LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

107th U.S. REGIMENT

U.S.
LIEUTENANT KENNETH GOW.
LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

LIEUT. KENNETH GOW, D. S. C.,
Machine Gun Co., 107th U. S. Infantry,
**7th Regt., N.G.N.Y. **
Killed in Action Oct. 17, 1918.

Introduction by
CAPT. KENNETH C. WILSON
107th U. S. Inf.,
Ex. M. G. Co., 7th Regt., N.G.N.Y.

27TH DIVISION, U. S. A.

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To
LIEUT.-COL. KENNETH GARDNER,
105th M. G. Battalion, 27th Division, U. S. A.,
Ex-Captain M. G. Co., 107th Inf.,

Commanding Officer, Comrade and Friend of the
Writer of these Letters,

This Volume is Dedicated.
FOREWORD

Our people have justifiable pride in the character of our army which fought in the World War. The character of that army was truly great, and worthy of the great cause in which it served. Its character, however, was great and noble only because of the high individual purpose and character of the men who composed it.

The mass of the people realize in a general way the worth of the men who made up the American Army; but in the book "Letters of a Soldier" the public will have opportunity to appreciate in intimate manner the moral and military standards of a soldier of the 27th Division who was representative of the best in that army, and who gave up his life in the Battle of the La Selle River, France, October 17th, 1918.

The "Letters of a Soldier" were written by First Lieutenant Kenneth Gow, of the Machine Gun Company, 107th Infantry, 27th Division, to members of his family. This officer in many respects was typical of that finest type of young manhood which for many years constituted the brains and heart of the New York National Guard Division. Lieutenant Gow served the period of the Mexican Border Service as a private, corporal and Sergeant in the 7th New York Infantry. His letters cover many interesting features of that service. Later, as a non-commissioned officer and commissioned officer of the same regiment in the World
War, he continued to write and send to members of his family letters descriptive of his experiences. Because these letters were written in intimate fashion to his family, without thought that they would ever be published, their interest and value are intensified.

The book is commended not only to the officers and men of the 27th Division, but to all who would view in intimate fashion the character and life of a very gallent soldier, who gave up that life in the service of his country.

JOHN F. O’RYAN
Major General,
27th Division, U.S.A.
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INTRODUCTION

By Capt. Kenneth Cunningham Wilson

To that great and terrible drama the chief scenes of which were enacted in France and Belgium in the years from 1914 to 1918 there is a significant historic background, in the case of the nations which took part in it and of the millions of individuals whose greater or smaller parts together made up the stupendous tout ensemble. As to that background in its larger and broader aspects, greater pens than mine have already described it, or will in the future; and in attempting to project the background of the individual soldier whose letters are printed in this volume, and whom I knew only as a comrade and friend on the Mexican Border, at Camp Wadsworth and in France, I am necessarily beholden to sources where this information could be best obtained.

The people of these United States of America have now become, and are still in the process of becoming, the most composite stock in the world. Many nations, tribes and kindreds, of different races, speaking different tongues, have contributed ingredients, both good and bad, to the contents of the great "melting-pot." Our present civilization is the composite product of various capacities.
inheritances and ideals. Human materials from the five continents and the seven seas have gone into the building of the nation, yet there is a potential unity and harmony in the result which suggests the directing mind of a Master Builder, building on a sound and lasting foundation; to wit, the great principles of the nation’s fathers.

Bismarck defined a nation as a “multitude of invisible spirits—the nation of yesterday and tomorrow.” The World War came with sudden call and trial to the nations. The response given by our composite people demonstrated that we are a nation, all its citizens having the same ideals and sharing a common devotion to our country.

When we survey, even cursorily, the history of the building and development of this nation, we are arrested by the fact that men of Scottish birth and of Scottish blood have taken a great and leading part, especially in its beginnings. To mention but a few* of the outstanding men along the line of American history, amongst statesmen we find the names of Patrick Henry, Alexander Hamilton, John Witherspoon and Robert Livingston, the latter the ancestor of a distinguished line of statesmen; in naval and military affairs, Paul Jones, Gens. Hugh Mercer and Arthur St. Clair;† in law, James Wilson; in education, James McCosh; in commerce and industry, Robert Lenox, John Crerar and Andrew Carnegie; in literature, Washington Irving and S. Weir Mitchell; in exploration and natural history, John Muir; in music, McDowell; in sculpture, Frederick MacMonnies; and in invention, Archibald Graham Bell.

* Vide “Scots and Scots Descendants in America.”

† Gen. Arthur St. Clair was born in Thurso, Caithness, Scotland. He was one of Washington’s generals, afterwards the first Governor of Ohio, then in a territory. He served with distinction in the War of Independence, and when the news was received of the signing of the Declaration of Independence he was at Ticonderoga. He ordered the Declaration read after divine service, and then said: “God save the free and independent States of America!” The people from whom Lt. Gow sprung were of the same county in Scotland.
Two of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, Dr. John Witherspoon and Judge James Wilson, were of Scottish birth. In Washington's Continental Army there were thirty-two generals of either Scottish birth or ancestry. Twelve of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 were of Scottish origin. Fifty-three generals in the Civil War, North and South, were of this same race and blood, as were 50,000 men in the Northern Army. According to the late Whitelaw Reid, twelve of our twenty-six Presidents were of Scottish descent.

Theodore Roosevelt writes in his "Winning of the West":

"Full credit has been awarded the Roundhead and the Cavalier; nor have we been altogether blind to the deeds of the Hollander and the Huguenot; but it is doubtful if we have wholly realized the importance of the part played by that stern and virile people whose preachers taught the creed of Knox and Calvin. These representatives of the Covenanters were in the West almost what the Puritans were in the Northeast and more than the Cavaliers were in the South. They formed the kernel of the distinctively and intensely American stock who were the pioneers of our people in their march westward."

So in this superb edifice, our nation, whose foundations are laid deep and strong in civil and religious liberty and the rights of man, whose spires and pinnacles soar ever upward in aspirations and ideals, we must recognize that, deep and firm in its structure, is a stone, a block of granite, inscribed "SCOTLAND."

Bringing with them a heritage of freedom from their long struggle for civil and religious liberty, still remembering with reverence and affection the glens and the seabeaches of Auld Scotia where their ancestors fought and worshipped while resisting religious tyranny; and bringing
also a more intimate knowledge of American history and American institutions than any other immigrants, the Scotch have made citizens one hundred per cent. American.

Scotland, although little amongst the nations, her name long since almost ceasing to be mentioned in world politics, has exerted, as the late Dr. Hamilton W. Mabie writes, an influence on the world out of all proportion to the numbers of her people. If men of Scottish birth and blood have thus impressed themselves on the world, it need not be imputed to any inherent superiority of race. If those whom Roosevelt calls "that stern and virile people whose preachers taught the creed of Knox and Calvin" have accomplished any creditable and lasting work in the world, it must be ascribed to that stern schooling in character which their religious education has supplied. Burns would not have been the national poet of Scotland had he not had the insight to recognize this. In his "Cotter's Saturday Night" he portrays one of those humble yet potent schools of character, where the emphasis is placed on the moral and the spiritual, and he writes:

"From scenes like these Auld Scotia's grandeurs rise; This makes her loved at home, revered abroad."

Let not the reader contempt these references to race and origin. Perhaps some of us Americans are somewhat vain-glorious in affecting that our people have always been Americans—that what went before does not matter. But whether our particular strain is derived from Scotland, Ireland, England, France, Germany, Italy, etc., we have race characteristics of habit, character and modes of thought which are inherent in our mental make-up. It is well to forget Old World political legacies, but it is not well to forget our spiritual heritages.
The writer of these letters, Kenneth Gow, was of purely Scottish blood. His immediate ancestors belonged to the County of Caithness, the northeastern corner of Scotland, on the North Sea. Scandinavian blood through Mowats and Gunns and other descendants of the old Vikings, Celtic blood through MacGregors and MacKays, flowed in his veins. Surely the old clan loyalty lived again in him.

When President Wilson sounded his trumpet call for preparedness in 1916, Kenneth Gow was quick to respond, and enlisted in the militia. His letters show that foremost in his make-up was loyalty—loyalty to his family, to his friends, to his comrades, to his officers, to his regimental company, to his regiment, to his division, and above all to his country and its cause.

In one of his letters he writes of being thankful for his heritage. He understood this in its broadest sense; that it was not only that heritage which he derived from his ancestry, but also the heritage derived from his American birth and nurture, his American education, and the spiritual heritage derived from those who helped to form his moral and religious concepts, the names of some of whom appear in the portion of this volume entitled "Tributes."

It is not intimated that, amongst the many hundreds of thousands of young American soldiers in the A. E. F., Kenneth Gow stands out as unique or unusual in character or patriotic devotion. He himself would be the first to deprecate and disclaim any such extravagant estimate. His story, experience and sentiments but serve to illustrate the spirit which actuated and inspired many thousands of others who, with equal devotion and the same exaltation of soul, laid all they were or hoped to be on the altar of their country, many paying, as he did, the last tribute of devotion. And these young men were derived from every nation and race in Europe, and of some even in Asia, as the roster of
the A. E. F. shows, proving to the world that the United States of America contains a people, one in mind and in ideals—the nation of yesterday, today and tomorrow. It is well to remind ourselves here, too, that all the patriotism and self-sacrifice were not confined to the southwestern side of the Hindenburg Line. That so many of the best and bravest of all the nations should have been marshalled, trained to the acme of physical and mental efficiency, and then hurled against each other in mutual destruction, surely brands war, whoever is held responsible, as the supreme crime of all the ages.

It is said of Kenneth Gow that at the—to him—supreme moment of his military career, when, through his own ability and the fortunes of war, the moment arrived when he was given command of his company, to put to the ultimate test his military ability and the long training he had been given, it was a pitiful fate to meet death rather than success and continued life. But, despite this, and despite of our knowledge of the dirt, toil, cruelties and horrors of war, our age-old inheritance from hundreds of generations of warring ancestors leads us to look upon this soldier's death in the spirit of ancient Rome:

“To every man upon this earth
   Death cometh soon or late;
   And how can man die better
   Than facing fearful odds,
   For the ashes of his fathers
   And the temples of his Gods?”

