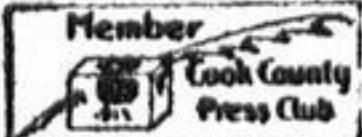


Downers Grove Reporter

Issued every Friday morning from the office of the Downers Grove Publishing Company, Belmont and Forest Avenues, Downers Grove, Illinois.

C. H. STAATS, EDITOR

Entered at the Downers Grove Post Office as second class mail matter. Advertising rates made known upon application. Subscription rates \$1.75 per year. Single copies 5c.



"And The Star Spangled Banner Forever Shall Wave,
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LETTERS FROM DOWNERS GROVE SOLDIER BOYS

Ruhe Auto & Tractor School
North Kansas City, Mo.
July 25th, 1918.

Dear Dad,

Well Dad, after trying many times, I am about to write you a letter for publication with fair success of finishing it. This job I am now on surely keeps a fellow humping and with the drill evenings make a long day.

I have been working in the office of the Captain of "D" Company since the second week I was here. For the past ten days, while the Acting Sergeant Major of the fourth platoon has been home on a furlough, I have taken his place and now that he is back I expect to have a little more time for personal affairs, such as keeping in touch with the home folks.

The last three days, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and today, have been the hottest we have so far experienced. I understand that the thermometer registered 110 in the shade yesterday and that one of the fellows from "T" Company pretty nearly went bat by looking for some shade.

North Kansas City, is only a small town and was built several years ago by a traction company, which still owns I understand, most of the village. It is only a ten minute car ride from the center of Kansas City and has possibilities of growth. There are now several manufacturing industries located here and two of them are of large size.

The Ruhe Auto School, that is the Army branch, occupies the Rumley building and three floors of the Sears Roebuck building. The Rumley building is used for school, mess hall, and two floors for barracks. Here C, I and K companies have their home. In the Sears building are D, L, and M. One to a floor. The company rooms are a little crowded but we all realize that Uncle Sam is in this war to win and that he cannot build on short notice, commodious barracks for every detachment of his vast army.

School days for the class now here, are nearly over. I don't think that graduation day can be more than two

weeks off. Men who can't here but two months ago will be sent to camps throughout the United States, wherever needed to take care of the vast transport system of a modern army. Some will go as truck drivers, some mechanics, others as experts on ignition, lubrication, rear axles, carburetors or other parts of an automobile, to repair, assemble and drive. They will be sifted into every branch of the service which has any use for automotive power and which branch hasn't in this age of gasoline. The Quartermaster's Corps, Infantry, Artillery, Aviation, Signal Corps, all will draw men from this school.

The first school, which was graduated just before we came, was an experiment on the part of the Government. No successful was it, however, that a second class was inducted into service and a third will follow.

Along with the school, about which I know little having attended but three or four days, we have regular infantry drill with rifles. Here is where my Co. H, I, R, M training stands me in good stead. From the first I have been an acting Sergeant and for the past two weeks a platoon leader. One of our platoons here is almost as large as the entire Co. H. at home, as it is composed of seven squads. Some nights we drill each platoon separately and others with the company. Both on Thursday and Friday nights of last week we had parade and review. One Thursday night we were reviewed by the commanding officer of the school here and on Friday night by the Major in charge of the Sweeney and Ruhe schools.

As for me, when the present school is over, I hardly know what will happen. I have put in my application for entrance to the Fifth Officers Training Camp and it has been endorsed by our Captain. If I do not pass the examination I expect to be held over in a military capacity for the next school.

Those whose applications were favorably acted upon by Company Commanders for the O. T. C. were examined by the Major last week. When

it came my turn to step into the office and "on the carpet," my heart missed several beats and I almost forgot to salute as I came to attention in front of him and the two Captains that composed the Board of Examining Officers. My knees shook with pure nervousness and the desire to appear as if that was an every-day occurrence. Two of the many things I thought of while being questioned were the captions of Briggs' famous cartoons, "Anxious Moments," and "When a Feller Needs a Friend." They were surely appropriate.

Fourteen men of this company have applications in that have been endorsed by our Captain and we are all on the anxious seat to find out how we passed our personal exam. Somehow or other, I am full of confidence (I suppose you're saying now, as usual) and think I will get my chance to go to camp. Once there, however, it will be different. In a few talks with our lieutenants, both graduates of training camps, I have been given to understand that the grind is awful and that I will be doing well to stand up under it. Be that as it may, if I can qualify as an officer I will do so. In a talk given us by our Captain he said it was the duty of every man in the army to prepare himself to step up and take the job of the man ahead of him and that the United States' crying need of the future of the Army was officers. If I can do my bit better in that way than in any other I want to win a commission and get across to where the real work of the war is going on, over in France so throttled and ground under the heel of imperialistic Germany.

