

Letters from Downers Grove Soldier Boys

HARRY SLUSSER WRITES FROM "OVER THERE"

Am. Ex. Forces, France.
March 29, 1918.

Dear M.
It is 9:15 p. m. and when I came up the street a few minutes ago it was just getting dusk. Tomorrow is Decoration Day and will be celebrated here with fitting ceremonies. Already from many windows the Tricolor of France is proudly flying. It seems to look differently here than when I have seen it back in Chicago. Here it is at home.

I am still uncertain as to what my immediate future will be. By another sudden change frequently met with in the army the Director of the Schools has been relieved and sent to France. This may mean that the present adjutant will be relieved also. There is absolutely no use in speculating as to what may happen. The only philosophy is to take what comes and try to do the best possible under the circumstances.

As you see from the papers the big drive is on again. I presume by this time even the most optimistic idiots back in the States realize that we have a tremendous task ahead of us. We shall win. There can be no question about that for the righteousness of our cause is as certain as the everlasting hills. But as to what sacrifices shall be required of us that remains to be seen. If it shall be that all of our chatter and weakness and folly must be paid for with blood and tears we as a people can only bow our heads and say to the God who leads us through, "Just and righteous are Thy judgments altogether."

American citizenship must mean something. It has come too easy. Perhaps the American People will only be brought to a realization of their blessings when they have gone thru the Valley of the Shadow of Death. We value highly those things that have cost us dearly. You remember the Roman Centurion who stood in awe before the Apostle Paul, who was a native born Roman citizen and said "This citizenship I bought with a great price." It will be well if we feel so as a nation. And then if our

children and children's children forget not the price.

I wish so much I could be with you tomorrow on Decoration Day. The day will mean more in the States, I doubt not, than it has meant for many long years. I suppose there will not be quite the same interest in ball games etc., as formerly. The cream of our youth will not be there for they are over here, or fast coming to play the oldest man's game in the world.

I must bring this long letter to a close for it is late. So long as I am able to I will write you just as often as I can. But do not be alarmed if there is a break, because I may not be situated so I can write so frequently.

As ever,
Harry (Slusser)

LT. JOHNSON SIGHTSEEING IN LONDON

The following letter was received this week from Lt. A. L. Johnson by his sister, Agnes:

Dear Agnes:
Am now over in old England, and have travelled the entire length of it. It is a very beautiful country, small fields and hills parted off by well trimmed hedges and shrubbery in bloom. I am located at Winchester: the oldest city or town, and which was the capital under the Romans hundreds of years B. C. as well as by the Saxons, Normans and English.

Am in London on leave for a few days sightseeing, etc. Read your history and you can tell what I am seeing for I intend to see everything of interest in London and elsewhere. Yesterday I attended church service at Westminster Abbey, and the King and Queen were there, and also the Princess Mary. The King tipped his hat to a number of American officers that had saluted him and he rode away without any escort as far as I could see.

I have met a number of fellows in the R. A. F. who know Gordon (Reid) well. I will probably run into him here.

There was an air raid here last night for the first time in three months, you no doubt have heard of

it already in the newspapers. I was not frightened, but you can imagine what a commotion there would be in a crowded street. I was not far from where the bomb fell. About a quarter of a mile. I cannot tell you the damage that was done.

I have got to quit this letter and go to tea. I am getting just like the English, go to tea at four o'clock, and the English have got to have their tea even if the war has to stop.

Beautiful weather over here and the days are long. A couple of weeks ago it did not get dark until about eleven o'clock at night, that was at Liverpool.

Love to all,
Arthur

FRITZ SACKSTEDER WRITES INTERESTING LETTER

The following very interesting letter is copied from the Springfield, Ill., Sunday News, of May 26.

On Active Service with the Am. Ex. Forces.
April 4, 1918.

"My Dear Mother:
"A long time has elapsed since my last letter to you, but I believe I can make up for it now, as I have a comfortable place in which to write and also the time. My last letter was written from the front, so is this one. This, however, is on another trip up here, as we have had a rest since then. We are very comfortably located here. There is very little going on at present. I am now located with my detail of six men in a nice cozy little room with all (?) the comforts of home.

"We have a room on the second floor of a house. The room is only about 12x14 but we have double bunks all but mine. We have a good size table and plenty of benches. In one corner is another table against the wall on which we have our radio equipment, with room for two operators. We have a stove and plenty of fire wood so mother dear, you can see how little we suffer. Our kitchen is just outside the door downstairs. We go down and get our mess and come up here and eat it; pretty soft—"Com-

meat!"

"We are just getting used to this kind of life, as we have not had it heretofore. While at the front the other time we were forced to keep on the alert a good deal of the time lodging souvenirs with which the Boches were kind enough to present us. For example one night we were awakened by heavy firing and as we lay listening and talking about it, we heard a whiz-z-z and then a crack and bits of tile flew around over our bunks. In the morning I found a piece of high explosive shell under my bunk, about 2 1/2 inches long and 1 inch square. I kept it for a while but forgot it when we moved from that section.

