BOYS IN KHAKI WRITE OF EXPERIENCES IN ARMY AND FIELD CAMP LIFE

Following are extracts from four letters written by Harold Kern, of Gresham, who is with the Engineer division, U. S. Expeditionary forces in France. The fourth one, under date of Nov. 10, is remarkable for its presentation of the Russian situation as it appeared on the battle front at that time:

Somewhere in France, Nov. 1, 1917

Dear Folks:—I cannot tell you how we appreciate mail. Your letter are so very good and I enjoy them immensely. Word from home is just as essential as food and sleep. I honestly enjoy every word of your letters.

Am rather surprised to hear that my letters were printed in the Outlook—have forgotten now what I wrote. When you get letters from me please

GUERDON HUMASON
136th Aero Squadron, Dallas, Texas.

tell me the date of them. I want to know how long it takes for mail to reach you.

Am tickled to know that you are knitting some socks for me. We need socks far more than anything else. All my socks are badly worn out now, and there is nothing besides the sweater that I would appreciate more. I will be glad when my sweater arrives, too.

Have been having lots of rain lately and our camp is a sea of mud. Have rainproof clothing and boots, so we get along fine. In fact we have plenty of clothes except socks.

Am working hard now and am mighty tired at night. Feel almost too tired to write. Have to get my washing done sometime this week, too.

You said you had enough fruit in the basement to last two years. I will surprise you when I get home. Gee! How I wish I could eat at home once more. Am not crazy about army grub.

Haven't got my own line of work yet. Hope to do so some day. At present we are building a warehouse.

Give Roy my regards. Tell the kiddies "hello" for me. Am feeling fine I am glad to say. Good bye until you hear from me again. HAROLD.

November 4.

Dear Folks.—Just a few lines as I am rather tired and am going to bed. We are working hard every day now. Makes us feel good, however, as I never felt better in my life.

Am sending in this letter my Christmas rpesent to you—a handkerchief—just a souvenir of France. It isn't much, but I wanted to send something, and this is the best I can do. The cost

RAYMOND DUNBAR
Musician Oregon Coast Artillery, Ft. Stevens, Oregon.

isn't much and probably the handkerchief isn't either, but we are not allowed to send any article of clothing, so it had to be something small. This may be somewhat early to send Christmas presents, but I have no place to keep them, now that I have bought them.

Give Roy my best regards; also the rest of the Gresham people.

I sent you a draft for $15 some time ago. Hope you received it. Also you will receive $15 a month from Washington, D. C., out of my pay, beginning with the month of October.

Must close and go to bed. Good night. HAROLD.

November 7.

Dear Folks:—Received your mighty welcome letter some time ago and will write a very few lines before going to bed. Am rather tired tonight, in fact I am tired every night, as we are working hard every day.

Never felt better in my life. The work I am doing doesn't allow me to take on any superfluous flesh, but I am growing strong anyway.

Possibly you folks think I should write oftener, but really I have very little time. I do the best I can and am sure that mother shows you all my letters so you can learn what little news I can tell.

Tell the kiddies "hello" for me. Hope the motorcycle is proving a success, Roy, and that all of you are well. Am anxiously awaiting the arrival of the package of which you wrote. Am rather curious to know what it is. In fact I have an idea that it is something which I had not thought of wanting and something that will please me mightily. Will tell you as soon as it arrives. Must close and go to bed.

HAROLD.

November 10.

Dear Folks:—This is another big day for us—lots of mail. Your letter and Genevieve's enclosed came, as also did the cake and candy. Gee! but it is good. That is the first package of eats I have received since I've been in the army. Homemade fudge! I want to thank you for these things, for I honestly appreciated them more than you can realize.

We are just like a bunch of kids when the mail comes in, for we leave meals, work and all else and stand around in the way until the letters and packages are distributed. God's country is a long ways from here, let me tell you.

I wrote you a short letter a few days ago. Probably you will receive this one first. Received two letters today from mother and some tobacco. First American pipe tobacco since I left the states. Right now my pipe is going strong and has been for an hour. Haven't received my sweater yet, but expect more mail today or tomorrow, and probably it will show up then.

