

Downers Grove Reporter

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"And The Star Spangled Banner Forever Shall Wave, O'er The Land of The Free and The Home of The Brave."



LETTERS FROM DOWNERS GROVE SOLDIER BOYS

THERON POTTER WANTS ICE CREAM

France, October 3d, 1918. Dear Mr. Staats:

Today I received a Reporter dated July 19th and noticed several letters in it from our Downers Grove boys over here, they were surely letters of interest and I was asking myself why it was I hadn't written to the Reporter since I've been here, if it was nothing but a letter of thanks for sending me copies of the paper. The copies may be a couple of months old but the news is new to me for it has been over a year since I have seen that old "hog" and in that time there is certain to have been changes take place which only the Reporter could tell about.

I noticed an advertisement in the paper as follows: "We are able to supply your wants in Ice Cream, phone us and we will deliver the goods." Houseman Drug Co. Well, I had almost forgotten that there was such a thing as Ice Cream. I don't think the Froegies know what it is for we have been in several good sized towns while we have been here and nary a spoonful of that tonsil cooling stuff have we seen, I'm sure though that if old Doc, Houseman and I had phone connections he would get a rush order P. D. Q.

Today a big truck pulled up to the Headquarters and about a dozen Officers and Non-Coms piled in and off they went on their first trip to the States, they were going back to be instructors in some other Division there. I'll bet that was hard to take, don't you think so, ten to one those fellows couldn't be dragged back to this hog pasture again if they were allowed to bring their wives with them.

This war is getting to be more of an occupation than adventure, if it last a couple more years I'll think I have a steady job, we will be so used to the army style of living that when we do get back we will refuse to sleep in a bed declaring that the floor or a shelf or a nice level patch of ground would be much more comfortable. I hope I don't forget myself in the States while in some restaurant and ask the head cook when he wanted 'em lined up for mess, he would think I was either on my way to Elgin or had just escaped, allowances will have to be made for the mistakes we are bound to make until we get back to a civilized way of living.

I have seen quite a number of the D. G. boys while I've been here, I ate and slept together with Laurence Rehm for three months but now that he is a Railroad Postal Clerk instead of a Brigade P. C. I see nothing of him. I have seen the Kidwell brothers quite often and Warren Wells a little more often, he was over here last Sunday night for about two hours in which time we talked over more happenings than could have been talked of at a Woman's Club Meeting. I saw Richard Hawkins and Arthur Dent a few days ago and they both told me they had seen most of the boys from the Rainbow Division, also some of our Artillery boys from this Division which we left in Camp Logan last spring. Adolph Winters is right around here and also Frank Gregory. Adolph was carrying a good sized pack when I saw him last and was about as much out of breath as he used to be on the basket ball floor a couple of winters ago.

A Lieutenant was telling us last night about one of his Corporals who made the entire company laugh when they were capturing a machine gun nest of the Jerry's. This particular Corporal stuttered considerably when he was excited and when he had waded thru mud up to his knees and had

fallen in it a couple of times he wasn't in the best of temper, when they got up close to the Huns one of them came toward them with arms up, surrendering, with a broad smile on his face and very glad to be taken prisoner. This Corporal went up to him and in a stuttering voice said, "Laugh you old devil" and before he had finished saying it he had delivered about six swift kicks to the rear which quickly took the smile off of the Hun's face. The incident must have looked much funnier than it sounds for this Lieut. had to hold his sides while he was relating it.

A week ago today was an interesting and exciting day for all of us. A big drive was started the night before and everything was lively in general. A bunch of our observation balloons were all around us and the Jerry aviators worked hard to down them and did succeed in getting a few of them on fire, it all happens so quickly that a person has to be looking right at the balloon when the music starts or else out on half the show. Its fun to see the observers jump out of their observing baskets and float to the ground in their parachutes. That same day we saw an interesting airplane battle between an American and a Jerry, it lasted about 7 or 8 minutes and was better than any world series ball game ever pulled off, the American downed the Hun and I'm sure that if the American could have heard us cheer him he would have had to get a size larger cap for his next trip. Our throats were raw from nattering but we blamed it on the bad weather.

