

Excerpts from letters sent
from Shrivenham American University
by U.S. Army Captain Norman O. Gunderson to his wife

October – December 1945

2 October 1945 - Tuesday - Shrivenham

We left Camp Philip Morris (*Le Havre, France*) yesterday morning at 0630 and boarded a “beautiful” little channel steamer, quaintly named the “Twickenham Ferry” . . . The boat got into Southampton about 2000 . . . We got into Shrivenham about 0100 this morning and went to bed, naturally.

I haven’t seen much of the school as yet this morning, but it looks pretty nice. Just a nice group of neat, red brick buildings, placed in a rural area. It’s a beautiful sunny day with a nice tang in the air. I’ll tell you a lot more about the place when I know more . . .

We register tomorrow and then are free to take off until Sunday night—a four-day pass . . .

3 October 1945 - Wednesday - Shrivenham

I am now officially enrolled in the Shrivenham American University, finishing the one hour’s task before chow. For some reason or other, I’m taking General Insurance, Business Finance and General Psychology—and volleyball, as a compulsory athletic subject. These courses are at 8, 9, and 11 in the morning and volleyball comes at 1330-1530 on Tues and Thurs afternoons. Tough schedule, isn’t it, honey? But they only allow you 3 subjects, so I arranged them for afternoons and the 10 o’clock coffee hour free. I’m no dummy! I wanted to take Elementary Photography, but was talked out of it because they said: (1) the classes are crowded, (2) very elementary, and (3) one can learn it just as easy by oneself . . .

Before I forget it, I saw Dr. Dickinson during registration this morning. He’s a Maj. In the Infantry and is head of the language department. I didn’t know him personally at Laramie (*University of Wyoming at Laramie*), but we had a short chat. He plans on going home after the present term.

The school is located on a former British military post that was built in 1938, so the buildings are pretty nice and modern. The officers are quartered in the west wing of Watson West barracks. In my room there are a Capt., 1st Lt., and 2nd Lt., and they’re all good eggs. The 1st Lt. is a Sigma Chi from George Washington U., and is the first SX I’ve met in the service. You can imagine our enthusiastic, brotherly greetings—you can, can’t you?

Yesterday afternoon we rode into Swindon, a town of about 15,000 people seven miles from here to see what a Britisher and his like are like. The country on the way is very pretty. You’ve seen pictures of cottages with thatched roofs, and hedges, and flower beds. Well, that’s the way

(notes in parentheses/italics entered by C. Ferguson)

the countryside is.—pleasantly quiet and clean. The first thing that impressed me about Swindon was its cleanliness in comparison to a French city. In France, if you traversed a certain route more than once, you leaned to know the location of the particularly bad odorous spots and upon walking that route again, you held your breath at those spots. Of course now and then, an unexpected one assailed you, and you had to mentally write it down for the next trip. Ah, it's nice to be in England!

There is one discouraging feature about England, though, and that is the custom of driving to the left. I'm accustomed to looking to the left before crossing streets—here that practice is rather foolish! Look right first, or else.

The money system too is confusing. You purchase something and are told it's "5 and 6"—if you have 10 minutes or so I figure it out, you can do it. But I'm still confused, so I hold out a handful of silver and let them sort it out. Of course you can just give them a £1 (1 pound) note, and act as if it's all old stuff to you, and get the equivalent weight of 4 or 5 silver dollars in change.—your pockets begin to strain after two such transactions. I believe that I had better concentrate on the English money system and learn it—or I might lose money to unscrupulous clerks, or suffer flat feet because of too much silver.

We stopped at a couple of "pubs" on the way back, enjoyed an exciting hour of beer, darts, and ha'penny shuffle. I'll tell you more about that later—in another letter.

Right now I'm going to kill an hour or so with a walk thru the surrounding area and see what we might have.

4 October 1945 - Thursday - 1230 - Shrivenham

Just a short note before I shove off for London. They're running a special train down at 1345 today and returning Saturday nite—and that's about the longest pass we'll get while here. Might as well take advantage of it . . .