The students here are crazy to get into the real thing and most of them are trying to get into a branch that will get them over and into it in the shortest possible time. It seems a funny thing that the minute a man gets into the army he wants to go right over, but it is the truth. We hadn't been here a week until they were all scheming on finding out which branch was most needed "Over There" and then to specialize in that. It sure makes one proud of the United States and her sons. They all realize that we are not in it to "pull France's chestnuts out of the fire," but for the defense of our own glorious country and its future. Many of the men are married and like I, have left loving wives at home. This can easily be seen from the size of the "D" company mail bag, both outgoing and incoming.

Well Dad it is getting late and this is my night to see that all the bunch is in quarters and make a report to that effect to the Officer of the Day. It is after nine and the fellows are beginning to drift in. Our usual tap hour is 10 on but Saturday and Sunday nights the lights go out and peaceful quiet reigns at 10:30.

That is peaceful quiet reigns some nights. One night last week, though, this was the noisiest spot in the state and the hollering was heard for miles and down the Missouri valley. The cause was this. One of the "K" company men a Swede born in Germany, who has been in the country for the past 12 years, refused to be naturalized when the aliens of the camp took out their first papers. That night he was caught and plentifully daubed with yellow paint on his naked back, chest, head and face. Not satisfied with this he was put at the head of a procession in which most of the six companies joined, all yelling like wild Indians. It sure showed where the hearts of these boys lay.

Will write again as soon as possible. Regards to all the old Downers Grove friends, the best little town in the world.

Your son,

WALTER
Co. D, Ruhe Army School,
N. Kansas City, Mo.

Chateauroux, France,
June 17th, 1918.

Dear Ruth:

I haven't received any mail since I wrote on the 15th, but I will write to you anyway just to show you that I haven't forgotten you over Sunday. Yesterday was the last day of unrestricted liberty for the company. Now the new order is in effect here and we cannot go down town during the day except on official business and evenings from 5 o'clock to 9 p. m., except 20 per cent of the company designated by the top cutter, short for serg't. That excepts Sunday but is a long time until next Sunday. So we made the most of it yesterday. From the deserted looks of this barracks at 9:30 taps last night, I think some of them overdid it.

Yesterday afternoon, Sunday, my pal and I were down to the Red Cross enjoying the music and having tea and sandwiches for the big sum of 9 cents. Watched the Paris express come in and several locals. There sure are a lot of people on one of those trains. Big engine and about 25 coaches to the train. Came back here for supper after taking a side trip over to the roller skating rink. I did not try it for I had on my hobnails and my feet are too big to get into a pair of skates anyway without the big shoes. There

