

SOLDIERS WRITE OF THEIR HIGH SEAS AND BATTLE LIFE

France Declared Beautiful as Western Oregon.

Lieutenant Gregg, Former School Principal, Writes From Front.

FOR several years Lieutenant John P. Gregg served as a principal for various schools of this city. Now he is a First Lieutenant in Troop E of the 15th Cavalry. The following letter which was received by Mrs. Frank Patton, 1203 Garfield avenue, follows:

"Have I written you a letter since my arrival in France? I'm blind if I can remember. But I think I did if not I should have.

"The trip was very pleasant. And since arriving about a month or more ago, I have been over the greater part of France by train. Some of the time I was with troops and part of the time alone. I have been in command two or three times, and for some time in each instance.

"To say we work hard is to put it mildly. But I shouldn't mind if we worked harder, as it is all worth it, and we have a beautiful country here. It is just as pretty as Oregon (western), and with much the same climate. There is little dust and plenty of parks and green trees and grass. And the ocean is close with a small beach that will perhaps be used for swimming on in the summer and fall.

"But it may be that we will move; where it is very hard to say, and of course I do not say anyway even though I knew.

"French towns are very funny. One seldom walks on the sidewalks—nearly always on the street, and the streets are about as wide as a good big sidewalk. The houses are all of stone and with no porches and few yards; and this is a country of the front.

"All of us are making a great effort to learn to understand and speak the language. It is very hard, they speak so fast one can't distinguish words which makes little sense. But I can make myself understood somewhat and that is a whole lot.

"There are many girls, but I have met very few. The men are all away to war, as ours will soon be. If we should send over a couple or three million dollars, it would be a great help over; that is my opinion gathered from what the French say.

"Tonight I met a French first lieutenant, who is going to the front tomorrow, and he is of that opinion. Also I met a French lieutenant, an aviator, who has brought down his German plane, and has the Legion of Honor, D'Honneur, the highest honor that the French give. He is but a lad, too."

Write More Letters, Plea of Fighting Man.

W. H. Kennedy, Former Ticket Salesman, Now in Navy.

W. H. KENNEDY, one of the most widely known of the old-time ticket salesmen and traffic solicitors of the Pacific coast cities, formerly located in Portland, has written from France, where he is chief boatswain's mate at the United States naval air station, to E. H. Duffy, now assistant in charge of the agent of the Denver & Rio Grande.

Kennedy's letter is chiefly an appeal for letters from home folks and at the same time closes with a poem on the subject:

There's a time in the day with our sailors
Somewhere in France or in camp,
That the troubles and worries decamp.
And their faces are bright and eager
With a laughing that tells its own tale,
When the bugle calls out clear and welcome
So fast one can't distinguish the gale.

Now their faces show varied emotions
As they eagerly scan every page,
Here is one that burns out with laughter,
Another with a sigh and a groan,
But there are some who watch with a longing
Lonely and sad-eyed men,
Wishing and longing and hoping
That someone would write to them.

So you that remember a fellow
Who has spent the night on the foe,
Take your pen and write him a letter
That will make his heart glow.
I'll make his life seem brighter,
The clouds will lift like a veil
When he hears the bugle calling,
"It's time to distribute the mail."

Let your letter
While I'm in the land of No Man's Land
And you in the land of Luxury,
A letter from you to me
Will bring back old memories.

W. H. KENNEDY,
Chief Boatswain's Mate, U. S. N. Air Station, France.

Boys "Over There" Appreciate Gifts From Home.

Charles Kraebel Writes Thanks to Friend's Mother for Sox.

CHARLES J. KRAEBEL, who was formerly a forest assistant engaged by the District Forester in Portland to investigate work on the Wind River experiment station of the Columbia National forest, worked side by side with Mathias Stonestreet in France. When he received a pair of Sox knitted by Mrs. T. J. Stonestreet, mother of his Army friend, he wrote her the following letter, which she wishes more than any largess she could ever receive for her work:

"About two weeks ago, while I was down at company headquarters, a portion of our men were presented with socks which were knitted for them by women back home and which found their way to us, I believe through the Forest Service. But, whatever might be the method of their coming, I consider it a fortunate coincidence that the pair I drew were knitted by the mother of Matt Stonestreet. My acknowledgment and my thanks are somewhat tardy, but you must believe that they are none the less sincere. Since I was a youngster, hustling papers, I have not owned a pair of hand-knitted socks, and I enjoy them now with a pleasure and sentiment that goes deeper than their mere value or their superior usefulness.

