American Letters and Diary Entries, World War One, 1917-1919

"No complete story of America's part in the war will ever be written until somebody has made a collection and read thousands of the letters home." The newspaperman, Heyward Broun, made this observation in his book, The ***AEF*** (1918).

The United States of America entered World War One on the Allied side officially on April 6, 1917. The first contingents of army and Marine Units reached France in late June 1917, although the U.S. Navy had been involved in convoy duty in the Atlantic for some time. By December 1, 1917, parts of four divisions were in France. At war's end on the Western Front, November 11, 1918, over two million men were in the American Expeditionary Forces and of those, 1,390,000 saw front line service.

Other Americans, men and women, took part in the war overseas with field hospitals, the Army and Navy Nurse Corps, support organizations such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Y.M.C.A. and the American Ambulance Service among many others.

Their letters, diaries, journals, sketches, and poetry do not give the whole history of the war. They do, however, dramatically illustrate its human side.

In the small booklet, Management of the American Soldier, presented to new officers in the U.S. Army in 1917, the officer was instructed to urge soldiers under their care to write home to their relatives.

General Orders, No. 66, from the General Headquarters, A.E.F., dated May I, 1918 stated that
Duty to one's country does not end on the parade ground, nor even on the battlefield, but consists of doing everything in ones' power to help win the war. To write home frequently and regularly, to keep in constant touch with family and friends, is one of the soldier's most important duties. Mothers and fathers will suffer if they do not hear often from sons fighting in France. In the present large companies, it is not possible for officers to write letters for their men, and every man must do it for himself.

Most needed no such encouragement. To the vast majority of the soldiers, Marines, sailors, Coast Guardsmen, volunteer ambulance drivers, nurses and Red Cross workers, the war experience and the travel during World War One was a high point of their lives and they wanted (or needed) to share it with the folks at home.

All forms of communication from military and other personnel were subject to censorship. Officers censored their men's letters, while officers were expected to censor their own missives.

The necessity of and the methods of censorship within theaters of operation were specifically stated in the United States Infantry Guide (1917). Article VIII, Section 420 related that:
Censorship includes (1) censorship over private communications and (2) censorship over press publications and communications. All private communications (post cards, letters, parcels, telegrams, etc.) of officers, soldiers, foreign attaches, newspaper correspondents, and all other individuals, dispatched from the theater of operations are liable to censorship and to such delay in transmission as may be deemed necessary by the military authorities. A censor is authorized to suppress any statement which might be of value to the enemy or prejudicial to the welfare of the forces in the field.

In an effort of self-censorship, a small printed card was given to members of the American Expeditionary Forces regarding writing letters, censorship and the dangers of "talking too much." In reference to writing letters or postcards, the soldier had to

In an effort of self-censorship, a small printed card was given to members of the American Expeditionary Forces regarding writing letters, censorship and the dangers of "talking too much." In reference to writing letters or postcards, the soldier had to remember "that the enemy and his agents are always on alert to gather information."

In spite of all the rules and regulations, an astonishing number of letters were written and received during the United States' involvement in the war. Just the transportation of the letters back and forth on the ocean took incredible amounts of ship space. One soldier, on one hand lamented not getting any mail, but on the other related he would rather have the ammunition.

In this publication, diary entries are used in appropriate instances to fill out the picture presented. Because of the official and self-imposed censorship, the letters home could not always contain much of the information and description that diaries could, even though the diaries were also supposed to have been censored.

The letters and diary entries are arranged in chronological order from April 1917 to June 1919, except in the Training Camps section, which covers much of the period.

Editing consisted primarily of deleting most salutations, questions about everyday activities and relatives at home, comments about letters received and weather reports. Repeated spelling errors were corrected, although certain spellings were left as illustrative of the personality, like "thru" and "tho."

The letters and diary entries in this publication are all preserved in the archival collection of the Liberty Memorial Museum of World War One in Kansas City, Missouri. The accompanying photographs and illustrated objects are in the museum as well. The Liberty Memorial Association, a not-for-profit organization founded in 1919 to honor those who served in the war and to build the Liberty Memorial, owns the museum collections.

TO WAR!

William Shoemaker, later Corporal, Co. A, 168th Infantry, 42nd Division, A.E.F.
Other letters by Shoemaker follow.

Winterset, Iowa
April 5, 1917

How is everything up there? All talking war I suppose. Was in town today & saw recruiting posters every place. Today's paper says they will draft 1,000,000 men immediately, between ages of 18 & 23, taking those unmarried & with no one depending on them.

The talk now is that they will inspect all between those ages and take the ones best-fitted physically. So I suppose it's a soldier's life for me. I am the only one of the family they could take, the rest are married or too young. Folks take it pretty hard but of course have been expecting it [war] more or less.

I wouldn't mind 6 months or so of training. I think it would be good for a fellow, but I don't like the idea of being forced into it for a term of years unless we're certain of fighting.

Well, this is enough talk of war for now. Write soon.

Former President Theodore Roosevelt

To Mr. George Lewis
3743 Main Street
Kansas City, Missouri

3743 Main Street
Kansas City, Missouri

My Dear Young Friend:
That's a very nice letter of yours, and a very nice picture, and I am proud of you as a boy scout. What you must do is to grow up into the kind of man that I know you will be, and leave us older fellows to fight in this war.

Faithfully yours,
Theodore Roosevelt
423 Fourth Avenue
New York.

IN TRAINING

Private Frank Courtney Lane, Co. B, 110th Engineers, 35th Division, enlisted July 9, 1917. Lane wrote home to his girlfriend (later wife) Miss Anna Drury, who transcribed his letters and diary entries into a scrapbook. Miss Drury often removed the obvious salutations and endearments in her transcriptions; more letters and entries from Lane follow.

September [no day] 1917

Yesterday was Gala Day in Lawton [Oklahoma] for the soldiers and I played football with the regimental team. We defeated the 14th Regular Artillery 8 to 0. I played my old position of right halfback and played with some real players, one All American from Michigan. There are a great many Atchison boys at the camp and we all welcome each other like long lost brothers.

We had bayonet drill for the first time this morning and it was very interesting. I don't imagine though that it would be quite so nice when you are cutting up another fellow while he is trying to do the same thing to you.

We had a regular practice war this morning. We crawled and wiggled for half a mile through sage brush and hot dust. I won't mind fighting but if they don't have cool weather down here pretty soon, I am going to turn in my suit.

John W. Jones, U.S. Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois; other letters from Seaman Jones follow.

Sept. 12, 1917
Dear Mother:

We moved our camp to Detention Camp Paul Jones which is about 1 1/2 miles from the first camp. We had to walk and carry our bedding and clothes. We received part of our clothing yesterday. We got 1 blue suit, 2 white suits, 4 suits summer underwear, 2 suits winter underwear, 12 pair socks, 12 handkerchiefs, 1 pair shoes, 1 pair leggins [sic], 1 kerchief, 2 white hats, 1 jersey, 1 watch cap, 1 parade cap, writing paper, pens, pen points, pencil, 1 sewing bag, clothes bag, soap bag. That was all we got yesterday. We have more to come yet.

Just got back from signing paycheck. Will get our pay in about a week. We get $10 every two weeks. They hold back part of our pay. We get the back pay at the end of our training. I like the life fine and everyone says it will be better when we get out of detention....

William Shoemaker, Co. A, 168th Infantry, 42nd Division.

Sunday 23 [September ?] 1917

William Shoemaker, Co. A, 168th Infantry, 42nd Division.

Sunday 23 [September ?] 1917
Camp Mills
Dear Brother:

I received your letter a few moments ago. I saw the officers about your enlisting here. They have vacancies but I don't know whether they can take a recruit or not. Will have to have special permission from the colonel.

We might leave for France this week. No one knows, but they are betting ten to one on Wall Street that we'll never see France, that the war will be over in six months. If you enlist now you might have to serve for no purpose. You are needed on the farm. The training is hard but the German fighting men will have nothing on the U.S.A. when they are thru training.

No doubt but what it is good for a fellow in every way and I like it. But if the war ends you are not needed & if it don't [sic] you will get a chance to serve in a year or so & if it does end there is no doubt in anyone's mind but what universal military training will be adopted by our nation & you will get a chance at some military training. But we may be here sometime yet according to some opinions.

You needn't think because you stand back that you are neglecting duty, because we need men your age on the farm. And take my advice, if I were you I would stay out one year at least. If they still need men there's time enough then. But if you still want to enlist I will know in a day or two whether you can enlist here or not.

The Rainbow [42nd] Division passed in review before the Sec'y of War Baker this morning. I think there was about 40,000 men in the column. We were about the first. It took several hours to pass.

Direct my letters to the same place. We may be here sometime & we may leave tomorrow. Take plenty of time to decide. Your time is not wasted there at home.
Yours as ever, Bill.

P.S. If you do enlist sometime later, I'd advise you to enlist in some branch like the artillery or machine-guns or engineers.

Sergeant Otto Stiehl, Medical Detachment, Battery F., 327th Field Artillery; another letter from Stiehl follows.

Camp Taylor [Kentucky]
October 4, 1917
Dear Sis [Ida Stiehl, Mt. Olive, Illinois]

I know you will be anxious to hear from camp and [I] will try and tell you about it. First of all, we landed in here Thurs. morning about nine a.m. and just a little tired of our trip but the whole bunch seemed satisfied and content. We were then taken over and assigned to Battery, 327 Field Artillery and introduced to our new home.

They use all steel couches [bed frames] and give you a bed ticking and start you our to fill it with feathers - better than straw and furnish blankets. After a few more instructions we were all ready for dinner, which consisted of fish, potatoes, peas, kraut, coffee and bread. We go plenty of it and it is quite wholesome but not fancy. We have our own meal kits consisting of two plates, cup, knife, fork & spoon and have to take care of it ourselves.

Yesterday afternoon we all went to the hospital and got a couple of injections, better known here as shots in the arm, but they did not affect me.

We were all measured up for suits, hats, shoes and overcoat yesterday afternoon and today have taken our first lessons in drilling, which is very interesting as Smith Fletcher

We were all measured up for suits, hats, shoes and overcoat yesterday afternoon and today have taken our first lessons in drilling, which is very interesting as Smith Fletcher has charge of our company. The crowd is going over to the Y.M.C.A. this evening and expect to put in the evening there as they are getting the musicians lined up to take along.

Have been rather enjoying the time here for it is so much of a change from what a person is used to. Will write again in a few days and tell the folks that I am first rate and with regards to all, I am

Your brother, Candy

P.S. Excuse writing as we do not have anything like desks and have to make the best of what we have.
*****
Sunday Evening
February 3rd, 1918
Dear Sis:

Just got back from Louisville a short time ago and trying to answer a few letters this evening. We went up for services this morning and decided to stay for a band concert to be given at the soldier's club by the 353rd Infantry band. They have the reputation of being the best in camp and must say that they concert was certainly fine. We miss our band very much for when the weather was good they would come out every morning and play on the Guard Mount, on the drill field and we can always watch them from our office.

I had my first experience to attend a Court Marshall [sic] trial the other day and had to go as a witness. One of the boys of our detachment took "French Leave" or rather, deserted and they caught him about 8 days later chasing around in Louisville. He was naturally just a little cracked so they tried him and had him examined by a special board who found that he was mentally disfit for the army. They sentenced him to about 15 days in the guard house and then he is to be discharged.

Private First Class John J. Bolin, 137th Infantry, 35th Division.

February 25, 1918
Camp Doniphan, Fort Sill, Oklahoma
G. Company, 137th U.S. Infantry

Rec'd you letter a day or so ago, but could not find time to write till now. As the wind is blowing this sand down here till a person can't see his hand in front of him, why, we get to stay in our tents and therefore I find time to answer your letters.

Well, this morning we had a big review in front of our colonel and Gov. Capper (I wish you could have been here to see it). We came into our company street and Capper came along in front of us; he passed a comment on us and to the Col. as our Co. (G. -250 men) was better equipped, better drilled, in better shape and looked 10 per cent better than any other Co. in the Regiment (12 Co. in a Reg.). Tomorrow we are inspected by Major General Wright commanding officer of the 35th Division to determine for himself if we are ready for active overseas service.

I just went up before the Captain a minute ago for a First Class Private's examination and passed and will now get 3 dollars more a month and also a pair of cross arm (or cross rifles) to sew on my shirtsleeves. A First Class Private is supposed to know as much as a corporal and if a corporal gets killed, he takes his place and if he shows up real good or as we say "hits the ball" he will be made a corporal (which is a fellow drawing 6 dollars more that a private a 3 more than a 1st Class Pvt. He has charge of a squad or 7 men.

squad or 7 men.

Private John Lewis Barkley, Co. K., 4th Infantry, 3rd Division; more letters from Barkley follow.

March 4, 1918
Camp Stuart, Newport News, Co. K., 4th U.S. Inft., Virginia

I am now in the U.S. regulars upon the Chepeak [sic] Bay. Am right upon the bay and can look out the window upon the sea. You can see big ocean steamers laying out in the harbor, some going and some coming. We sure had some trip coming out here. We came through ten states - Kansas, Mo., Arkansas, Tennessee, Ky., Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina and to the coast in Virginia. The reason we did this was to keep German agents from knowing where we were going.

This sure is going to be some trip if we live over it. Lots of the boys are dreading the ocean. We had a patrol engine with us all of the time coming our here. It was a switch engine, tender and one car. It ran ten minutes ahead of us all the time. They were looking for a bridge to be blown up any time.

March 12, 1918

There is a fleet of 43 battle ships here today. More than usual. There must be something stirring in the harbor someplace. There was a sub-marine saw [sic] about 100 miles out of the bay the other day. The other day a transport came in and 1100 New Zealanders stopped off for exercise. They were on their way to the trenches.

I have my full pack now and am ready to leave any time they say the word.

Corporal Frank Courtney Lane, Co. B., 110th Engineers, 35th Division.

Written from Camp Merritt, New Jersey
April 28, 1918

We left old Camp Doniphan at eleven thirty last Tuesday morning. Our platoon was very lucky in as much as we received a Standard Pullman to do our bunk fatigue in. It was a pleasant sight to see old Camp Doniphan slowly disappearing in the west. Yet we all wondered if it wouldn't seem a palace some day when we were in barren France.

Our first stop was at Shawnee [Oklahoma]. The Red Cross met us at Shawnee with reading material and lots of pretty girls. Oh! Oh! I was good though. We certainly devoured the magazines they presented us with and turned them over to the farmers along the route.

The second night we hit Memphis about six o'clock. We paraded there and let me say that they certainly are a loyal bunch. Everybody cheered and seemed to go wild. Next morning we ran into one of the most patriotic little towns in the old U.S.A., Bowling Green, Kentucky. The people of the town were all out to meet us and we put on a little extra for them in the way of drill and formations. We had enough cigarettes to last all the way east and some of the men will have enough chewing tobacco to last an ordinary man a lifetime....

