

### With the Colors

LETTER FROM FRED KIDDLE

November 23, 1918.

My Dear Dad: Well this is Sunday the 24th of November and this day has been officially designated by the A. E. F. members as "Father's Christmas Victory Letter" day. Conditions are propitious in my case because this is the first Sunday that I haven't had to work for three or four months and the responsibility has practically been removed for the occasion and I am permitted to tell most anything. So this will be more of a diary of my movements since leaving the States. There is so much to tell that I will have to slight the details but will make note of the chief items of interest.

Will start from the time we left Camp Mills. We pulled out of Camp Mills at 1:30 a. m. on May 26th and had a train waiting to take us to Long Island City where we took the ferry and went down the East River and then up the Hudson to the White Star Line docks. The Mauretania was lying adjacent to the White Star Line dock and I thought maybe that we would be lucky enough to get to come across on that; but they directed us into the White Star Line dock and sent us aboard the Cedric, a big ship of 33,000 tons displacement and about 725 feet long. That trip across was sure a nightmare; they had about 4000 troops on board and you couldn't find a place to sit down on the deck it was so crowded and then the food—well the English sure don't believe in over feeding you. And I didn't have any money to buy stuff at the canteen because when I landed in England I just had a five cent piece. There were fourteen ships in our convoy and we were 12 days coming over. Had a cruiser with us until we were a couple days out of Liverpool and then we were met by a fleet of destroyers and submarine chasers, so the cruiser then turned back. We steered north and came down through the straits between Ireland and Scotland. Two huge dirigibles came out from the coast of Scotland and flew along over us keeping watch for submarines but fortunately none were sighted. We pulled into the harbor at Liverpool about 9 o'clock on the evening of June 7th and laid there all that night starting to debarck about 4 a. m. the next morning. Our battalion didn't get off the boat until about 8 o'clock and were loaded right into a train which was waiting at the dock. Had a very pleasant journey down through England and arrived at Southampton about 6 p. m. that evening. Spent the night in a rest camp which we had to walk 6 miles to reach with full pack and then had to sleep on hard board floors—some real camp. Stayed there five days and then we embarked again on the evening of the 13th of June for the trip across the channel. We left the mouth of the river about 10 p. m. accompanied by three destroyers and docked at Le Harve about 4 a. m. We got off the boat about 7 a. m. and walked 7 miles to another one of these rest camps only stayed there a day when we were loaded in a train and started for Melun in the department of Cher, went via Rouen, Versailles, Orleans and arrived at Melun in the evening of the 15th of June. This was an intermediate Ordnance depot and there were eight big warehouses 100 x 50 all filled with ammunition and just about as much which was piled outside on the ground. I was stationed there for about a month and spent most of that time in powder warehouse, examining and testing powder charges for 3 and 9 inch shells.

From Melun a hundred of us were transferred to Juchery in Haute Marne just three miles from Chaumont, which is general headquarters for the A. E. F. Ordnance depot and there were about 22 warehouses there but they were not as large as those at Melun. I had only been there a day when I was put in as an assistant in charge of the warehouse, which handled trench motors the 3 in. Stokes and 6 in. Newton, both of English manufacture. That was a very busy place, because all the requisitions from the front were sent out from there. Train loads after train loads of ammunition came and left there most every day. Had about a thousand colored boys there to do the labor work and we were in charge of all the work. Handled everything there from 22 shells to the big 14 inch which were used in bombarding Metz and other German fortresses. Had several air raids but none of the warehouses were touched. The warehouse that I was in had trees growing upright through the roof so as to afford a camouflage.

From Chaumont I was transferred here which is a base depot so you can see that I have covered the ground quite thoroughly. All that I lack was being sent to the ammunition dumps at the front. At this place we receive the ammunition off of barges which are loaded at the mouth of the river from ships coming from the States. Have had to crane and handle the stuff. At first I was in charge of an ammunition platform at the dock but now I am in charge of a warehouse.

The village that we are near is St. Loup, which is about 10 miles out of Bourbourg.

There are hundreds of details and these accidents that have occurred in connection with my work over here that I am not going to

take time or spare to mention but will save until I get home. But you can gather a good idea of what I have been doing from the information given.

I certainly am glad that I had the opportunity to come over and help do my bit and I hope now that the world will be safe for democracy forever. I don't think the Hun or any other nation will catch us by guard again.

Now that the struggle is over we are all impatient to get home. I hate to think that I will not be able to spend Christmas at home this year, the first Christmas away from home.

Well, Dad, this has been rather a long letter, so will quit for this time. Together that you will recognize in the nature of a long letter.

Your son, FRED.

#### ARTILLERYMAN WRITES.

In a letter to his folks, Roland Thomas, son of "Tap" Thomas, writes of the experiences of the past four months. He is a member of the field artillery, was gassed once but kept the fact away from the folks at home. He says in part, in a letter under date of November 24:

"Have seen some service on the front. We put in a little over four months on the busiest All-American fronts and fought part of the time with the French. Was in the second battle of the Marne, at Chateau Thierry; the St. Mihiel drive and the second battle of Verdun. No doubt you have read of Montfaucon. Have been there several times and worked lines of communication through there under shell fire. The battle of Argonne wood was also quite a fight; was in that, too, and am still as good a man as when I told you good-bye on July 24, 1917."

In describing the guns used in his branch of the artillery the young man says: "In traveling position they weigh 18½ tons; are pulled by 125-horsepower tractors; have an accurate range of 16 kilometers; (one kilometer is five-eighths of a mile) an extreme range of about 22 kilo; (accuracy not guaranteed) projectile weighs 98 pounds; the barrels are 18 or 20 feet. They are known as the 155 millimeter G. P. E., the bore being a trifle more than six inches. They are said to be one of the greatest guns the world has ever known and they certainly are. Could write much more about it but will wait and tell you when I get home, which I hope will not be long."

#### Has Two Independence Days.

There is one country on the American continent, Ecuador, which actually boasts of two national days. These Independence days of the little republic are the 9th of August and the 9th of October, and mark two determined revolutions, the first of which failed, only to spur the patriots, revolting against Spanish domination, to shake it off, a few months later, forever.

#### "Pone"

Pone is a word of Indian derivation and an early English historian of Virginia took pains to explain that it was not from the Latin pants, meaning bread, but from the red Indian word oppone, and it was early applied in the south to any bread made of Indian corn.

Butter wrappers printed at the Observer office.

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#### SERGT. BEARDEN WRITES HOME

IN WITH AMERICAN ARMY OF OCCUPATION AND WILL BE IN A. E. F. FOR SOME TIME

November 25th, 1918.

Dear Mother: I am dropping you a few lines to let you know that I am O. K. I am having my mail sent to A. P. O. No. 713. That is at the last camp we were at that had a postoffice, and they will forward the mail to us.

We were in the first division of the First American army, but now we are in the Third American army, which is the army of occupation, so I do not expect to be home before the first of July. Don't be disappointed therefore if I am not home for several months.

Well, I will have to close, but will write more later.

Your son,

Sergt. Harold C. Bearden, Co. E., 13th U. S. Inf., Amer. Ex. Force, A. P. O. 713.

All Wool.

Providence may temper the wind to the sheep lamb, but there's no comeback for the fellow who allows himself to be fleeced while his wits are wool-gathering.

#### Help the Child.

A child is prey to many fears which have little to do with physical cowardice. The sensitive child is positively afraid of many things without realizing he is afraid. What he needs is to be given a greater confidence in life and in himself.

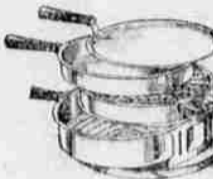
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