Some of those who were very close to the men in France have, like Father Hoey, testified to the spirit of exaltation that buoyed up many of the soldiers of the A. E. F. They were fortified through all the fatigue, danger and suf-
ferring by the feeling that it was well worth while—that the world would be freer, better and happier for all their sacrifice and toil. Many, like Lieut. Gow, died in this belief, happy in that their ideals were unshattered, with the conviction that they were fighting and suffering in a cause which, in his words, was "worth a dozen lives." These dead did not come back home to disillusionment, to find men living on the same low plane, to meet indifference and even neglect and seeming forgetfulness on the part of their own countrymen. They did not live to see the nations of the earth, selfish and self-seeking, under darker clouds than overshadowed the world in 1917-18, or to see that country for whose ideals they fought and died threatening to forsake those ideals and to stand solely for itself and by itself. We may ask: "Have these dead died in vain?" but they sleep in peace, secure from the sorrows, doubts and fears which so sorely beset the living.

"No vision of the morrow's strife
The warriors' dream alarms,
No braying horn, or screaming fife
At dawn shall call to arms.

"On Fame's eternal camping-ground
Their silent tents are spread;
And Glory guards, with solemn round,
The bivouac of the dead."

To the reader of these letters who did not know Kenneth Gow, they give an insight into the thoughts and emotions of one of those fine characters which made up the great United States Army. To me, and to his many devoted comrades of the old Machine Gun Co. and the 107th Infantry, they bring back memories of that stirring period of our
lives devoted to the service of the United States, tinged with the regret that this cherished friend is no longer with us. My acquaintance with Kenneth Gow began when he joined the Machine Gun Detachment of the old 7th Infantry, N. G. N. Y., of which I was a newly-appointed non-commissioned officer, before we were called into service on the Mexican Border; drawn to him, as were all his comrades, by his charming personality, his absolute faithfulness and loyalty to the Service and his friends. Through all my service with him I cherished his companionship and the inspiration his high ideals and sense of duty brought to me. In no profession or walk of life do men rely on one another as in the military service; and we all felt that Lieut. Kenneth Gow could be relied upon absolutely to marshal every one of his fine qualities to the execution of any duty with which he was charged, from the smallest routine task to the command of his Company in battle. It is our sorrow that in this faithful performance he met a soldier’s death, at the head of the Company which looked to him with confidence as its fearless, accomplished, and beloved leader.

Amongst Lieut. Gow’s ancient Highland ancestors, when some beloved clansman was laid in his last bed beneath the heather, a monument of stones, called a cairn, was erected, from every friend a stone. In like fashion do I add one stone to the cairn of my friend and comrade, Kenneth Gow.
PREFATORY NOTE

These letters were written without any thought that they would ever be published; they were nearly all written under the stress and hurry of strenuous military training in camp or operations in the field; and some of them were written under shell fire. The primary object of their publication is that this book should serve as a memorial of the writer of them.

But as the letters present in a graphic and intimate way, being written as events were happening, those military experiences gone through by many others, it is believed that they will recall much of interest which will always dwell in the memories of the survivors of the company and regiment in which Lt. Gow served, and of others who also responded to the call of their country.

Editor.
The Seventh Infantry

The Seventh Infantry, National Guard, State of New York, dates back to 1806, when four companies were organized and mustered into the service of the State, but it was not designated the Seventh until about forty years later. These four companies became the infantry battalion in the Third Regiment of Artillery in 1807. In 1812 the regiment was designated the Eleventh, and was in the United States service in the war with Great Britain, stationed at Bedloe’s Island, New York harbor, and afterwards at the North Battery, New York, in 1814.

The regiment was gradually enlarged, under various designations, doing State service in a number of riots and public disasters, until 1847, when it was designated the Seventh Regiment of Infantry. Between 1849 and 1859 it was still further enlarged, and served the State during three periods of public disturbances.

In 1861 the regiment was called into the service of the United States and sent to the defence of Washington. During the Civil War it served at various times both under the State and National Governments. The regiment was continued after the Civil War, serving the State for periods in 1871, 1877, 1895, and 1900. Addi-
tional companies were organized between 1908 and 1912, and the Machine Gun Company was organized in 1914.

The Seventh Regiment of New York adopted the name "National Guard" in 1824, in honor of the French general Lafayette, of the Garde Nationale, who revisited the United States in that year, being received with great honors by the nation on account of his services to it in the War of Independence, the Seventh being his guard of honor on his arrival in New York City, as it was the honor escort of Marshal Joffre in 1917. The State of New York, in the Militia Act of 1862, appropriated the title
"National Guard" for all the militia of the State, and this designation was afterwards adopted by the United States Government and by most of the States. For the information of British readers it should be stated here that the National Guard of the United States somewhat corresponds to the "Territorials," as it is composed of citizen soldiery, subject to call for active duty by the governors of the respective States of the Union, but which may be mustered, in a national emergency, into the service of the United States by the President.

The Seventh Regiment, N. G. N. Y., has built and owns its own armory, a commodious, substantial and imposing edifice, occupying a city "block" between 66th and 67th Sts., Park and Lexington Aves., New York City. It was erected in 1879 at a cost of $750,000 (£154,000). The regiment has been nicknamed "the Grayjackets," from its uniform, adopted in 1824. Its field uniform is the khaki (O. D.—olive drab), which was donned when the regiment was mustered into the U. S. service in 1916 and 1917. From generation to generation the regiment has maintained its "touch of elbow," passing on its traditions as well as its identity to the new recruits. The Seventh Regiment Gazette has been published for thirty years, and has done much to maintain the continuity of the organization and its esprit de corps. The Seventh has long been recognized as the "crack" regiment of New York. Old New Yorkers, remembering the various parades of our citizen soldiers, can recall the added thrill they experienced when the "Dandy Seventh," with its fine marching and almost perfect alignment, came swinging down Fifth Avenue. Its last public appearance
in New York before the World War was in 1917, when it marched away to Camp Wadsworth to its regimental hymn, "Onward, Christian Soldiers."

In 1916 the regiment was called out for United States service, and was sent to the Mexican Border, being stationed at McAllen, Texas. It was in this service from June 19 to Dec. 2, 1916.

In 1917 the Seventh was called for the fourth time in its history to service by the U. S. Government. It was sent to Camp Wadsworth, Spartanburg, South Carolina, for training and reorganization, preparatory to being sent across seas in the war with Germany, the World War. While at Spartanburg it received various accretions, mainly from the First and Twelfth Regiments, New York National Guard, to bring its strength up to 3,700 men. After reorganization (Oct. 8, 1917), it was designated the 107th U. S. Infantry, being part of the 27th or New York Division. The training period at Camp Wadsworth lasted from July 16, 1917, to April 7, 1918.

In May, 1918, the 107th Regt. was sent to France, landing at Brest. With the other units of the 27th Division and the 30th Division, 2d American Corps, it was brigaded with the British 4th Army. The 107th took part in engagements and battles in both Belgium and France, in the East Poperinghe Line July 9 to Aug. 20, 1918; in the Dickebusch Lake sector Aug. 21 to 30; these places being in Belgium; at the Knoll, Guillemont Farm, Quennemont Farm, near Ronsoy, France, Sept. 27; at the Hindenburg Line near Bony, France, Sept. 29 and 30; at the La Selle River, near St. Souplet (Nord) Oct.
17; at the Jonc de Mer Ridge, near Arbre Guernon, Oct. 18; and at St. Maurice River, near Catillon, Oct. 19 and 20, 1918.

Two days before they went into the line in Belgium the strength of the 27th Division was approximately 19,500 officers and men. The artillery and trains, aggregating about 6,500 officers and men, had been detached from the division and sent to the American sector. The division at that time was about 2,000 short of full war strength, which for a division was 999 officers and 27,173 men, or a total of 28,172.

The 107th Inf. had 116 officers and 3,201 men, a total of 3,317, 489 short of full war strength, which was 107 officers and 3,699 men, a total of 3,806.

The Machine Gun Co. of the 107th Inf. had six officers and 160 men, a total of 166, twelve short of full war strength, which for a machine gun company was six officers and 172 men, a total of 178.

The 27th Division sustained 8,100 battle casualties, 1,928 killed and 8,100 wounded. The 107th Regt. sustained 1,867 battle casualties in the various actions from July 14 to Nov. 1, 1918—529 killed, 1,100 wounded, 202 gassed, fifteen missing and twenty-one captured. The Machine Gun Co. of the 107th sustained 103 battle casualties—twenty-four killed, sixty-five wounded and fourteen gassed.

Men of the 27th Division received a total of 254 decorations. Sixty of these were conferred on men of the 107th, and thirteen out of the sixty were won by men of the Machine Gun Co. The 27th Division won six Congressional Medals of Honor. Three of these were
The “Gray Jacket” Uniform

illustrate the *esprit de corps* of the 7th, which became the

conferred on men of the 107th Inf., and these three men were of the M. G. Co.* The 27th Division was awarded 134 Distinguished Service Crosses. Of these, forty were won by men of the 107th, and seven of the forty were conferred on members of the M. G. Co. An officer of the 27th Division has said that in every case where a man won a decoration there were others neck-and-neck with him, and yet others close at his heels.

The letters in this volume give us glimpses of the rigorous training of the 27th Division at Camp Wadsworth, under General O’Ryan, *Alan Louis Eggers, Sergeant, M. G. Co., 107th Infantry, September 29th, Le Catelet.*


Thomas E. O’Shea, Corporal, M. G. Co., 107th Infantry, September 29th, Le Catelet. *(Killed in action Sept. 29th.)*
107th Regt., and tell of the personnel and training of the officers and men of the M. G. Co. of the old 7th, developed into the M. G. Co. of the new 107th. And this training of the 7th and of its M. G. Co. goes back farther than Camp Wadsworth—to the months spent on the Mexican border in 1916. In Gen. Pershing’s army in France there were over one thousand officers who graduated from the Seventh, N. Y. N. G., besides those in the 107th Infantry and other units of the 27th Division. The 7th Regiment also furnished 350 men in a block to the N. Y. 69th (165th U. S. Inf.), of the Rainbow Division.