5 October 1945 - Friday - London

. . . Five of us kids are going to the Theatre in a ½ hr or so and from there to the Berkeley Hotel for late supper and dancing. Sporty, eh what, old girl? I can't remember what the play is, but it's supposedly good. And the hotel is supposedly the top dining and dancing spot in London—they wear white tie and tails. I'm sure the five of us won't do much dancing with each other.

We went slumming last night thru Piccadilly Circus and found it just as "bad and wicked" as Paris. I'll tell you lost more about the city in a much longer letter—Sunday morning . . .

8 October 1945 - Monday - Shrivenham

School started with a rush today—more of the old dismissal early on the first day. The instructors gave their full hour's lecture and the three I have seem to be pretty good—they're from Columbia, U. of Pennsylvania, and the U. of California. Tomorrow I start volleyball and I probably won't be able to walk for days after such strenuous exercise.

Saw a show last night that was so old it seems I was in grade school when it first came out. It was "Mutiny on the Bounty" with C. Laughton, C. Gable, and F. Tone., and I enjoyed it a lot. It was easy to tell that it was filmed before the Hays office came into being. The love scenes on Tahiti were a bit torrid compared to those of today. You can imagine the G. I.'s reactions to such scenes—rather noisy! . . .

10 October – Wednesday - 1400 - Shrivenham

It's a beautiful sunny day in Shrivenham and the warmth really feels good. I think we'd better live in a perennial sunny climate—it's so nice to be warm all the time . . .

School days are coming along fine and I'm enjoying the classes. The quarter percentage of the students are enlisted men and it's rather embarrassing when an officer can't answer a question and numerous privates volunteer a very complete and intelligent answer. That hasn't happened to me as yet, but no doubt will. The courses are condensed quite a bit because they cover a standard semester's work in two months. Things go a lot faster. Credit received here are accepted at any college in the States, so I'll have 9 hrs toward something or other . . .

11 Oct 1945 - Thurs. - Shrivenham

. . . Played volleyball for the first time this afternoon and quite enjoyed it. It's strange, how, after a long period of no physical exertion you lose all your coordination and look like a bull in a China shop. The whole thing should be good for me.—at least I think so! . . .

12 October 1945 – Sat afternoon - Shrivenham (typewritten)

It's a beautiful afternoon—sunny, warm and just pleasant . . .

Everyone has taken off for London, Bournemouth, Birmingham, and lots of other places, so it's rather quiet around here for a change. I, and a few others plan on getting rid of slight colds, studying, cycling, etc. If I make a few mistakes on this machine, it's not my fault—it's a portable and rather strange to operate . . .

I had my first quiz this morning in business finance, and think possibly that I passed, because it was rather a simple one. Business finance as a course is pretty much out of my line, in that it deals with large corporations such as General Electric, General Motors, etc., but I may pick up enough information so that we can advantageously invest our “fortune” in the better stocks and bonds . . . It’s a good course tho, and I’m taking the personal finance course on my own—it tells you how to save pennies, and that’s what I need . . .

The insurance instructor is quite the boy and I like the way he teaches. He assigns a chapter to the class and at the beginning of the next day’s class, asks if there are any questions concerning the chapter. If there aren’t, he dismisses and everyone goes over and has a Coke. The first few days nobody thought to ask questions but now, feeling that the time is theirs to spend as they wish, everyone has a few questions and the class has open discussion and debate. Very interesting! . . .

In fact, all my classes are interesting and I consider myself very fortunate in being able to spend a few months here, rather than in Reims. As I wouldn’t be able to get home to you before Dec or Jan anyway, this is a very nice and profitable place to spend that interim. In case I should get an opportunity to go home before the course finishes—and that’s so remote—I could quit school and take right off. So it’s not going to hurt my chances of getting home at all—I think they’ll really be better.