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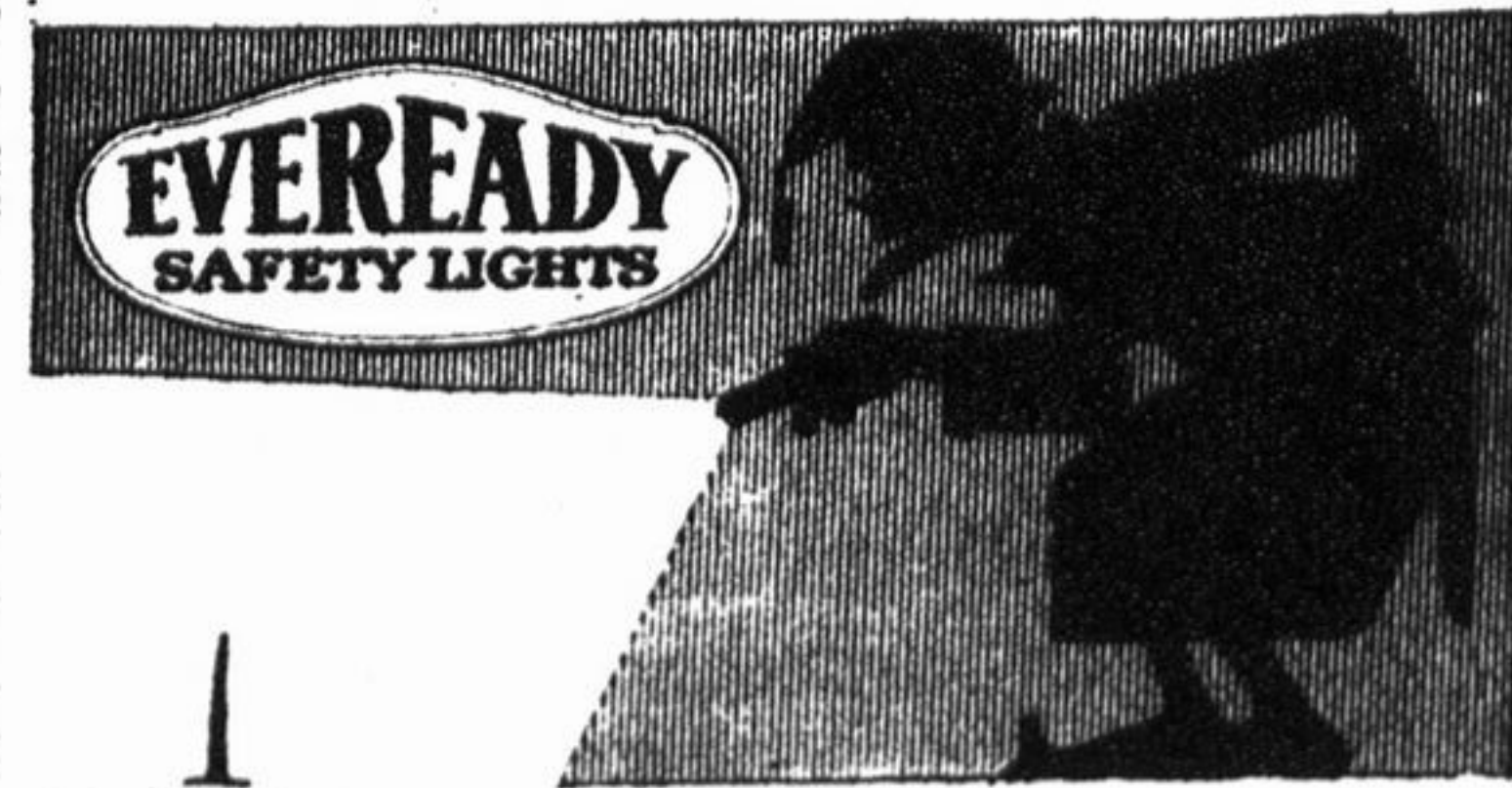
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Don't stumble over a chunk of night!
Don't trip on a chair wrapped in blackness.
Don't fall victim to the garden rake;
or the baby's tin soldiers that lie in wait
for your bare feet.

Don't flirt with fickle night.
Go where you want to and get what you
go after, and do it decently.

Take an EVEREADY into the night—
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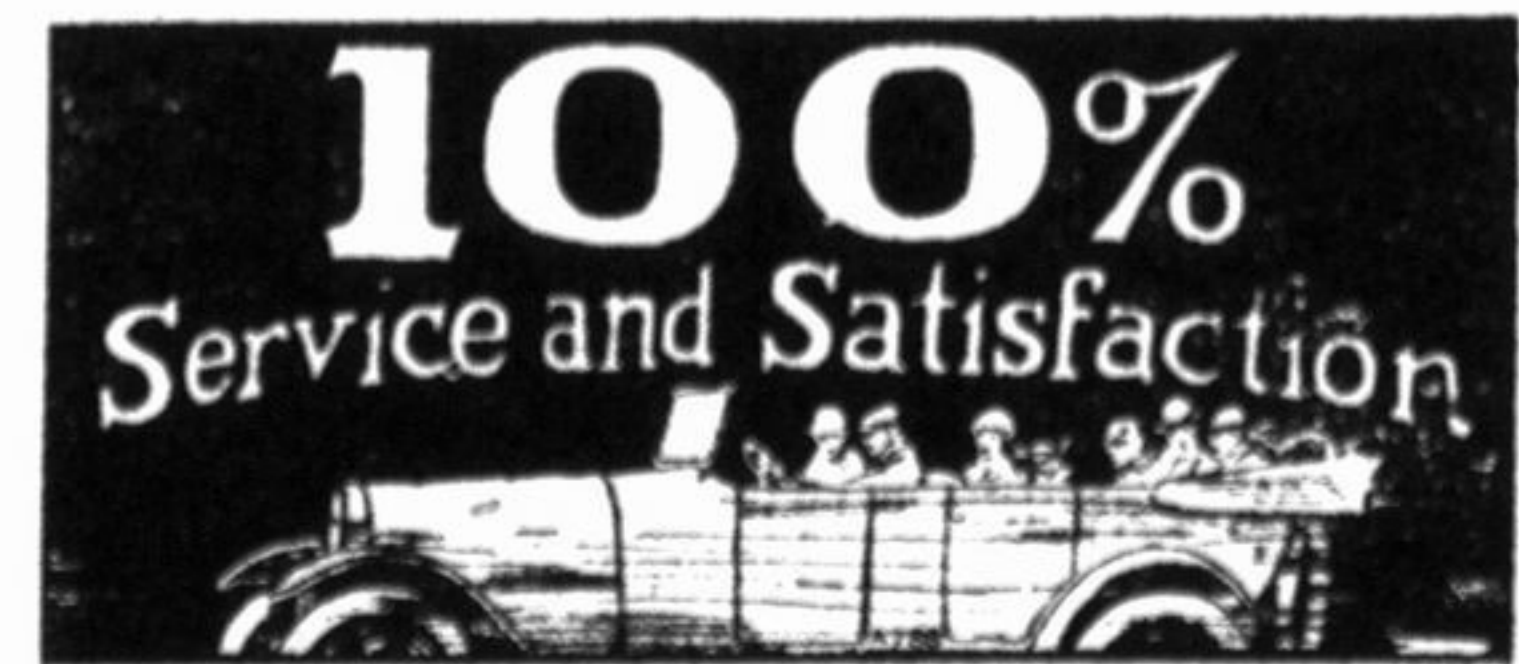