We have read much as to what nation, what army, what division, what regiment even, won the World War, and preposterous claims have been made that have provoked derision. A great deal of this comes from the inability or unwillingness of many people to visualize the war in its entirety, and to see one effort or one campaign in proportion to the whole. And few there are who, with Marshal Foch, ascribe the success of the Allies to the overruling of Divine Providence. It has not been claimed by or for the 27th Division or the 107th Regiment that their efforts alone won the war. They simply did their part. As to the 7th-107th, those of us who knew something of its make-up, training and experience were confident that, when its men went to France, what it was possible for men to do they would do. Now we have the knowledge that what it was possible for men to do they did. This suffices for us and for them—Pro patria et gloria!

R. M. G.
Actions of the 27th Div., Hindenburg Line and Later.  (From the N. Y. Times.)
Some Official Commendations of the 27th Am. Division

From Sir Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief, British Army.

"I wish to express to you personally and to all the officers and men serving under you my warm appreciation of the very valuable and gallant services rendered by you, throughout the recent operations with the 4th British Army. Called upon to attack positions of great strength held by a determined enemy, all ranks of the 27th and 30th American Divisions displayed an energy, courage and determination in attack which proved irresistible. It does not need me to tell you that in the heavy fighting of the past three weeks you have earned the lasting esteem and admiration of your British comrades in arms whose success you have so nobly shared.

"On the 29th of September you took part with great distinction in the great and critical attack which shattered the enemy's resistance in the Hindenburg Line and opened the road to final victory. The deeds of the 27th and 30th American Divisions who on that day took Bellicourt and Nauroy, and so gallantly sustained the desperate struggle for Bony, will rank with the highest achievements of the war. They will always be remembered by the British regiments that fought beside you."

From Gen. H. L. Rawlinson, Commander Fourth British Army.

"The breaking of the great Hindenburg system of defense, coupled with the captures of Grandcourt, Busigny and St. Souplet, and finally the forcing of the passages of the La Selle, constitute a series of victories of which each officer, N. C. O. and man have every reason to feel proud."

From Lt.-Col. H. Murray, Commander Fourth Australian M. G. Battalion.

"I am convinced that the officers and men of the 27th Division have done all that was humanly possible for brave men to do, and their gallantry in this action must stand out through all time in American history."
Germans Captured by the 27th Division, Peronne, Oct. 5, 1918.

"On behalf of all ranks of the 3rd Australian Division, I desire to express our sincere appreciation of the fighting qualities displayed by the 27th Division U. S. on the 27th and 29th September last. The gallant manner in which your troops faced an extremely difficult task, the determination of their attacks on a strongly entrenched position, and the undaunted spirit with which they met their losses make us hope that we shall again have the honor of fighting alongside the Division under your command. The confidence of the men in their officers appealed to us as a particularly happy omen for the future successes of the 27th."

From Gen. O'Ryan, Commander 27th Div.

"Almost continuously the division has been fighting and marching, and the 107th Infantry has continued its inspiring record for discipline and cheerful endurance in battle. Lying in shell holes at night, attacking at dawn, fighting all day against the most determined and cunning machine-gun resistance, supported by artillery—repeating this the following day until the relief, which meant lying in other shell holes and pits in a position of close support—to experience these privations with confidence and cheerfulness unimpaired requires physical fitness and spirit in superlative degree, and well indeed have you demonstrated their possession."

From Gen. Pershing, Commander American Army.

"It was the fortune of our 2d Corps, composed of the 27th and 30th Divisions, which had remained with the British, to have a place of honor in co-operation with the Australian Corps on Sept. 29 and Oct. 1 in the assault on the Hindenburg line where the St. Quentin Canal passes through a tunnel under a ridge. The 30th Division speedily broke through the main line of defense for all its objectives, while the 27th pushed on impetuously through the main line until some of its elements reached Gouy. In the midst of the maze of trenches and shell craters and under crossfire from machine guns, the other elements fought desperately against odds. In this and in later actions, from Oct. 6 to Oct. 19, our 2d Corps captured over 6,000 prisoners and advanced over thirteen miles. The spirit and aggressiveness of these divisions have been highly praised by the British commander under whom they served."
ROLL OF HONOR

Machine Gun Co., 7th Int.

Officers and Men and Graduates of the M. G. Co. of the 7th Inft., N. Y. N. G.

Dates of Death and Places of Burial.

First Lieutenant Edward Willis; killed in action Sept. 29, 1918; Bony, F-8-202.
First Lieutenant Kenneth Gow; killed in action Oct. 17, 1918; St. Souplet, A-1-2.
Second Lieutenant Jerome J. Dixon.
Second Lieutenant Henry B. Smith.
Second Lieutenant William H. Tailer; killed in action; aviator.
Sergt. Morris S. Boyer; killed in action Oct. 12, 1918; Montbrehain, A-4-1.
Sergt. Harry P. Bruhn.
Corp. Dennis J. Donnelly; died of wounds Sept. 29; Doinigt, 4-D-6.
Corp. Nicholas E. Kelly; killed in action Sept. 29; Bony, F-2-35.
Corp. George H. Moore; killed in action Sept. 29; Bony, F-2-40.
Corp. Thomas E. O'Shea; killed in action Sept. 29; Bony, E-2-47.
Corp. Raymond H. Spickerman; killed in action Sept. 29; Bony, 9-2-27.

Privates—
Edward J. Borstleman; died of wounds Sept. 29; Tincourt, F-6-4.
Walter L. Crandall; killed in action Sept. 29; Bony, F-3-78.
Harry A. Dearing.
Ray de Graff; killed in action Sept. 29; Bony, F-2-45.
William H. Grant; killed in action Oct. 12; Busigny, Am. C. 12.
R. D. Hamilton, Jr.; killed in action Sept. 29; Bony, F-3-51.
Thomas E. McDonald; killed in action Sept. 29; Bony, F-8-205.
Frederick A. Mackenzie; killed in action Sept. 29; Bony, F-2-39.
William McKibbin; killed in action Sept. 29; Bony, F-8-207.
John J. Mallow, Jr.; killed in action Sept. 29; Bony, F-2-38.
Horace Murtha; killed in action Sept. 29; Bony F-8-186.
Harold J. Porter; killed in action Sept. 29; Bony, F-2-42.
Floyd Pudney; killed in action Sept. 29; Bony, F-2-32.
Harry V. Quinn; killed in action Sept. 29.
William Reynolds; killed in action Sept. 29; Guillemont, A-3-24.
Louis Ruoff; killed in action Sept. 29; Guillemont, A-4-13.
Richard A. Scully; died of disease Oct. 30; 18 A. G. R.
Melvin T. Smith; killed in action Sept. 29.
Military Record of Kenneth Gow

Born Sept. 1, 1889, at Summit, N. J.
Served with 7th Inftry. from June 19, 1916, to December 2, 1916, on Mexican Border.
Appointed Corporal Oct. 8, 1916.
Appointed Stable Sergeant Nov. 10, 1916.
Appointed First Sergeant July 14, 1917.
Served with 7th Inftry. from July 16, 1917, to Oct. 8, 1917, Camp Wadsworth.
Served with 107th U. S. Inftry. from Oct. 8, 1917, to April 7, 1918, Camp Wadsworth.
Commissioned Second Lieutenant Jan. 27, 1918.
Served with 107th U. S. Inftry. in Belgium and France from May 8, 1918, to October 17, 1918.
D. S. at 2d Corps School, Chatillon, France, from June 1, 1918, to July 7, 1918.
Promoted to rank of First Lieutenant October, 1918, by Special Order 299.
Killed in action on the morning of Oct. 17, 1918, between La Haje Menneresse and St. Souplet, in attack on the Selle River heights, while going forward to find a crossing place of the La Selle River and to locate machine gun emplacements.
CORPORAL'S WARRANT.

The Commanding Officer of the Seventh Infantry, National Guard, New York, to all who shall see these presents, greeting:

Know ye that, reposing special trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, fidelity and abilities of Kenneth Gow, I do hereby appoint him Corporal in the Machine Gun Co. of the 7th N. Y. Infantry, N. G. U. S., in the service of the State of New York, to rank as such from the 8th day of October one thousand nine hundred and sixteen. He is therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of Corporal by doing and performing all manner of things thereunto belonging. And I do strictly charge and require all non-commissioned officers and soldiers under his command to be obedient to his orders as corporal. And he is to observe and follow such orders and directions from time to time as he shall receive from me or his future commanding officer or other superior officers and non-commissioned officers set over him according to the laws and regulations governing the military forces of the State of New York. This warrant to continue in force during the pleasure of the commanding officer of the 7th N. Y. Inftry., N. G. U. S., for the time being.

Given under my hand at the headquarters of the 7th N. Y. Inf., N. G. U. S., at McAllen, Texas, this 8th day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and sixteen.

(Signed) WILLARD C. FISK,
Colonel Commanding the 7th N. Y. Inf., N. G. U. S.

By the Commanding Officer:

D. C. DESPARD,
Captain Adjutant.

SERGEANT'S WARRANT.

The Commanding Officer of the Seventh Infantry, National Guard, New York, to all who shall see these presents, greeting:

Know ye that, reposing special trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, fidelity and abilities of Kenneth Gow, I do hereby appoint him Stable Sergeant in Machine Gun Co. of the 7th N. Y. Infantry, N. G. U. S., in the service of the State of New York, to rank as such from the 10th day of November, one thousand nine hundred and sixteen. He is therefore carefully and diligently to dis-
LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

charge the duty of Stable Sergeant by doing and performing all manner of things thereunto belonging. And I do strictly charge and require all non-commissioned officers and soldiers under his command to be obedient to his orders as stable sergeant. And he is to observe and follow such orders and directions from time to time as he shall receive from me or his future commanding officer or other superior officers and non-commissioned officers set over him according to the laws and regulations governing the military forces of the State of New York. This warrant to continue in force during the pleasure of the commanding officer of the 7th N. Y. Infantry, N. G. U. S., for the time being.

Given under my hand at the headquarters of the N. Y. 7th Infantry, N. G., U. S., at McAllen, Texas, this 10th day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and sixteen.

(Signed) WILLARD C. FISK,
Colonel Commanding the 7th N. Y. Infantry, N. G. U. S.

By the Commanding Officer:

D. C. DESPARD,
Captain Adjutant.

APPOINTMENT AS FIRST SERGEANT.

