

LETTERS FROM DOWNERS GROVE SOLDIER BOYS

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good but not much like real American candy. I have seen thousands of Austrian prisoners, they march them by five and ten in a group, and they are a pretty ragged and hungry looking lot. Very few of them have any underwear at all and their clothes are in rags. They have no socks, and wrap their feet in gunny sacks or most any old rag they can find. I have talked to lots of them, and quite a number can speak English and have been in the states but they all claim they were over here when the war began, that they never would have left if they had known there was going to be a war. They all want to come back to the United States again, but I guess they will find that a pretty hard job.

During the offensive it was not an uncommon thing to drive along the road and see dead men and horses lying on both sides of the road, which had fallen probably just a short time before we passed, and in the trenches and on the scene of the hardest battle there were many more. One could go out with a large truck and in ten minutes pick up a load of helmets and rifles, bayonets, knives and gas masks. They used a lot of gas shells up on this front too. I have quite a collection of war trophies and pictures and hope I will be able to bring them home with me.

I came near buying another bond but didn't because we hope to get a furlough soon and then will need some money, as I want to travel around and see all that I can while we are here. Traveling is quite expensive now when you have to buy your meals. Think of eggs costing 1 Lire a piece, twenty cents for one egg. Shoes cost 75 to 100 Lire a pair. Most everyone here except soldiers wear wooden sandals.

Well my stinky letter has gotten rather lengthy and it is bed time again so will say goodnight. Love to all, Ed. Pfaff.

GEORGE DICKE TO HIKE ON GERMAN SOIL

France, November 17th, 1918.

Dear Folks: I just received two letters from you also the Reporter you enclosed. I sure was glad to get the Reporter but wish I had one sooner, the address in it are fine as we can look up our old friends. The reason that I haven't been getting them regular is that we have moved around from place to place so often. We were relieved by the (recovered) Division and I note that Shannabrook is in that Division. I

saw many fellows of that outfit but failed to find Billie. The other day I saw Bill Heal.

We are now back of the lines in a nice little town called Commercy but believe we will leave soon. Think we will go to Germany as this is a branch of the regular army and I do not believe we will start for home for a few more months. Its a good thing the fighting is over or we most likely would be laying in some cold woods without fire. I am going over to see Elmer Lehman tonight. Today - got a shave in a barber shop for the first time in a long while, maybe you don't think it seemed funny and the barber shop was a joke.

I suppose you will get this letter about Christmas and I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, my next letter will most likely be written from Germany as it is rumored we will have an eleven day hike on German soil.

As ever, George (Dicke).

EXPLOSIONS "SCARE" AMERICAN BOYS

France, November 23d, 1918.

Dear Mr. Staats: A few weeks ago I wrote to you asking you for a copy of the Downers Grove Reporter at intervals, but since then you have been so kind as to send me the weekly edition regularly, and tonight I received the Reporter for October 18, and the fifth copy of all the good news from home which has reached me in five consecutive weeks. They are all getting to destination and I enjoy them immensely. As the papers started coming before my letter could possibly have reached you my request was evidently granted before asked, and I thank you ever so much for your kindness.

Well, the noise of the guns has ceased, and for that matter ceased at 11:00 a. m. sharp on the 11th. At that time the difference was very marked as you may well imagine, but we have gotten used to it now, and I had to laugh today when there were two explosions near here, one following the other very closely with a sound very similar to two shells coming over. The fellows all sat up very straight for a second and looked at each other, trying to dope out what the racket was, and one fellow remarks, "Hey, hey! Guess someone has started the war again." Turned out to be the Engineers blowing up an ammunition dump. That just shows you the difference. A month ago no one would have noticed that noise at all. I haven't seen any of the Downers Grove boys lately, not since the Argonne push, but just before the start came off I saw Don McKee and Wells, and after it was over I saw Potter and A. and we had a few minutes talk, but that was quite a long time ago now.

Am enclosing a copy of the Order which our General has gotten out

commending the work of the men under his command. As it has to do with many of the Downers Grove boys, for as you know there are a good many of us in the 33d Division, I am sure that it will be of interest to you.

And now that the Big Job is about finished the next question the fellows are asking themselves and each other is, "When do we go HOME" and it is too big a question for me. One thing I do know is that we are moving back to the training area but what we will do after that is the question, and I don't think anyone but the General himself knows.