"As the French say over here these gifts of socks and caps and sweaters represent to us the efforts of our women to do something to help our cause in the great war. And it strikes me that it is one of the best things that you could possibly do. It is the all-womanly, motherly act that means a great deal to the boys in France. We may be clumsy in expressing ourselves, but just the same we feel warmly grateful for all the things these letters for. Letters and clippings from home papers are full of 'wheatless, meatless and heatless days.' We know all about the scarcity of sugar and the coal strike.

Portland Doctor Commissioned First Lieutenant.

Dr. R. W. Cahill, 1380 East Fourth Street, Has Been Practicing in Portland for the Last Four Years, Has Been Commissioned First Lieutenant in the United States Army and Has Been Ordered to the Base Hospital at Camp Kearney.

Dr. R. W. Cahill, 1380 East Fourth street, who has been practicing in Portland for the last four years, has been commissioned first lieutenant in the United States Army and has been ordered to the base hospital at Camp Kearney. Dr. Cahill enlisted in the Medical Reserve some weeks ago. Mrs. Cahill and their son will live in San Francisco while Lieutenant Cahill is at San Diego.

France Is Wonderful, Writes Portland Soldier.

Melvin Nelmezer Tells of Trip Through Beautiful Country.

MR. AND MRS. F. F. NEIMEYER, 468 Rodney avenue, have received a letter from their son Melvin, formerly of Company C, 162d Infantry, now of Company D, 15th Engineers in France. The letter was dated April 23 and was received May 21. It follows:

"We had a fine trip through very interesting country. I am very glad I did not have to form my opinion of France entirely upon the place we were stationed. We took a long hike into the country and the colors in beautiful France are wonderful, and the people here, too, are much more interesting.

"A funny thing happened along the road. A woman was pushing a baby buggy along the road and it contained four 'kids' she was taking them to market to sell, only they were 'kid goats.' It is colder here and that sweater came in handy. Had a box of candy the other day and I gave it to some of the children, they enjoyed it so much. They are a great help to us here and are as polite as diplomats. We are lively as jumpyacks.

"As you will see by the address, I have been transferred to a different branch of the service. Six months ago I was transferred because of our knowledge of a certain trade. We left our company at 5 in the morning, and Captain and I went to the front. We were in one of the finest barracks in France and in a large city where the people who tour visit there in a chateau that has been over 300 years old.

"Women are holding down the rear platform of streetcars over here. The old company is billeted in houses all up to the mountains. We have quite a time looking over old relics. It is wonderful, the scenery, the weather and the old buildings."

Ensign Jay H. Keller Writes of Experiences in Service.

Portland Naval Officer Now Stationed at Washington, D. C.

IN ORDER to save time and stationery, which he says are scarce in military centers, and still give a great deal of information, Jay H. Keller, formerly a consulting engineer of this city, who is now an ensign in the United States Navy and stationed at Washington, D. C., wrote a detailed account of his experiences since his enlistment to M. E. Coleman, of Linnton, in the form of a ship's log, extracts from which follow:

"April 7, 1917—Joined class 4, Naval Reserve Force.

"April 7, 1917—Called into active service.

"April 13—Reported for service at Bremerton, Wash. Was given a place on a receiving ship doing nothing. I continued to do nothing until I was put to drilling recruits, also clearing land and building cantonments with them. I was next detached to the Naval Academy, to be trained as an officer.

"June 28—Was detached and proceeded to the front lines in France. I spent the first few days in the front-line trenches in fact, about the condition of the American troops up north at or near the front line, but they are entirely comfortable and well fed. We feel not a little guilty when we think of the boys in the front-line trenches. We finish our allies with the necessities and ourselves with these comforts of life.

"Our life may be a little rough on some of the fellows, but for others like 'Stony' and myself—who have been accustomed to outdoor work and a rigorous climate, it is nothing but the best of times. We are in the front line, and we like it.

"Once more let me thank you and assure you that the work of our mothers and wives and sweethearts back home is appreciated, absolutely and fully."

Centralia Youth Tells of Trench Life.

Lloyd Dysart Passes Eight Days on French Fighting Front.