Private (later Corporal) Walter E. Bullard, Co. D., 29th Engineers; other letters from Bullard follow.

Washington Barracks, D.C.
May 18, 1918

We were assigned to quarters last night, mine being the last one to go into the frame barracks, all after me were put under canvas. They sure give you a lot of advice as you

We were assigned to quarters last night, mine being the last one to go into the frame barracks, all after me were put under canvas. They sure give you a lot of advice as you go by, but we'll do the same after we are here awhile, I suppose. They all do it in a spirit of fun and they all seem to be a fine bunch.

There are a bunch of men here and lots come in everyday. They all seem to be men with trades and we are the fellows that will see the action. I hope so anyhow.

They had a searchlight practice last night and it sure was pretty, about a dozen searching the sky at one time. Looked just like pictures you see from the front. Expect to get examined today then my uniform. Got tick, two blankets and cot last night and mess kit. Mess kit consists of cup, meat pan and dessert dish, knife, fork and spoon.

The Red Cross gave us a package at Chestnut Hill with cigarettes, sandwiches, cakes, post card and chewing gum.

It is sure nice here and I like it the longer I am here. We have had no work yet except a little detail work I was put at by the Captain. The feed is O.K. tho sometimes I could eat more than I get but if any [is] left there is a chance for seconds. It is not in the form some are used to. That is it is all in the pan together but what is the difference it's that way later anyhow.

I am anxious to get thru the exam, get my uniform and get to work. They give your three shots of serum in as many weeks. The dentist is the only man I am afraid of but what will that amount to after it is over.

Well, I'll have to close this time but will write again when I get a chance.

Captain Clarence J. Minick, 361st Infantry, 91st Division; more diary entries from Captain Minick follow.

Diary entry - 23 June 1918.
Today is the "Day" of all "Days" one I have looked forward to for many long months. I have two feelings towards this Day - one a happy feeling - while the other is opposite.

"Happy" because today is the day we start for the "other side" known to us as "Over There." To help the Allies down an inhuman foe so the world will be safe for our families and to posterity.

"Sorry" because I am leaving behind a little girl who is broken hearted but who is brave as can be and long will I remember the words she said to me this morning when we parted (at 524 S. J Street, Tacoma, Wash.) "Some day I know you will return."

We left camp Lewis, American Lake, Wash. at 2:30 p.m. for Camp Merritt, New Jersey over the Northern Pacific.

Diary entry - July 6th, 1918
At 11:15 a.m. we start for "Over There." There are fourteen ships in our convoy, including the Cruiser COLORADO. The big Empress of Russia is one of our ships. We have a few (3) torpedo destroyers and an aeroplane along as guards. This is a beautiful sight, but rather exciting to think that as large a convoy as this will ever get across without a Hun sub getting at us. Here's hoping of course they don't.

OVER THERE

Private Walter G. Shaw, 18th Infantry Band, 1st Division; see also the letter of January 1919 from Chaplain King, 18th Infantry.

Hoboken, N.J.
6/19/17

Hoboken, N.J.
6/19/17
Dear Ma:-

Arrived here O.K. expect to leave tonight on the FINLAND. I am just fine hope I will get through O.K. Will trust to luck if it is my time it will come if not I will come back.

Pershing is already there. I will be in his Division. I guess there are some troops already gone. I guess the subs will watch for us. We have 3300 in our Reg., full war strength. I have a .45 automatic pistol, all the arms I have.

I hate the trip over more than anything else. I guess we will get sick. I can say I didn't have to be drafted if I come back, a whole lot will have to go that don't want to. The people are much more patriotic in the east than the west. The girls are just crazy about the soldiers wherever we got off the train they just simply grabbed us around the neck....

Your loving son, Walter.

James Edward Henschel, "TM 537 Convois Auto" later TMU 133 and then with the U.S. Motor Transport Corps, Reserve Mallet, A.E.F.; more letters from Henschel follow.

A Bord de Rochambeau
2 de July 1917.

You know our date of sailing from my last letter from New York. For a number of days the sea remained as calm and level as a billiard table. The first two or three days we sighted quite a number of ships, freighters mostly, with one passenger and one Belgian Relief ship. The last two days we have seen none at all.

The passenger list is composed of about 200 of us, some Red cross people, twenty five men in Y.M.C.A. work, five or six millionaires and -esses, and a few ordinary Americans, and the rest are French men and women. There are a few children. The crew is entirely French; only a few speak English at all. The "garcon" at my table knows "Charley Chaplain" (we christened him Chas. the first day out) and no more...

There is a rumor afloat as to picking up a convoy today or tomorrow. That would please all of us. We have been given explicit instructions as to conduct in case the ship is to be abandoned. It gets rather morbid after a while, although I suppose it is quite necessary. Each person has a place assigned to him in a certain boat (mine is number 9). He is given a sort of ticket entitling him to that seat. I have been a little curious to know what would happen in case he lost the ticket....
*****
Somewhere in France
July 8th, 1917
Dear Folks:

Our reception in Bordeaux was quite gratifying; it please us very much. Whenever one sees a French flag one sees an American flag. It seems fine and makes one feel good.

The French spirit is wonderful. You people at home cannot appreciate it. The patience and determination, the quiet, uncomplaining, enduring of sacrifices is beautiful, and really as wonderful as it is beautiful. One meets the "Poilu" or private, who is home on leave, or permanently because of wounds and he never complains or grumbles. It is a case of life or death with them. Winning the war is more than a duty; it is a sacred obligation, the fulfillment of a prayer, while with us Americans at home, it is taken as more or less as a part of the day's work.

If only the Americans back home could "get" the spirit that the French have, why with all of the tremendous resources and abilities that our country has, the war would be a different proposition. The Frenchman has given everything he has for three long years

If only the Americans back home could “get” the spirit that the French have, why with all of the tremendous resources and abilities that our country has, the war would be a different proposition. The Frenchman has given everything he has for three long years and is still hopeful and smiling. We in America don’t know the meaning of sacrifice. Just wait a few months; America will know then as well. The appreciation of France for the presence of American troops cannot be overestimated. If you at home could know that even as we who have been here less than a week do, it would make your hearts good.

We are now at a training camp for transport munition drivers [TMD] at [censored]. We are near the front and can hear very plainly the heavy guns. Airplanes fly overhead at times in the day and night. Wherever we go, there are German prisoners, working on docks, or roads, or farms - wherever possible, to relieve Frenchmen for other military service (I say other because there is no service in France now except military service).

Our work will consist of driving transports, big 5 ton Pierce Arrow trucks. It will be either more or less dangerous than the Ambulance Service; that does not matter. The important thing is that France needs right now munitions transport drivers more than she does ambulance drivers, and that is why we came, or why I came at any rate - to do the most possible good wherever I am most wanted. I think that is the spirit of all in the American Field Service.

I want to explain that fully so that the ladies who were good enough to pay my expenses would understand just how and why I am driving a truck instead of an ambulance. Our status is exactly the same in one branch of the Field Service as in the other - with this single difference - that whereas the ambulances are assigned to divisions of the French Army and are busy when the particular divisions are busy and idle when they are idle, the transport sections go wherever the fighting is. Wherever the offensive is [most] severe will be found sections of the transport-munitions...

I found out by reading a French newspaper that the French Poliu [“Hairy One”] and the British Tommy had been joined by the American Teddy, which shows that “Teddy” [Theodore Roosevelt] is pretty well known and thought of here.
*****
“Near the Front”
July 25, 1917

I am pretty well tired out. Our work driving these big trucks full of anything the army in this sector may need, from lumber and barbed wire to high explosive shells. Almost all of our trips are at night without lights over horrible roads...

The big guns keep banging away night and day, but today they have quieted up a little. Last night we took thousands of 75’s [75 mm. shells] somewhere, so in a few days I suppose we shall hear a French offensive. The Poilus we see say that the fighting has been worse here than at any other place heretofore. One hears terrible tales and the small trench knives all of the soldiers carry seem to bear them out. The one big impression that proximity to the fighting has given me is one of horror - gas and liquid fire - and the terrible ways of using them are just a part. It’s everybody and both sides. Very few prisoners are taken now by anyone. Those who started the ball rolling have a terrible score to answer to.

We have been united with the Princeton unit to make T.M.U 133. They are a mighty nice outfit of boys and we get along together splendidly. And, by the way, that is our new address.
J.E.H.
T.M.U. 133, Convoise Automobiles
Par B.C.M., Paris, France.
*****
October 1, 1917
... This big war machine never ceases to amaze me. It is always new, always changing, and always wonderful, but the thing that impresses itself on me is the fact that it is so stupendous and yet moves along as smoothly as it does. We will leave on a convoy at one o’clock perhaps to start on a trip that will last all night. We arrive at the first loading park in an hour or so and find a hundred other camions [trucks] - all loading with different

stupendous and yet moves along as smoothly as it does. We will leave on a convoy at one o'clock perhaps to start on a trip that will last all night. We arrive at the first loading park in an hour or so and find a hundred other camions [trucks] - all loading with different materials - perhaps no two convoys intended for the same destination.

[One] of the fellows put it [that the shells] look like nail kegs. From the monstrous affairs to the diminutive but very destructive "thirty sevens" and trench mortars, there is a vast range of other guns, but the chief thing is the number of them. Everywhere that we go we see guns - little guns - big guns - but guns and more guns and all moving front-ward a little closer from day to day.

Ruth Emory, American Red Cross, Chief Clerk, Paris Bureau, Department of Military Affairs.

[January 1918]
A Bord de "Espagne"
Friday a.m.
Dear Family -

You'll have to excuse this writing as we are rolling around terribly and have been for three days - it's all we can do to sit in the chairs and I'm sure they'll come unscrewed and fly across the room...

The Serbian mission is on board going home, about eight of them, I think. Their uniforms are wonderful and they're covered with medals - one has only one arm. Elsie Janis is here, going over to entertain the soldiers in the camps and hospitals. When we had our first boat drill on Monday we had to go to our rooms for our life belts, put them on, and go to our assigned places on deck where there was a roll call for each boat.

The war is very evident here in every way - the people are very quiet and serious and everyone going for a purpose - the food is very simple and we're rationed in bread and sugar - of course there's no music and no gaiety of any kind and at eight there is no light at all in the companion ways and in the salons it is very dim and every porthole is covered. There's a gunner at both guns all the time, fussing with it, bringing up shell, etc....
*****
Tuesday, March 12th, '18

You'll be surprised to know that I'm writing this at eight a.m. on a Sunday morning, fully dressed and had my breakfast! We have had one alarm after another. There was one Friday night but the Germans were driven back before reaching Paris and they only succeeded in bombing the outskirts. Then yesterday a.m. I woke up at the sound of explosions, went to the office, and about 9:30 the alert was sounded again - of course everyone thought it was a daylight raid and we worked all day long with explosions every once and awhile - that is the Americans did! The poor French tore to the cellar and subway and stayed there all day. It wasn't until five in the afternoon that the signal was given "all clear" and we learned that it wasn't an air raid, but the Germans were shelling Paris with a new gun [the so-called "Paris" gun] that carries a hundred miles! I suppose you have read all about it by now....

Private Willard Thompson, 101st Infantry, 26th Division, A.E.F.; more diary entries follow.

Diary entry, May 31, 1918

We hiked through Beaumont down to Seicheprey. Remember the battle of Seicheprey where we sat down to rest. We sat there from 12 to 1:30 a.m. Then we moved forward across the fields to our advance lines. We got out in front of them at 2:00 and had plenty of time to think it over. At 2:25 we had a hold of our explosives and were waiting the hour. At 2:29 I turned around and took a look at the moon and the beautiful starry sky which in a moment would be lit up with the flash of the now-silent guns.

of time to think it over. At 2:25 we had a hold of our explosives and were waiting the hour. At 2:29 I turned around and took a look at the moon and the beautiful starry sky which in a moment would be lit up with the flash of the now-silent guns.

I had hardly turned around, when Crack! the Boche [nickname for the Germans] got a reception never before equaled. 2:32 we were in "No Man's Lands." 2:35 we were blowing up the first wire. Our first explosives were no good so we had to use a second one. 2:37 we were in the front line trench, we met no opposition and kept on going. At the second line we bumped off a few dirty Huns. Here Bill Traften and Leslie got theirs.

2:47 we were in the third line and the dugouts. Turk Whalen and I brought a machine gun to our first line, where, when none of our company could help us, we gave it to K. Co[mpany]. The reason we left it was because we were so choked with gas we could hardly move ourselves. It was all over at 3:00 but on the way back Jim McGrath and Ricker Shay got theirs - a piece of shrapnel hit their bomb bags and exploded all their bombs.

[The incident of Thompson and Whalen turning over the captured German machine gun was recorded also by Captain James T. Duane in his book, Dear Old "K" 101st Infantry, 1922].

Private Dean Robertson, 79th Co., 6th Regiment, U.S. Marine Corps, 2nd Division, A.E.F.; more letters and diary entries from Robertson follow.

June 11, 1918
My dear Folks:

It has been some time since I wrote you last but I have moved again. We hiked several miles in the night to the train. Slept in an empty "Y" till daylight - just as we were - no blankets or overcoats and believe me the nights are plenty cool here. We made quite a jump. We are in the field - not in the trenches. You must have read of what the Americans are doing and of the open fighting. This is quite different from trench warfare. Of course there are hastily dug pits, etc. in the front line but no system. I believe it must be something like Civil War campaigning.

We move at night and lay in woods by day. As soon as we make a hike and have a new location we dig in. Small holes & dugouts for protection from shells. We use everything to dig in with. Our kitchen generally follows us and we eat when we can. Supper is usually about 11 p.m. Other meals we have canned beef & French war bread & sugar. All we want. Shell fire isn't bad unless there is a heavy barrage near you. Then everybody hunts a hole. But for all the shells fired lots of them do no damage.

We keep out of sight of airplanes. That is how they get their range. We haven't been over the top but I have been under fire in the front line. Of course there are casualties but the general per cent is low and the most part are wounded and 90% of the wounded get well. So my dear folks don't worry about me. I am now in [an] actual position to do my bit and I believe I am coming back thru this O.K. I may be wounded but I think I'm coming back.

Nearly everyone is a fatalist here. It is hard to dodge a shell and when your time comes it's going to get you. I am ready for this and haven't been afraid yet. I believe every man is frightened at first but he gets over it if he isn't a coward and they are few in the Marines. I am with old timers - a fine bunch.

I have turned in everything extra I had. I carry everything I want on my back. Half of our load consists of 3 days rations (emergency) and [censored section]. The Marines have sure done their part and I am proud to belong....
*****
June 18, 1918

I am alive and well. I hope you are all the same. I have had no chance to write before. I have been at the front twice and consider myself very fortunate to be here O.K. Not only

I am alive and well. I hope you are all the same. I have had no chance to write before. I have been at the front twice and consider myself very fortunate to be here O.K. Not only that I was not killed but also neither wounded or gassed. You see the biggest part of casualties are wounded or gassed, lots of them only slightly....
*****
Diary entry, Thursday June 18

Left 8 a.m. Hiked till 1 p.m. Got grub on the way - white bread, sugar, beef, etc. We are in a big drive. Roads are blocked with infantry, artillery supplies, etc. Wounded coming back & lots of Hun prisoners. We are on ground just taken from Germans.

