

S/SGT. GUYOWEN H. HOWARD, SR.
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My father, Guyowen Howard, Sr. was drafted in March 1944 at Schenectady, NY. He trained at Camp Fannin, Texas. He sailed for Europe as a replacement in August 1944. He landed at Omaha Beach in early September 1944 and was assigned to the 80th Division. He served on the front until he was wounded the day after Christmas 1944.

The following is an excerpt from a letter to his brother, Roland Howard of Blue Hill, Maine dated 9 October 1945. It was written from the VA Hospital in Utica, New York.

Dear Roland, My writing has taken a sudden turn for the worst since planting my feet on good old Yankee soil. Anyway I learned one thing by going over there and that is how nice it is over here.

We boarded a hospital train for Cherbourg. The trip was especially nice knowing I was headed home. It was awful hard to believe at first and I really wasn't sure until we got on the old boat and the main land of Europe disappeared behind us. I sure felt relieved. It was calm all the way across. On the night of the eighth day we pulled into N. Y. Harbor. Of course I can't tell you how that looks from a ship, you being in the Navy and no doubt making the trip several times. But to me it was just like entering paradise. We dropped anchor just a short way down the bay from the Statue of Liberty. I stayed on deck until the damp night air drove me down below to my bunk. But I woke up every half hour and took a trip up to the open deck to make sure we were still there. It was a good feeling to think only a couple of hundred miles away were my family. It seemed almost as though I could reach out and touch them. Lord knows how some of the other boys felt who had been away much longer. Some 4 and 5 years. I met some who landed in Iceland with the 5th Division in 1941 and many had been through Africa, Sicily and Italy. Of course those who had been in the war all those years were not riflemen in an infantry outfit. We riflemen don't last that long. I hit the front the first of September and see the outfit cleaned out twice to the time I got hit on Dec. 26th. I sure feel very thankful to be here right now even though I am not in the best of shape. I am perfect compared to some I see here in the hospital every day, not to mention the boys I have ate and slept with who will never come home. Anyway it's over with and I hope it will never happen again. I ain't sorry I went but I sure hope my children won't have to.

Good luck and best wishes, Guy

Dad had a cervical fusion and limited ability to turn his head when he was drafted. He was hit by mortar shell fragments in the side of the face and the fusion was broken. He spent time in VA hospitals from time to time getting his neck fixed up.

On the 50th anniversary of D-day I pulled out a book on the Battle of the Bulge to see if there was anything he recognized. He looked at it for a while and had to sit down--it was the look in a soldier's eyes that made him feel light headed. It was the look of a person who saw things that no human being should have to see. After 50 years the experience had never left him.

Dad died in 2000 in his 90th year. He never forgot the men who didn't come home.