October 14, 1945 - Shrivenham

I’m about ready to climb into my upper bunk and drop off to sleep—having gone through a strenuous afternoon . . .

This afternoon, 3 of us borrowed some bicycles and started out for a historic or interesting place that we’d heard of, called the White Hope—about 5 miles away. We didn’t know what was supposed to be there, but we peddled away, uphill and downhill, for some time and finally came to a very high and steep hill. The hill was White Hope Hill. It took us a half hour to push and pull the bikes up the hill and upon gaining the top, couldn’t see a damn thing of interest. We walked down again—the hill was too steep to ride down—and found an Englishman who put us up. It seems that in ancient times, a tribe of people carved out of the white chalk a huge relief of a horse. During the war it was such a good landmark for German bombers that the whole hill had been camouflaged with sod—and that’s why we couldn’t see a thing. It was good exercise, tho, and on the way back, we stopped at a nice little Inn for “tea and crumpets”. The shops, Inns, pubs, etc. in the small towns over here are much the same as in Carmel (*California*)—except with thatched roofs. You’d like traveling through the English countryside . . .

18 Oct 1945 – Thurs. - Shrivenham

This has been an interesting day—good classes and one letter from you in the morning—a good volleyball game and one letter from you in the afternoon. Of course the letters are the important happening in any day . . .

The concert last night was “but good”. Sgt. List (*Eugene List-- known as the “Pianist of the Presidents” or “The Potsdam Pianist”*) is a good-looking kid of around 25 and can really play the piano. Then there was a Pfc about 22, who made pretty music on the violin—the lights went out during his performance and he played for about ½ hr. in the dark.—just filling in. He played a beautiful dreamy melody towards the end of the darkness that almost put the audience in a stupor.—the suddenness of the lights made everyone jump about 2 ft. I wish you could have heard the two of them—you would have liked them . . .

I and a few of the boys are going down to Bournemouth tomorrow for the weekend. It’s supposedly England’s “Palm Beach” (*California*) or “Atlantic City” (*New Jersey*) and at this time of year, a very nice restful place with very few people around. The officers that went down last week said it was a good place for soft beds, good food, and relaxation. That’s for me! I’ll take my books along and study.—really, I’m not kidding you . . .

20 October 1945 - Sat. 3 P. M. - Bournemouth

. . . you’d love Bournemouth—the Carmel, Sea Islands (*Georgia*), Long Beach (*California*) of England. It’s rather a modern resort town of about 100,000 population, placed on a cliff overlooking the ocean. The sun hasn’t been out at all but it’s still quite warm—and with just a little sun would be nice enough for swimming. The cliff is, in places, beautifully landscaped, and has paths winding back and forth, down to the ocean. In the town, they have some nice parks with symphony orchestras playing nice music. The shoppes are attractive and the tea places and bars are comfortable. There are so few Americans around that everyone is glad to see them. The hotel room costs 80 cents a night and meals 50 cents apiece. So you can see it’s a good deal and . . . it’s a lot better than London.

The bathtub is something to behold—black “marble” and as long as me. Before going to bed last night, I filled it up and relaxed—almost going to sleep in it! After getting out I was so relaxed I could hardly make the bed—but I did and slept until 9 this morning. A nice bed! Our beds at the Uni. aren’t exactly what you would call comfortable. They’re a 2’ x 4’ frame with steel straps criss-crossed about every 9”. Like this: (drawing) plus a thin mattress . . .