Diary entry, Fri. June 19.

We got up at dawn & stood by. Told we are going to attack at 7. We hiked a mile or so thru a town where we left our [blanket] rolls. Lined up on a hill beyond the town in 4 waves - behind French tanks. Were fired on even there. Finally started out slowly. Tanks couldn't make much time.

Went thru beet & wheat fields towards line of hills (wooded hills where Heinie was). As we got closer the machine gun bullets flew like hail & then artillery got our range & opened up. Our fellows commenced to wilt & fall.

A shell lit among 4 men about 20 ft. ahead of me. Two got up, 2 never did. What were [sic] left of us got up to Heinie's front line, which he had left to go to his 2nd along the woods. Tanks got this far & stopped so we had to stop. Fooled around for several minutes, bullets flying like hail. Finally tanks started to retreat so we went back to the front line of shallow trenches.

We had several wounded there too. All but 3 managed to walk in. These laid out in the hot sun all day & till 11 p.m. when they finally got in. We stayed too, of course. Were shelled often & shot at by machine guns. There is [sic] about 400 yds. between lines here.
*****
June 21, 1918, I guess
My dear Folks:

...the Marines have done wonderful fighting here. They stopped the Huns & started to drive them back. They recaptured a town held by the Germans - the 5th Prussian Guards who had never been beaten till now. However most of the credit [in the newspapers] is given to "Americans" not "the Marines."

The Huns were on 3 sides & fired on us continually. It was 2 days of Hell. When people tell you what their boys went thru you can tell 'em that little Willie went thru as heavy shelling and artillery fire as most any battle in this war. There were any number of miraculous escapes.

It was heavy woods - mostly 2nd growth but every day it got more bare - limbs, etc. being shot away. Ground was filled with shell holes & dugouts. Dead bodies all around. All kinds of equipment - German & American - scattered all over. You are lucky to eat. What you eat is iron rations. Sometimes they get grub & coffee up to you. Water was awful scarce. One canteen full in two days. I know what real thirst is....

1st Lieutenant Harry M. Vale, Truck Unit 150, Quartermaster Corps, U.S. Army Ambulance Service with the Italian Army.

June 1918
Dearest Girl,

We are off. We are moving slowly down the harbor, no one is allowed to leave his room until we get outside....

We are off. We are moving slowly down the harbor, no one is allowed to leave his room until we get outside....

Monday June 17

Excellent weather. No idea where we are but expect to stop at [censored] for coal then on to [censored]. My men are well except one or two are very sick. The sea was a little rough yesterday but few are seasick.

We have drills, classes and lectures daily and each officer is on guard duty for 6 hours every thirty hours so the time goes rapidly!

We are to be allowed to mail our letters at [censored] so every one is busy writing. Each officer censors his organization and his own letters so what you find obliterated will be done by myself.

The life on board is great. No one worries and there is no indication that there might be danger except the careful watch for subs.
The officers and crew speak only Italian and we have a great time making ourselves understood. They are all anxious to help us. The food is excellent on board but will probably not be the same when we land as so many things are hard to get over there....

Captain Clarence J. Minick, 361st Infantry, 91st Division, A.E.F.

Diary entry
June 18th, 1918, Thursday

This morning we unloaded off the Scotian at 7:15 a.m. and marched about 1/2 mile to station and was loaded on box cars and left Glascow at 8:40 a.m. via North British Railroad Company. We arrived in Southampton, England at 10:30 p.m. (18th). We came through Carlisle, England.

This is our first trip in the French style (soldat) of traveling in French cars (Chevaux 8 - Hommes 40). From Southampton (where we detrained) we hiked to what is called a “camp.” But we gave it a different name soon after arriving. There all the men got to bathe. I got all my American money changed into French currency. Soap wrappers is the name we gave the paper money.

1st Lieutenant James K. Burnham Hockaday, 354th Infantry, 89th Division, A.E.F.; other letters by Hockaday follow.

Somewhere in England
Sunday, June 23rd, 1918

There is so much to tell since I last wrote you that I don’t know where to start. It was certainly a wonderful voyage. My ship did not have the excitement of even seeing a submarine. We were seventeen days on the water and I was never so glad to see land in all my life. You may talk about the navy, but I am certainly glad I joined the army. Tell June he had better take a few weeks ride on a ship without seeing land and get a whiff of that musty odor around a ship’s dining room before he fully makes up his mind as to the navy.

Taken as a whole, however, I have never enjoyed anything so much in my life. Three days before we landed, I don’t believe the sea could have been rougher. I was on guard that night and I was nearly drowned trying to inspect the submarine lookouts. The main deck was being washed over constantly. I finally went up to the bridge of the upper deck and hung on the railing. It was a sight I shall never forget.

I am now over here, somewhere in England, is all I can say. I had always hoped to come abroad sometime, but this has happened all so suddenly that it is hard to believe I am on another continent. I am certainly in love with England. I wouldn’t mind coming

I am now over here, somewhere in England, is all I can say. I had always hoped to come abroad sometime, but this has happened all so suddenly that it is hard to believe I am on another continent. I am certainly in love with England. I wouldn't mind coming over here and living for a couple of years. Just the little I have seen of it has certainly impressed me. The houses are all built together on streets, which are very narrow, some only eight feet wide with a two foot walk on either side; in every window are flowers or vines. It is about as quaint and picturesque a place as there could possibly be.

The trains are another thing. They remind me of that little steam train we used to ride in at Electric Park [a Kansas City, Missouri amusement park]. Little, low cars divided up into eight or ten sections holding about six or eight persons.

One of the things, which impressed me most, was the women in the big factories and plants. Every factory, whether it was an iron foundry or chemical plant or what, we passed, I did not see a single man. The women would all come running out in the overalls or "unionalls" and wave to us as we went by. You cannot begin to be impressed by this significance until you are over here and actually see it. It is the English women who are winning this war today, in my opinion. The sacrifices, which they are undergoing has won from us all the highest admiration. I am told that the servants are working side by side with the mistresses, all in unionalls and cheerfully doing any unpleasant work assigned to them, all the way from making shells, running steam engines, etc. to delicate tasks in a chemical factory.

I could not be any happier or better than I am now. There is so much new to take in that I am occupied every minute along with my duties.

Tell everyone to get their clothing over here, especially Sam Brown[e] belts, wrap leggings and trench coats; they are less than half price compared with the states. Suits with much better materials and cheaper are obtainable here as well as many other things. Woolen knit socks are very expensive here, however, so tell Aunt Jessie I owe my life to her.

I have become thoroughly familiar with English money now. The banks and Y.M.C.A.'s as well as many merchants will gladly exchange U.S. currency for you.

Please don't worry about anything, Mother dear. I am having the experience of my life time. Be sure not to let any reports or rumors bother you. There will be many of them and they only cause needless worry and anxiety, which does nobody any good. If you don't hear from me for any length of time, don't let it worry you. There may be hundreds of reasons, ship sunk, or held in harbor, etc.

We have received no mails yet. Letters are the most welcome things just now. Tell me everything.

After the war we can all take a trip through all this wonderful and historic country.

Ever so much love to you Mother dear and everyone,
Burnie.

Corporal William Shoemaker, Co. A., 168th Infantry, 42nd Division, A.E.F.

In France
June 25th [1918]

Received your letter some time ago but haven't had the chance to answer. We are back in training camp now after four months at the Front. We get some kind of special training then up to where life is sweet but uncertain.

The 42nd Div. has made a name for itself in the last four months, although what we've been thru with is nearly like play to what is ahead of us.

The 42nd Div. has made a name for itself in the last four months, although what we've been thru with is nearly like play to what is ahead of us.

You were asking men about me saying I was operating an 8-inch gun, I am still with the infantry. If I were to enlist over I don't believe I would take the infantry. The Inf'ty & Art' necessarily work together. They don't have the laugh on us over here, for the Infantry is always in advance of the Artillery.

We have the Minnesota Artillery behind us. They are considered some of the best marksmen on the front. They have all 75' [mm.], which is considered some gun far better than the German 77 [mm.].

I was glad to hear you are in the Hdqtrs [Headquarters] Co. I think you are much better suited to the work there, as it will not be heavy like work on the guns. Also you will be back where you will better taken care of & [with] better conditions. I would advise you to stay there, as it takes an older stronger man to endure the exposure & strain, which comes from extreme front service. Of course, the enemy artillery is all you need to fear but sometimes that is pretty lively especially when they throw gas back on out artillery, which they often do.

We have had quite a little experience with gas lately and several of the boys have "gone west" [died] under its effects. Eugene Ford & Lieut. Green were some of them that you know. The trouble is we're too careless. Let me advise that as soon as you are given your gas mask, learn how to put it on as quickly as possible. From the time you arrive in the Zone of Advance, that is up where there is a danger of gas shells, never get out of reach of your mask.

Form a habit of putting it on the same as you would your helmet or even more so. Inspect it every day when within range of the enemy guns & be sure it's in perfect condition. It is a safe protection from all German gas. Never take off your mask until you are certain it has all blown away. When the gas signal is given never stop to look but just put on your mask & <u>damn quick</u>. You can easily tell the sound of a gas shell & the smell of it.

Will write more later. Your brother, Bill.

Corporal William H. Shoemaker was killed in action on July 26, 1918.

Russell R. Peed, Co. B., 9th Infantry, 2nd Division, A.E.F.; a letter dated November 21, 1918, follows.

July 18, 1918

Just a few lines to let you know I am still kicking. I am still at Vichy. I got a dose of gas the 24th of June and they sent us here. I guess I will be all right again before long so don't worry.

I guess you have been notified by this time for they say the Red Cross notifies you people in the U.S. when we go to the hospital.

We had a hot time when we were at the front this last time, but came out fine to what the Boche did. They sure are losing heavily and will continue to until we have won. He gains a little ground once in a while, but he sure pays an awful price. We just mow them down like mowing hay. Quite exciting up there at times.

Private Willard Thompson, 101st Infantry, 26th Division, A.E.F.

Diary entry
July 21 [1918]

Diary entry
July 21 [1918]

...Well, at 4:30, two platoons of L. Co., by misunderstood orders, went Over the Top alone in the face of a machine gun nest. We got 100 ft. and thought the men were folding fast. We kept on until ordered to cover. Another runner and I formed a left flank outpost and from where we were fired 100 shots a piece at the machine gunners, that is whenever they gave us a chance.

We ran out of ammunitions and went back for more. Believe me, with our packs on it was some job, but my pack saved my life. 3 bullets found their way there instead of my back. Our losses were extremely heavy.

July 22 - After our disastrous attempt yesterday we were again picked to lead but, oh, what a difference. We took Chateau Thierry and 200 prisoners and our line advanced 8 or 10 kilometers.

Sergeant Ralph L. Wheelock, Medical Department, Base Hospital #34, A.E.F., Nantes, France.

July 24, 1918
Dear Mom & Pop.
... Suppose you have been watching the war news pretty close. There have been some doings up at the front lately and therefore we are busy. There is one mighty happy boy on our ward today. He has his arm off above the elbow and is to be sent from here today and go to some camp to get ready to go back home.

The fellows have all sorts of stories as they come in from the front. One that came in recently told me he laid out some hours before being picked up and [he] saw three Germans so he took a chance and waved his coat to attract their attention. They had a blanket with them and carried him on the blanket two kilometers to the American first aid station. They were coming in without a guard to surrender....

Richard S. Righter, Y.M.C.A. Foreign Service, France.

In a pretty French town
July 24, 1918

Well, here I am in the “field” and it is an interesting field indeed, a very old town with narrow cobble paved streets crooked and winding, and walled with stone, mortar plastered houses. The sidewalks are narrow, never more than three feet wide and sometimes less than a foot in width. Walking in the street is both popular and necessary.

The place is full of soldiers, coming and going and billeted here for rest after strenuous work at the front. French and Americans with steel hats, jingling accoutrements, and long crawling trains of endless motor lorries, motorcycles, military motors and occasional batteries of grey guns. There is a military hospital here in which I worked a long Sunday afternoon, bringing in the wounded, carrying men to the operating room, helping to “evacuate” the men capable of being moved to hospitals more remote from the front and leaving the space for new men. It is not pleasant work at first, but after a little [while] one can walk thru the “death chamber” and move a man without a tremor. The “death chamber’ is the resting place of those whose wounds are almost helpless.

I am at this moment writing at a table in the big concrete warehouse where, in company with three other gentlemen, I care for Y.M.C.A. supplies, a carload of which we moved early this morning. Ah, we have everything here [:] various brands of cigarettes, cigars, smoking tobacco, chewing tobacco, chocolate in cakes, in bars, in lumps, cookies of all sorts and conditions, canned peaches, pineapples, pears and condensed milk....

Sergeant Albert E. Robinson, 140th Infantry, 35th Division, A.E.F. Robinson wrote

Sergeant Albert E. Robinson, 140th Infantry, 35th Division, A.E.F. Robinson wrote entries in his diary like letters home.

Diary entry
July 30, 1918

Lt. Champion took a patrol including myself and my "Three Musketeers," Van Brunt, Oliver and Lusk to search the house where we had watched the sniper two days previous. Lt. Champion and Van Brunt entered it and the rest of the patrol covered them. I was looking toward our lines when I saw two heavy shells drop into our front lines like two comets of fire. The enemy had begun an hour and a half heavy barrage to cover a raid. We tumbled into a hole and hung fast to the ground. We waited. That was about all we could do.

The lead and iron poured into our lines and ours answered back. The air was heavy with the rattle and roar. And the machine gun bullets from both sides seemed to heat the air across the top of our hole. Still the barrage of No-Man's-Land did not come. The steady patter of our machine guns had a most business-like and reassuring sound.

Oliver carefully arranged the pins of his grenades. Lusk swore softly but efficiently to himself. Van rolled a cigarette with steady fingers and smoked to detect the fumes of a gas attack. Then the show quieted down and we went in.

Then Lt. Champion, Lt. Slaughter, Barney Nevins, John Lusk and I went over to M. Company. where the raid took place. We had had no fatalities - Fritz had left one behind. I looked at him - my first dead foe - and it seemed as though all the glory were struck from war. A mere boy, he was, named Hagedorn. The identification of the sole victim - which fell to Lt. Slaughter - was a sad task. He had photographs on him of pretty homelike women - his folks, no doubt. His cap, which he crammed into his pouch at the moment of putting on his helmet, was still wet with his perspiration. He had a pouch of what passed for tobacco - bark-like substance - a slice of coarse bread in his pouch and his gas mask was made of leather.