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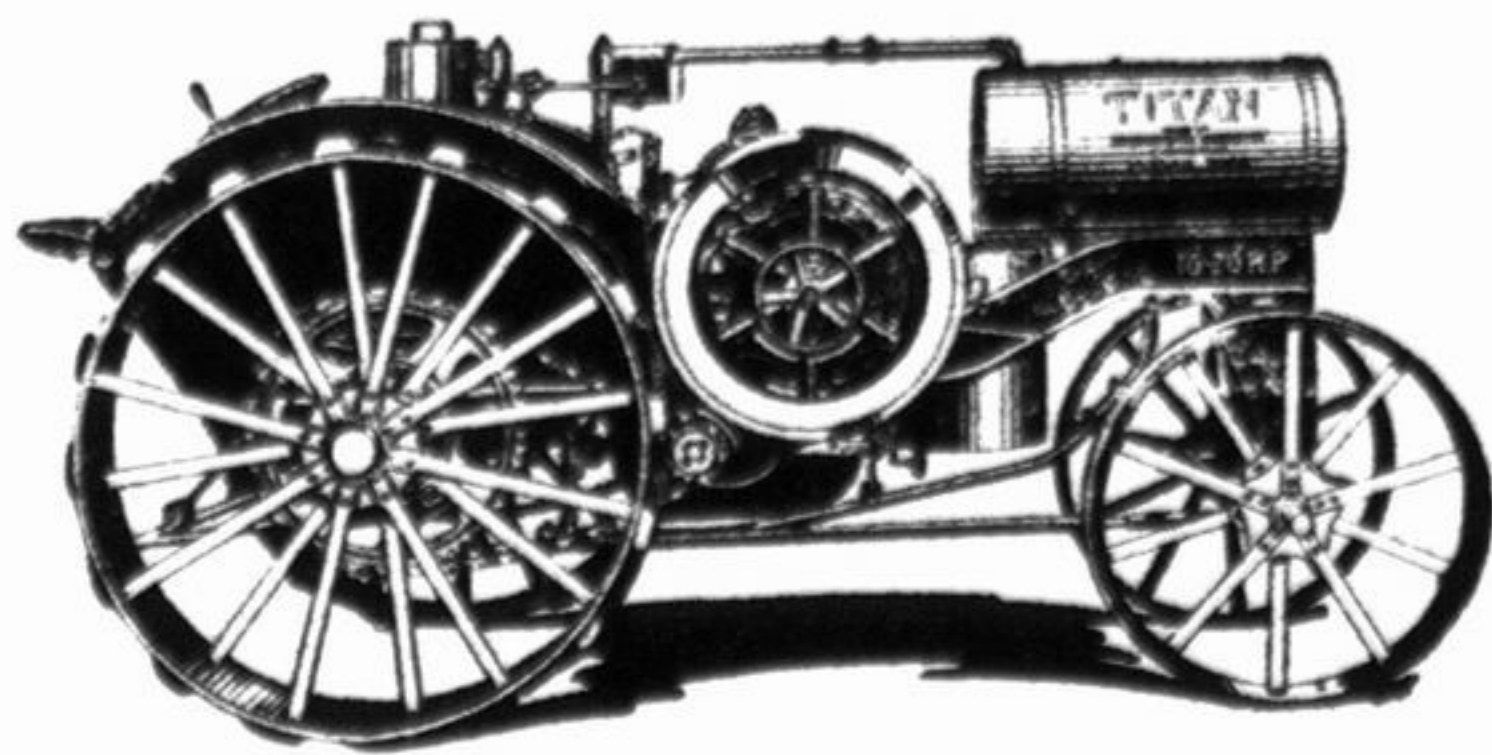
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