Mother said she was sending me some canned chicken. That is rather rich for a common soldier, but maybe I can take it without any ill effects afterward. By the way I am not the only one who finds your fudge easy to take. All the boys have sampled it and every darned

RICHARD KNARR
U. S. S. Alabama, care Postmaster, New York.

one is ready for the next grand opening.

We are working hard but at what I cannot say. Needleess to say it isn't a kind of work that any of us are crazy about, but guess we can do it. In fact I know we can—there is no chance to do anything else.

Have plenty of clothing now, and are fairly situated. We are, however, running no chance of being troubled with the gout. That goes without saying.

Am having some work done on my teeth today, so am not on the work. Our dentist is O. K., and does not handle us recklessly either, which is saying a good deal for a dentist anywhere and especially in the army.

I sure enjoy the papers you folks send to me. Camp Lewis must be a regular place now. When I first landed there not even a piece of lumber was anywhere in sight.

That same job would take any of these European countries three or four times as long to complete. Oh, everything here is done so slowly. An American will do as much work in a day as three or four men of the European nations.

I see by the morning paper that Kerensky has lost his job, and that the Sonviet are about to take their turns at governing Russia. Well, it is nice that they get along so agreeably. It is a dirty shame the way the Russian soldiers have been handled in this war. They are good fighters if only given an honest chance, but the old government under Nick sent them knowingly and meaningly into a slaughter of hundreds of thousands of the best men in Russia.

Kerensky's fall means that just that many more Americans will never again see home and probably add a lot to the length of the war. But the Germans can never win, not even if Russia should turn on us. It may take a long time and a lot of men and money, but Fritz is going to get a good walloping. That's a cinch.

We are very anxious for our boys to come over here in big numbers, for we believe when that time comes that we will be on the front ourselves. Right now we want to get into action, and when we do I expect we will wish we were out of it. A soldier's greatest misfortune is that he is never satisfied.

We meet lots of the boys from the front on leave, and they tell us wonderful stories of the battles. That makes us anxious to see the same things they have seen, and we are always wanting to move—never satisfied with what we have, nor the place where we are located. I guess we will always have this feeling until we get home, again.

And then there is always a mental strain. Lots of us will never see home again, and how well we know it. We think of the loved ones and the friends at home, so far away, and the question of seeing them again seems at times to be one-sided.

The one pleasant fact, however, is that almost every soldier firmly believes that his chances for returning alive are far better than those of any other man. Each of us believes that, and there the worry ends. But we are fatalists, nearly all of us, and there is no question but what we can lie on our

FIRST SGT. KENNETH ROBERTS
Co. E, 18th Eng. Ry. A. E. F., France.

faces and die just as gracefully as millions of other men have done.

Well, I am out of ideas, so presume I had better ring off. Hope you folks are all well and good. Tell the kiddies "hello" for me and write often.

And any time you feel like sending me any more fudge just let it come. It is great. I intend to write to the Gresham Volunteer Fire Department soon. Will write again to you soon, and in the meantime we will plug along doing our bit, though we may grumble at times, in the hope that the square-headed population of Germany will wake up some morning and send Bill looking for a new job. HAROLD.

WATCHES AIR FIGHTS

Extracts from recent letters received from John K. Honey.

October 18, 1917.

We were taken over by the U. S. government a few days after arrival in Paris. I got through on my eyes O. K., but three or four of the other fellows in our crowd were refused for various reasons.

In taking the U. S. army oath, the service was designated as the "U. S. Army Ambulance Service with the French armies." There seems to be some distinction between the American ambulances serving with the U. S. army and with the French armies.

I'm mighty glad to be with the French for the experiences. They are very friendly towards the Americans. One told me that they liked the English, but loved the Americans. Our uniforms resemble the English, and they nearly always ask us if we are "Anglois." When we say Americans, they beam all over and insist on shaking hands.

My French vocabulary is slowly increasing in spite of itself. Have to read the French newspapers here, which helps

JOHN HONEY
Ambulance Corps, A. E. F., France

a lot, although rather slow work at times.

Packages come through in good shape, and one a month, with non-perishable home food would be appreciated. I would also like another of those knit helmets, the one I have is invaluable.