During July 27-August 13, the 35th Division, less its artillery, occupied the Fecht Sector, Alsace. Sergeant Albert E. Robinson earned the Silver Star "for gallantry in action" in France, August 19, 1918 and the Purple Heart for wounds suffered eleven days later.

Private Goodman, Co. A., 314th Engineers, 89th Division, A.E.F.

On Active Service with the American Expeditionary Forces
Aug. 7, 1918

I will try to write you a few lines this eve. Am well as common and feel very well everything considered, but how is everything at home. I wonder, I wish I knew, I haven't heard a word since I left Camp Merritt over [censored] mo. ago.

I am with a regiment of engineers now, a fine bunch of boys, but all by myself. All the other boys went to the Infantry. I hope they are alive for I know they were in the last great battle. The engineers is what I am in now. They do construction work behind the lines, dig trenches, etc. We are only a few miles from the front now, everything is as bad as the papers say only worse.

I hope Mother has not worried herself to death. I hope to come back to her someday and I want her to be at home.

While I have been sitting here writing a fight is going on with a German aeroplane and American or French planes. I can see the German very easy from where I sit. They are chasing him away and the anti-aircraft batteries are firing at him. They nearly got him twice.

chasing him away and the anti-aircraft batteries are firing at him. They nearly got him twice.

I am sitting here writing in a Salvation Army hut. If it were not for them and the Y.M.C.A. and the Red Cross, I don't know what a person would do. They are having a church service in front of the building now. They are singing ["] Savior, gentle Savior do no pass me by.["] There are only a few but they are gathered together in the name of Christ. I hope the gentle Savior will not pass us by but help us to withstand our trials....

Private John Lewis Barkley, Co. K., 4th Infantry, 3rd Division, A.E.F.

August 7, 1918
My dear Mother,

While the French band is playing Joan of Arc it makes me think of home so here goes for a few lines to let you know that I am well as I ever was in my life. I have been up to the front for some time and as good luck will sometimes take possession of some people I came out in the fittest of condition. I have been where the rest have been, and am proud to say I cam back with an honorable word of mention from my officers for doing more than my share of the game.

The French and the Americans are sure good comrades, always dividing their tobacco, money or anything one another has that the other has not got. The English Tommies are sure good scouts always talking in a calm tone of voice and always willing to do their share....

Corporal Walter Bullard, now in Co. F., 603rd Engineers, A.E.F.

Friday, August 16, 1918
...We have made another move since I last wrote. Have gone back to school days again. Am taking a short course to fit me for a branch [of service] that is one of the most useful that Uncle Sam has. The work is very technical and requires lots of study but I can do that. It is so very interesting and the work afterward will be more so. It comes under what is known as the intelligence service. Am sorry I can't explain more to you so you can understand better but we can't take chances.

We live in casements under ground now and the quarters are fine. Will sure have a bunch of first hand knowledge of the war if I make it on the study. Will be where I can see all that is going on which just suits me.

...Saw a funny little incident just before I left the last place. I was out on guard when a German prisoner was brought in. They brought him into the post past a French soldier. The soldier's son, a boy about Tom's age, was standing alongside and as soon as he saw the Hun he reached up for his father's bayonet and wanted to run him thru. Of course, the father didn't let him do it and the youngster had a crying spell. He was real indignant that the father wouldn't let him kill the Hun. Just goes to show how the people here feel on the Hun question.
...Haven't gotten a letter from home since I arrived, but having come across the pond myself I well know how it is with mail. Of course the war material has the right of way so as we are more or less dependent on it we can't kick if we don't get mail. Would rather have the shells and food come thru so our doughboys can keep on going. They have got a fine start and I guess they will keep on going. General Pershing's battle cry is heard all along the lines as they go over the top, "H---, Heaven or Hoboken by Christmas."

The Huns will have to do some tall work or by George the doughboys will be shouting it in the Kaiser's palaces long before he expects. We will all be glad to see it over by then but believe me each and every man is prepared to stand it just as long as it is necessary. We will give just as good an account of ourselves five years from now if it takes that long. Yankees were never made to be whipped by any bull-headed hogs like the Huns.

We will give just as good an account of ourselves five years from now if it takes that long. Yankees were never made to be whipped by any bull-headed hogs like the Huns.

Just to show you what they think of us. A German prisoner when brought before a British questioning officer made a good reply. The officer said "well Fritz do you still think Gott is with you?" Prisoner replied "yes, but you have the Yankees with you." Reckon he said all that was needed.

Poor fellows, I guess [they] would stop if they didn't have so much fear of getting shot. D--- German officers tell the men that to be taken by the Yankees is to be shot. The men in the German army are still kept misinformed as to actual losses. You would think they would wake up to the fact after all they have been lied to in the past. When they do wake up it will be hard to find themselves without a country.

I am enclosing a handkerchief that I bought for you. It is rather pretty with the French flag and Stars and Stripes together. They sell quite a bunch of them to the boys to send home and there is hardly a town that I have been in that you can't find hundreds in stores. They have all colors and with different words and such. Some have all the Allied flags worked in the corner.

They have lots of souvenirs but I don't want to pick them up now as I'll have no place to keep them. Will try to get something for each of you. As soon as I get a German helmet I'll send it along. There are plenty to be picked up on no man's land. We are allowed to ship them home if we wish. The Germans don't use the spike on the sides [actually top] of them anymore. All I've seen are minus the spike.

Private Joe S. Turner, 8th Co., 1st Infantry Training Regiment, A.E.F.

August 17, 1918

Just a few lines to let you know I am well and I hope these few lines find you all well and happy. We are now at a training camp in France and I certainly like the place fine as we surely have fine officers who really know modern warfare to perfection and I surely wish that I could stay here until I had an opportunity of becoming just half as good a soldier as they [are].

I certainly was impressed with the French people, who certainly show their goodwill to the American people, especially the soldier and while they have suffered over 4 years of this hell war they still stand as united as the day war was declared and are willing to make any sacrifices to it cause.

Everything certainly looks favorable to the allies now and believe me by Christmas Kaiser Bill had better make a dash for the North Pole for he will amount to about as much as a drop of rain in hell, for the allied armies are now so strong that no human power can keep them out of Berlin. Just take this as a tip and see if I'm not right.

We now have our steel helmets and gas masks and also our winter caps and I wish you could see us with them on. Maybe I will get some photographs taken with the different outfits on but I don't think we can send photographs home so will bring them when I come.

Well, I guess I will have to close for this time and I sincerely hope you folks do not worry about me simply because I am in France and cannot be with you for the time being, but form your ideas of the future, and I assure you it will be in the near future, and we will all be together again and know that we did our bit and the slacker will have to hunt his hole for he will be despised and hated by everyone.

Lieutenant Bartlett H.S. Travis was an American who trained in Canada for service in the Royal Air Force, 65 Squadron; other letters by Travis follow, as well as letters from his sister, Adelaide.

Lieutenant Bartlett H.S. Travis was an American who trained in Canada for service in the Royal Air Force, 65 Squadron; other letters by Travis follow, as well as letters from his sister, Adelaide.

August 17th, 1918

I haven't had any chance to write during the last four days on account of our being on the move.

We left our old aerodrome on the 13th for one near a sector where there is not quite so much action as the Squadron has been greatly overworked during the recent push.

We arrived at our new camp expecting to get a good rest. It was only a mile or so adjacent to a large French city and during the three nights we were there I don't think anyone got a bit of sleep. Fritz would come over about eleven p.m. and start in bombing and it would be one or two a.m. before he would let up. The Archie, or anti-aircraft guns, make such a racket that sleep is impossible, and then it isn't very soothing for the nerves when you hear Fritz's engine going right overhead and hear him shut off just before dropping one of his pills. After his first pill the suspense waiting for the rest of them is awful.

We moved out of there day before yesterday and are now about twelve kilos from the old aerodrome.

I went out on my first patrol this morning, the chief purpose of which was to locate the lines as no one is very familiar with this front. We got Archied like the devil going over but outside of that nothing eventful occurred and the Archie only lasted a minute or so. As soon as we saw and heard it the whole formation started to fly in S's and only one burst came very near us. The stuff isn't very pleasant tho and keeps one more or less on the jump maneuvering the bus around.

It is very windy this a.m. and as a result two of the fellows crashed when landing and I don't think we'll do any flying this afternoon. There is a Belgian squadron right near us....

August 27th, 1918

...For four or five days during the push all the pilots were worked very hard, eight or sometimes ten hours a day of war flying and a great deal of bomb dropping and strafing the retreating Huns, a rotten job, as one has to fly very low and becomes a target for endless machine guns. The squadron did a fine job tho.

I got over-venturesome the second day I was here and went looking for the lines on my own hook. It seems that owing to the retreat the Huns had no visible lines and the result was that while looking for the front line trenches I calmly sailed over into Hunland. Was going along very peacefully when all of a sudden I heard a noise that sounded as tho someone had ripped the fabric off the plane. Nothing seemed to happen afterwards so I cautiously peeped out of the cockpit and in my rear there appeared a little puff of black smoke followed by the same ripping noise. I got an awful gust up when I realized it was Archie and executed a right angle turn toward the opposite direction and sure traveled....

Caroline A. Derby, American Red Cross

York, England
August 24th, 1918
Dear Mr. Woodcox,

I am the American Red Cross Visitor here and it is with the deepest sympathy that I am writing to tell you about the death and funeral of your son, Ernest, who died in our Military Hospital here, last Monday, Aug. 19th. Of course you have already had a cable from the military authorities, but I know it will be a comfort to you to hear from someone who was with him and it may please you to know that I am an American by birth, so you

Military Hospital here, last Monday, Aug. 19th. Of course you have already had a cable from the military authorities, but I know it will be a comfort to you to hear from someone who was with him and it may please you to know that I am an American by birth, so you will not feel that he was entirely among strangers, though no one could have been kinder than all the English doctors and nurses were to him.

Ernest came to our military hospital here from a Yorkshire camp, (the name of which I must not mention for military reasons) last Thursday, Aug. 15th. It seems that shortly after he arrived in England he went to a dance one evening and coming out into the cold night air, after being over-heated, he took a chill which later developed into pneumonia. He was in the hospital tent at the camp for a few days and then was sent into the hospital here. I do not know if he realized how ill he was or not.

I saw him first on Saturday, but he was too ill to talk, except a few words. Still they hoped that he might recover. Sunday afternoon I went to the hospital again. I found he was gradually sinking. The Chaplain had had prayers for him at the Hospital Chapel that morning. The early part of the evening he seemed in a good deal of pain, but the doctor thinks that towards the end he did not suffer. He gave him everything he could to relieve the pain.

I sat with him until 1:30 a.m. when the nurse wanted me to go and rest a little, promising to call me if there was a sudden change. About an hour later I went back to him. I had hardly been in the room five minutes before the change came. It was very quick and peaceful, no struggle whatever. He drew a few quiet breaths and simply ceased to breathe at five minutes before three a.m. Just before his last breath I heard him whisper “Three - six” as if he were answering to his number at roll call.

I kissed his forehead for you just afterwards, and also before the coffin was closed. I saw the body. It was dressed in full uniform, with flowers around him and my own Stars and Stripes covering him.

The funeral took place yesterday, Friday, when the body was buried with full military honors. The grave is in the military part of the new cemetery at Fulford, York, about a mile and a half from the hospital. The coffin, which was taken from the hospital on a gun carriage, was covered with the Stars and Stripes, and beautiful flowers. The firing squad walked in front of it and the six boys from his own squadron who carried the coffin at the grave walked beside it.

I stood beside the grave all the time. When the service was over, the firing squad fired the usual volley of three rounds and a bugler sounded “Taps” and then all was over that love could do for a poor boy dying so far away from his own people. You will be glad to know that one of the boys in his squadron, who was at the funeral, was from Topeka, and says he knew Ernest at home, and often played ball with him (I suppose he means baseball). The only things Ernest had with him at the hospital were his watch, a fountain pen, a purse with a little American money in it and a bundle of letters. These have all been given to his C.O. and will be sent home to you in due time.

Praying that God will comfort you, and that your dear boy may often be near you still, I am, with heartfelt sympathy to you all.

Caroline A. Derby

Ernest E. Woodcox, 259th U.S. Aero Squadron, attached to the Royal Air Force, had arrived in England a few days prior to his illness. He was twenty-four.

1st Lieutenant James K. Burnham Hockaday, 354th Infantry, 89th Division, A.E.F.

Somewhere in France

August 28th, 1918

I have at last found time to drop a few lines. This summer seems to be over all of a

August 28th, 1918

I have at last found time to drop a few lines. This summer seems to be over all of a sudden. It really doesn't seem any time since we were eating together back there in old N.Y. at Rector's - but, oh my! How much has happened!

Well, I can tell you now that I am right in the thick of it. I have dodging shells, breathing through gas masks, and making myself as little and inconspicuous as possible when traveling across "No-Man's Land" at night. These Boche certainly have a wonderful set of fireworks which they let loose every night, all colored rockets, golden showers and bright stars, which they shoot up every few minutes and light up the ground for a thousand or more yards around. I was out last night and it was quite clear. Besides the many rockets, etc., the aeroplanes were flying overhead and fired those flaming bullets.

Every now and then the Boche would get a notion, they would let loose with a few salvos of artillery and then is when yours truly would try the ground. I have never loved Mother Earth so hard as I do when shells are sailing over me. Some would break pretty close, too damn close, and pieces of them would whistle back over me. You are fairly safe, only fairly safe, from shell fire if you get down flat on the ground in time. You can hear the shell as it whistles through the air for quite a while before it lights. After a while you can judge about where it will break.

This all sounds very thrilling, but it is all very true. The fellow who says it is wonderful amusement and sport to stand out in the front line trench and listen to the shells whistle and burst around you, is nothing but a damn fool and you can doubt seriously whether he has really been in it. After you get back, it is fun to talk it over, but while you are up there it is hell.

We will never be satisfied until the Hun is off the map that will certainly be a glorious day.

As I wrote Father in my last letter, I am now with Brigade Headquarters. I am in command of the Headquarters Detachment and also liaison officer from Brigade to Division Headquarters. I have to keep Division Headquarters informed of everything that happens in my Brigade, as to disposition and functions of fighting groups, machine guns, artillery, etc.

This means that I have to be in the lines practically all of the time. It is much more broadening than my position of platoon leader, as now I have to know everything along the whole brigade front, instead of just along my little platoon sector. I am over trying to find out as much as I can about the enemy front lines in front of my brigade sector also.

There is one thing that these darn Huns ought to be ashamed of and that is the gas, which they fight with now and then. I hope we give them their own medicine every chance we get. I was starting out from my own trenches with a raiding party a while ago, when the Huns began shelling the lower end of the valley for all they were worth with mustard gas. It drifted up the valley so we had to call the raid off for the night. The gas masks are sure protection against all gas, but unless you know the smell of gas, it is hard to tell when you are in it. My company lost more than any other but my platoon did not lose a man except one and that was by shrapnel. I think this speaks pretty good for discipline, especially as there wasn't an officer with them. The sergeants had command.