Think I will stop writing for his time as its getting late and my candle is about burned out. Here lately I have been doing some "mtan kipping" which is 33d Division slang for "good sleeping", and I owe it to two things. First, I am sleeping on an honest to goodness bed with springs and a mattress under me, and "beaucoup" blankets. Second, I have ceased to care whether the nights are moonlight or cloudy, for in either case there are no enemy aeroplanes coming over about ten o'clock to give us our nightly allowance of G. I. cans, and no shells. I have had fellows tell me that they had gotten used to Jerry and his bombs, but the average fellow will tell you that it is something which you can't get used to in a thousand years, and that is the truth. There is something about the hum of that double engine in a German bombing plane which gives a fellow the creeps, or as the English Tommy says, "Gets your wind up." You can hear the plane coming when it is yet a long ways off, and then you see the lights shoot up by the tens and twenties looking for it. Sometimes they spot Jerry right away and start sooting the anti-air craft guns at him, and at other times they never pick him up until he has dropped his load of bombs and gotten away. However, I am too poor a writer to try to explain a fellow's feelings while Jerry is out looking for mischief, and besides "air-raids" is a rookies first experience, usually. (I know it was in my case, for the first night I spent in France old Jerry staged a little air-raid on the Rest Camp at Calais where I was) while the fellow with more experience does not say much about them. In a few days now, this Division will be wearing their first gold stripes.

Well, Mr. Staats, let me thank you for sending me the Reporter, which, needless to say, I thoroughly enjoy and appreciate. Sincerely, William B. Miles.

Headquarters 33d Division, American Expeditionary Forces, France. November 11th, 1918. General Orders No. 144.

The Armistice has been signed and hostilities have ceased, at least for the present. The Division Commander takes this opportunity of expressing his appreciation and pride to all ranks for their efficient and effective work. Shortly after leaving New York in May, 1918 the Division took station with the British in the defense of the Amiens. On the morning of July 4th, 1918, part of it attacked, and Americans for the first time in history were associated on the battlefield with Australian, winning the victory. General of the Australian Corps as "an historic event of such significance that it will live forever in the annals of our respective nations." The dash and gallantry displayed on his occasion was recognized by the British Commander-in-Chief and rewarded by the King. The engagement had far reaching results. On the 9th of August at Grossaire Wood and Chipilly the Division materially assisted the beginning of what developed into the final British advance and were again honored by the British nation. On September 26th and October 9th, as part of the First American Army, it carried all its objectives in the Verdun Sector and held the territory won on both sides of the Meuse. It has been awarded decorations by our Government and our former French Corps Commander has asked that recommendations be submitted for the Croix de Guerre. Such is the record of this Division.

The Commanding General congratulates officers and men, soldiers of the Great War, on these things done by them in the Service of their Country. By Command of Major General Bell, William K. Naylor, Brigadier General, General Staff, Chief of Staff. OFFICIAL: H. S. Hooker, Major, A. G., Acting Division Adjutant.

LIEUT. HULING ANOTHER OUT OF THE SERVICE

Camp Lewis, Wash. Dec. 13, 1918.

Dear Mr. Staats: Uncle Sam has decreed that after today he can dispense with the services of myself and a number of other officers. A good many have preceded us and there are more to follow. Hundreds of men have gone from here. If the Kaiser knew what a disappointed bunch of men and officers

there are in the camps of the United States, who did not get to cross the "big drink" to take a swat at him, he and his gang of murderers would have quit sooner than they did.

I am glad that I had the opportunity of serving as a Chaplain here, and before that as a Y worker and Camp Pastor at Camp Taylor, Kentucky. No doubt many officers made large financial sacrifices by entering the service, but in my judgement many of the enlisted men have sustained losses which are far harder for them to bear.

However, I am sure that everyone in the service and out, who has conscientiously done his best to help our country and the allies win the great victory of right against hellish might, which God has vouchsafed to us, believe the prize to be worth the price. And we should be devoutly thankful to God that the awful carnage has ceased. All honor to the men and women who made the supreme sacrifice, and to those who are maimed and crippled for life, and to their loved ones who have laid such costly gifts on the altar of Liberty.

The army training has meant much to the men who have had it, and on the whole, I think the war has given our country a healthy shaking, and cleared our vision.

I have been glad to note the effort that is being made to have a Y. M. C. A. in Downers Grove. The "get together" trait in human nature has been greatly accentuated in the camps here and overseas, and I sincerely hope that Downers Grove will soon have a Y. M. C. A. I need not expatiate on the need and advantages of a Y, for they are too well known.

I will take the boat from Seattle to Los Angeles, stopping over a few days with my sister at San Francisco. Thank you for sending me the Reporter. I shared it with Corporal Roy Haller who is in this camp with the 116th Ordnance Depot. While in Los Angeles I will see my mother's copy of The Reporter.

Sincerely yours, Franklin G. Huling.

NURSE WRITES FROM FRANCE ABOUT WORK

The following interesting letter is from Miss Clara Ruden, a sister of Mrs. Ray McCollum.

France, October 19, 1918.