"Mother, no doubt you have heard the statement that it costs \$10,000 to kill a man in this war. I could not believe it was true until I saw it. We used to sit and watch the Boche shelling our various positions, and that was most of the time. It was very interesting to see the way they shoot all around a target and not hit it. On two different occasions we were forced to take to our dugouts (abries) because they were dropping too close for comfort. There is one big advantage we have and that is we can always hear them coming. It is possible after some little practice to tell almost exactly where they are going to land also to duck in plenty of time.

"The first announcement of the fact that a shell is coming is a high pitched sound, which becomes louder and louder. It sounds a great deal like the whir of an electric self starter on an automobile. By the time the whirring gets real loud you can tell where the thing is going to land. If it is a big one, the best thing to do is to lay flat on the ground if it is in a radius of 150 yards. In several instances I was out where they were falling pretty close. At the first sound I became very much interested in the shell. As it approached I became still more interested and began to look for a place to flop into.

"At such a time a small mound of dirt 3 or 4 inches high looks very welcome indeed; if it is the only thing in sight a shell hole looks like a home. In the meantime the shell is coming on. The next move you make is to make yourself protrude above the surface of the earth as little as pos-

sible and my, but you can flatten out! You then lay there and wait and you don't have to wait long for the shell is coming on, although you succeed in making your helmet, which is normally only 12 inches in diameter, cover about two thirds of your body.

"My! How you wish you were a turtle. By this time the shell has arrived and you welcome the sound of the violent explosion, because if you hear it you know it did not hit you. The next thing to worry about is the pieces, they also announce themselves with a musical hum, which would be pleasant if it were coming from an organ. Again you wish you were a turtle and you cover as little space as possible: until the hum has ceased. The danger is over now until the next one sends out its announcement. Another good thing is you can generally time them.

"The most gratifying thing of all is to go through all this preparation and to have it land with a thud and fail to explode.

"The most trying thing about shell fire is the noise they make in coming, that gets on a man's nerve.

"The worst thing about this war is the gas. It is a tremendous bother because you never know when it may come. For this reason you have to carry gas masks all the time and it is much in the way.

"We had a couple of gas attacks. One morning we were awakened by the call "Gas." By the time we were fully awake we had our masks on and were safe. A mask is a very uncomfortable thing to wear.

"We are not engaged now, though at the front. Please don't worry as a shell will have to be directed by a greater hand than the Kaiser to get me. I am your loving son,
Frederick Sacksteder."

GEO. JOHNSTONE WRITES FROM FORT SILL

Ft. Sill, Okla.
June 15, 1918.

Downers Grove Reporter:

Dear Mr. Staats:
I have just time enough to thank you for the Reporter which you so kindly send me and which I enjoy

very much, before I am called back to the mess hall to help the cook. You see, everybody gets a chance at that and it was just my luck to be one of three, out of our company, to serve as kitchen police in this hot weather. I began last Sunday morning and I finish tonight, for which I am thankful.

I am stationed down here in No Man's Land where nothing but the bugle and the sand blow, and they blow often. Rain is very scarce here but when it rains, it rains.

Ft. Sill is a very big place and there are aeroplanes tanks, French guns, etc., moving about all day long.

I do not want to write a lengthy letter but just a few lines to let you know I receive the Reporter and believe me I often think of good old Downers Grove.

Again thanking you and with kind regards, I am,

Yours in haste,
Pvt. George S. Johnstone,
9th Field Artillery,
Ft. Sill, Okla.
Headquarters Co.

Nitro-Starch Possibilities.
Nitro-starch, more compact than the allied nitro-cellulose or gun-cotton, seems to promise great efficiency as a blasting explosive.

Character and Obedience.
Character is grounded on obedience. All the human derelicts stranded on the rocks of life came to wreck because of continued disobedience to the chart of right living. Wrecked lives are directly chargeable to the parents, who did not compel obedience during the formative period of childhood. Insistence on a course of action lays the foundation for obedience during infancy, but as soon as the child develops reasoning power something more than mere insistence is needed to develop obedience.

Parental commands are laws which rule the domain of childhood and, like the laws of a nation, they are obeyed in the degree that they are believed to be reasonable and just. The child is a rational human being, however much we may ignore his capacity for reason, and our commands must be founded on reason if we are to expect reasonable compliance with them.—Mother's Magazine.

FORDSON TRACTORS

Demonstration at Mooseheart, Ill.,

JUNE 24th & 25th

750 Tractors have been assigned to Illinois at the request of Governor Lowden. They will be delivered direct to the farmers at factory price of \$750 plus \$25 freight and delivery charges anywhere in Illinois. Fleck & Buchholz, the Hinsdale South Side Sales Room, are distributors for this section and will be glad to give any information relative to the Tractors or the demonstration at Mooseheart.

FLECK & BUCHHOLZ

Phone 58

HINSDALE, ILLINOIS