I suppose you remember Lieutenant Cox and Lieutenant Topping, who tented with me at Camp Mills, and whom you thought such fine fellows. They were both badly gassed. I hope not fatally. Of course we are fighting now and we all realize that some of us have to go. If we stopped to moan and sympathize, we would lose all of our morale and never accomplish our task. Of course, I can't tell how many were hurt or not how many fatalities there were, but we could hardly keep the men who were left from going over and skinning those damned Huns alive.

Don't worry at all about me. It is not so deadly up here as one would think. Last week, they sent over thousands of shells and only got one man. All kinds of exciting aeroplane scraps take place right over our headquarters. I just got through watching the Boche bring down one of our observation balloons but we got one of his planes.

they sent over thousands of shells and only got one man. All kinds of exciting aeroplane scraps take place right over our headquarters. I just got through watching the Boche bring down one of our observation balloons but we got one of his planes.

Well so long, I.O., old top. Write me often. Give my best to all the boys and gals. Don't think it is all so serious over here. I thank God that no matter how low a Yank may feel, he always has a bit of humor left. I have never laughed so hard in all my life as I have at the experiences I have had and stories I have heard. I shall have a heap to tell when I get back....

Lieutenant Bartlett Travis, R.A.F. 65 Squadron

September 4, 1918

I was in my first battle this morning. We were flying in flight formation at about fifteen thousand, the Major leading, when he signaled that he saw Huns (by waggling his ailerons) and started to dive. Three of us stayed up to protect us in case the Huns should appear while we were having a dog fight. I dove with the others. We went down with engine full out and attained speed of over two hundred miles an hour as a result.

There were six Huns flying in a triangle formation and as I was on the left of our bunch I picked a red tailed Fokker biplane. I was going like the devil but it seemed I never would get down to him and when we were about fifteen hundred feet above them their leader saw us and dove for the clouds. I realized my Hun would do the same so [I] opened fire just before he started his dive. He went into a spin and disappeared into the clouds. There's a chance I sent him out of control but as the range was very long I doubt it and didn't put in any claim.

We were at eight thousand again after the dive and came across the lines at that height with the result that I had my first experience with the flaming-onions [a type of anti-aircraft fire]. They're rotten things, look just like our tracer bullets only larger and you can see the little balls of fire almost where they leave the ground. They leave a thin line of smoke after them. Whenever they appear the whole formation starts diving, zooming, stall turns to right and left and one has to be quite alert keeping out of each other's way.

Our new machines are proving wonders and everyone's itching to get them. It will be a while yet before the whole squadron is equipped....

September 5th, 1918

...We went on offensive patrol this a.m., leaving the ground at eleven-thirty. We went across the lines as soon as the formation of bombers appeared (as we were supposed to escort them) and accompanied them to their objective.

When returning after the bombers had dropped their pills and while about twelve miles back of the Hun's lines, Campbell pushed up in front of our formation, slowed down and started to waggle, meaning he saw Huns. As soon as I got my nose down I could see the Huns, nine of them, at about three thousand feet below us. I picked one machine that was more or less straggling on the extreme right and when I was about to fire I saw him start a dive. I let go at him and got in about twenty rounds before he disappeared in the clouds. I doubt if I got him and his getting away seemed to more or less arouse my anger, as he was such an easy-looking target, all silver along the fuselage, silver wings and a red tail with a black cross on a silver rudder.

After he disappeared I flattened out and started a gradual right hand climbing turn in order to gain height. When about eight hundred or a thousand feet above the clouds I saw a machine on my right come up through the clouds in a steep left hand climbing turn and down I went with engine full on. At that I got down a little late to get on his tail. He had finished or gone around his turn by this time and as a result we were pointing head on. I got him in my telescope sight and started both guns and on we came. I was very intent on keeping his machine within the ring on my sight, so intent that I more or less forgot about getting out of his way and when he was (it seemed about two feet at the

on. I got him in my telescope sight and started both guns and on we came. I was very intent on keeping his machine within the ring on my sight, so intent that I more or less forgot about getting out of his way and when he was (it seemed about two feet at the time) about twenty feet from me his left wing went straight up in the air and he veered off and went by or above me with a tremendous rush, his right wing missing my top plane by about a foot, I guess.

I recall seeing some yellow camouflage and a red tail and after that did a fast vertical to the left and saw him on his back with his nose coming down into a dive and he disappeared into the clouds about a hundred feet below, starting to spin. I don't know whether I could have heard his guns with mine going, anyway I saw no tracer bullets but my own and think his gun might have been jammed as there was only one bullet hole in my bottom plane. My tracers seemed to go right into his engine. I think, from the way he went down, that I got him. I told the Major and he told me to fill out a combat report and I'm praying that it will be confirmed.

When I turned toward home the rest of the formation or machines (as they were all over the sky and none in formation) were miles ahead of me and the only time I had the wind up was coming over the lines alone. It seemed as tho every anti-aircraft gun, machine gun and flaming onion the Huns had was concentrating on me and climb as I would I had to go over at only about five thousand feet, a nice range for them all....

Corporal Frank Courtney Lane, 110th Engineers, 35th Division, A.E.F.

Somewhere in France
September 7, 1918

We are getting acquainted with the finest people in Europe - the French. They are the greatest home lovers in the world. Families have lived on the same little plot of ground for hundreds of years. Imagine the American, raised in a small town, working hard for fifty years and never getting any further than fifty miles from home. Their towns have no attractions for an American, yet they suffice the needs of the people and surely are a paradise for the boys just out of the trenches.

Probably you have read of town criers of olden days in New England. In this town there is a man who after attracting the attention of the people tells them the news. It surely is the lowest type of newspaper that I have ever seen. What would people in the States do if they heard some man reciting how the "Cubs" beat the "Sox" in the great series at Chicago. It would either mean that he had won a big bet on the "Cubs" or was trying to get by the [draft] exemption board.

The fellows who do not get across will miss the greatest adventure that life can offer. One will never know what war is until they have been through it. The lucky ones will come back and tell their tales of woe, but there will be lots of them sacrificed. Loving parents and friends will mourn them and think it all a mistake. A fellow over here cannot feel that way about it, especially after he has seen the French and English with their gold stripes on their sleeves and their sallow faces that tell of this suffering and misery.

Here's hoping that we make a home run and make it soon. The game is won but there are a few more innings to play and then the whole world will shout with joy.

Captain Clarence J. Minick, 361st Infantry, 91st Division, A.E.F.

Diary Entry
Sept. 18th, 1918, Wednesday

Nearing "Action"
Stayed in these woods all day under cover and left at 7:30 p.m. under cover of woods and darkness and arrived at Parois, France at 9:30 p.m. and was billeted in a shell-torn town - no civilians here. The last two towns we were in had been shelled but this one is worse. We saw an air battle. We are now getting close to the front in the Verdun sector

and darkness and arrived at Parois, France at 9:30 p.m. and was billeted in a shell-torn town - no civilians here. The last two towns we were in had been shelled but this one is worse. We saw an air battle. We are now getting close to the front in the Verdun sector. About 5 big shells landed in this town late in the evening. Our first ones to hear "sing" and it is no music to anyone's ears.

At 5:00 p.m. I and my 4 platoon sgts. left Parois and hiked under cover of woods all the way to Bois de Hesse to locate our position. The company was brought up later. An old system of trenches are in this wood. Many shells landing in the woods. We are in our pup tents - on a wooded ridge - many gas alarms - all false ones - but playing safe - we are 3 miles from the front lines - our supply train shelled.

Sergeant Charles S. Stevenson, Co. A., 314th Engineers, 89th Division, A.E.F.; other letters from Stevenson follow.

France
Sept. 18, 1918
Dear People:

This is the seventh day of the St. Mihiel drive and I find myself sitting in a thick, muddy forest, with my knees and a gas mask as a table, writing to you. I went thru my first real touch of war and came out with nothing more serious than the loss of some sleep and a couple of tears in my best leggins [sic].

It was some drive. Small, in comparison to many operations, to we rookies it was a real battle. Machine guns, rifles, shells, aeroplanes and tanks - everything you read about - I saw 'em all. We followed the first line (the attacking party) for twelve hours and ours was a sort of "after the battle" review. I saw all kinds of German trenches, barbed wire entanglements, busted houses, burning trees, deep shell holes, torn-up railroad tracks, peaceful gardens, dynamited bridges. All kinds of German prisoners passed me on the way back.

One night we slept in a hay barn; the next night a few of we sergeants slept in a German colonel's quarters. I got a few souvenirs. The best of all is a blank form of a bond - the eighth German war loan. I also got some shoulder straps. It is impossible to carry anywheres [sic] near all you can get.

We did in two days what we were supposed to do in five. Maurice [his brother] was in it - on our left, I think. No word from him has come of course. As I understand it his division had the hardest place of the entire attack.

We know Major Bland of K.C. [Kansas City, MO] was killed. Our commanding officer was only ten feet from him when he was shelled.

...Today has been a nice, peaceful day. Some shelling - not very close - machines overhead constantly. No longer is this a quiet sector.

No telling when I can mail this - we are far from mail headquarters, as far as outgoing stuff is concerned. And as you might guess, our officers are rather busy to devote much time to censorship.

Never worry about me! No news is always good news!
*****
Sept. 20, 1918

...We have just finished being part of a drive - and our division has not yet been relieved.

...The chase was a merry one! The Boche beat it - and beat it fast, too. I saw any number of prisoners - all young - and as far as I could see - well fed. We went thru a German camp and at their expense got some good stuff to eat. They have fine jam and tea - their bread is awful, and their coffee is vile. But 'twas all better than hardtack!

German camp and at their expense got some good stuff to eat. They have fine jam and tea - their bread is awful, and their coffee is vile. But 'twas all better than hardtack!

Their officers' quarters were luxurious - plush chairs, fine carpets, cut glass, fine beds, the best kind of mattresses - all furnishings were wonderful. Of course in their retreat they did quite a bit of messing up, but their surroundings and the finishing of them were plainly evident.

A piano and a talking machine I found. The piano was a French one and the machine of American make - "His Master's Voice" - in German - they must have had a life of ease.

If I once said I thought it would be over in six months I admit freely I was too optimistic - about eighteen months so, if this darn thing is over in two years - if I am in Olathe [Kansas] on January 1, 1921 - I will consider myself lucky.

...Work calls to me - being in the Army, I have to go.

Private John Lewis Barkley, Co. K., 4th Infantry, 3rd Division, A.E.F.

September 21, 1918

You see the date this letter was written and you see I am still alive. I never felt better in my life. I weigh 155 lbs. and don't bar any square-head in bayonet or any kind of fight he wants. When I came to France I thought "Germans," the way the people talked, were man eaters, but they haven't anything on the Americans. The only good German is a dead one and there is [sic] getting to be lots of good Germans.

I have had experiences so I pretty near know. For instance, the Boche put over a kind of laughing gas and when they followed up the gas attack they expected to find us dead and instead, they found us laughing at them, ha ha, some gas.

Just received a letter from Sister and she was afraid her man would have to go. Now don't look at it that way. Join the fray and have some real sport. The more men we have the shorter it will last, so all yellow stripes and cold feet must wake up, leave some of the old married men. I am not sorry that I am in France and it is no disgrace to be drafted for there are sure some fighting drafted men. I am sure I never saw a Boche I ever was afraid of.

Well, I must close for [I am] writing upon my helmet and it is getting dark.

Corporal Frank Courtney Lane, 110th Engineers, 35th Division, A.E.F.

[Diary entries: September 24 - October 3,1918]
The 24th of September
We are in a dense wood. It was rainy and wet and we were allowed no fire. That night about sunset we started for the lines. My platoon was detached from the company. They had already gone forward to get into position with the tanks, to which they were to be attached. We walked a long way, through shell torn country and towns. Finally after what seemed many hours, but in reality was only five or six, we began to meet up with the heavy artillery which was to support us.

25th September
We went into the trenches. We first shed our packs of everything, except our rations and a few very dear personal articles. We walked into the trenches about a mile until we came to the jumping off place. Here we rested, just lying around any place.

By this time the light artillery was tuning up some and was a little noisy. Jerry sensed that something was going to happen and shot his skies full of flares, trying to see what it was.

that something was going to happen and shot his skies full of flares, trying to see what it was.

Doughboys were lying around everywhere and it seemed that there were millions of them. We were not supposed to smoke because of betraying our position to the enemy but everyone was dragging on a cigarette and seeing “Home, Mother and Sweetheart” through the clouds of smoke that rose, mixed with the smoke of the guns and the screen because we had put on a heavy smoke screen to hide our actions.

[September 26 through October 3]
About 4 o’clock a.m. the real barrage opened and there never was such a noise in France. When the Zero Hour, which was different according to the work to be done, came we started over. There was nothing exciting about it, but we asked ourselves “well, am I going through or going to drop?” I never felt that I was going to stay up there although I came very near it a couple of times.

We walked the best that we could through our wires, just sifting through it anywhere and through the paths made by the tanks. Machine guns were popping on all sides of us but they were firing on the strong points ahead so they didn’t get us through the haze.

We stopped when we got through the wire and waited for the bunch to get closer together. I was with Lt. Payne. He had a map spread out on his knees and showed me where we would first look for mines. He also showed me the location of Cheppy, the town where we were to sleep that night. So he said and so we did.

We went forward again and still hadn’t seen a German. We examined some grenade supplies in the Jerry front lines and found no traps there so went in.

Frank Madden, George Colmill, Mac and I were running together through some dugouts, cutting wires and looking around we found lots of mines. Everything seemed fixed for us to move and get blown up but a Yank can be cautious if he wants to and we were. Pretty soon I heard a noise like someone feeling their way along in the dark. There was a dark passage just in front of us, leading back to the Lord knows where. So I began to holler back into it.

I’ll admit my blood chilled for a second or two but I held onto my old trusty [rifle] and hollered more and pretty soon out they came. It was very dark in the passage so I started backing out as soon as I could see them coming. I could see a couple but did not know how many Germans were there.

I kept hollering to the Jerries to keep their hands up. When we got to where it was light, the first fellow I could see was a little old fellow about fifty. I made a lunge at him with my bayonet to scare him and he nearly died with fright. Three more now filed out, one wearing a Red Cross band and the other, by pointing at his, tried to signify that they were also medics. I knew they were lying or they would not be up there. I searched them, [and] took away their knives. Mac and I debated on what to do with them.

About this time, a sergeant from the 139th Infantry was giving orders and said that he would take them back. I decided that I would go along. We had not gone far until we came to some fine looking dugouts. I suggested that we look around in them, when great gobs of Jerries began pouring out of them calling “Kamerad.” It greatly surprised us and I just hollered some more and let them file by. There were forty seven in this gang. There were about a dozen Yanks with us now and they had guns. We began searching them [the prisoners] for souvenirs.