CENTRALIA, Wash., May 31.—(Special.)—Judge and Mrs. George Dysart, of this city, are in receipt of a letter from their son, Lieutenant Lloyd Dysart, a Marine Corps officer and former University of Washington athlete, telling of an eight-day period he spent in the front-line trenches in France. The sector the young officer is in has seen some of the hardest fighting of the war, its history, dating back to 1914, being written on thousands of graves that dot the valley.

"I have gotten pretty well used to shell while here, writes the officer. 'Fritz' used to throw over our heads a few 'minnow' shells, or aerial torpedoes, a shell about four feet high and eight inches in diameter. It sounds like a railroad train coming through the air and turns over about a half acre when it strikes."

Lieutenant Russell Loudon, a member of the 1914 class of the Centralia High School, is at Empire, in the Panama Canal zone, with the Fifth United States Infantry. According to a letter received from him today by his mother, Mrs. M. A. Loudon, the officer described the conditions at the "land of tomorrow, a tomorrow which never comes as long as the blue blood of Spain flows through the veins of the world. They are a puny little class of people he ever saw, writes the soldier.

Lieutenant Loudon enlisted in June, 1917, in the 15th Infantry, and before the regiment sailed for France in December he was sent to an officers' training camp at Fort Leavenworth, where he received a commission as first lieutenant and was assigned to the regular Army.

Letters and Paydays Are Scarce in France.

Edward Walsh Writes Interestingly of Life Overseas.

EDWARD J. WALSH, Company A, 148th Machine Gun Battalion, American expeditionary forces, has just written to Captain G. H. Seaton, Deputy United States Marshal in charge of the Federal building at night, telling of his experiences in France. He writes:

"I have just received (May 2) your card dated December 21, but I must say how late the news is all news from the States looks good. The scariest things here are letters and paydays. I met Barkus a week ago while going through a town on my way somewhere. He was a long talk and he was looking fine. I have been over a good part of France. The country is extremely healthy, popular, but with the exception of a few large cities it is mostly small villages and the farms are all rather small.

"The land seems to be fairly good. It is not to be compared with the farming land in the States, however. The tools used here are hand tools, and the farmer has to do a lot of hand work. The sight of these carts and donkeys puts me in mind of the Rocky Road to Dublin. The French people are a friendly lot and the boys get along well with them. Their homes are built by stone and brick as if they had been built by Noah.

"The soldiers are working hard and drilling a lot. Tell the boys who are coming over the top that a ten-hour hike is just a nice day's job."

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Customs and Costumes in France Are Queer.

Dallas M. Mark Likes the Country and Life in Army.

THEY build their houses of stone and brick and build them fair upon the sidewalks in the sunny land of France, according to the observations of Dallas M. Mark, a Portland boy with the American expeditionary forces. He is constrained to remark their queer costumes and customs, but he likes the country and he likes his job.

"When I tell you that I am well and have a good place to stay," he writes in a recent letter, "and that there are no stretcher cases here large enough to hurt a person if they should overtake you on the street, you will know that I am all right."

"How do I like the country? Well, it is odd—much different from home. Nothing there is done the same as here. Customs are queer and the houses are different. They are all built of stone and will stand for years. As if they are located behind the business section of a city in America.

"You cannot imagine how much good the Red Cross is doing. I wish I could tell you all about it. It is wonderful what the mothers and sweethearts of America are doing through that medium."

"How would you like a letter written in French? I can speak quite a little now, but I want to learn to write it. I don't know why they want to call everything by such funny names and twist their mouths out of shape when the good old American language is so good."

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"But just remember this—every fellow has his eye on the game, and every one does one good to have a part in it. We have let go of civil life here and are over here with the single, united purpose of winning the war."

French Railroads Described by Cove Soldier.

Cars Are Small and Engines Are of Ancient Design.

COVE, Or., May 26.—(Special.)—Private Roland C. Ingram, Company L, Twenty-third Engineers, a Cove boy now in France, under date of April 14, gives this information in his first letter home:

"Our ship anchored out in the harbor and we were taken off by small steamers in the afternoon. We were met between three and four miles to the barracks. One of the first of the many strange things that impressed me was the smallness of the cars. They are very small when compared with those in the United States.

The railroads are narrow gauge, the wheels having six spokes, and look very queer. The cars are short, and the drive shafts on the engines are strips of steel about two inches wide and four inches long. The Central Oregon Railway would be a giant beside them. The switches each have a horn which they blow at crossings. This seems rather unnecessary for they move very slow.