National Guard of the United States and of the State of New York, to all who shall see these presents, greeting:

Know ye that, reposing special trust and confidence in the fidelity and abilities of Kenneth Gow, I do hereby appoint him First Sergeant, Machine Gun Co., 7th Regt., N. Y. Inftry., National Guard, to rank as such from the 14th day of July, one thousand nine hundred and seventeen. He is therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of first sergeant by doing and performing all manner of things thereunto belonging. And I do strictly charge and require all non-commissioned officers and soldiers under his command to be obedient to his orders as first sergeant. And he is to observe and follow such orders and directions from time to time as he shall receive from his superior officers and non-commissioned officers set over him, according to the rules and discipline of war.

Given under my hand at New York this fourteenth day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seventeen.

(Signed) WILLARD C. FISK,
Colonel 7th Regt. N. Y. Infantry.
LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

DISCHARGE FROM NATIONAL GUARD.

National Guard of the United States and of the State of New York, to all whom it may concern:

This is to certify that Kenneth Gow, First Sergeant Machine Gun Co., 7th Regt., New York Inf., National Guard, as a testimonial of honest and faithful service, is hereby honorably discharged from the National Guard of the United States and of the State of New York, by reason of being drafted into the military service of the United States, August 5, 1917.

Said Kenneth Gow was born in Summit, in the State of New Jersey. When enlisted he was twenty-six years of age, and by occupation a salesman. He had blue eyes, brown hair, light complexion, and was 5 feet 11 inches in height.

Given under my hand at New York City, N.Y., this 5th day of August, one thousand nine hundred and seventeen.

(Signed) Willard C. Fisk, Colonel 7th New York Inf.

ENLISTMENT RECORD.

Name: Kenneth Gow. Grade: 1st Sergeant.
Enlisted May 16, 1916, at New York City, N. Y.
Non-commissioned officer: First Sergeant, July 14, 1917.
Single; character excellent; no A. W. O. L.; service honest and faithful.

(Signed) Kenneth Gardner, Captain 7th New York Infantry, Commanding Machine Gun Co.

DISCHARGE FROM U. S. ARMY.

Honorable Discharge from the United States Army. To all whom it may concern:

This is to certify that Kenneth Gow, a first sergeant of Machine Gun Co. of the 107th Regiment of Infantry, as a testimonial of honest and faithful service, is hereby honorably discharged from the United States Army by reason of accepting commission as 2d lieutenant.
Said Kenneth Gow was born in Summit, in the State of New Jersey, and when enlisted was 26 years of age, by occupation a salesman, had blue eyes, brown hair, light complexion, and was 5 feet 10 3/4 inches in height.

Given under my hand at Camp Wadsworth, S. C., this 26th day of January, one thousand nine hundred and eighteen.

(Signed) Robert Mazet, Major 107th Infantry.

ENLISTMENT RECORD.

Name: Kenneth Gow. Grade: First Sergeant.
Enlisted May 16, 1916, at New York, N. Y., for period of the emergency.
Non-commissioned officer: 1st Sergeant, July 16, 1917.
Horsemanship: Qualified.
Physical condition when discharged: Good.
Typhoid prophylaxis completed Oct. 19, 1917.
Single; character excellent; no A. W. O. L.; service honest and faithful.

(Signed) Kenneth Gardner, Captain 107th Inf., Commanding Machine Gun Co.

Washington, D. C.,
7 P. M., Jan. 26, 1918.

Commanding General, 27th Division,
Camp Wadsworth, Spartanburg, S. C.


McCain.

Headquarters Camp Wadsworth, S. C.,
Jan. 27, 1918.

Official copy to 2d Lt. Gow, thru
Commanding Officer 107th Inftry.
LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

Camp Wadsworth, S. C.,
January 27, 1918.

From: 2d Lieut. Kenneth Gow, Infantry, N. G.
To: Adjutant General of the Army.
Subject: Oath of Office.

Enclosing Oath of Office and copy of telegram sent this date to Adjutant General of the Army, as follows:

Referring your telegram January twenty-sixth addressed to Commanding General Twenty-seventh Division. I accept appointment as Second Lieutenant.

KENNETH GOW.

Headquarters, 27th Division,
Camp Wadsworth,
Spartanburg, S. C.

Jan. 29, 1918.

Special Orders
No. 29

EXTRACT.

1. Second Lieut. Kenneth Gow, N. G. U. S., appointed from Sergeant, Machine Gun Company, 107th Infantry, having accepted commission as such on January 27, 1918, will be discharged by his Commanding Officer as an enlisted man as of January 26, 1918. Lieut. Gow is assigned to the 107th Infantry, and will be assigned to a company by the regimental commander.

By command of MAJOR-GENERAL O'RYAN:

H. H. BANDHOLTZ,
Colonel, Chief of Staff.

Official:

FRANKLIN W. WARD,
Adjutant General,
Adjutant.
Regimental Order No. 115

Second Lieut. Kenneth Gow, having been assigned to this regiment by Division Order, and having reported, is hereby assigned to the Machine Gun Company for duty.

By order of Major Mazet: (Signed) Douglas C. Despard,

Captain, Adjutant.

Official:

D. C. D. F.

Copy to C. O., M. G. Co.

Copy to Lieut. Gow.

COMMISSION.

The President of the United States of America to all who shall see these presents, greeting:

Know ye that, reposing special trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, fidelity and abilities of Kenneth Gow, I do appoint him a Second Lieutenant in the National Guard, in the service of the United States, to rank as such from the twenty-first day of January, nineteen hundred and eighteen. He is therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of the office to which he is appointed by doing and performing all manner of things thereunto belonging.

And I do strictly charge and require all officers and soldiers under his command to be obedient to his orders as an officer of his grade and position. And he is to observe and follow such orders and directions, from time to time, as he shall receive from me, or the future President of the United States of America, or the General or other superior officers set over him, according to the rules and discipline of war. This commission to continue in force during the pleasure of the President of the United States for the time being, and for the period of the existing emergency, under the provisions of an act of Congress approved June three, nineteen hundred and sixteen.

Given under my hand, at the City of Washington, this twenty-first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and eighteen, and in the one hundred and forty-second year of the independence of the United States.

By the President: (Signed) B. Crowell,

Assistant Secretary of War.

The Adjutant General's Office. Recorded Feb. 6, 1918.
(Signed) H. P. McCain,

The Adjutant General.
NOTE.

By Special Order No. 299, 2d Lt. Gow was promoted to be first lieutenant in October, 1918, but had not received the commission when killed in action, near St. Souplet, Nord, France, Oct. 17th, 1918.

CITATION.

War Department
The Adjutant General's Office
Washington, April 9, 1919.

Mr. R. M. Gow,

12 Caldwell Avenue, Summit, N. J.

Dear Sir: This office has been advised, by cable No. 2010, by the Commanding General, American Expeditionary Forces, that he has awarded the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously to your son, 1st Lieutenant Kenneth Gow, Machine Gun Company, 107th Infantry, for—

"Extraordinary heroism in action near Ronssoy, France, September 29th, 1918. While supply officer for his company he personally took rations forward with a pack mule through continuous shell and machine gun fire.

"When all officers of his company were either killed or wounded he assumed command and led it forward through heavy shell and machine gun fire, until he was killed" (Oct. 17th).

The Quartermaster General of the Army has been directed to cause the distinguished service cross to be forwarded to you.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) P. C. HARRIS,
The Adjutant General, per R. H.
ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

To all who shall see these presents, greeting:

This is to certify that Kenneth Gow, First Lieutenant of Infantry, died with honor in the service of his country on the seventeenth day of October, 1918.

Given at Washington, D. C., office of the Adjutant General of the Army, this seventh day of January, one thousand nine hundred and twenty.

(Signed) C. S. McNeill,
Adjutant-General.
Mexican Border Service

Poster-stamp of the Seventh

June 19 to Dec. 2, 1916
Off for the Border

The Seventh Regiment N. G. N. Y. left their armory in New York for Mexican Border service on June 26, 1916. The regiment received a very enthusiastic send-off in New York City and an ovation all along the route. The railroad tracks were lined with cheering crowds from Jersey City out to the Meadows, and through Newark and Elizabeth, N. J. This was repeated at other cities which the regiment passed through by daylight, notably Richmond, Ind. They arrived at McAllen, Tex., on July 2d.

LETTER I

Travelling by Troops Transport Train.—The Reception at Harrisburg.—Probable Destination.—His First Promotion.

On Train, near Columbus, Ohio.

Wednesday, June, 1916.

Dear Mama and Family:

Expect to get to Columbus in about an hour. We have twenty-six cars in our train, which is the last of the division. The horses and mules are on the first train, combat wagons and trucks on the second and the men on two twenty-six car trains. We have dragged all the way across Ohio, and it is very wearisome. The men have sung, talked and slept themselves out already, and we are not one-quarter of the way there. The weather is very
fine; cool so far, which is a great relief. I was on guard last night, consequently have had but one hour's sleep since entraining. We stopped for half an hour at Harrisburg, and the men were allowed to get out for a stretch. As I was on guard, I could not take advantage of this liberty. We expect to do the same thing at Indianapolis, to-night, when I will have my turn. The discipline is very strict. We cannot buy any but specified things. No man is allowed even on the train platforms, etc.

I almost forgot to speak of the reception we received at Harrisburg. Half the city population seemed to be there. Any man could have all the cigarettes, cigars or tobacco he wanted. Baskets of fruit and sandwiches were presented to any man who would take the trouble to carry them on the train. Who paid for it all I do not know.

We are going to St. Louis and thence down the Mississippi Valley to Galveston, and from there to Brownsville, on the Gulf of Mexico. The town is at
the mouth of the Rio Grande. If there is no change in the present relations between this country and Mexico, we will probably remain there all summer. We will relieve two regiments of regulars.

We are a part of the U. S. Regular Army now. I have received my first promotion. It does not amount to much—means $3 a month additional, making my pay the stupendous sum of $18 per month. Besides this, we will receive a food allowance and a clothing allowance. I am now known as a first-class private, one of four chosen from the company. First line privates in a machine gun company load the gun, and, in case of accident to the gunner, take his place. The next non-coms will be chosen from the first-class privates.

Will write more later. It is anything but easy to write on one’s knees in a swaying, pitching old rattlebox of a car. There are 750 men and officers on this train. Ohio is flat and rather monotonous. It must have been beautiful at Pittsburg before a factory or a signboard was erected there.

Have Rob give this letter to Walter, as I know he will be waiting to hear from us. If there are any good pictures of the regiment leaving New York in the illustrated sections of the Sunday papers, clip them out and save them for me.