One Jerry started to run at a doughboy, who was playing with his trench knife. He didn’t get far, for a hand grenade made a clean hit and three or four automatics were turned loose. He did not even kick. This made the others panicky. We flashed our guns around a little just to let them know who was boss and started again for the rear.

We went along quite a way and then met a tank that had lost the gasoline tanks off the top. We told the Jerries to put these back on and they sure did. I gave my pack to the highest ranking one, a sergeant major who wore an iron cross [medal]. I took the cross

We went along quite a way and then met a tank that had lost the gasoline tanks off the top. We told the Jerries to put these back on and they sure did. I gave my pack to the highest ranking one, a sergeant major who wore an iron cross [medal]. I took the cross but got outranked by Colonel Clarke.

We walked around a hill to Divisional Headquarters. It was here that I met and talked with Colonel Clarke. He arranged it so I wouldn't have to wait until they were all examined by the interpreters of the intelligence section. The Colonel gave me a can of bully beef, which I ate. He also gave me permission to go back to my outfit.

A little later I ran onto about twenty of the fourth platoon. We traveled out of the barrenness up a road quite away when we began to notice that no other troops were on the road and that only a few were around us but [we] kept on going as there was no fire to stop us.

On our left, about six hundred yards away the tanks were fighting it out with a machine gun nest on the edge of the forest. We were just straggling along and finally a bunch of soldiers who were in a trench along side of the road hollered at us and told us to get under cover as Fritz had a machine gun just a little way ahead that was sweeping the road at that point. We jumped down into the trenches which were German reserve lines and were very strongly built.

It was here that I parted with the rest of the bunch. Three of us said that we would go ahead and try to clean out the machine gun which was holding us up. So two boys from the 110th Infantry [28th Division] and I started out.

We crawled and wiggled and walked probably three hundred yards and then the machine gun opened up on us. I got low and moved near him, about 100 yards to the side. When I finally got him spotted I could see him just as plain as anything and it was no hard matter to pull on him. I looked twice before I pulled the trigger because he was so close that I did not dare to miss him.

When I fired he fell right on his gun and it quit spitting. Just as he went down my partner across the way tore into him twice so there was no struggle. He was the only man on his gun, which was odd, but we presume that his partner had retreated and that he was too game to fall back. This other chap got to him first and was in his pockets when I got there. He [the German gunner] was a big fellow and very rough looking. He had three wounds, two through his body and one through his shoulder but was as dead as you can make them.

Here we picked up two other 28th Division men and started for the creek. We got over all right but they hit pretty close and there were many dead lying in the fields which we crossed. As I went across the bridge, just on the other side lay a 35th Division doughboy, pure white and looking as if he were sleeping. He had on a wristwatch, which was still going and two very fine rings but no one had bothered him. We pulled his raincoat over his face and went on.

At five o'clock we met up with some 137th Infantrymen. I left the other boys to go with them. I carried an ammunition box quite a ways for Harry Fleming who was killed late that day or the next. I stayed with them until they were told to take cover down near the road, then I beat it on ahead to where Engineers were but I never saw anyone except some 137th Infantry and 110th Infantry, lost as I.

I went over to a creek and filled my canteens. I met some doughboys trying to braze chickens over a fire but they did not taste very good and I did not eat mu7ch although they offered me a whole one.

About seven o'clock I lay down in a shell hole at the side of the big hill and talked to some 110th Infantrymen and one 137th Infantryman. I guess that I slept a little, but not much. We started on up over a hill but were stopped by an officer. He said that it was too dangerous after dark with so many machine guns swinging around. So I sat down by a Vickers gun crew of three and loaded some strips for them from a box of shells, then just waited for daylight.

by a Vickers gun crew of three and loaded some strips for them from a box of shells, then just waited for daylight.

Early in the day, about six o'clock, I think, I ran into McNeal, our motorcycle driver on the road to Cheppy. I asked him to take me up to the outfit, which was quite a ways ahead. We started out pushing and riding the motorcycle. Half of the time I was in the sidecar and the other half I wasn't. Soon I was back again with my own boys, but there was quite a difference - my pal was gone. McDuff had been wounded by three machine gun bullets and no one seemed to know whether he was seriously wounded or not.

They were dropping them pretty close on us at Very and we dug in the side of the hill but a Jerry aeroplane had great fun shooting his machine gun at us at any time that he cared to. Believe me, he was unmolested except by our rifle fire and it was pretty strong the second time he came down at us.

Next morning. We moved on up to Charpentry and dug in there. We went into Charpentry and through the network of German dugouts, where we got all kinds of junk and many souvenirs, but best of all, I found a big jar of strawberry jam and believe me, I kept it although I did divide up later.

Just as Magers and I came out of the dugouts, a gas shell or H.E. [high explosive] lit right under Mager's foot about six inches in the ground. Luckily it was a dud but it knocked him down and nearly scared him to death.

Lane's entries describe well one soldier's view of the massive Meuse-Argonne offensive. Lane was promoted to Corporal, October 1, 1918 "in consideration of conduct under fire," by order of Colonel Clarke.

Captain Clarence J. Minick, 361st Infantry, 91st Division, A.E.F.

Diary entry
Sept. 26, 1918
The War begins for the 361st

A more miserable night I never spent, cold enough to freeze, no room to move about to keep warm - and too cold to sleep. We are patiently awaiting our turn at the Hun for revenge. Zero Hour was 12:00 midnight. Artillery from all directions broke into the silence of the night. The war was on for the 361st Inf. The heavy artillery guns sounded like the pistons in a huge marine engine. About 6:30 a.m. the 1st and 3rd Bn. [Battalions] went over the top after a heavy barrage of 7 and 1/2 hours. Our Bn. followed. We sure saw some artillery fire.

We saw wounded being brought back and many prisoners. We arrived in "No Man's Land" up to and across what had been the German front line the day before. There was nothing left of it. It was rather difficult to cross the shell holes. Many concrete pillboxes were passed. After crossing "No Man's Land" we were ordered to support a battalion of the 362nd Inf. in closing up a gap that had developed between the 181st Brigade and 182nd Brigade. After advancing through the Bois de Cheppy and Very we found that the gap had been closed.

We changed direction to the right along the edge of the Bois de Very (he we ate supper - reserve rations). At the farm I saw many German prisoners, also the first dead Yanks, one officer and 3 men and 6 dead Germans.

My company has only one man wounded. Tonight I showed the Co., how to go through barb wire. I put a man cutting wire entanglements and if it had been left to him we never would have gotten through. So I took the wire cutters & went through <u>for it was a hot place</u> and no place for a slow man.

Sept. 27th, 1918
Our Battalion was to envelope Epinonville from the left. We went "over the top" about

Sept. 27th, 1918
Our Battalion was to envelope Epinonville from the left. We went "over the top" about noon from the ridge at Death Hollow. Here many wounded & dead were lying in the road. Here Lieut. Paul Smith [361st Infantry] had been killed. Eclisefontaine had been pointed out to us as Epinonville. Under sharp artillery and machine gun fire we reached the outskirts of Eclisefontaine about 5:00 p.m. and dug in. We could see the 37th Division entering Ivoiry. About 3/4 of an hour we had orders to withdraw back to our jumping-off place.

Sept. 28th, 1918
This morning is bright. Fighting has started. We are getting reserve rations early and have orders that we go over the top again today. The Battalion goes out in the same formation as yesterday. Lt. Lane & Lt. Davis have assault platoons. In getting into positions near Death Hollow a high explosive [shell] hit in the head of the Co., killing four of my Co. Headquarters men: Pvt. Pane [Paul?] Washington, Willie Young, Rawley and [Glezen F.] Hamlin. These were really Co. G's first killed and fine fellows they were too. It was a big blow for the Co. but there were many more to follow.

We captured Eclisefontaine. Off of our sector. Move to right, a little to north of Epinonville. And attack again to right of woods. Here we were pinched out by a Co. from the 148th Infantry, 37th Division. In the meantime our Third Battalion captures Miller Ridge. Major Miller, Oscar J. and Major Farwell, George W. were killed this afternoon.

Sept. 29th, 1918, Sunday
Over the Top Some More
The 2nd Bn. received attack orders shortly after noon. Our Bn was to follow the 362nd at 500 meters. About 3:00 p.m. the 362nd front echelons started the attack on Gesnes. We were to take Gesnes & the Heights beyond at all costs. About 3:30 p.m. Co. G moved out.

Crossing ridge after ridge under high explosives, shrapnel, gas, machine gun fire between Miller Ridge & Gesnes under direct observation. Artillery and machine guns fire from high ridge beyond Gesnes and from Hill 255. This ridge and hill was wooded. Miller Ridge is located between the Bois Communal de Baulny and the Bois Communal de Cierges.

By 4:15 p.m. the 362nd had suffered very heavily (more than we and we had suffered considerably). I sent Major Ward (C.O. of our Bn.) a message (Cannot advance any further if I am to keep 500 yds. from 362nd Inf. They have halted). Major Ward's reply - message written in pencil on bottom of my message - Advance and reinforce the right flank of the 362nd Inf. at once. The battalion runner brought the message to Lt. Lane and he read it to Lt. Davis. Lt. Lane inquired of the Bn. runner (Broughton) if Captain Minick had seen the message and he replied yes.

This is where the misunderstanding came in and a split in Co. G. resulted Lt. Lane directed the runner to me with the message so to be on the safe side. I had never seen the Major's message before Lt. Lane saw it.

At this time Lt. Lane saw Amer. troops advancing across a creek and hollow to the left of Gesnes (which he took to be the 1st or 3rd Bn. of the 362nd Inf., also a few of Co. H. 362nd who he was in support of). The Lt. Lane & Lt. Davis (thinking I had seen the message) and had sent it to them for them to move out, and they went. At the start they moved to the left too much. Lt. Davis got mixed up and followed Co. F. although his platoon kept its position presumably awaiting orders from him. This left the 1st platoon with Sgt. Greenlees in charge. F. Co. by this time was pretty badly disorganized. Lt. Lane's platoon moved out and the 4th platoon under Sgt. Subia followed in support, Lt. Fairchild having been wounded.

I was slightly wounded but kept up with the company.

The 2nd & 4th platoons under Lt. Lane and Sgt. Subia moved straight north through Gesnes. About this time I received the message that Lt. Lane and [Lt.] Davis had

The 2nd & 4th platoons under Lt. Lane and Sgt. Subia moved straight north through Gesnes. About this time I received the message that Lt. Lane and [Lt.] Davis had already seen and had moved out on and which they thought I had seen. I sent company runners to the 1st & 2nd platoons to tell them to move out. I took up the advance with the 3rd platoon and soon caught the rest of the 1st platoon. After getting into the town I was the senior officer at this point on the line so we got busy and organized a line running along the hedge & ridge (north) of Gesnes-Cierges road.

I had sent message after message back to my Major with no reply what to do. So [I] took things in my own hands thinking Major Ward was killed. So I then sent patrols out to locate some troops on my right and left with instructions for all to return with their reports by 12:30 a.m. (September 30th). About 9:00 p.m. Captain Armstrong, 362nd Inf., reported to me that he had orders to withdraw and wanted to know what I was going to do. I said hold this town for it cost too many men to take to give it up. But they withdrew leaving my small detachment alone.

At about 11:30 p.m. some of my patrols reported back with the information [that] no one [was] on our right & left as far as 2 kilometers, being the distance they had gone. By this time I had close to 500 men, some from the 363rd Inf., 37th Div. men and 35th Div. men who were lost. I decided to withdraw at 1:00 a.m. if no orders came - none came - and at 1:00 a.m. we started back. On my way back I met Lt. Gilbert (Bn. adjutant of our Bn.) who told me Maj. Ward had been sent to the rear. And also said Lt. Lane was north of Gesnes. At this I told Lt. Gilbert to beat it back for Lane and Capt. Smith, Regt. Adj., who had gotten to us, led us back to our jumping off place, all too tired to think.

My leg was making it tough for me to even navigate but I decided to stick it our. We were on Miller Ridge where we went over the top the evening before. No back to where Lts. Lane & Davis left.

Captain F.O. Ludlow, Co. C., 6th Field Signal Battalion, 6th Division, A.E.F.

France, Sept. 29, 1918
My dear Mrs. Martin:

Your letter dated Aug. 30th has just reached me and I hasten to assure you that your son, James W. Martin, is well and doing his bit for his country near the fighting lines here in France. Just at present he is up in the mountains looking after telephone lines which connect our camps together.

He is out in rather wild country but has a good shelter to sleep in and I think he is quite comfortable.

I will see that he gets the letter you have written me and I hope he will get a chance to write you very soon.

1st Lieutenant James K. Burnham Hockaday, 354th Infantry, 89th Division, A.E.F.

Somewhere in France
Oct. 2nd, 1918

I am sorry that I could not write very often these last few weeks, but I think you will agree that I was doing more important business, if you have read the papers. I have been through it all and am glad to say I came out without a scratch. I got mud all over me from head to foot. It rained hard the night before the advance. I was going up to the lines that night in a motorcycle side car, but had to abandon it. The roads were jammed with guns, ammunition and troops all “moving up” and the rain was pouring. There was a trench running along the side of the road half filled with mud and water which I fell into head first a couple of times. The night was pitch black. I finally reached the dugout and there remained until the guns opened up and we went “over the top.”

head first a couple of times. The night was pitch black. I finally reached the dugout and there remained until the guns opened up and we went “over the top.”

It was a beautiful night. The flashes from the big guns lit up the sky like lightning. We could hardly hold the men back, to keep them from running into their own barrage. In six hours we had reached our objective assigned for the second day. These were the boys from Missouri and Kansas.

As I was going through one of the towns [Xammes] which the Germans had hurriedly left, I wandered into a deep cellar, or dugout, where they kept some stores. It was filled with many little trinkets, but mostly wine and beer. No, I don’t drink, Aunt Jessie, but I was very tired and shaky then, and to add to the discomfort, big Austrian howitzers were dropping shells all around. I’ll admit, however, that when I left the cellar I felt like going over and knocking out the whole Austrian artillery. [sentence censored]. Yes, indeed, I looked around a little and picked up a couple of German pipes, which I will send home or take back myself.

My orderly just brought me Jessie’s letter. I haven’t been to Paree [sic] yet. Thank her ever so much for knitting those socks. They will come in handy all right....

William P. Joyce, Battery A., 129th Field Artillery, 35th Division, A.E.F.

October 6, 1918

I will drop you a few lines today to let you know that I am still alive, but am wounded and in the hospital. I got a shot through the neck, but am making it fine and am in no danger at all. We are getting the best of care taken of us and get plenty to eat. The Dr. and nurses are very nice and do everything they can for us, so you know we are taken care of and there is nothing to worry about at all.

We had quite a spell of it the time I was hurt. We was [sic] giving the Huns hell by the wholesale.