I didn't intend to make a package of this letter but will have to if I don't stop writing, if this letter gets to you as quickly as some of my mail gets to me it ought to be there by Christmas.

Best to all, Sergt. Theron Potter.

WM. HEAL HAS TO RUN SOME TO CATCH UP

Sept. 15, 1918.

Dear Folks: Am feeling fine, and hope you are well. Have done quite a little marching, and it has rained every day lately, but it cleared up yesterday. We left here early Friday morning and went up to the lines and got there about 7 a. m., and stayed until Saturday morning, then came back to camp. The joke is, when we got to the lines, they had the Germans going back so fast they didn't need us, so we went back to camp. Suppose we will go back in a few days but will be off the lines before you get this. We saw a number of prisoners they had just taken.

It is hard to get stationary until we get off the lines, so don't worry if my letters come irregularly.

In the night the sky flares up like lightning from the big guns near here, but we are way in back of the lines and no German shells land near here. I suppose I will have to wait another month before I receive any mail.

We have slept in almost every place now: old German trenches, dugouts and pup tents, and it is very seldom my clothes come off, so I will be able to sleep any place when I get home.

I will have a lot to tell you about also. Have traveled over the largest part of France. It is a very different country than I imagined.

Will probably have more to write when I write again. Things look very rosy, as we certainly are giving the Dutch theirs. Suppose you know more about the war at home than we do, but we can get a New York and London paper when we are way back of the lines. Will close with love to you all. Your loving son and brother. WILLIAM. Letter from William Heal.

MILES TIMES EXPLODING SHELLS

France, Sept. 15, 1918. Dear Annie Ruth: Pardon me for not having written for so long a time. I have no real good excuse so won't give any. This, I believe, is the first time I have written since I have been in France, and so should be able to tell you a lot. First a few words about myself. I am feeling fine, as healthy as the day is long, eat a lot, sleep well and weigh considerable more than I did when I landed here. I like it first rate. I am still company clerk for Company C. One Hundred and Eighth field signal battalion, A. E. F. France, A. P. O. No. 750. That is my address. At present we are stationed about nine kilometers behind the lines at one of the old battle grounds. The village we are in is all knocked to pieces by German shells, in fact he still puts them over here when he feels mean of mornings, you know—when he gets up on the wrong side of the bed. I timed some of his shells the other day when he was shelling a village north of us. You could hear the distant boom of his gun and exactly thirty-four seconds after that the shell would hit the town. Between shells and bombs we have a merry time.

France is a wonderful place. The villages, which are far off from the cities, are old-fashioned and quaint, with the stables and barns built up flush with the road and the houses behind them, exactly opposite to the way we plan things in the states. And Paris, from all accounts, is one gay place. I don't know, having only passed through there. All I saw was the Eiffel tower and some large buildings about a mile distant. I have also been through London on my way here. We were here only a short time when our infantry went into line for instruction purposes and then you began to read in the Chicago papers about the good work done by a certain Chicago outfit and that outfit was this one. Believe me, the Germans lost their idea right then that we were British dressed in American uniforms, as they had been told by their officers. Some of the blockheads still think that way, but wait until they meet a Yank.

I met one of Ruth's particular friends the other day, a certain Bill Luthorn and also an old friend of mine. Sure was glad to see him.

I have received a few letters from mother and father since I landed and try to send them one every two weeks. A fellow loses track of time here so easily and it hardly seems possible that we will be wearing our first gold service stripes in a short while. (8th month's service.)

I must close now, Annie, as I will not be able to fill up another page tonight and should go to bed. I will try to write more often in the future. Lots of love to all at home and the lion's share to your own dear self. Affectionately, your nephew, WILLIAM R. MILES.

EDGAR BOYDSTON THE THIRTEENTH

France, Aug. 22, 1918.

Dear Mother and Ruth: Well it is five months today since I left New York, and believe me, never before have I had such a five months. These quarters we have here are as I said before, part of an old convent, but after this bunch got here it is as much unlike a convent as any place you ever saw, but this is a very pretty town. On one side of our quarters we overlook the Loire river, but it is narrow and only four or five feet deep here, but fine for swimming. I have been in twice this week. Today I was on quarters police and believe me I worked hard, but about 4:30 p. m. I found time to go over and jump in for a half hour before supper. We sure have been lucky to have a river to swim in all the time.