Love to all,

Kenneth.
LETTER II

IN THE SOUTHWEST, EN ROUTE.—IMPRESSIONS GATHERED ON THE WAY.

June 30, 1916.

Dear Mama and Family:

We are nearing the Texas line. Oklahoma is very picturesque. Until we got to Muskogee, a city of 30,000 inhabitants, it was as flat as a table. Afterwards it becomes quite hilly, but as we approach Texas we have run into the plains again. The country is very impressive. You can look all the way to the horizon and see nothing but one vast expanse of flat country. We are being transported over the Missouri, Kansas and Texas R. R. We followed the Missouri River across Missouri to Sedalia, a city of 50,000 people. The valley of the Missouri is beautiful. There is nothing grand about it, but very pleasing to the eye. Corn and wheat seem to be about the only crops, the wheat being cut and ready for threshing, and as we progress further south it is being threshed. The valley is very wide, and the soil looks worth a million dollars. Have passed wheat and corn fields that one cannot see across.

Muskogee, Okla., is a very fine city. It is situated in the Oklahoma oil district, and consequently is one of the richest cities in the State. We got pretty well over the town. The post-office is one of the finest buildings I have ever seen. All this part of the country has had its hands in the pork-barrel at Washington and has brought them out full. One town of twenty or thirty houses that we passed has a post-office that must have cost $25,000.
LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

We are passing through what used to be Indian Territory, but have seen no Indians, with the single exception of East St. Louis, where some were working on the railroad tracks. The temperature is about 100 degrees, but we do not feel it; that is, not so much as you might expect. There seems to be no wind in this part of the country. Since leaving St. Louis there has not been a

breeze, except that made by the motion of the train, which same motion, by the way, is responsible for this exhibition of penmanship. Natives say they have very little wind until a cyclone comes along.

People come down here to farm, and have started to plant all along the railroad. They pitch a tent and immediately start to prepare the ground. If there are

Officers of the Seventh.
trees on it, they cut a ring around the butt, to kill it, and then get at their ploughing and planting. This part of the State seems to be just opening up. There are no orchards to speak of.

We have been given a great reception all along the route. When we pull into a depot, the whole confounded town makes a rush for the train. Everything is different—the people, their dress and their talk. A great many things are cheaper than in New York, but not as good. Silver dollars are more plentiful than bills. Enclosed is a clipping from the Richmond, Ind., Palladium. It will give you an idea of the fuss people here are making over us.

Have crossed the Red River and have passed into Texas since I started to write. Have just pulled into Denison, but they will not allow us to leave the train. Save any clippings about the regiment you think are worth saving. Looks now as if we are to be allowed to get off, so will bring this to a hurried close.

Kenneth.

LETTER III

The Arrival at McAllen.—Pitching Camp.

McAllen, Tex.

Dear Mother:

Arrived yesterday, but have not had a chance to write. Work, work, work! The heat is awful; thermometer 118°. The day before it went to 128°. Arrived at 10 A. M., and by 11.30 every tent was up. Had to
clear out a big company ground of cactus and chaparral. Everything one touches has stings in it. Our destination was changed. Will write when I get an opportunity.

Kenneth.

LETTER IV

The Black Belt of Texas.—San Antonio.—Making Camp.—Making Acquaintance with the Flora and Fauna of the Border.—An Impressive Religious Service.


Dear Mother, Pop and Family:

We finally arrived in camp Sunday morning. After leaving St. Louis, we ran across the State through the Missouri Valley to Sedalia on the M. K. and T. of Texas. Ran through part of Oklahoma, which used to be Indian Territory. A great part of it is cultivated, but as a whole it looks rather poor. Many of the people live in hovels. The country seems to be just opening up. Stopped at Muskogee. We passed through the famous Black Belt of Texas. This refers to the soil, not to the people. I never saw such farms. Corn and wheat are the principal crops in the northern part of the State, and cotton as you progress South. We crossed the Red River, which marks the State line, right after lunch; stopped at Denison for three-quarters of an hour. We made our best time through Texas. Ran all afternoon until dark without seeing hardly a foot of uncultivated land. Towns few and far between. The soil is the blackest I have ever seen. Texas is a grand State—that is, the northern
part of it; very flat, but rather rougher and gently rolling in the central part. As you approach San Antonio the sand and desert begin. The sunrises and sunsets are the most gorgeous I have ever seen.

San Antonio is the most interesting city we have visited—a very quaint old city, the oldest, I believe, in Texas. We were all through the Alamo, where Davy Crockett, in 1847, stood off 15,000 Spaniards for fifteen days with a garrison of 2,000. The most of the Alamo is in ruins. The main hall and confessional room and several smaller rooms are still intact, apparently as good as the day it was built. The streets of the city are narrow, and most of the buildings are one-story rambling affairs, with porches from the roof which extend over the sidewalk to the street. The Southern Pacific Railway station is beautiful. The city has a plaza and park laid out near the station. In it are all the known varieties of cacti. There are date and many other palms, banana, orange and lemon trees. The place looks like a picture of a Spanish city.

From San Antonio south the country gets dryer and dryer. They changed our destination at the last moment, as we kind of thought they would. We are fifty miles northwest of Brownsville, at McAllen, in Hidalgo Co., about three to five miles from the border. The country looks terrible. Until the day we arrived they had had no rain for fourteen months. We had a stiff shower in the afternoon, luckily just as we had our tents in shape. It came up without a bit of warning, with a terrible wind. It is hot. My heavens! I never knew such heat. Two men of my company went down the first day, one right
beside me. Nevertheless there is far less chance of being overcome by the heat here than in New York, owing to the dry climate.

We have had a lot of hard work to do making the camp site. The space allotted to us was covered with cacti and chaparral and about a million other thorny tropical growths. It had all to be grubbed out to a depth of about six inches below the surface and then graded.

We now have a company ground as flat as a table, with every living thing except ourselves and a few unpleasant visitors, which I will tell you about later, cleaned off.

This afternoon we experienced our first sand and wind storm. It was certainly fierce, and was followed by a violent thunderstorm, which is not over yet as I write, and that is why I have time to write this letter. Sand is in everything. When you close your teeth the
sand grits between them. I do not exaggerate; it is a fact. At night and during thunderstorms we have visitors in our tents,—namely, rattlesnakes, chameleons, and one hundred and one varieties of lizards, tarantulas, and scorpions. A rattlesnake thought he would pay a visit to the band tent yesterday, and got killed for his pains. Opposite us the Second and Twenty-sixth Texas are encamped. They killed a rattlesnake yesterday with sixteen rattles on him. Several men have been stung by scorpions, and several more of the insects have been caught. The bite or sting of none of these beasts is fatal.

Lt. Van Roeder, one of our medical staff, and a prominent physician of New York, comes from this very part of Texas and knows how to treat all these things. Oh! this sure is a delightful country. Why anyone will live here passes my comprehension. No one but a Mexican can stand the climate. Between the hours of 10 A. M. and 4 P. M., they are the only people you see about. As soon as we get to rights we will take it easy too.

We have reveillé at 5.20 A. M., assembly and drill at 5.30 until 6; mess-call at 6.30, then work until mess-call at 12.30; more work until 6, then assembly on the parade grounds and regimental manoeuvres; retreat at 6.30; mess-call at 7 P. M.; tattoo at 9; call to quarters at 9.45; first call at 9.55 and taps at 10 P. M. That is our day at present. Some day! Gen. Funston is our commander-in-chief.

We had religious services, conducted by the chaplain, last night. The whole regiment assembled on the parade grounds in hollow square. We were on the eastern wing, and therefore faced the west. The sun was just setting.
I mentioned the beauty of the sunsets before. Our colors were in the centre of the square, with the field music. The chaplain read the Episcopal service. The whole regiment stood at parade rest, every man carefully uniformed and equipped and perfectly aligned. The camp was in the background, and on the horizon the sun setting in a blaze of glory, everything about our equipment, tents, combat wagons, etc., dyed in the same glow. It was one of the most impressive scenes I have ever witnessed.

Kenneth.

LETTER V

THE FOURTH OF JULY IN CAMP.—IN HOSTILE COUNTRY.—THE TRANSFORMATIONS CAUSED BY A MILITARY LIFE.


Dear Folks:

This is the Fourth of July, and this is the last place in which I ever thought that I would spend it.

Our first and second battalions went to Brownsville and had to be turned back. Two Texas outfits, the 71st and ourselves, are encamped just outside the town. I believe that Squadron A, First Cavalry, and the 12th, 14th and 69th regiments will all be here.

We were fed on cold rations all the way down, jam, beans, corned beef, hash and hardtack principally. We were treated as well as could be expected.

Let Pop send me his Times every morning. Also send me the Summit Herald and write me all the news.
There are lots more to tell you about, but it will have to keep. An interesting feature is an encampment of Mexicans, about 5,000, six miles from us. There is a little sniping, but it doesn’t amount to much. We have thrown out a line and have posted double guards. We

are allowed no liberty, and must not leave camp. Men who go outside on the various details carry arms with one cartridge thrown into the chamber, rifle or automatic cocked and on safety. We do not let any Mexican come nearer than ten or twelve feet. We are in hostile country, and cannot afford to take chances. The discipline is strict to an extreme degree. It is the only way. The sanitary arrangements are excellent.

Now I suppose this all reads a great deal worse than
it really is. We are having a good time. Let Walter read this, as I simply cannot get the time to write another letter of this length.

Bob Rieser is cooking for our company as well as for his own. He said he never would have dreamed when I was selling him electros that he would be cooking my meals on the Mexican Border.

Don’t laugh, but I am on the permanent carpenter detail. Have been building mess tables all morning with Vernon Henry and a man named Waldo.

Love to all,

Kenneth.

LETTER VI

Letter-Writing Under Difficulties.—Scorpions, Tarantulas, Heat, Rain and Thirst.—Mules and How to Restore Lost Ones.—National Guard Becomes U. S. Army.

McAllen, Tex., July 5, 1916.

Dear Walter:

The writing facilities are not of the best. This is written on the back of my mess-kit, which is perched on my knees. We will have a tremendous camp here in another week. Gen. Dyer has arrived, and Gen. O’Ryan is expected this week.