Four hours later—Just had to go "rolling" after a wounded poilu. We call at posts up as far as the second line trenches, but of course only at night. The roads are splendid around here, except up close, where they are pitted with shell holes. It would almost break a snake's back to miss them all. This sector is quiet, so have not much to worry about from shells, but the Germans are fairly liberal in their use of gas. Have to carry masks all the time, but haven't had occasion yet to use mine.

The most interesting thing to me is to watch the air fights. On fairly clear days, we see practically dozens of them. The shrapnel bursts all around the planes, but never seems to get them. Have only seen one fight between planes in the air, also saw a German observation balloon hit by a French shell and go up in smoke.

At night, the 4th of July celebrations are wonderful. A star shell at the first line trench will cast a shadow over three miles away. Last night a heavy barrage fire was going on several miles from us. It sounded more like a thunder storm than anything else. The noise of the guns rises and falls like thunder does after a storm has passed, the sky reflects the flashes of the guns and looks like sheet lightning on the horizon.

Our food here is very eatable and satisfactory; there is usually plenty of it although not much variety. They put us on a tea ration the other day instead of the Pinard, as they call the cheap red wine, on account of us being in the U. S. employ, I suppose. The water around here is not very safe to drink.

We are living in an old brick yard, our room is wind and rain proof, and almost sound proof, for the walls are thick. Three of us room together and are very comfortable. Have a chimney, so dug up an old stove and bricked it in, for a fire place, we keep the room fine and warm. It was whitewashed the other day, so things also look clean and nice. We can see all over the country from a knoll which is about 50 yards away. I wish I could tell you more about the country, for we are just outside of one of France's famous old cities, but the censor forbids.

Out of the five new men who have just entered this section, I was the only one to get a car, on account of being able to drive one well, I suppose. Two of them arrived with the section several weeks before we three who came over together.

This life is quite a bit different from the Waldorf in New York, but I wouldn't swap these experiences for a lot. There are a few discomforts such as cold water for shaving, etc., but these very minor troubles don't bother any.

The weather here is almost identical with that of Oregon, so won't be bothered much with the cold, as long as I can keep dry, which I should be able to do with the rubber boots, poncho and steel helmet. The helmets come in rather handy in keeping the falling shrapnel, from the anti-aircraft guns, from getting too familiar with your head. Haven't been hit by any yet, but several times have had to beat a hasty retreat to cover.

Shall repeat my new address in case my other letter was lost, strayed or stolen:

S. S. U. 28
Section Sanitaire Americaine
Secteur Postale 65 France.

October 27, 1917.

Have been working day and night the last week, but ran into a bridge the other night, so am laid up temporarily for repairs. This night driving without lights is rather difficult. I caught the end of the bridge head on, but fortunate-

SGT. BOYD O. BRASSWELL
Aviation School, Austin, Texas.

ly only bent my front axle and crank. Had a wounded man in behind, and when I struck, he knocked out a couple of boards in the body of the car, with his head, but didn't hurt himself much. Just laughed and said it was nothing.

The French are mighty friendly, and I have some pretty good friends among them. A good many of them speak some English, and with my little French and with the aid of a dictionary, we can carry on quite a conversation. There is one fellow, especially, who has been in the "Blue Devils", as they call the chasseurs, for two years. They are the crack French troops, and do all the difficult work. He speaks very decent English, and my curiosity and his experience work together well.

Well, its time I was rolling in for the night, for it is now a. m. of the 28th. We don't have to roll call Sunday, so can sleep, unless I have to "roll" as they call driving a Ford. Here's hoping I can sleep.

October 30, 1917.

Have been fairly busy the last ten days. Being called out in the middle of the night no longer holds any of its novelty, although most of its discomforts remain permanent. When I'm near the head of the list at night, I just climb in bed, clothes and all, taking off my shoes—with due consideration for the blankets. Blankets are one of the most plentiful articles over here, have a wonderful double white one, which is at least an inch think and guaranteed

DEWEY GIBBS
Co. B, 116th Inf., Camp Mills, New York.

filled with aeroplanes practically all day long. When the shrapnel bursts too closely overhead, we have to run for cover, and then come out and pick up the fragments after they pass over. One of the fellows in our room had a shell casing fall within a few feet of him the other day. It weighed about ten lbs. and buried itself in the ground over two feet deep. Since then he doesn't wait quite as long in seeking a wall.