Dear Folks: I Spens I am writing someone all the time but I never get caught up. I sure have had a very interesting summer. In June I made my first trip up to a casualty clearing station. They are the nearest hospitals to the line. There are advanced dressing stations that do give the more severe cases first aid. These C. C. S. as they are called, are all in tents or portable buildings. They advance or fall back as the line changes. This spring the latter but this fall the former.

All nurses sleep in tents. We were on day duty most of the time, but there were very few except the first few days but that we saw 12 midnight. Many days we worked from 8 a. m. until 2 a. m. But when there are dozens waiting to be relieved of pain, and every minute they wait gives them less chance to live. Only the severe cases were operated on there, the others were sent to the base hospital. Seems some days the saws were going all the time. Don't think there is anything that makes me feel more sad than to see an arm taken off. Seems a leg can be replaced and even one eye.

I made three trips at different times. Last was most exciting. Could hear the big guns and hear the flashes and the observation balloons. All day the machines were flying past. Saw 54 at one time. The last C. C. S. moved forward three times while we were with it. Came home earlier than we expected or wished to, as the captain I was with made the commanding officer of the unit. I am hoping I can go again, but there are so many who wish to go that I expect that I must be satisfied.

We always travel by ambulance. Are like gypsies— must live in one's suit case. Met several very nice people. Went on leave September 12th. Spent a most delightful ten days. Couple of days in Paris getting some clothes; then went to Aix Les Bains, a very nice resort. Met several Americans there, as it is a place the soldiers can spend their leaves. After two days there I went to Chaminix, which is near Switzerland.

We were not very busy when I first came home, but after a few days we got our share. When the big advance started on the Western front we let no grass grow under our feet. Then was in the operating room and we worked 18 hours a day. Did as many as 105 in 24 hours.

The war cannot come to an end any too soon to please us. The price is sure high. But I am sure we all wish to see it finished in just the right way. We all hope that we will be back soon, but even after peace is declared there will be lots of work for us to do. Two of our nurses left for the

U. S. A. yesterday, both unfit for service. One a Wisconsin girl, and the other from Boston. Hope that I will not have to go home before everything is all over here, and that there then will be peace forever.

Give my regards and best wishes to all I know.

GEO. CORCORAN ON THE MARCH TO GERMANY

Somewhere in Belgium, Nov. 19, 1918.

Dear Friend Mr. Staats: Just a line to you as I received the Reporter this p. m., and sure was glad to receive it. I have been in France for the last three months and rather liked it. I have seen a little of the fighting but nothing to talk about. I put a week in the hospital on account of a shell dropping too close to this laddie which gave me a slight touch of shell shock, but am O. K. now.

I have not seen any of the D. G. boys but there are quite a few boys from Chicago where we are now on a little march to Germany, which is some distance from where we are now, but I guess we will get there.

I have not seen a railroad for such a long time that I forget how one looks. Besides the railroads they have over here are like a wheelbarrow on rails and as for riding they are worse than a Ford car.

I just found now from a Sergeant that we are permitted to let the people at home know where we are, so here goes, Wassmer, Belgium, but we are leaving this town tomorrow. I suppose it will be sometime after midnight as they are hard as ever on the marching staff.

Well, I wished many a night while I have been in France and up the line that I was back in dear old D. G. but as the war is now over they can hold me for only six months so that means I will be back in Downers Grove in April or May and can hardly wait until that time comes.

Well, the old front line is not as much of an enjoyable place as one would think it would be, not when old Jerry opens up on you with two or three machine guns. He sure can do some damage and as for shelling us there is not much to it, only he has some very wicked shells which have so many names that I can't count them. The fighting of late has not been like some of the boys have gone through. The fighting on our front was chasing Jerry from house to house and getting a shot at him when you could. He certainly has done some damage in France, but here in Belgium where we are you could not tell there had been a war on as far as the houses are concerned.

It is just 9:30 here and the bugle has just blown "taps" which means lights out, so will say good bye for this time and write again soon.

Yours truly, George B. Corcoran.

P. S. Saw some of the boys letters in the Reporter so I thought I would have to keep up my end and write too. Best wishes to the Home Guard and the Captain. Tell him I made a soldier.

ED. BOYDSON WRITES TO "DAD" ON FATHERS DAY

November 23d, 1918.

Dear Dad: We are all given the opportunity to write our Dads with the assurance that they will be given special delivery so I am going to let you know of a few things that I was high in unable to, but now that some of the censorship regulations are lifted, I can without any risk.

I can say that the A. E. F. is sure a happy bunch now with the end here and only the finishing touches to put on. Its a tossup whether or not we have another job after we finish this little one, or get orders to embark for the good old Etats Unis. This little job consists of finishing 12 miles of a lead connecting Paris and Tours.