We continue to have trouble with scorpions, tarantulas and centipedes. The rattlesnakes seem to have been killed off or scared away. We have had several men affected by the heat, two of them in our squad, but not seriously. Only one man went out completely.
There had been no rain here for fourteen months before we came, and now it rains every afternoon, although the rainy season is not due until August. The heat is the worst. It was 122° this afternoon in the sun and 112° in the shade. We get so thirsty that it nearly drives us crazy, and they won’t let us drink. The water has petroleum in it, owing to the oil in the ground.

meal is dumped into the water by the H. C. You can imagine the result. When a man starts drinking root-beer, ginger-ale and so forth, down he goes.

Take my word for it, the mess is O.K. We get fresh corn, excellent tea and coffee, both hot and iced, steak, bacon, beef, hash, rice pudding, pork and beans, macaroni baked with cheese, etc., and all excellently cooked.

The First Cavalry came in this morning, and Dick
with them. They will camp above us about a mile away. Things are very quiet. There is a good deal of sniping, but no one seems to get hit. We have had no trouble, but some of the other outfits have had. The dope points to our being here until after election day. The newspapers all have correspondents here. The Times man came into our street the other morning and interviewed me for an hour. He is going to photograph our outfit, guns, mules and all, and to write us up. So keep your eye on the N. Y. Times.

Our mules and horses came in yesterday. The M. G. Co. unloaded 137 mules and 68 horses. The mules cost the Govt. $300 apiece, and are beauties. I can’t hand the horses much. It is exceedingly difficult to get good mounts for the army, as Europe has gobbled up every-
thing. Every animal we received has to be broken. The mules are the worst. It takes from eight to twelve men to take them off the cars to the corral. We lost two. The last seen of them they were headed over the border. Now we will have to steal two from some other outfit. Almost got two from the First Field Hospital Corps this morning, but were prevented by one of our own fool sentries. I had the pleasure of going on guard over the contrary brutes from 2 A. M. until 6 this morning. Have been working on my carpenter detail all morning, this being mess hour. It is h—— to be a private.

This stealing stunt may sound funny to you, but the first thing I learned is that in the army you must never under any circumstances borrow anything, and never must you be short of anything. Enough said.

Before we left Jersey City, Mr. C——told me that there was a movement on foot to buy a field kitchen for the M. G. Co. of the Seventh, this to be subscribed for by Summit people. It is the finest thing we could get.

The National Guard is gone until we are mustered out of the Federal service. We are known as the Sixth Division of the U. S. Army, New York being the only State to furnish a complete division.

Your sincere friend,

Ken.
Dear Mama, Pop and Family:

We are having an easy two hours, owing to a rain-storm, which has lasted thirty-six hours and still going strong, so am taking the opportunity to write. Have not heard from you yet. It seems as though we had been here a month. Most of the hard work has been done, and the drills have set in. At 5.15 A. M. we have a half-hour of physical drill, then mess, then infantry drill, followed by automatic pistol and machine gun drill, etc. Am very busy learning the Morse wig-wag code and the semaphore signal system. We will soon get field and truck work.

Yesterday Vernon Henry and I hired an automobile and went to the border, a ride of about five miles. We went to the town of Hidalgo, which used to be the county seat of Hidalgo Co. It is a typical border town, which has been deserted and is now occupied by about seventy-five Mexicans, who till the soil after a fashion and keep large herds of goats. The town is situated on the banks of the Rio Grande. The only white men in it are the Customs officials and the regular border patrol. There is a very pretentious building which used to be the town hall. It is three stories high, and on the roof has a cupola about a story and a half high, making a little more
than four stories altogether. We went up and had a most wonderful view of the country for miles around. It stretches away as far as the eye can see as flat as a pancake, without a single break on the horizon. Mexico looks the same as Texas.

There is an observer continually in this town, either an officer or a non-com of the regular army. Right opposite Hidalgo is a Mexican village, which has also been deserted. The lookout in the town told us that, up until the night before last, there were about 800 Mexican cavalry encamped there. They had been watching them very closely, but they had slipped away in the night without a sound.
The Rio Grande is a dirty, muddy stream, about a hundred or a hundred and fifty feet wide at Hidalgo. The two shores are reached by means of two cable ferries. We saw Mexicans walking about on the opposite shore, but they did not appear to be armed. We presented a beautiful target against the banks of the river, if they had cared to try their luck.

Jun Willis received a letter from Mr. Franklin saying that the ladies of the N. D. O. would send a box down with anything we wanted. We are going to ask them for socks (which we cannot buy here), compasses, and two or three U. S. topographical maps of Texas. That is the list so far. I sadly need socks; sent my good ones to a laundry in Brownsville and they came back about five inches long—absolutely ruined.

Have had another terrible misfortune: broke both of my pipes, but have managed to whittle down the stems and make new plugs. We cannot even buy a pipestem.

We have been receiving copies of the *Summit Herald* and *Record*, which I believe will be sent regularly.

It looks as if we will be here until November; supplies are ordered until then. They are issuing us two extra pairs of shoes, three extra pairs of breeches and shirts, so it looks as if we were here for awhile. We will be part of the border patrol. There are three battalions in the regiment, and they will take turns patrolling at intervals of eighteen days, each on duty six days at a time, using this camp as a base. What disposition will be made of the M. G. Co. I don’t know.

It is still raining, and the company streets are canals, but we are very dry in the tents. Everything is very
damp and sticky. The carpenter detail has just completed door-sills and mud-racks for each tent. The rain and mud make no difference with our work and drills; they go on just the same.

Have been reading the New York papers. They are full of bosh; very little concerning even our every-day camp life is told straight. The camp is full of reporters. I enclose a clipping from the Times. It is absolutely untrue. How a woman in New Jersey can know anything about it beats me. The only thing there is any legitimate complaint about is the quantity of food issued by the U. S. Q. M. Dept. We have got around that by chipping in and partially buying our own supplies.

Never mind about sending the papers down; we get plenty of them. Save any pictures of the regiment or camp in the Sunday supplements. Keep an account of the things I ask you to send down, and I will settle up when I get home. Would send the money, but my cash is running low, and I don’t know when they intend to pay us. Health is still good, as is that of everyone else from Summit.

I went over to see Dick the other day, but he had got leave and gone to town. His outfit is encamped about two miles from us.

Capt. Gordon Johnson, of the regular army, has taken active command of the Twelfth N. Y., encamped next to us. He is the man who spoke at the preparedness meeting in Summit.

July 14.

It has taken three different days to write this letter. It is still raining, and this place is a quagmire. Our
shoes, leggings and breeches up to our waists are covered with mud. It sticks like plaster, and has to be scraped off with a knife. I have never seen such mud. The soil here is very peculiar. When we arrived there had been no rain for fourteen months, and consequently there was about six inches of dust and sand. The rain has transformed this into a heavy clinging mud.

With love,

Kenneth.

LETTER VIII

The Weather Becomes Fine.—Regiment Gaining Proficiency.—Exterminating Vermin.—Camp Best Place to Learn to Care for One’s Health.—Very Comfortable, But Don’t Mention String Beans.


Dear Mama, Pop, Marj. and Rob:

Received your letter last night, and you don’t know how glad I was to hear from you.

It has stopped raining, and the weather is beautiful. Last night was perfect, with a fine, cool breeze; in fact, we needed our blankets for the first time. The wind has shifted, and is coming direct from the Gulf. The change is wonderful. It is like that described by Kipling in “On the Road to Mandalay.” That best indicates how it strikes me.

I am going to town this afternoon, and I guess I will have some pictures taken. The town photographer has
been doing a rushing business. He charges a dollar a dozen for post-card photos.

We start out of camp next week in heavy marching order. The men are going to be gradually speeded up until they can do twenty miles a day in heavy, and thirty miles a day in light, marching order, that being the infantry regulation for distance. I guess we won't see Mexico except from this side. I can easily appreciate the dangers of an armed camp now. As the regiment is getting more familiar with the ways of an army, and waxing exceedingly proficient in the use of arms and in drill, there is a growing restlessness. Everyone seems to want to see how things would work out in action. I think that this will pass when we are here another month or so, and all get tired and sick of waiting.
The pests I spoke of before are disappearing. We have very little trouble with tarantulas, scorpions, etc., now. We had our first battle the other day, when the whole regiment was armed with pails of hot water. Tarantulas live in holes in the ground about one and a half inch in diameter. The water is poured down the holes, and the tarantulas soon come out in double quick time, and get slammed with a mallet. Simple, isn’t it?

Don’t worry about my health. We have some of the most prominent doctors and surgeons in New York down with us, besides a very efficient hospital corps, with three dentists. The men who have been bothered the most are the ones who have been drinking pop and the rest of the slop that is sold just outside the picket lines and in town. A place set up near our camp laid forty-two men flat on their backs in one day. The physician, upon investigation, found it was bad milk that did it. They made short work of the fellow who ran that joint. The soda, ginger-ale, root-beer, etc., is all artificially colored and flavored, and is just so much poison; yet men will drink four or five bottles of it at a time, despite explicit instructions to leave it alone. A military camp is the best place in the world for a man to learn to care for himself. We have some cases of dysentery. As soon as a man is sick, it does not make any difference what his symptoms are, he is immediately isolated.

I have thanked Heaven a dozen times since I have been here that I can do a day’s work. For this very reason, I have had to do more than my share; but would rather have it that way than get sick. When a man gets sick, the burden thrown on the others is just so much
greater, because they have his work to do as well as their own. The same work would have to be done if we only had ten men in the company able and well. Eddy has also been well.

You can all think of me as being very comfortable, and having a very interesting, instructive and enjoyable experience. The drills are very interesting and absorbing. Take everything you read in the papers with a grain of salt. I read a story in the *Times* yesterday about a sentry of the Seventh being shot at. That is untrue; nothing in it at all.

For Heaven's sake don't mention string-beans again, or I will desert. I think often of the garden. We cannot get fresh vegetables. Potatoes and onions, and sometimes carrots, are sent from Dallas. The country has been foraged over for thirty miles around the camp, and consequently is bare of anything edible.

I am terribly sorry that your not hearing from me caused concern. The mails have been so badly handled that the regiment has taken over its own collecting and distribution now. Am waiting for a letter from Walter.

With love, and hoping you are all well,

Kenneth.
Dear Pop:

Received your letter yesterday, also the Jersey Bulletin. Read your article, which certainly is good. Have been reading of the terrible heat you have been having in New York, which wound up with that thunderstorm which did so much damage. Old New York is certainly having her troubles just at present, and, believe me, some 10,000 of her citizens are having their troubles outside of the State.