26 October 1945 – Friday - Shrivenham

Lt. Cruikshank, the psychology professor and I had a very interesting little time this afternoon for a couple of hours. Yes, I took my first I. Q. test. Listen and you shall hear! We started out with

(notes in parentheses/italics entered by C. Ferguson)

questions such as, “where is Egypt?” and ended up with “Who was Faustus?” on the first part of the test. Of course I definitely stopped on the Faustus question, never having heard of the guy. The second part consisted of similarities, such as “what’s the similarity between “orange and apple”, “praise and condemnation”, etc. I don’t know how far I got on that part. Then we went into numbers, such as “repeat after me. 8, 7, 2, 6 and 9, 4, 6, 2, 8, 7, 3”—then I repeated more of the same backwards. Then came a few mathematics. Then picture puzzles, blocks, etc. Well, any hoo—we totaled up my score and behold! . . . (*he did well*) . . .Of course, the test given me had been generally discussed in class, and giving me somewhat of an advantage. Therefore, I’m going to take a different one next week, and that should drop my score somewhat. He said it would probably drop a couple of points . . . it was a lot of fun—and at least I’m not feeble-minded. Now I know! . . .

3 November 1945 - Sat - Bournemouth

Slept until about 0830 in that nice soft bed, bathed in the great big tub and breakfasted on shredded wheat, toast and kippered herring. Then I walked thru town, looking in the windows . . .

There was quite a crowd on the beach—just wading along. Old ladies with their skirts held up, old men with pants rolled up, some girls in short, some girls with their skirts tucked up . . . just wading in the breakers and having a wonderful time.

Walked some more and found interesting art museum along the beach. It’s situated on the cliff overlooking the beach and is the former home of some Lord. It must’ve been a beautiful place with an inspiring view. The woodwork was nice and the walls and ceiling in each room were muraled appropriately. M’lord’s and Lady’s bedroom had cupids, and nudes making love. The dining room had game birds, and horns of plenty. The library had maps and studious figures. The other rooms each had an appropriate motif. And around the house were formal gardens. It would have been a nice place to live . . .

. . . After lunch I noticed two Lt’s. starting out with golf clubs. That seemed like a very good afternoon’s plan, so I invited myself along. One had never played before and the other was about my speed.—slow. We had an interesting afternoon, tho—even if we did make the Englishmen on the course rather unhappy by being so slow. I have no idea what my score was—pretty high, tho.

5 Nov 1945 - Monday - Shrivensham

Another Monday has rolled around and it’s back to the books for another week. We got back around midnights and tumbled into the springless beds.—such a cruel contrast to Bournemouth’s nicer springs.

(notes in parentheses/italics entered by C. Ferguson)

Maybe I should explain the why for of the short note yesterday—a short but simple story. We got up about 10 yesterday morning, had breakfast, and read magazines until lunch. Had lunch, and then went down to the beach where we sat and read the Stars and Stripes. All this time I thought the train was leaving around 2000 hours. I chatted with an old lady and the others went back to the hotel. The lady was about 55-60 and was really nice. Her husband had been killed in the London “Blitz” and their only son had been killed in France. Her sister was living with her now . . . she asked me up for “supper” and I said I was leaving and wouldn’t have time. So—she told me to be sure to call her the next time I was down. About that time, a chauffeur came up and asked her if she was ready to go. She gave me her name and address—and invited me for the full weekend.—and departed. She had some very fine “jools” and a very fine car. If I go down again I’m going to take her up on that food invitation—just to see how the high class English live. It was about 1700 when I got back to the hotel—and as I was leisurely shaving about 1745, the Capt. with me came up and gave me the startling news that we were leaving at 1830 and chow was being served at 1800. From the above story, you can see that I was rushed. That was my day on Sunday.

Bournemouth is really a nice town and that along with the nice hotel makes me think it’s the best place for weekends. Cheap too—the whole weekend doesn’t cost over 4 or 5 dollars. There’s no nite life because everything closes at 10 o’clock.—just a nice, comfortable place to sleep, eat, read magazines, etc. . . .

. . . now I have to go over to the library and do a little research on the General Motors Corporation—big business man that I am.

Did I ever mention shampoo to you? I need some!

10 Nov 1945 – Saturday - London

This has been a typical London day—they say—because of the light rain that has been soaking the pavements. It’s not too bad tho—something like “Frisco”. I intended to go to Cambridge today but got the train schedules fouled up and will spend the rest of the weekend in the big city as a result.

