

CPL Curtis L. Johnson

Location - East-A: R5, C34



PARATROOPER WRITES PARENTS HE IS FREE AGAIN

Curtis L. Johnson, Wounded
in Invasion, Operated on by
German Doctor, Is Safe in
France

In a two-page letter, written in his own handwriting from "somewhere in France," Pvt. First Class Curtis L. Johnson, 20, Oshkosh paratrooper who was listed as "missing in action" following the D-day invasion June 6, has informed his parents that he is recuperating behind the allied lines in France, after having been wounded in action and a prisoner of war for a period immediately following the invasion.

The young man's letter to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin A. Johnson, 61 East New York avenue, was dated Aug. 7. It was written on two sheets of brown paper which, the youth said, had been "captured from the Jerry."

The war department telegram which listed Private Johnson as "missing in action" was received here July 25.

His present communication reached Oshkosh ahead of any official notice, either from the government or through Red Cross channels. The youth indicated in his letter that he had expected news of his capture might have reached his parents through the Red Cross, but no such message had been received.

In German Hospital

Private Johnson was wounded in three places by German bullets, necessitating an operation by a German field hospital doctor a half hour after he was captured.

Although not specifically stated, the letter indicated that the Oshkosh paratrooper had been left at some place in France by the fleeing Germans, who could not arrange to convey wounded prisoners of war with them, or that the American prisoners had been "recaptured" by the allies, in one of the fast breakthroughs that featured the advance in Normandy.

Excerpts from his letter said:

"During the fight, I was hit by three German bullets. Don't worry. It's not as bad as it sounds. I'm O. K. They can't kill a Johnson. I accounted for three Germans myself. I was sorry I did, but that was the way it had to be.

"I was hit twice in the shoulder, the one was only a nick. The third shot hit me in the wrist. It will be O. K. after one more month. My wrist is already healed and is just sore.

Treated "Quite Well"

"I couldn't get mail to you because I was captured by the Germans.

"It was only about a half hour after the Germans got me that a German doctor operated on me. I was treated quite well, but could have been treated much better. The German prisoners are, when we get them.

"Most Germans I talked to behind their own lines know they are licked.

"All my clothing was taken by the Jerry. I was kept in a German prisoner-of-war hospital for a long time. We didn't get much to eat; in fact, we nearly starved. Anyone who had been there any length of time lost 20 to 30 pounds. The Jerry ate well though.

"There was nothing to eat, read, play or do, except dream of the day I was going to be free again.

His Prayers Answered

"I prayed, just as I prayed in the plane all the way across the channel, and God answered them all. I'm free again and I'll be home by Christmas.

"Don't get the idea all the Germans were terrible to us; most of them were swell.

"I'm not the only one who is free. So are the French in certain areas. Are they glad! They were under the nazi rule for four years. As for the kisses and handshakes, plus salutes, they sure came from the heart!

"The main thing is I'm living a wonderful life now, with the best of everything. The time for thankfulness is here!"

He added a postscript to his letter: "Don't write yet." His parents said this indicated he may have expected to be moved soon, possibly to England or even to the United States.

8-19-44

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Pfc. Curtis Johnson telephoned his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Johnson, 61 East New York avenue, yesterday morning to tell them of his safe arrival in the states. Private Johnson, who entered service December, 1942, trained as a paratrooper and left for overseas a little over a year ago. July 25, 1944, his parents were informed he had been unaccounted for since D-day and on Aug. 19, they received a letter from him informing them he had been wounded, but was safe after being held a German prisoner for a time. He was awarded the purple heart medal. Private Johnson expects to arrive home some time this week.

Curtis L. Johnson

A former Oshkosh resident, Curtis L. Johnson, 62, Stoughton, died Sunday in Madison General Hospital.

He was born Nov. 23, 1923, in Oshkosh, the son of Edwin and Edna Petersen Johnson. He married Rhoda Sorenson Aug. 17, 1946.

Mr. Johnson served in the Army during World War II. He was employed as an architect and project manager for the Wisconsin Department of Administration until retiring in December 1985. He was a member of First Lutheran Church, Stoughton.

Surviving are his widow; his mother, Oshkosh; two daughters, Mrs. Jack (Barbara) James, Waukesha, and Terry Johnson, Minneapolis; two sons, Dale, Sterling, Va., and David, Stoughton; and four grandchildren.

Cpl. Curtis L. Johnson, 61 East New York avenue, was—a field lineman in the infantry and later the parachute school, Fort Benning, Ga., and earned the American theater service ribbon, ETO service ribbon with two bronze stars, good conduct medal, purple heart and distinguished unit badge. He entered service Dec. 3, 1942.



CURTIS L
JOHNSON

CPL

US ARMY

WORLD WAR II

NOV 23 1923

JUL 27 1986