Sunday we had our first day off. Did practically nothing all day. Our company in particular needed the rest, for on top of a hard two-weeks' work we hiked the mules ten miles on Saturday afternoon, and then went for a four-mile hike with the regiment at night. Sunday I went over to the First Cavalry camp and spent the afternoon with Dick. He has brought his own horse with him, a present from Mr. Hubbs, as they did not want him to take a chance with the horse the Govt. would supply. The horse cost $500, and he had to sell it to the Government for $130, that being the regulation. Dick was glad to see me, and I was certainly glad to see him. We never dreamed that we would be visiting each other on the Mexican border.
We sent away two companies to the border last night. They will return in six days and then two more will go, etc. The regiment sent a battalion out on a ten-day hike yesterday afternoon, and two men died and forty-two dropped out of ranks before dark. They had to bring the whole battalion back. Why men in their condition are sent out I cannot understand.

We are very busy breaking our mules to the pack and training them to follow in trace. I did not know a thing about mules, but believe I am learning fast. I have been assigned my animal. While leading her along, she has a delightful little trick of catching the slack in the seat of my breeches and hanging on like a bulldog. Once they are broken they are all right. A mule makes a great pet; and are three times more affectionate than a horse. My mule will grab my hand in her mouth and squeeze very gently, hardly enough to mark the skin. We had a regular circus performance when first we packed them. I took some pictures, and hope they will come out good. The mules are beginning to submit calmly now, so we do not anticipate any more trouble.

I received the films, and hope to get some good pic-
tures with them. Wrote in my last letter for some socks, which I hope are on the way, as I have to borrow socks. They are a terrible problem with the whole camp. The men all sent them to that confounded laundry in Brownsville, and of course they were all ruined.

I am afraid I shall have to ask you for $10. I thought I could get along, but find I can’t. There have been a lot of assessments for comforts, such as floors for the tents, which, by the way, we have not been able to put in yet, owing to a lack of lumber; also for mess, etc. I have spent a good deal for stuff, of course. Have bought oranges and lemons and crackers. The first two are great to eat in this climate. The Govt. does nothing except to furnish equipment and some food.

The weather continues hot as blazes during the day, but it has cooled off at night lately, and therefore we have no kick on that score. The families of the men are sending all kinds of stuff. My squad leader is the son of the owner of the Ringler Brewery, which is one of the largest in the country, I think, and his family send a box every week. The stuff they send is fine—nothing foolish, but good, substantial food. It has been necessary to form a mail detail, and men from each company go to the Regimental P. O. with wheelbarrows. I have a great longing for some cookies, Mama; won’t you make some and send them down. They are as good a thing as we can eat. We get very little sweet stuff. One of the men received some, and they were the best thing that has struck this camp so far.

Pop says the weeds are growing just the same. Nuisance that they are, I wouldn’t mind looking at some
good green chickweed right now, after three weeks of this barren waste.

Now that the Mexican situation has cleared up, I imagine that they will make a lot of experiments with us and try out some things that have long been in the minds of the officers. Gen. Cornelius Vanderbilt inspected our camp yesterday.

Am well and taking good care of myself. Everyone from Summit has been sick now, except Eddie and myself. I am knocking wood.

Ken.

LETTER X

A Welcome Gift from Summit.—Flooded Out.—A Theoretical Night Attack.—A Refractory Mule.

McAllen, Tex., July 20, 1916.

Dear Walter:

George Slate sent me an express package containing six pounds of Durham, 450 Fatima cigarettes, and two large boxes of Spearmint chewing gum, which I distributed.

Continued, Aug. 1st.

It has rained here steadily for the last four days. Conditions are terrible. Our tent was flooded and everything soaked, but we managed to get dry before the next storm hit us. We had dug two big holes back of our tent to take the overflow from the tent ditch. A day before this rainy spell they made us fill them in, consequently the water, finding no vent, backed up,
through the doorway and flooded us. This happened about 2:30 A. M. We spent the balance of the night sitting on our ditch dykes. The morning after I got busy and built a cot for myself. The Govt. was supposed to issue them, but, like a lot of other things, they have failed to materialize.

Sunday evening we were reviewed by a Mexican general of Carranza’s army. We were the only regiment Gen. O’Ryan selected from the division for the review. The Mexican had his staff with him.

We had a theoretical night attack last week, in which all the troops at McAllen took part. We packed our first two mules, which are the gun mules, also their ammunition mules, in two minutes, and got the other two
guns off in four minutes, fifteen mules in all. You cannot appreciate this unless you saw what we had to pack. And two weeks ago not one of the mules would submit to even a blanket being put on him. We have one animal that we cannot pack. She is the most beautiful mule we have, but has been spoiled. The captain wanted to make one more try, so he detailed two sergeants and myself. We managed to get a blanket and corona on her, but when it came to putting on the aparejo (which is a heavy leather pack fitted to the animal's back, and over which the pack-frames fit), the fun was on. We had both a twitch and a break on her, and when she felt that weight on her back she left the ground with all four feet and went straight up in the air, and I with her. She broke the break and the twitch. I had the reins and the bridle, and when the twitch broke it threw the man holding it. Consequently the whole force of the animal's lunge came on me. I had a narrow escape, but managed to hang on, and thus avoided being hurt. After she had bucked everything off her back, she quieted down.

If this rain keeps up, the whole regiment will have to strike camp and move out. The ground is getting terribly soft, and the regular roads have two and three feet of water on them. This country is so flat that water will not drain off, and the soil is so hard that it will not absorb, consequently the water just lies on the surface.

Yours,

Ken.
LETTER XI

The Comfort of a Good Smoke.—Sandstorm and Rainstorm.—An Incursion of Frogs.—A Description of McAllen.—More to Eat Now Than They Can Get Away With.


Dear Walter:

I received your cigars two days after your last letter. To say that I was more than glad to receive them is putting it mildly. I generally smoke one after drill at night while lying on my back in my tent in the darkness. To lie thus and listen to the varied sounds that arise from the camp, smoking a good cigar, is the best part of a long, hard day.

Our spell of fine nights was suddenly brought to an end last night, when we had a terrible dust-storm, followed by a violent thunder-storm. The wind and sand were terrible. It was an absolute impossibility to face it. You could not see two feet ahead of you. This lasted about forty-five minutes, and then came the blessed rain, which made a lake of the drill-grounds and transformed the company streets into canals. The insides of the tents were as dry as a bone, owing to our ditching system. A peculiar thing was the sudden appearance of about two and a half million frogs in camp. Back of our camp and at the ends of the company streets our latrines are situated. They are about 1000 feet from camp. This space has always been as dry as a bone until last night, when it was flooded. A half hour after the rain had started this place was full of croaking frogs. I
never heard the like of it. Standing beside them, you had to yell to make yourself heard. By the way, I was out in both the sand-storm and the rain, as I was doing my watch on the picket line. Came in soaked absolutely to the skin.

Am sending a couple of pictures home, which you will ask Rob to show you. They are of our pets, the mules.

McAllen is about seven years old, and has lain in a semi-dormant condition until the arrival of the troops, when it awoke and is growing like magic. Restaurants, lunch-rooms, bottling works, photograph studios, ice-cream parlors, fruit-stands, shooting-galleries, etc., have sprung up over night like mushrooms. Someone told me an undertaker had moved in with a supply of one hundred coffins. Rotten, squalid rooms in rickety one-story frame buildings have been fumigated and leased as sleep-
ing-rooms for reporters, camera men and their ilk. The town also has a typical Western saloon, such as we all have read about in Western stories. It is of the swing-door, sawdust-floor variety. Around it are always a few cowboys and some of the picturesque Texas Rangers, their broncos tied to a hitching-bar near the door. In the Mexican quarter is one of the old buckhorn saloons, which reminds me of the Quiet House in Hoboken. It is more a museum than anything else. Stuffed rattlesnakes, armadillos, pumas, wolves, coyotes, and deer-heads are all over the place. This place is patronized almost exclusively by Mexicans of all kinds. They always have a cabaret, consisting of mandolins, guitars and a flute or two. The music they play is purely Mexican and Spanish. Some of it is very weird and melancholy, while some is light and very beautiful.

There is but one residential street, known as Park Drive. There is a large park with a grove of palm and banana trees, and just beyond a fenced-off space with a dozen or so of brushdeer in it. This spot is very beautiful, it being like an oasis in a desert.

Our men have returned from their hike and border patrol. Not a man dropped out of ranks, and they went out in heavy marching order.

Thank you for the Cincinnati offer; it is very thoughtful; but do not send anything, as we have a great deal more to eat now than we can get away with. Food is inspected, and must come up to specifications. Cigarettes I can buy at the army post. If I start smoking anything better, I am afraid I will ruin a cultivated taste for what I can buy.
Tell your father if he sends any more diagrams like that which he put on the outside of the cigarbox, he will be responsible for a desertion. He would not like to see me in Fort Leavenworth.

Kenneth.

LETTER XII

Sandstorms and Heat.—The Watch on the Border.
—Mess Arrangements.


Dear Rob:

This is just a note, enclosing a couple of photos taken of the mule picket and the mule “experts.” You will see yours truly on the right, second in the back row. One picture is a view of the entire picket line, and the other a “close-up” of the same group.

Our spell of fine nights was brought to a sudden end last night by a terrible sandstorm, which lasted forty-five minutes and was followed by a violent thunderstorm, which made a lake of the drill-grounds and transformed the company streets into canals.

Junior Willis put his thermometer out in front of his tent yesterday and it went up to 136°, which is as far as it could register, and then it “bust.” That's a good one you can tell. Yesterday was the worst we have had, but we worked most of the day, and no one seemed to mind it.

Am still well. Received a letter from Mr. Geistweit saying that he hoped I would be able to return during September, as if I was not back by that time he would
absolutely have to put some one out to solicit business. In any event, he assured me, my position would be open on my return. It is perfectly reasonable to expect that they will have to put a man on. In fact, some one ought to be chasing “prospects” now.