. . . I was a little late to the theater last night—and the only seat I could get as a cancellation in the reserved section for \$2.50. As a result I was surrounded by the “upper crust society” dressed in furs, jewels, tuxes, etc. And old Englishman next to me really liked the music and we got along in a jolly fashion—he and his wife had a sack of sweets that they shared with me and I shared my American cigarettes. The music was really nice, although I didn’t think too much of the acting and the plot.

Tonight I’m going to a play with a Prof from the school. The play is “Duet with Two Hands” or something—maybe it’s “four hands”—and I don’t know whether it’s a comedy or a tragedy.

(notes in parentheses/italics entered by C. Ferguson)

I'd planned on going to a symphony concert tomorrow, but it seems there isn't one this Sunday. Think I'll go back to the school early—and rest. London is too big for a restful weekend. Bournemouth is more my speed!

17 Nov. 1945 - Sat. Evening - Bournemouth

. . . This really has been a lovely day—to be by the fireplace, or in a warm bar drinking a cool beer. The wind has been blowing rather large waves ashore and a few rain squalls have kept things damp. We sat in the Norfolk bar for an hour or drinking beer and talking to the Englishmen—interesting characters! On our way back to the hotel, we passed the Pavilion, the town's civic amusement center that has a concert hall, dance floor, swimming pool, etc. A tea dance was in progress, so we stumbled in to see the affair. For 30 cents you get quite a lot. It's a very nice place with tables and a floor and with your admission you get a table (reserved), tea, crumpets and ice cream. And I now know how a girl at a tag dance feels. A Canadian officer and his girlfriend were at the same table, and while the Lt. went off to see a man about a dog, I started dancing with his girl. I'd taken about 10 steps when something pulled my coat—and there was a little girl, about 14 years old, I'd say. In a dazed condition, I was informed that this was an "All Ladies excused" dance. I'd taken about 10 more steps with my new partner—she couldn't dance—when an elderly lady, about 40 tapped me. From then on, it was horrible—good-looking girls, fat girls, good women, bad women, women who could dance and those who couldn't.

During the war there were thousands of Yanks around, ready, willing, and able to take care of the above mentioned women—and the Yanks had more money and gave them a better time than the native lads. Now, an American is a rarity and a prize—and I being the only American on the floor at the time was the prize. Never again will I venture blindly into such folly! I really wanted and needed you at that time to advise me on how to peacefully say my feet were sore and that I needed to sit down and rest . . .

19 Nov. 1945 – Monday - Shrivenham

. . . SAU seems to be getting publicity—Colliers, etc. Do they think it's a good idea,-- or what?

20 Nov 1945 - Tuesday - Shrivenham

Our volleyball game today was rather a strange one—the fog was so thick that at times one lost the ball. Fun, tho! I've just showered and shaved, and collected two letters and a package from the mailman.

I'd forgotten that I'd asked you for all the items and it was just like Xmas, delving into the affair. Shampoo, lotion, deodorant, pills, and cigarettes. I needed them all except the cigs. And if the ration hadn't been increased to 10 packs a week, they would have come in handy . . .

The Army Thanksgiving comes this Thurs, 22 Nov. for some strange reason and we have the day off. So, I'm going to London tomorrow afternoon to see the supposedly best play in town, "The First Gentleman," in the evening. Then Thurs evening, there's a big American Thanksgiving concert by the London Symphony Orchestra and chorus, with Yehudi Menuhin and Eugene List. They're going to play "Rhapsody in Blue" for one number. Never having heard a symphony, I'm looking forward to it . . .

. . . The (*photo*) negative is one that a Lt. took of me while chatting to a London cabby. It will have to be enlarged quite a bit, to get any detail and I don't know what you'll see then.

I'm running out of chatter—and have a psych paper I have to start working on.

