Dear Ma. and Pa.,

Winter seems to have arrived in this part of the Old World. Last night it snowed an inch or so, and the white covering has lasted through all the gray cold day. However, it has not been quite cold enough to freeze the everlasting mud. The English weather has been widely criticized but the French autumn and winter will not receive any praise from me. When the rain stops at all it is only through a momentary rift in the endless clouds.

Service Battery is now the sole occupant of this town except for a detachment of six men (engineers who work the water point). There is not a single building here undamaged and most are completely wrecked. Our CP (Command Post)
In the vaulted wine cellar of an old inn and the various sections of the battery are dispersed through the town, wherever quarters for men and parking space under cover for vehicles could be improvised. A room here, a cellar there, with salvaged stones and a few handfuls of straw and we are grateful for the shelter, particularly when the renewerable lot of the doughboy is contracted therewith. We can count on three meals a day, generally hot meals too, while the infantrymen, during an attack, may have to go for a day or two with no meals served at all, and some meals missed entirely, at a time when he is running, crawling, and lying in wet fields and muddy fox holes. Some of the men caught a horse and at first amused themselves by riding it bareback; then, after finding a buggy, they engaged in a little buggy driving through the town.
Group B: Battlefield Experience Materials
Letter, Water S. Gunnarson to Mr. and Mrs. Frederick W. Gunnarson, November 15, 1944, Page Three
State Historical Society of Missouri

One section of the battery, the motor maintenance, "accidentally" shot a young pig. Accidental it wasn because they thought a German was hiding behind him, or else the pig didn't know the password. One man butchered the porker, to make the best of the matter.

Thanks Mom, for the second package (assorted candy bars) which reached me last week and served a most pleasant purpose.

Our votes seem to be gone with the wind again, maybe next time we'll do it.

As far as I can tell from here and according to the "Stars and Stripes," the war news is very favorable. Saw three truckloads of German prisoners going to the rear as we neared the main highway yesterday morning and two prisoners were being guarded at our Battalion CP when I stopped in later.
Christmas will soon be with us again and I write these Christmas greetings as a stream of roaring tanks, race past and I earnestly pray that this war shall have ended before this message will have reached you. There is no question of relating our efforts; however, until the Allied armies are completely victorious on the battlefields. May God be with us all, here, and at home.

(Signed) Walter

Written by Captain Walter S. Gunnarson 0278309
Service Battery 216th Field Artillery Battalion
35th Division - A.P.O. No. 35
Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.
and sent to
Mrs. Mrs. Frederick W. Gunnarson
459 63rd St.
Brooklyn N.Y.
Dear Ma and Pa

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Service Battery is now the sole occupant of this town except for a detachment of six men (engineers) who work with the water paint. There is not a single building here un-damaged and most are completely wrecked. Our CP (command post) is in the vaulted wine cellar of an old inn and the various sections of the battery are dispersed through the town, wherever quarters for men and parking space under cover for vehicles could be improvised. A room here, a cellar there, with salvaged stoves and a few armful of straw and we are grateful for the shelter, particularly when the unenviable lot of the doughboys contrested therewith. We can count on three meals a day, generally hot meals too, while the infantry men, during an attack, may have to go for a day or two with no meals served hot, and some meals missed entirely, at a time when he is running, crawling and lying in wet fields and muddy fox holes. Some of the men caught a horse and at first amuse themselves by riding it bareback, after finding a buggy they engaged in a little buggy driving through the town.

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Skål [Cheers]--
(signed) Walter

Written by Captain Walter S. Gunnarson 0278309
Service Battery 216th Field Artillery Battalion, 35th Division - A.P.O No. 35
c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y. and sent to
Mr., Mrs. Frederick W. Gunnarson, 459 63rd St. Brooklyn, N.Y.