You get all the papers and read them all about the war, don’t you? I can tell you more about it when I get back.

Well, Mother, I have not much to tell you this time, only that I am getting along fine. Hope to find you all well and in smiles with me. As ever, your son.

Private First Class John Lewis Barkley, Co. K., 4th Infantry, 3rd Division, A.E.F. In this undated letter from France to his brother, Barkley describes the events of 7 October 1918 which led to him receiving the Medal of Honor.

...How would you like to have been in the battle of the Argonne. There was not one second of this time but what there was a barrage from both sides of shrapnel and the strongest of gasses [sic] and the biggest of guns. The Germans shot some of the damnedest shells at us you ever heard of, bigger than nail kegs and four times as long and when one hit, you had better look out.

How would you like to have saw [sic] five thousand dead men to every thousand yards. Just think of looking from our house to our west line and then place this many men in the space. Across on the German side they was [sic] twice as bad. Don’t ever let anybody with dutch [German] blood in their veins ever say anything to you or about me or anyone else.

Don’t think I am going to tell you anything about that tank deal, it is too bad to tell a civilized man. I played them dirty every chance I got and this is not the first time I ever did this. I fired my last round of ammunition [but] kept my automatic pistol for hand to hand fighting, plunged out of the tank with a sudden dash. I had three bullet marks in my clothes and a burnt legging string. I run [sic] for a ditch about fifty yards from me and

did this. I fired my last round of ammunition [but] kept my automatic pistol in hand to hand fighting, plunged out of the tank with a sudden dash. I had three bullet marks in my clothes and a burnt legging string. I run [sic] for a ditch about fifty yards from me and went down it to our Major who was wondering what was taking place....

The War Department's official description of Barkley's deeds which led to him receiving the Medal of Honor related that:

for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy near Cunel, France, October 7, 1918. Pvt. Barkley, who was stationed in an observation post half a kilometer from the German line, on his own initiative, repaired a captured enemy machine gun and mounted it in a disabled French tank near his post.

Shortly afterwards, when the enemy launched a counterattack against our forces, Pvt. Barkley got into the tank, waited under the hostile barrage until the enemy line was abreast of him, and then opened fire, completely breaking up the counterattack and killing or wounding a large number of the enemy. Five minutes later an enemy 77 millimeter gun opened fire on the tank point-blank. One shell struck the driver wheel of the tank, but this soldier nevertheless remained in the tank and, after the barrage ceased, broke up a second enemy counterattack, thereby enabling our forces to gain and hold Hill 253.

Private Marion E. Simmons, 115th Engineers, 40th Division, A.E.F.

October 9, 1918

We have been on the jump for the last ten days. We moved out of the little village that we were living in early one morning and hiked about five miles with the heaviest blooming pack I ever carried, then we were loaded into one of their side door pullmans [French boxcars, known as "40 & 8's."].

All of the boxcars in this country were made for forty men or eight horses instead of a certain number of pounds. I think when they figured the capacity of those cars they surely figured on these frogeaters because forty American soldiers could hardly stand up in there, if anybody wanted to shift the chew [of tobacco] from one side of their mouth to the other they would have to go outside.

We had to put in two nights on the train and the hardest part of the trip was waking up in the morning without coffee. That was hard to take. Kim and I were out in what was no man's land before the drive and the layout was surprising. Why these Frenchmen had homes in some of these dugouts that I believe were more comfortable than any of the houses that I have been in yet. It looked like they expected to be in them for years.

I heard that some of the French had been in these trenches for a year without firing a shot from their rifles and before the Americans were in there six hours they had gone over the top. If you could see the places that they had to run the Germans out of it would surprise you, it looks like it is almost impossible. There was a doughboy hanging around here that claimed that he had gone over the top five times and was among those present when they drove the Germans out of their homes that they had.

He was telling me about going through the German trenches right after the raid and stopped before the entrance to a dugout and shouted "how many of you are down there?" Someone said "twelve." The doughboy said "well, just divide this up among you" and dropped a bomb down the hole.

Then I heard about a small stream with the French on one side and the Germans on the other. The French used to use this river in the morning and the Germans used it in the afternoon. When the Americans got there they opened fire on Fritz while he was having his bath one afternoon and the French were all peeved about it. They thought they never would get another bath, but in a couple of days they had the river all to themselves.

never would get another bath, but in a couple of days they had the river all to themselves.

Well, dear, that stuff has all been told for the truth but you can believe whatever you want to. I think that most of this stuff is about as reliable as some fishing tales that I have heard. However, I thought they would be interesting and there is not anything else to write about.

We were on pick and shovel repairing a road today. It was the most interesting day that I have ever spent in the army. We went over that old battlefield like sightseers, you know, necks all stretched and mouths open. Well, sweetheart, I have been sitting on a box with a board across my knees writing this and if I don't quit pretty soon there won't be enough ink in this pen to address it.

Private George C. Roth, Machine Gun Co., 7th Infantry, 3rd Division, A.E.F.

Diary entry
Oct. 11th [1918]

A Day to Remember
About 2 o'clock we got orders to move our positions on top of a hill in an open field. On reaching here we were immediately surprised by an Infantry of Dutch [German] and almost captured. We fought with our automatics until the Boche hunted a hole then all we could do was snipe while the Boche riddled the hill with artillery fire. About 4 o'clock our Inf. came to our rescue and we all went over the top with them.

We took about 400 prisoners and the rest fell back. Then the artillery opened up still more and shells rained on our position. About 20 minutes later a shell came to close and wounded me and two of my pals. We were helped to the first aid station and then sent to a field hospital.

Captain Clarence J. Minick, 361st Infantry, 91st Division, A.E.F.

Diary entry - Poem
October 13, 1918

They were lying dug in on the hills
East of the Argonne, France,
Some were forever still,
But the rest were taking their chance.
Four days they had battled the Boche,
These boys from over the seas,
Fighting as only Americans can,
For the cause of Liberty.
Gesnes was just over the hill,
And full of the dirty Huns,
The kind that holler "Kamerade,"
While working machine guns.
The order came to advance,
Capture the town we must,
And the Colonel said we'd do it too,
We'd do it by God or bust.
Shrapnel and shell, bullets and gas,
But only the hit went down,
Forward in thinning ranks they went,
To the ridge beyond the town.
This is not the song of the Light Brigade,
But of another He man fight,
And I guess that ravine this side of Gesnes,
Was the Valley of Death all right.
"Powder River, Hook 'Em Cow,"

Was the Valley of Death all right.
"Powder River, Hook 'Em Cow,"
This was their war cry yell,
And it means we'll never stop this side
of the fiery brink of H--LLLLLLLLLLL.

Sergeant Arthur Bundy, Co. C., 527th Engineers, A.E.F.

October 21st, 1918
In France

...You said you wished I would write a more newsy letter. Well, I might write it, but it would not pass the censor. Have seen much of France and many interesting sights, including many German prisoners. Have had the pleasure of seeing several German aeroplanes shot down and believe me, that is some pleasure too.

As for war news, you are in a better position to know how it is going than we are. We don't get a paper very often so will know little about how it is going outside of the sector in which we may happen to be in. Of course we can always pick up enough news to know that Fritz is not putting anything over on us.

We have strong hope that this year may see the finish of this game, when the world may again settle down to peace and rest.

Sergeant Charles S. Stevenson, Co. A., 314th Engineers, 89th Division, A.E.F.

France
October 24, 1918

I just got word from Maurice [his brother, Lieutenant Stevenson] that he is now in the hospital getting well from some shrapnel wounds. His letter was dated Oct. 16 and he said he was making good progress.

Now don't get too excited over his wounds. From what he writes he evidently got plenty of this said shrapnel in him, but if what he told me is true none of his wounds will impair him and all he needs for complete recovery is attention and time. You may be sure he will get attention and time is now at his disposal. None of his wounds will disfigure him, except one small part of one of his ears.

Shrapnel wounds can almost always be successfully handled and unless the victim dies at once he nearly always recovers and is generally as good as ever.

Officers of the U.S. Army are given somewhat different attention than enlisted men, being sent to separate hospitals and given more individual attention. We have some large convalescent places in England and he will probably be sent to one of these homes. England is a great place too....

Captain Clarence J. Minick, 361st Infantry, 91st Division, A.E.F.

Diary entry
October 27, Sunday [1918]
Memorial Day
Today we held our first memorial services in honor of the ones we lost in the Argonne which included 8 officers & 154 enlisted men at this date. Beautiful sermon by Chaplain Biard, 361st Inf. and Colonel.

November 1st, Friday, 1918
The Turnip Top Drive
At 6:00 companies of the 2nd Battalion received attack orders - Pass through 362nd Inf.

November 1st, Friday, 1918
The Turnip Top Drive
At 6:00 companies of the 2nd Battalion received attack orders - Pass through 362nd Inf. lines and attack in the direction of Audenarde. We finally located the advanced lines of the 362nd Inf. (dug in along a ridge in southern end of Spitaals-Bosschen Woods parallel to and about 1 3/4 K from R.R. They gave us but little information. Lt. Lane with patrols could find no Boche. We were able therefore to form a column of squad formation.

We guided on a high church tower in the town of Wortegem. We captured Wortegem without a shot. The inhabitants were a happy lot and gave us apples, milk and sandwiches of all kinds. Beer to the men. So far we have had no opposition, not even artillery fire.

On the ridge between two big windmills just north of Petegemstraat, we were held up by heavy machine gun fire. This was about 11:35 a.m. The 363rd Inf. had crowded us to the right some and we were bumping into the French on our right. Shortly after noon (after we had cleared the Boche machine guns) we changed directions somewhat to the left, advancing directly towards Audenarde [which] could be plainly seen in the distance, as well as the river Sheldt.

Boche machine gun fire [was] sharp and artillery fire heavy. The shell fire from across the river was terrific before entering Mooregem. We had reached our objective. We captured a piece of Boche artillery (a whiz bang) at Huddegem. Sent patrols into Audenarde to clean out snipers left behind. We have advanced 9 1/2 kilometers today.

Have lost several men, 7 wounded, none killed. Lt. Lane [was] knocked off a bridge by a shell & bruised up some, sprained knee. Nothing to eat today. Colonel Davis and Capt. Hughes killed today. Same shell got both. Colonel Cummings takes command of 361st. Slightly wounded myself at about 4:30 p.m. by high explosive. Can hardly hear anything, but intend to remain with Co.

This diary entry describes Captain Minick's participation in the Ypres-Lys Operation. The 91st Division was assigned to the Group of Armies of Flanders on October 16, 1918.

Sergeant Morris Pigman, unit unknown, possibly 28th Division, A.E.F.

France
Nov. 4th, '18

...I am glad to know that both you and Uncle Henry were workers for the 4th [Liberty] Loan. I have a share in it also paid for by my <u>little</u> army pay.

In your location of our division at the Marne battle we were somewhat north and west of Dormans at a little town of Conde-en-Brie. We had no casualties there but helped stop the best of the Kaiser's Guard. Where we had our worst battle was at Courmont north of Jaulgonne on the Marne River.

I am sending to you a little sheet of German propaganda that has been dropped to our men on the front line by the Hun aeroplanes. They are trying to weaken the morale of our men. What a feeble appeal for us to give ourselves up to them. Our boys only laugh at it and gather them up for souvenirs. They come down every morning like rain and the ground is covered but no one bothers them.

From all the news that we can get, Turkey has quit the war. If that's the case I don't suppose Germany will last much longer....

Sergeant Pigman's description of activity during the Aisne-Marne operations, July 18-August 6, 1918 would seem to put him with the 28th Division.

Now Corporal John Lewis Barkley, Co. K., 4th Infantry, 3rd Division, A.E.F.

Now Corporal John Lewis Barkley, Co. K., 4th Infantry, 3rd Division, A.E.F.

Nov. 6, 1918

I am back from the front and believe me!!! I wish I could tell you about the fight and what we did for the Boche. I have just come [sic] out of one of the worst battles and the most deciding battle of the war. The American soldiers are the most gallant, brave, witty and stubborn fighters in the world. I mean "world" and that is taking in lots of territory and lots of good fighters. The French, when they came to barb wire entanglements, they just dug in and sat there until the Boche moved them again.

Now a different man appears on the scene in O.D. [olive drab] uniform. The Boche say these men are very wild and reckless and don't care what time they come over the top or how rough they handle their opponents or what kind of shotgun or rifle they use. I have a hunch that I am recommended for something good, something that but few American soldiers ever win. I sure did some work at this front that will never be forgotten. My officer says that I am deserving of it. I will write more if I can someday.

ARMISTICE

Captain Clarence J. Minick, 361st Infantry, 91st Division, A.E.F.

Diary entries:
November 10, Sunday -
Bombs sure dropped close last night. My Co. on labor duty today. Boche have till 11 a.m. tomorrow to sign Armistice. Have 50 centimes bet that they sign it. Sleep tonight in a Belgian cellar under my P.C. [Post of Command].

"War is Over" November 11, Monday - Hurray. I haven't heard a shot since 11:00 a.m. this morning. Is the war over? It must be. How sweet it is to stir about without thinking you will be shot by a Hun sniper.

1st Lieutenant Lealand Shadburne, 110th Ammunition Train, 35th Division, A.E.F.

La Guerre Finis, 11th Hour, 11th Day, 11th Month, Somewhere in France

Dear Dad:

Here I am sitting here in Co. "D" orderly room when the word comes out that the War has started to end. Well, what do you think of that? Just now or a minute ago an old lady came out of the house of ruins and began going up and won the road crying and shaking hands with all the Americans. The church bell ringing all four of her bells as they had never rang....

Sergeant C.D. Grant, 19th Ambulance Co., 4th Division, A.E.F.

Dairy entry
Nov. 11 - Morning.
Still heavy fighting. 11:30 a.m. ALL OVER! Impossible to believe that it can be so quiet after the awful shelling.

Private W.R. Phillips, Co. D., 110th Engineers, 35th Division, A.E.F.

Diary entry [November 11, 1918]
This was a happy day. The band played and our dear old flag flew proudly. That showed to us that peace was at hand. We are ready to leave this old world behind and set sail for America and live in peace under the dear old red, white and blue forever.

This was a happy day. The band played and our dear old flag flew proudly. That showed to us that peace was at hand. We are ready to leave this old world behind and set sail for America and live in peace under the dear old red, white and blue forever.

H.M. Vale, U.S. Army Ambulance Service with the Italian Army

November 12, 1918
Dearest Girl:

I know that today is a day of celebration for you in America as it is for me in this country. The people here are overjoyed and we are having a series of Holidays, church and otherwise anyway, and the signing of the Armistice made it one continuous festival....

Private John L. Hackley, 89th Division, A.E.F.

Diary entry
At 2 o'clock a.m. Nov. 11 we started to the front again, marching all the way through mud & arriving at 10:30 a.m. ready to go over the top again late that evening when we received the order to turn back. The last shot was to be fired at 10:59.