Six men arrived in the section Sunday. They are regular U. S. army men, and have been training at Allentown, Pa., for three or four months. They know how to salute and drill, carry a stretcher in the prescribed manner, etc., but not one of them can drive or repair a Ford, speak French, or other necessary things. It surely was a waste of time and money, as well as energy.

My permission of ten days off comes every three months, my next one is due Christmas day; am planning now on going down to southern France with some other fellows, but may change my plans a dozen times before then.

November 7, 1917.

I'm taking life easy this afternoon, by a warm stove, even though the stove isn't necessary, for it is very decently warm outside.

I'm not sure how long I'll be at ease for am "on call" and may be sent out any minute. Haven't heard any more about when the war is going to end. I've told them that I wouldn't object to an abrupt finish, but there are times when I'm afraid that my opinions are not paid much attention to, strange to say.

The high officers are called "grosses legumes" over here, or speaking in my native tongue, "large vegetables". This is not used with any disrespect, however, and even pleases them, especially some of the lower officers. We have quite an assortment of Frenchmen around here. There is our French lieutenant, with two assistants, one of them a French-Australian, and all three speaking good English. At the other extreme, there are "Shiftless Sam," "Ambitionless Ambrose", and "Mecanic Willy". Shiftless Sam helps our cookie, and would make an ideal understudy for Charley Chaplin. He wears a pair of pointed wooden shoes most of the time, which, with his side-burns and moustache, would shame Chaplin at the height of his popularity.

I feel curious about the cause of his delapidation, but the color of his nose offers some clue. To take the next in order, Ambitionless Ambrose, I don't know what he does around here, except bum for a living. He's a tall, lanky, loose featured misrepresentation of a man. When he walks, one holds his breath for fear that one of his arms, legs or head will drop off, and that he'll continue on without missing it. There seems to be no uniformity in his motions at all. He rather jerks and throws himself along at random. He is drunk most of the time, but always shows up at meal-time. Forutnately he eats at some distance from me. "Ambitionless" describes him better than any other one word. He exists simply because it is easier to do so, than to die, although I don't think he realizes it.

"Mechanic Willy" is just another of the same sort, lazy, dirty, and absolutely vulgar. Aside from these three misfits, our section is made up of a mighty agreeable bunch of fellows.

My two bunkmates are both out "rolling" at present, as we call running the ambulances. Philip Frost, one of them, is having the time of his life over here. He's actually funny, and is writing for some magazines in the states. He went out as orderly on a night run with one of the new men who had never driven a Ford over a half dozen times, and after he got back last night, kept us laughing for an hour. The night was pitch dark, and as they are not allowed to use lights at all, it is difficult work for an old driver, not speaking of greenhorns. McAuelly, also from Chicago, worked down at the Panama canal for seven years. He is also having some trouble at night, for is not used to driving. We've been issued some new kind of gas mask. It is more complicated than the old ones, but will last longer. Consists of a tank, which is strappel on

Continued on succeeding page

EXPERT
Auto, Buggy and Wagon
PAINTING
SEE
E. E. CHIPMAN

MERRY CHRISTMAS
Christmas is Coming
MERRY CHRISTMAS MERRY CHRISTMAS
And all Men and Boys want
NEW SHOES AND RUBBERS
We have them and they speak for themselves without boasting
GET YOUR SHOES HALF SOLED
where you can have them sewed for same price as nailed. Sewed soles wear better and look better. All up-to-date Shoe Machinery.
Gresham Shoe Shop
CARL DAHL, Prop.
MERRY CHRISTMAS

FINE TAILORING
FOR SUCH WORK SEE PETER LENARD.
Cleaning and Repairing is resorted to by all Well Dressed persons, who thereby retain their own self-respect and win the approval of others.
HAVE A SUIT MADE BY A TAILOR
A well dressed person will appear to better advantage in a New Suit than in one that has been repaired, hence it is advisable to have a Suit made by a Tailor who has learned his trade and will guarantee to give satisfaction. Prices reasonable.
PETER LENARD
Powell Street - - Gresham