Speaking of the trip across, he says: "The last few days we slept in our clothes. I did not realize I had been under any strain or fear, or whatever you want to call it, until we saw land and I knew we were out of danger."

Reed Student Says Yankees Are Up and Doing.

Corporal Guy Handles Changes Address to Sunny France.

PRINCIPAL HOPKIN JENKINS, of Jefferson High School, has received an interesting letter from Corporal Guy A. Randles, formerly a student at that school, who is now somewhere near the front line trenches in France with the 28th Aero Squadron, American Expeditionary Force. Extracts from the letter follow:

"Somewhat over a year ago I left the spacious halls of our school. Since then I have been in France. All the houses are built of white masonry, with red tile roofs, which, when set in a grove of evergreen trees, makes them look like a picture you read about, but never expect to see.

"After roaming around for a couple of hours, taking in all the sights, we decided to go to the nearest cafe. In the place where we are quartered it costs more to drink than it does in America. We were pleasantly surprised by the slight cost of refreshments.

"The round trip on the boat cost 45 cents, or 5 cents in American money. We had a very pleasant afternoon, the only trouble being that the last boat left about 6:45, when we wished it wouldn't go till midnight."

Soldier Mixed Up With Concrete in France.

Jesse M. Hutson, of Hood River, Has Miraculous Escape From Death.

HOOD RIVER, June 4.—According to letters arriving here from Hood River boys, members of Company F, 15th Engineers, Regiment now in France, Jesse M. Hutson, of Parkdale, a member of the unit, had a miraculous escape from death recently when caught in a concrete mixer. The incident is fully described in the April issue of The Spiker, a publication issued monthly by the men of the 15th Regiment, as follows:

Roosevelt discovered the River of Doubt, near the North Pole, and other great explorers covered other unknown sections of the earth's surface, but it remained for Jesse M. Hutson, of Company F, to explore the interior of war and crannies in the interior of a concrete mixer.

The boy's work at the mixer was completed, and Hutson crawled into the drum of the machine to give it a thorough wash. About that time one of the boys caught the mixer running up the engine a little and gave orders for the mixer to be started. After Hutson had been thoroughly washed with concrete and water by several revolutions of the drum, he was discovered by the engineer and the machine was stopped, giving him a chance to crawl out with a slight limp, but unperjured. He is of the opinion, however, that an appeal records previously held by squirrels for going around wheels has been beaten by him. He declares that it was worse than wrestling with Alva Hardman.

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Life at Fort Leavenworth Highly Enjoyed.

"Fine Bunch of Fellows," College Graduates, in Signal Corps.

AN interesting idea of the life at Fort Leavenworth is given in a letter from James H. Gance, who has been at the post for some time.

"The quarters that I am in now are fine and the food is of a good quality, but a little coarse," he writes. "The Post is a beautiful place.

"We have all the things from 4 P. M. on and all afternoon Saturdays and all day Sunday to ourselves unless we are assigned to detail work and we are allowed to go to Leavenworth any evening.

"It may surprise you, but our barracks consist of iron beds with springs and mattresses; that we sleep between sheets and have pillows on our pillows. Also that we have a reading room with papers and magazines, modern lavatories with tub and shower-baths and hot and cold water. However, the boys in the cantonments have no such luxuries.

"There is a fine bunch of fellows here in the Signal Corps. A surprisingly large percentage of them are college graduates and a nice, clean bunch of fellows.

"I am writing at the Y. M. C. A. It is a beautiful two and a half story modern brick building with comfortable quarters and fine accommodations. The building was built as a university building, but it is a very nice place. It is a popular place, crowded all the time. At least it has been every time that I have had an opportunity to go there.

"Our week-day routine is as follows: 6:00 A. M., reveille; 6:15, roll call; 6:30, breakfast; 7:15, drill; 8:00, buzzer practice; 8:30, drill; 9:00, drill; 10:00, buzzer practice; 11:00, drill (wig-wag signaling); 12:00, mess call; 1:00 P. M., buzzer practice; 2:00, drill; 3:00, elementary electricity; 4:00, drill (military); 5:00, retreat; 6:00, mess call, etc., ad libitum.

"The weather here is real hot. We had a regular Kansas rain, thunder and lightning storm here last night and this morning. It rained several days. I guess I had better close for this time. Be sure to tell