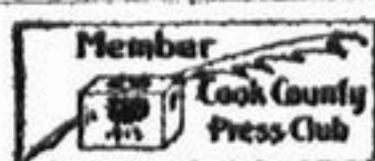


Downers Grove Reporter

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C. H. STAATS, EDITOR

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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

ADOLPH WINTER "WENT OVER" ON ARMISTICE DAY

France, November 16th, 1918.
Mr. Staats,
Dear Friend:

It has been a long time since I wrote to you and thinking you might care to hear an ordinary W. S. Engineer's idea of the last act in this bloody struggle over here. As the French say, "La Guerre Finis (the war is finished). I played in the last act before the curtain was rung down and if the act had not been cut short, I guess I would probably be "pushing up the daisies, instead of writing to you.

On the night of November 10th we received orders that we would be the advanced guard of the north column of troops, that were to enter into Germany via one of their greatest strong holds. We did not say much, but we knew what advanced guard meant, to be plain, one chance in Hell of coming thru: Grimly we put on our tin derbies, made a last examination of our gas masks, filled our ammuni-

tion belts with 100 rounds apiece, took our rifles and started out. We arrived at our front line in the early morn of the 11th. We were assigned four Engineers to a company of dough boys and cut the wire in front of Jerry's front lie trench. In other words make a path for the doughboys. One NICE job. It seemed like hours we waited in the mud and slime of the trench, for our orders to go over. And I think in the heart of every one of us was the prayer that Germany would sign the armistice and we would get out of it, before our orders to go over came. But Fate ruled otherwise. Finally our orders came, and being Americans over we went. It was just a few minutes later that a runner brought word up to the front line that the armistice had been signed. They tell that the bugler leaped on top of the bags and blew recall for us, but we did not hear him, as we were EXTRA busy, about that time. He then ran after us, across "NO Man's Land" and sounded recall again. This time we heard him and started back but some of the boys were killed on the way back. Oh, the bitter

irony of Fate, to be "knocked off" after the armistice had been signed. We threw ourselves into our front line trench and laid flat in the mud, because Jerry had not as yet heard the armistice. had been signed and was giving us about all the H. E. and gas shells he had left. The next half hour was the worst Hell, I ever expected to pass through. There we were knowing the war was supposed to be over, and still shells were coming and men were dying. Some of them cursing their luck at being hit after the war was over. The War was over and Victory was ours! I can hardly realize it yet, that this bloody struggle is over. I can still see the lad that was hit just a minute before the guns stopped. Death beat the signing of the armistice by a minute for him.

But it is over now, and will soon be only a memory. We have done our bit. Now for that little town back in the U. S. A. where Mother and Home await me.

Wishing you and the D. G. Reporter the best of luck.

Sincerely,
A. F. Winter.

THERON POTTER TELLS OF OBSERVATION DANGER

France, October 9th, 1918.

My dear Cousin:
Your letter came yesterday and I was sure glad to hear from you, you write a very interesting letter and I sincerely hope it isn't the only one I'll receive.

So you think the helmet is a heavy piece of head gear to wear, well they are very tiresome but they get used to them. Our helmets are not near as heavy and are made much better. They have rubber hosing around the inside covered with leather. The first few days a person wears them is the worst for it makes the back of the neck very tired but after a few days it isn't noticeable.

Today we saw the largest number of aeroplanes we had ever seen at one time, 138 went over us and right for the lines, we watched them circle around beyond the lines and come right back within 20 minutes after they went over us. They dropped their load of bombs and came right back. The enemy sure did a lot of shooting at them but only got one plane out of the bunch. It came down in flames. I suppose you know all about the manner in which the aeroplanes are shot at, they have long range guns that shoot a shrapnel into the air at an awful height. They are timed to explode

at a certain distance and when 25 or 30 guns cut loose at an aeroplane it generally makes him stay pretty high. Any time of the day we can always see shrapnel bursting in the air and it is very interesting to watch the plane to see how close they come to hitting him. The enemy planes come over to try and shoot down our observation balloons and it is lots of fun to see the observers jump from their baskets and float down in their parachutes. They generally get down safely but sometimes have had places to land such as woods and swamps and in those cases sometimes get hurt. The observers in the American Army only have to make three jumps and they are honorably discharged, the French observers are discharged the same only they have to make four jumps and it is compulsory to be an observer in the French Army when they are picked while in the American service it is voluntary. The jumping is very weakening to the heart, one Captain I was talking to not very long ago told us that he was bothered with heart trouble every night, he told us that he was always unconscious from the time his parachute opened until he hit the ground. A week or so ago I was real close to two observers when they jumped, one kicked his feet back and forth to try to land on a mole while the other one was very limp and couldn't stand up after he landed. It goes to show that some retain consciousness all the way down while others do not. Their parachutes are made of white silk and are the shape of an umbrella and about 25 feet across. We saw eight observers jump inside of two hours one day. There are either one or two observers to a balloon depending on the ferocity of the drive, they are told when to jump by ground observers, they themselves cannot see the enemy plane approaching for they are in a little basket underneath the balloon watching artillery action and giving gunners the proper range by telephone. The balloon itself is 82 feet long and 27 feet in diameter filled with gas so you can imagine how many minutes they last when a dozen or so inflammable bullets are poked into them from the machine guns of the enemy plane. The balloon is nothing but ashes long before the observer gets a good start toward the earth, occasionally however the enemy will miss the balloon entirely being shot at uncomfortably close and will go up into the clouds again leaving his mission undone. Some aviators are much more daring than others and will swoop and then drive at it re-

gardless of the shrapnel bursting on all sides of it if it takes a full minute to complete his work which period is a very long time and seldom that length of time is necessary.

