of you not to object at all. However your unplanned bath did nothing to improve your situation. Your Rank Sir!!!

On our trip back through the forest we encountered some (9) German chappies. Now we do not speak a word of German and they did not speak a word on English but we all understood the language of a levelled gun when they tried to surround us. I must thank you for providing cover during the battle. You may have picked up a couple of extra scars but I understand that they are quite fashionable now with the ladies. Owen cut a couple of them in half with that Tommy gun of his. I threw a grenade that one of them neatly caught and proceeded to stare at until he went blind. That was shortly before he died and his two companions seemed to die of shock, or was that concussion I can never remember the difference. I think Williams downed one of them but then he must have got bored with the battle as he dozed off. One of the Germans tried to run away. It is so much effort to run in the deep snow, so I saved him the bother. The officer and the last remaining soldier surrendered. I tied them up against a tree then collected all the weapons. The guns were smashed against a tree. We could not decide how best to destroy of the ammuniton so we buried it.

We had to wait a couple of hours for Williams to wake up again so we made camp and stayed there for the night. We had a watch rota of two on guard and one sleeping that we changed every 3 hours until daylight. I understand that the Gerries got rather cold and wet sitting in the snow but luckily I found something soft that was not snow covered on which to sit. We made it back to the survey camp Sunday morning with no further encounters.

The trip home was a little more tricky. In the end we put the Germans in the boot of the car. They did not seem to enjoy each others company so Williams had to administer a sedative before we got to the boarder. I believe that the bumps and bruises will go down in a week or so. You and Heart were real gents, you sat in the back of the car with Owen and did not utter a squeak. That was quite impressive with all of that gas that must have been building up inside you. However the atmosphere in the car required some improvements. We rummaged around and found some money in your pockets with which to obtain a bottle of whiskey. Sorry sir but it seems it was Irish whiskey. Anyway we poured a little into you mouth and some over your clothes and the same for Heart. We managed to pass you off as a couple of dead drunks. Owen looked a little green sitting between the two of you and that helped with the deception.

The boss was pleased to see us all if a little disappointed at our condition. The cloaks were a real hit with him. So much so that he would like us to go on a little trip and get the rest and the person who makes them. Apparently they must not fall into German hands at any cost.

We managed to arrange a couple of first class air tickets home for you and Heart but some joker inserted the word 'freight' after the first class. Oh well I understand that you got home OK just the same.

In your absence we have been doing a little planning. The boss wants us to take a few extras (24) on our trip back so the route in that we used last time will not work. We considered tagging along with the diplomats on their way to Brussels but we would have had to wear a uniform and then would not have been able to get away for our country hike without being stopped by the Belgies. We considered jumping from a passenger plane. Williams, Owen and I all had a couple of practice jumps but twisted an ankle, knee or wrist each time. I still think it is a good plan but more training is required and we do not have time. So we had to resort to a long drive along the Maginot line to the boarder and then a long hike through the forest. There does not seem to be any other option. We have a selection of equipment including some heavier stuff than last time and some purple smoke. Apparently on our return we need to set this off as we approach the Maginot line or they will open us up, or was that open up on us. I must try to listen harder in these briefings.

Any way I understand that you will be back just in time to lead us for this hike.

Good to have you back sir.

Sgt Arnold