On the other side of our barracks I can look upon the hill overlooking the city and see the remains of the old chateau which was built in the fourteenth century and which was shot up in the war of 1870-1871. There certainly are some pretty buildings and views here as you can see from some of the cards I send.

We see many of army life here, there are lots of French and British soldiers. This noon I took the bunches out to the men on the job and coming back we picked up a bunch of Tomatoes. You surely would laugh to hear them talk. You see we have to go past a British flying field. There are some U. S. A. officers there too.

There are always a lot of soldiers coming in and out of this barrack. One of the interesting things is the veterinary hospital. The horses, are mended the same as the men. Some of the horses come in just skin and bones, but they get good treatment and flesh wounds are about all that is curable on a horse. Broken legs are seldom cured. Is a wonder we don't get horse meat, but we haven't had any such bad luck yet. The other good thing for me is that I haven't had a cootie since I left Havre. Yesterday I had a wicked day in kitchen police. Well, people, I think I'll close now. Love, EDGAR.

Sept. 15, 1918. Well, people, I got through Friday, the 13th, without any bad luck, but yesterday and today ought to have been the 13th. Saturday afternoon and Sunday we usually have to ourselves, but the top cutter called for volunteers to go out picking blackberries. Can you beat it? So he could have pie before he goes away. Well,

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try a volunteer, so he said: "Hell, no volunteers; well, I want all you guys to stand around after dinner until I pick out a gang." Well, you understood it. I went and also some others, and let me tell you that we got the blackberries, 24 quarts in two hours and we left more than we picked. We should have the pie for dinner. Oh well, Sherman was right, but at that we are having the time of our lives.

Well, the furlough is delayed for a while, but I'll get it yet. That is one of the many things that, knowing, I cannot tell. Times are not what they used to be.

I decided not to send that book of views I spoke to you about as I am getting skeptical about this trans-Atlantic mail service. I have them and a good many others of places I've been through, but I'll carry them back myself. In the meantime the Stars and Stripes will give you an idea that we are not at all slouchy in war, society or love.

I received a letter from each of the two nice French girls I have been writing to. They seem to understand my French. I am going down soon and buy a big cantelope for my dinner. A big one costs about two francs and fresh tomatoes we get for a penny, but I got a franc's worth at a time and that lasts me for a time.

Well, this is supposed to be my Sunday letter to you and I don't know how much of a success it is, but I've lately made the marks on paper so you can see I am not among the missing. I might add that there is no bad news to write if I wanted to. You never saw such a lively bunch in your life.

I want you to be sure to read all the Stars and Stripes I send. I am going down now and get that mail. I'll close now. Lovingly, EDGAR.

THE CUB REPORTER GETS SHOT IN ARM

October 23d 1918. Barracks No. 6, Evanston, Illinois. Dear friend and Editor:

Just a word to let you know I'm in the army. Some life this better than hanging around. Getting to be some soldier now, had a vaccination and two shots. Got my second Monday and was in bed all day Tuesday. Takes a man to stand them, believe me but although I may be a poor excuse of one I feel fine and get away with affairs just "swimming by." We are in quarantine until Nov. 1st or soon after. Seems funny not to get home but in a week or several months I do not know, I'll be in the south at an officers training school. Took an

exam for entrance and passed O. K. Got my draft board release and the only thing that hinders me is my age. Oh! Why! wasn't I born sooner. My folks are sending me the Reporter so I can get some addresses. Gordon Swanson and Aubrey Jones are up here. See them every day. Well I must close hoping to get the Reporter from home soon.

JOSEPH FENDER WINS AS MARKSMAN

Paris Island, S. C., Sept. 28. Dear Mother: I received your letter and that was good news you sent me. I have been getting the Reporter alright. Well, mother so dear, I will tell you my good news: I am now through with my rifle range. My score was 262 out of 300 points, so I qualified and won a pretty medal. Some of the other lads won marksman and sharpshooters medals, but I beat them all. I got the highest score out of 483 men. That's pretty good, I think. The lieutenants said so, too.

Right now the boys are singing for me while I write you this letter. We have our fun, and it isn't as hard as (continued on page 5)