Today we saw an American aviator make a forced landing on a hill top, his machine turned completely over when it hit the ground due to the fact that his propeller was broken, he didn't get a scratch himself but he been mixed up with three Jerry machines across the line and they shot his machine into pretty bad shape, he was very fortunate in landing on this side and without injury. He was just a lad of 19 years old and was a 1st. Lieutenant. The aviators all seem to be very young judging from the ones we have seen, he was a real pleasant lad to talk to and didn't seem the least bit excited over anything, just as if it was an every day occurrence

with him.
I didn't intend to make this letter a one subject affair but as the air service is the most exciting part of the war it isn't a wonder that we write and talk of it most.
Theron (Potter).

BOCHE SPOILED SCHEEL'S SUPPER WITH ARTILLERY

November 12th, 1918.

My dear Mother:
Well it is all over now but the shouting and I have the satisfaction at least, that I was right on the front line when hostilities ceased. Yesterday at eleven o'clock you could have set a watch by the artillery, our batteries were raising red all morning and when it came five minutes of

(Continued on page 6)

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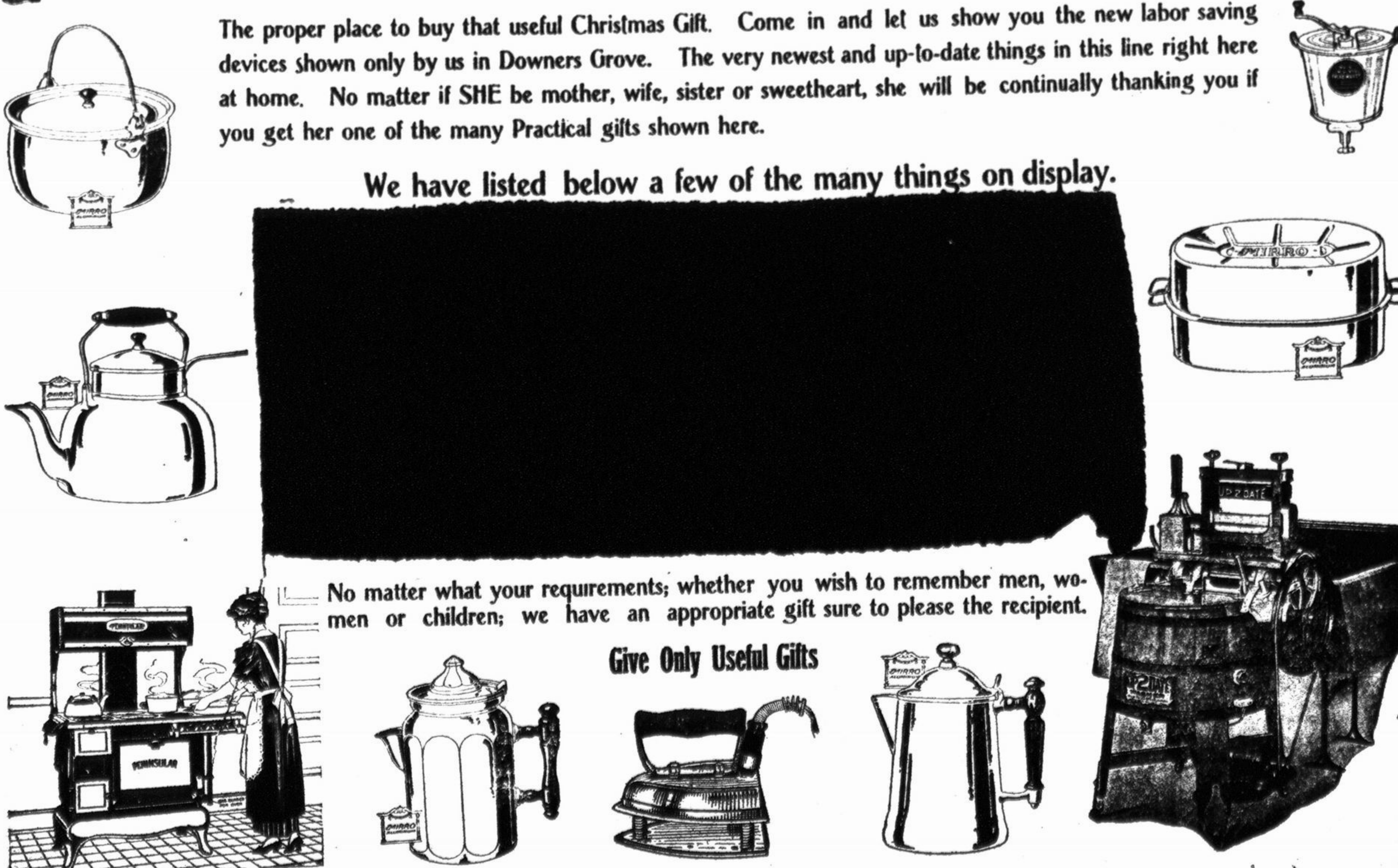
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