23 Nov 1945 - Fri Aft. - London

Herewith—"My Thanksgiving" or "A Day in London" as I promised this AM. As I said, it was a pleasant day and would have been much more so if we'd shared it together.

. . . (another officer) and I arose about 0900 and had the usual English breakfast of porridge, kippered herring, toast and coffee. Then we started shopping for Xmas presents for you and his gal. The fog and smoke lay along the streets, making it appear as early dusk—a comfortable close feeling. We walked by Yardley's at 33 Old Bond St. and noticed a line of people from the door and bending around a corner. Bond St. Perfume as a gift sounded OK, so we fell in and at the end of 20 minutes reached the door—noticing that the people coming out were carrying but one bar of unwrapped soap. We began to feel foolish but thought maybe the customers just didn't want perfume. 15 more minutes brought us to the counter and the sales lady, who upon hearing our question concerning perfume, looked at us as if we had holes in our heads and then with a resigned look, explained Britain's economic plight and the resulting necessity of exporting all but the bare necessities of life. We slunk out with the Xmas problem still unsolved.

Down Bond St. to Oxford St. we went, finding everything either too expensive or rationed . . . From Oxford St. we went up Regent St., finding nothing for you—and it was now about 2:30 and time for chow. There was a "pub" handy about this stage of the game so we dropped in for a short beer—which they were out of right at this time. The bartender suggested a "Pims" which we accepted and found very good—mint leaves, slice of apple, ginger ale, gin, and a few other things. I think you'd like the drink—I must get the recipe.

The dinner at the Red Cross was good—turkey, ham, cranberries, etc.—and dinner music. All for nothing, too!

(notes in parentheses/italics entered by C. Ferguson)

After dinner we rested for a while, trying to think of something to do and finally took off for the pictures—Jenny Jones, Joe Cotton in “Love Letters”. We got in about 15 minutes after the feature started, sat thru the feature which wasn’t bad, and 4 shorts, waiting to see how the picture started. At 5:30 P.M., the 5th short started and the Concert started at 7. We took off to eat and to the concert. I still wonder how the picture started, but I supposed that I shall never know.

We had cold turkey and ham for supper—again on the house.—and started for the Royal Albert Hall about 6:30 P. M., giving us a half an hour or plenty of time. But everyone else in London seemed to be going someplace at the same time and we had one __ of a time catching a cab. The concert waiting for us before starting—about 7:05.

Royal Albert Hall is a huge circular place with about 5 tiers of balcony or boxes—the whole thing done in light blue and gold. On the platform was a huge Statue of Liberty with the New York and London skylines—the London Symphony in tails, the Grenadier Band in light O. D., (*acronym for uniform color “olive drab”*) the Alexandria Choir in White, the Shrivenham boys in O. D.,-- on the whole a nice appearing group of 3 or 400 people. I enjoyed the whole thing, especially Rhapsody in Blue. Yehudi was fogged in in Germany and couldn’t make it—so the outstanding French woman violinist took his place. She was on the ball—on the ball! Anthony Eden and Ambassador Winant came out in tails and made short speeches. The audience was interesting—formals, tails, Generals- 1, 2, 3 stars, Admirals—just about everything! You would have liked it!

After the concert, we had a beer and caught the train to SAU. Most of the Officers have gone to London for the weekend—I think I’ll stay around and maybe go up to Oxford and Bath on Sunday.—if I have enough ambition . . .

1 Dec. 1945 - Saturday - Edinburgh

. . . We got in this morning about 0700 after riding all night in a 1st class chair car. I slept most of the time, so it wasn’t too bad. By the time we obtained a room, ate breakfast and cleaned up, it was time to go on the inevitable ARC walking tour. An old gentleman with a beautiful Scotch brogue conducted it and led us hither and yon, showing us the main building and the homes of Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott, etc. We climbed up to Edinburgh Castle which is a typical medieval castle with moats, thick walls, gun ports, spires, etc. The Crown and Jewels of Scotland were there—wonderful things to behold—lots of “ice”! We saw the room in which Mary, Queen of Scots, conceived and later gave birth to a later King of England—can’t remember his name.