I believe this last trip on the Front was the hardest trip or hike we ever have taken. It sure was a glorious time to know that we could sleep that night without dodging shells.

Sergeant Charles S. Stevenson, Co. A., 314th Engineers, 89th Division, A.E.F.

Nov. 14, 1918

It's been a long time since I wrote, but "there's a reason" and the reason is shown by Germany's acceptance of the Armistice. We chased the Boche way, way back - and the good news of November 11 is the result.

Honestly, folks! It seems too good to be true! We had very little idea it was coming and you can guess how much it pleased us. None of us can realize it yet - it certainly does seem too good to be true! To you all there it means the same and a lot more. Until Maurice or I get back you won't know what this thing has meant....

1st Lieutenant James K. Burnham Hockaday, 354th Infantry, 89th Division, A.E.F.

11/16/98
My dear Mother:

Well the war, as far as we know now, is over and the good Lord has been very good to me. We knew of the armistice early in the morning and at the eleventh hour all guns ceased. What a relief now to be able to walk down a road without being on edge and ready to drop in a hole at the whistle of a shell.

It all came so suddenly for we hear very little of what actually goes on, that it is hard to realize and I have been unable to come out of a kind of stupor.

The next important question is "when are we going home?" I wish I could answer that. This division was going to have the honor of being part of the army of occupation and we were going to Coblenz, but just yesterday orders were changed. This division is going to move some place pretty soon but I don't know where. The army of occupation has already been decided upon and I can't see anything else they can do with us except to ship us back. This is purely conjecture, however, and it will take quite a while for all of us to get back. We might also have to rebuild some of these French towns and "police up" the battlefields before leaving.

Perhaps you have heard of the town of Stenay. This division was the first to enter that

up" the battlefields before leaving.

Perhaps you have heard of the town of Stenay. This division was the first to enter that town at five minutes before eleven on the eleventh day of the eleventh month. Our headquarters are in a beautiful chateau where the Crown Prince lived for two years and a half. The Kaiser also visited here frequently. We eat in the same dining room and with the same china and silverware that the royal family used for so long. The same caretakers of this chateau are here now that were when the prince was here. Strange to say they liked him very well. He was very kind to them and frequently gave them gifts. The people in the town, however, are of a very different opinion. They despised him and the Kaiser. The caretakers say that the chief occupation of the C.P. [Crown Prince] was to change his suits. He changed suits at least ten times a day, no exaggeration. He never took an active part in the war such as planning campaigns or leading his army. He was merely a figure head [and] enjoyed riding his horses and automobiles.

The Germans are getting out of France as fast as they can now and letting their prisoners loose as they go. The latter are coming through the lines all the time: French, English, Russian, etc. There are not many Americans. You can't imagine how happy they are.

I shall have to close now. Give my love to all. When I get back and sit down in front of the parlor fire on a soft cushion, I'll weep for joy. I wouldn't have missed being in this war for anything, but oh! how happy we are that all this bloodshed is over and we will no longer see the awful sights of maimed bodies and crying men on the shell torn fields of battle.

After The Guns Were Silenced

Russell R. Peed, Co. B., 9th Infantry, 2nd Division, later 1st M.P. Co., A.E.F.

Paris, France
Nov. 21, 1918

Just a line to let you know that I am well. I guess it won't be long before I see you all again. Well, what do you think of the good news? I suppose you had quite a celebration the day the news [of the Armistice] reached over there. They sure did celebrate here in Paris for about 4 days. I am on a station doing duty now.

You should see all the prisoners coming back. French, Italians, Belgians & Americans. They sure look awful. It sure is a shame the way they have treated them.

Well, we have worked pretty hard the last 3 mo. but today we got 80 new men so it will be easier from now on.

You wanted to know how long I was in the hospital. I was in the hospital 2 months then I went to a convalescent camp and stayed 3 weeks then came to Paris. I was in the hospital here 10 days for the same thing, but am feeling pretty good now. I can still feel the effects of the gas yet and for some time to come, I guess.

Well, Mother, don't worry. I hope to eat Xmas dinner in the U.S.

Sergeant Charles S. Stevenson, Co. A., 314th Engineers, 89th Division, A.E.F.

France
November 22, 1918

...We have been shifted from one dirty French town to another dirty French town. We do not know where we are going - or when - in fact as far as any knowledge concerning ourselves the only thing we know are events of the past.

A letter from Maurice yesterday told me he had been placed in Base Hospital number

A letter from Maurice yesterday told me he had been placed in Base Hospital number 34. Wasn't it great stuff that he was awarded a Distinguished Service Cross? I picked up a copy of the New York HERALD of November 16 on the street of one of these before-mentioned dirty French towns and in it I found a short article telling just where and under what conditions Maurice did the deed.

...Can you beat that -- his getting the D.S.C.?

The official account of Second Lieutenant Maurice S. Stevenson, 16th Infantry, being awarded the Distinguished Service Cross stated: "For extraordinary heroism in action near Exermont, France, October 9, 1918. He displayed splendid devotion to duty by twice passing through a terrific artillery and machine-gun barrage in order to transmit important orders from his brigade commander to the assaulting battalion, and while in the performance of such duty was seriously wounded, but refused to be evacuated."

George Carroll Roth, Machine Gun Company, 7th Infantry, 3rd Division, A.E.F.

November 25, 1918
I'll give you a little surprise and I hope it will find you well and able to enjoy reading it. I am still in bed but think I will be ready to travel in a few days. I hear the wounded ones are to be sent home first so I kinda [sic] plan on being home by March and I hope it won't be any longer than that for I am getting anxious to commence to live again. I'll just give you a little idea of the kind of life I have been living.

You know I just got here in time to see part of the drive at Chateau Thierry and I guess that was a good place to get broke in. After we were relieved there we were billeted in an old farm for about two weeks. Then we were sent up to the Toul Front but before we got into much trouble we got jerked off the line and rushed to the Metz Front where they all said would be our last fight for the winter and it proved true.

We were up there 15 days before I got hurt. We had advanced about 1/2 mile beyond the Argonne Woods when I suddenly took a notion to go to the rear. I got shot in the right leg and a piece of shrapnel in the left foot. I guess it was time to go to the rear, don't you....

Lt. Colonel B.M. Atkinson, 1st Pursuit Wing, Air Service, A.E.F.

December 12th, 1918
To the 13th Aero Squadron, 2nd Pursuit Group, 1st Pursuit Wing:

To remind you all of your great deeds would be superfluous. Organized late in August, you found yourselves confronted in less than a month with the most formidable elements of enemy air service. You came to the battle untrimmed, but filled with the spirit of sacrifice; your dash, skill, and teamwork achieved a proud record, you set a new standard for all countries which have fought in this war for aviation. Foul weather could stop you no more than the enemy, day after day, of wind, rain and mist, saw you flying and fighting at all altitudes, cooperating with the infantry in their muddy struggle on the ground or meeting the enemy more than five kilometers in the air.

Bombers and fighters both played their part in achieving mastery over the enemy air service. You are officially credited with having destroyed 286 enemy air service. You have dropped 150,000 kilograms of bombs on his lines. Now the war is ended. The armistice, forever humiliation of the enemy, is signed. You have played no small part in helping to win the victory.

In the days that passed between the end of August and the signing of the armistice, many of your comrades have been lost. Their memory will be treasured forever, for each of them you can feel, "none died that day with greater glory, though many fell and

In the days that passed between the end of August and the signing of the armistice, many of your comrades have been lost. Their memory will be treasured forever, for each of them you can feel, “none died that day with greater glory, though many fell and there was much glory.”

The Wing is disbanded. The task set before our country nearly two years ago is almost completed. Its successful conclusion is due to the qualities of the team work and self-sacrifice which no where were more highly exemplified than in this command.

To the Wing Staff, the Second Pursuit Group, the #3rd Pursuit Group and the First Day Bombardment Group, to the 13th, 22nd, 49th, and 139th, to the 28th, 93rd, 103rd, 213th Squadrons and the 95th, 11th, 166th and 20th Squadrons, to every officer and every man in them, the Commander bids good-bye. His pride in your work is beyond expression.

Chaplain King, 18th Infantry, to Mr. John Shaw, about Walter G. Shaw, 18th Infantry, A.E.F.

January 1919
Dear Sir,

Your son, Walter G. Shaw, was killed by a shell on October 2, 1918. The 18th Infantry was holding the line at a town called CHARPENTRY in the Argonne. All day & night the shells were falling on our position. One of the shells killed your boy. He is buried at CHARPENTRY.

May God reward & comfort you for having given a son to the service, who gave his life for freedom & justice and the peace we will soon enjoy.

Private Dean Robertson, 79th Company, 6th Marines, in occupation in Germany
Bittze, Germany
March 9, 1919

...Our outfit is fixed pretty well, being in a town & on the river and railroad. Some of the companies are scattered in 2 or 3 little villages & have to hike a mile for chow. However, they probably don’t have as many inspections & battalion drills & parades.

We all had one shot with a Colt automatic at a small target about 10 paces. There were about 25 of us & we scored 7 hits. I like to shoot a pistol. It is great sport.

Most every German family had sons & brothers in the war & many who never returned. Every now & then we see a fellow with part of his old uniform - dirty grey blouse or trousers - and nearly always the round red trimmed cap that is their uniform cap. I’ll bet lots of them have pulled a trigger on us. Here where I live there is a souvenir in the clock. It is a small monument marked “Verdun” & has 2 bullets & pieces of shrapnel on the 4 sides. I suppose some Heinie was in the line there & brought home the souvenir.

...Don’t worry Mother dear, I won’t sign up for any extra time. I want to come home as soon as Uncle Sam says so. I don’t dislike this country or the service as far as emergency requires but now the war is over, why, I want to go to work again....

Corporal John Lewis Barkley, Co. K., 4th Infantry, 3rd Division, A.E.F.

April 2, 1919

Germany is fine and dandy and you see I am here on the Rhine and do nothing but entertain the dutch [German] girls and you know I am good at that! I can’t tell them anything about the war. You see, I leave that out for so many of them had their sweethearts killed and I just let things run as smooth as they will.

anything about the war. You see, I leave that out for so many of them had their sweethearts killed and I just let things run as smooth as they will.

When I received my Medal of Honor O lost all my dutch girls. They heard what I did at the front and everything. Annie, I did not get to see the French girls very much for I was always at the front keeping these dutchmen away from Paris.

...I don't know what America is going to do with so many Americans that for two years they have been studying how to kill human beings. The army of occupation is the army that did the fighting. When you see some good looking fellow with a wound stripe and many gold service chevrons you can ask if he wasn't in the Quartermaster Corps somewhere in Paris.

You may have seen some of these kind of fellows but wait until the famous army of occupation returns and then you will see some real men, a man that hiked 250 miles with a pack upon his back facing every rainy, cold and drizzly day with mud and slush to your ankles up hill and down.

I have been lucky, Ann! I have went [sic] over the top with wave after wave, have seen wave after wave fall and never was touched by a bullet but have had my pack and rifle stock riddled with bullets while I was wearing it too.

My old gas mask was my best friend and believe me I always used it too. Those Boche would make an attack and when they did would try to gas, shell, bayonet and machine gun you all at once. Then is when the Americans would try to do the same and hell broke loose and we rushed together with trench knife, pistol and bayonet and the man that was the dirtiest, wittiest and luckiest came out all right. We fought with any gun that was the closest to us, dutch, French or American. I won my Medal with a dutch machine gun. I sure got myself some krauts....

Private Grant McClellan, Co. L, 806th Pioneer Infantry Regiment, A.E.F.

April 4, 1919
Mrs. Bessie McClellan:

...I will be home in the next 4 weeks if nothing happens. You asked me what division I was in when we came over. We were the last part of the 92nd Division but when we got to the front they were resting and we went over the top with the 28th Division. We are in no Division now, so I hear.

You don't know half the time where you are. These people don't let you know anything. It seems like a dream to me now to think of what I have gone through. I have never told you anything yet....

The 806th Pioneer Infantry was one the segregated units of African Americans in the U.S. Army.

Adelaide Travis, American Red Cross canteen worker, Foreign Service; another letter from Travis follows.

May 19, 1919
Canteen Des Deux Drapeaux, Survilliers

...We went to the front a week ago today: to Montedidiers, Amiens, Albert, Lens, Arras, St. Quentin and back through the Forest of Compaigne. There is no use my trying to describe the destruction and desolation up there. No description, picture or amount of imagination would give you any idea of it. I was awfully shocked and after seeing it all I marvel that Bart [Lt. Bartlett Travis, 65 Squadron, R.A.F.] or any of them are alive to tell what they have been through.

marvel that Bart [Lt. Bartlett Travis, 96 Squadron, RAF] of any of them are alive to tell what they have been through.

It was just a tiny part of the British front that we saw but it has made a lasting impression on me that will last as long as I live. I consider myself very lucky to have seen it for so many of the workers who have been over here during the war have gone back without seeing a thing....

Private Dean Robertson, 79th Co., 6th Regiment, U.S. Marine Corps, 2nd Division, A.E.F.

Rheinbrohl, Germany
June 2, 1919

I have just returned last eve. from quite a trip into France...for services on Decoration Day [in Beaumont, France]. Everything went off well. There was a detail of French soldiers & a band there. Also several French officers with Gen. Pershing. Also there were 2 or 3 hundred French civilians there - come to help us honor the American dead.

The cemetery is beautiful for a new one. The graves are raised and leveled off, the crosses are all even and on every grave was a flag and wreath. In the center was a big American flag at half mast.

After noon, we looked around town. It had been shelled considerable [sic]. I talked with several young French lads who had stayed thru the 4 years of German occupation. They said they were sure glad to see the Americans. The 6th Reg. Headquarters Marines were in this town on Nov. 11 which is the reason I think we were sent there.

On Sat. a French couple got married. They have 2 ceremonies, one in the town hall by the mayor; the other in the church, by the priest. We witnessed both of them.

When the bridal couple came out of the church a bunch of the fellows made an archway of crossed bayonets while the band played soft music. A little later while we were standing by to move the Captain suggested we take up a collection for them & give them a good start. Everybody was willing and they got about 700 francs ($100). The Captain called the couple out in front of us. We presented arms & the band gave them 4 flourishes - what a General rates. Then he gave them the money & wished them well. Then the band played the “Star Spangled Banner.”

When we left they played “There’ll be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight.” An the French soldat (the groom) and his pretty wife waved at us & said “good bye” in English. I bet the Americans will always stand ace high with that couple & with the whole village....

Adelaide Travis, American Red Cross canteen worker, Foreign Service

June 24 [1919]
Chantilly
...There was great excitement here this week when Peace was signed everyone celebrated. All the Permissionaire Poilus had heard the news and celebrated the night before, so we had a camp full of very gay men, some of them quite zig-zag, as they call it, and our guards who help us were all tired out from dancing all the night before.