I might as well start from the first and let you know how things went from the time I left Camp Merritt, N. J. on March 22nd last.

We boarded ship at 11:30 a. m. and it was the S. S. St. Paul, an American Line passenger and mail boat. We were lucky all the way for everybody was coming over on troop ships and dious but were O. K. at that. The worst but this ship with accommodations for 900 only had 550 passengers, soldiers, officers and nurses. We men were assigned 3d class staterooms which might have been more commodious but were O. K. at that. The weather was very clear and fine and the sun was shining when we got under way at 3. 30 p. m. while we were at mess. I was assigned to 2nd mess at 12 noon. More about the mess later.

We had no bands or celebration whatever and were kept under cover until the Statue of Liberty faded in the distance. I was able to see it thru a port hole. I had no idea what I was in for before I could see it again either.

When we finally got on the ship routing it was a. K. As I was a sprained wrist for six weeks from the time I left Chicago I was assigned to any duties but had to easy. I soon found a way to go at least one 1st class meal per day. Every afternoon I would feel spuds from 4 to 6 and say that first cabin stuff was regular chow. Like chicken, roast short rib of beef, brown spuds, cauliflower, pie, cheese and what not and take it from me I filled up every evening.

The crew was British and I never could get over liking to hear their Cockney talk. It kept me laughing most of the time.

The weather remained clear the whole trip but we could not have any lights on deck after sundown. I was not affected by the motion and felt fine. But one morning I was strolling on the starboard side promenade deck, 30 feet from the water when the roll broke over and a big wave hit me mid rift and I was waving salt water for an hour but none the worse for wear. I always looked for those big ones after that but nothing more happened in that line. Three days out we tried a little target practice with our 6 inch stern gun. At a barrel a mile away. At the third shot the barrel disappeared and that made us feel pretty safe and it was a good thing. On the 6th day we destroyed, one English and one U. S. met us and kept alongside until we landed the eve of the 30th or arthe got to harbor. But the morning of the 30th was when the fun started. I had just eaten breakfast downstairs when something shook the dishes. We had dropped a depth bomb and got one Sub. About an hour later we got another the same way. By that time we were in the St. Georges Channel in the thick of it so I went up on deck for the scenery. It was great. I climbed up on the top next to the wireless station in the sun where I could see nothing. I was watching the signals on the Bridge sending and receiving flag signals with the Destroyers. I felt that something was in the air so I was keeping one eye on the water and one on the Bridge for the Destroyers were getting out of the way of our guns. We were going about 20 knots per when the Captain jumped, shouted an order, the ship started to speed up and the gunners on their toes and I was watching with my breath held. Then it happened. We were off Holy Head light too. Right where I was looking appeared the barrel shap tower of the Sub, 100 yards on the starboard. At the same time appeared the deadly w.ks of the torpedo coming right towards me about 35 miles an hour. The guns seemed slow to get around but the Captain of the ship wasn't. He swung her over hard and then the guns let go but the Sub had submerged as they missed. Well, my nerves were rotten but I was under some terrible strain until I saw the old ship get around just in time. Then I sat down and couldn't get up for a half an hour. Yes, the torpedo missed just six yards and we had 17 tons of TNT. H. E. in the hold, the H. E. for our own guns. If we had been six yards later we would be over there yet but we were not the six yards late. But after it was all over my legs wouldn't hold me up. That's a rotten way for a soldier to act but that is what I did anyway.

That evening about 9 p. m. we dropped anchor in Liverpool Harbor until next morning when I got up we were at the dock.

In the course of two hours we were unloaded and in another two were on board a 2nd class special on the London and Northwestern on our way across England. We each had iron rations with us for on the train. One can of canned wiley and a box of hard biscuits. That had to last 24 hours for altho we arrived at South Hampton at 6 p. m. we had an 8 mile hike with full packs to rest camp? We got up to camp at 9 p. m. too late to get any supper. It was raining, an air raid going on and searchlights every where in the sky. We slept in tents that night and the next. It rained every 20 minutes regular the two nights and a day we were there. Every thing was new to me and I enjoyed everything. England is a very pretty country in the spring when everything was green. The train was a joke. Little cars with the doors in the side and hauled by a little locomotive. We were all day from Liverpool to South Hampton. I never will forget the march from the depot to the camp there. It was uphill for about five miles and under full pack. I thought we never would make it. But, of course we did.

The second day we left there about 12:30 to board ship to go across the Channel. We boarded a boat, a little side wheeler, called the Maudie Queen, and say, she sure was a queen too. There was a regiment of English and Irish troops on board too. About 2,000 of us on it and about room for a thousand. We left South Hampton at 5:30 and it was a wild ride from there to Laffan.

(Continued on Last Page)

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