We’ve been intending to take a bus trip around the city but at 3pm it’s getting dark fast. The sun at high noon is only about 30 degrees above the horizon. It’s so far north that they only get about 8 hours a day—light now—much less around 21 Dec. The educated Scotch talk much the same as the English—but the other half are pretty hard to understand.

(notes in parentheses/italics entered by C. Ferguson)

The boys want to talk down the main drag and see the stores and people. So I'll finished this and troop along with them.

3 Dec. 1945 - Monday Evening - Shrivenham

This has been a lovely day . . . The sun has shone brightly and yet the temperature has remained crisp. The English weather hasn't been at all bad during the school term and of course everyone says it has been an "extraordinary" year so far.—I love to hear the English say "extraordinary"—they sound as if the discussed subject it beyond the realm of possibility and yet—the thing has happened! "How extraordinary!"

. . . I didn't tell you too much about Scotland, mostly because I saw very little—but what I did see pleased me. Edinburgh is built in a hilly country and the main street and the park run along the valley. From Princess St. you look across the small valley and see silhouetted against the sky, the spires, and castle turrets of the ancient government buildings. When the backdrop for these buildings is a clouded sky with a red setting sun breaking there, you have a beautiful and satisfying scene.

The people are all very friendly—and love to chat with the "Yanks" about anything and everything. Saturday nite, we toured the bars and people of all ages would come up and ask us how we liked Edinburgh, and try to buy us beer. There didn't seem to be a drink of Scotch whiskey anyplace—the same story" "it's all sent to America". Anyhoo, I like Scotland, ye bonnie lassie.

Tomorrow is our last day of classes and commencement is Wednesday. We leave for Reims early Sat. Morning. I'm going to London Thursday to try to pick up a Rolls Razor—supposedly the bestest of best razors . . .

5 Dec. 1945 - Wednesday - Shrivenham

Today was commencement and the only passable part of the exercises was the weather—it was beautiful. The 3800 graduates were formed on the parade ground facing the speaker's platform—the band played and the celebrities filed onto the platform. The public address system failed during the benediction and of course no one could hear a word after that. The main speaker orated for 25 minutes, unheard except for the first few ranks. The other 3600 passed the time by watching airplanes fly over, occasionally applauding for no reason whatsoever, and with the usual GI humor, inflating "gadgets" like dirigibles and releasing them so they floated over the speakers stand. A grand time was had by all!

I passed my courses, getting "Superior" in Psych and Business Finance, and "Excellent" in Insurance. And that finishes SAU. Everyone is packing and preparing to cross the channel. I think that I'm still leaving Sat. but things are rather confused at the present time.

(notes in parentheses/italics entered by C. Ferguson)

Most of the boys slept late this morning—I and a few others arose early and had breakfast. There hasn't been much to do afterwards, the day looking promising, so I started for a morning stroll around the post and the surrounding area. I'm continuously amazed at the greenness of England's grass at this time of year—the leafy trees are bare but with the evergreens and hedges, the country looks as if it were early fall at home.

The little footpaths winding over the fields, along the hedges, and thru the trees are pleasant trails—conducive to meditation, memories, thoughts of we two and our future. You feel as if the huge, onrushing, inevitable stream of history that rushes one along continuously has slowed to your pace in order to give you time for thought. And so during my walks, I could see an especially nice view, stop, think, and almost feel you beside me, sharing those same thoughts. Thoughts of love and beauty and—well—just we two.

All my love,
Norm



Capt. Norman O. Gunderson



Talking to a London Cabbie in 1945



Premises known as 'Swiss Cottage' near Shrivenham



Norman Gunderson by Beckett House



Beckett House in 1945



Norman Gunderson & Leimkuhler in Edinburgh



The military buildings at Shrivenham where the SAU was located



Southampton Harbour in 1945