Went to Hidalgo again today and spent about three hours along the border. It is exceedingly interesting. We were entertained by some of the regulars stationed there. They are a fine lot of men. We have two companies down there patrolling with them. They have barriers thrown up, trenches dug, and barbed wire entanglements, which are charged with electricity at night. Took a lot of pictures, which I hope will turn out good.
Looks as if we will not be home until October or November. I understand that there have been several protests made by various organizations in New York demanding the return of the National Guard. I don’t have to tell you how much effect they will have. The Government, after expending about a million and a half in transportation alone, is not going to ship us right back home.

Everyone’s health is good. The most common complaint is the “midnight quickstep.” The doctors say it is caused by the ice cream and pop the men consume. Our mess is fine now; have got it running. We are on the Regular Army basis; that is, instead of taking the food the Government supplies, we take the money allowance and run our own mess. This allowance at present is 26 cents per man per day. Adding to this our 50 cents per man per week, we do as well as is possible in this country.

Hoping you are all well,

Ken.

LETTER XIII

Hiking.—Revolver Practice.—Some Natural History.—A Texas Farm.—Fine Skirmishing Country.—McAllen and its Saloons.—The Mexican Bird Scavenger.


Dear Pop and Mama:

Received Pop’s letter, and the pipes Rob sent, yesterday. The socks came the day before, all of them most
welcome. Have received everything, and am now waiting for the money, as I have not a cent and owe two dollars.

We have started hiking at evening; that is, instead of a gun or close order drill during the evening drill period, we march. We leave at 6.40, and generally get back between 8.00 and 8.15. As a rule, we do

about five miles. These walks are very popular. We get over the country, which is very interesting. The shooting is very fine in season, quail and wild pigeon being the best wild game. We take the old Mexican trails through the mesquite, which are so narrow in places that we have to execute right by twos. The quail are very plentiful, and as we move along they run in all
directions, and get behind cover and watch us. They remind me of your stories of the partridge in New Brunswick. We always see a hundred and one varieties of snakes, most of which are very brilliantly colored. Texas has the largest blacksnakes I have ever seen, about five feet long. Every two minutes a hare, with long ears like a mule's, and about twice the size of our rabbits, scuttles off through the chaparral like a streak.

Yesterday we marched to the range, a distance of four miles, and spent the day at revolver practice. The army .45 is certainly a wicked weapon. My scores are not worth writing about. There was a lot of excellent shooting, the highest score being 189 out of a possible 200, made by Major Waterbury, of the Regular Army. The regulars generally did not shoot any better than our men.

On our way to the range we passed an enormous farm, which is owned by a man named Shary, who, I believe, lives in New York. He has acres and acres of sugar-corn and grape-fruit, which is just ripening. He has a lot of banana trees planted, but they had no fruit on them. Have not found out yet just when they bear. He has a pumping station of his own, which pumps water tapped from one of the main irrigation canals. All water is pumped, of course, from the Rio Grande. The grape-fruit is a very beautiful tree. It seems to grow about the size of a medium-sized peach tree, only it is much more stocky, and the branches very thick. The leaves are very similar to those of the privet, and are a most beautiful golden green. The fruit now is a rather brownish green. This farm has also enormous fields of cotton and broom-corn.
July 28, 1916.

I do not seem to be able to finish a letter the same day I start it. I just get started when along comes the first sergeant calling for a detail.

We went for another hike this morning, making about twelve miles. We drilled in signals and in taking cover, out on the waste about seven miles from camp. This country is just built for skirmishing, as it is very easy to take cover. A whole company can advance by crawling on their bellies and never be seen. On a dark day and in the evening the color of the ground blends so well with the O. D.* uniform that a man is almost invisible.

McAllen is growing faster than any town I have ever seen. Soda-water fountains, ice-cream parlors, photographic galleries, shooting-galleries, restaurants, moving-picture houses and so forth have been built almost overnight. Old two-room, one-story houses, which are squalid and overrun with vermin, are being cleaned out and rented as sleeping places for the hosts of reporters, salesmen, photographers and fly-by-nights that have invaded the place. The Mexican quarter runs in an unbroken circle around the outskirts of the town. Speaking of the Mexicans reminds me that I must tell you of a funny thing I saw in one of their hovels. On the floor were piled a few dishes, an alarm clock and a picture-frame with nothing in it, while on the wall they had hung the baby!

There are two saloons in town. The one patronized by white people is a typical Western saloon, the like of which is described in every story of early days in the West. It has sawdust on the floor and swinging doors,

*Olive drab.
and you see cowboys and Texas Rangers gallop up at full speed, throw their broncos on their haunches, hurl themselves off and swagger into the bar-room. There is a long wooden hitching-bar in front, to which they tie their horses. The other saloon is in the Mexican quarter, and is of the buckhorn variety. It resembles a museum more than it looks like a gin-mill. There are deer and goat heads, stuffed wolves, wild-cats, rattlesnake skins, armadillos, ground-squirrels and other animals and birds that inhabit this part of Texas. This place is patronized for the most part only by Mexicans.

I had a good look at what the natives call the Mexican vulture the other day. We have a division dumping grounds, and there is always a lot of buzzards hovering over it. They are a very repulsive-looking bird. I believe that in Mexico they walk around in the streets of the towns.

I am enclosing a few leaves of the mesquite tree. I have spoken of it so often that I thought you might be curious to know just what the leaves look like. This tree never grows more than fifteen or twenty feet high. Its limbs are scraggly and the foliage very thin. So you see that even if you get into a whole grove of them they afford very little shade.

Pop says that he may eventually get down to Texas. For Heaven's sake don't get into this part of it. The northern part of Texas is wonderful, but this country is h---. Texas is not the only State whose percentage of enlistments is ridiculous, although that, of course, has nothing to do with the point raised by the Post.

No one knows how long we will be here. We are
fixing this place up, I believe, for a regular army post. I can explain it in no other way, unless they mean to keep us here for an indefinite time, the permanent arrangements being made.

Hoping you are all well, with love,

Ken.

LETTER XIV

Flooded Out.—No Sunday in Camp.—Building Roads.—Reviewed by a Mexican General.—Reporters Chased.—Y. M. C. A. in the Field.—Band Concerts and Shows.

McAllen, Tex., July 30, 1916.

Dear Pop:

Have just received your money-order, which is certainly welcome.

We had another terrible storm last night, by far the worst we have had yet. It flooded us out of our tent, and consequently we spent a very uncomfortable night. Everything got soaked. We had dug a three-foot ditch in the rear of our tent, which took the overflow from the tent ditch. Two days ago they made us fill it in, therefore, when the ditch filled up, it had no place to drain, so when the water reached the level of the floor, in it came. We dried everything out this morning.

This is Sunday, when, according to regulations, we are not supposed to work or drill; but the last two Sundays have been just the same as other days. This morning we had to crown our picket line, which is a terrible
job, especially as the storm last night made a quagmire of it. I am now off till five o'clock.

We have built, under the supervision of road engineers of the regiment, two regimental streets, which will last for five years, and over which cavalry and heavy wagon trains can pass. A regimental street is different from a company street, inasmuch as the former runs the

length of the camp and the latter the width. We now have about 18,000 men here, nearly all of whom are encamped in a line running straight to the border. All of the regiments are making the same kind of a road, so you can see when they are all finished there will be a fine road to the border. The country roads are absolutely impassable when it rains.
Last night we were reviewed by a general of Carranza’s army and his staff. We were the only regiment selected by Gen. O’Ryan for the review, and made a fine showing. The Mexican and his staff were afterwards taken the longest way through the entire division on an inspection tour. Gen. Bell, of the Regular Army, who commands at Fort Sam Houston, after his inspection, stated that we had the best camp in the division.

There is a very persistent rumor in camp that we will be home by Sept. 1st. I read a story in one paper quoting Gen. O’Ryan as saying that the troops would eat their Christmas dinner here. He never made such a statement. There have been so many false reports and stories of the regiment in the papers that Col. Fisk has ordered the reporters out of camp, and told them to stay out. I suppose we will get it now.

The Army and Navy Y. M. C. A. have erected buildings just outside the sentry line of each regiment, where men may go and write, paper and envelopes being furnished them, play checkers, etc. It is very convenient and much more satisfactory than writing on your knees in your tent.

We are going to start work tomorrow on a wooden cook shack, which will be enclosed by wire screening. A mess shack will be similarly constructed. In fact, everything we are doing is being put up to stay. I think that it all confirms a theory held by a lot of us, that we are constructing a permanent army post. Well, it is cheap labor for the Government, fifty cents a day and grub.

We are going to be issued socks and underwear, leg-
tings and hats if we need them. We are all allowed $48 for a clothes allowance. Socks are twelve cents a pair and underwear twenty-three cents a garment. This is cost price, and the stuff in them is very good.

You mentioned graft in connection with the well-boring at Camp Whitman. Here is some more. The Regular Army has been in Texas for almost six years, and, outside of the large posts, there has not been a barracks constructed anywhere along the border, although troops have been two and three years in the same place. In a great many cases where a certain body of troops has been moved their place has been occupied by others. Now the perambula canvas tent that we use, which is the best money can buy, is absolutely worthless after six months. If you wanted to buy one, it would cost $72. The Govt. pays $43.75 apiece for them. So you see that an army can be housed in barracks a great deal cheaper than under canvas. Looks as if some one is getting rich out of the army tent contract.

I have received an express package from Geo. Slate with 500 cigarettes, six pounds of tobacco and two large boxes of chewing-gum, most of which I have distributed amongst the men of the company.

On our parade grounds a band stand and stage have been built. Three nights a week we have band concerts and shows. Each regiment takes its turn in entertaining. Last week, on Monday night the Twelfth furnished the entertainment, the next night the Seventy-first and the Seventh on Saturday night. They are all fine, or at least we think so. The First and Second Field Artillery have two exceedingly fine bands, which are amalgamated and
used on these occasions. An average attendance is about from eight to ten thousand, and I just wish you could hear that crowd sing. The volume is tremendous; there is no use in trying to describe it; I will leave it to your imagination.

Am still well, and as hard as nails. Thank you for the money-order. There is no sight or sign of pay day. With love to the family,

Kenneth.

LETTER XV

Prospects of Return.—What They May Have to Face in Mexico.—Heat and Hard Riding.—Clothes Allowance.


Dear Marj.:

The cookies were fine. The night they came another fellow, who had some fine Ceylon tea, and I had the cookies and tea for mess—finished the whole can.

There are a whole lot of rumors and speculations as to when we will get home. A lot of men seem to think we will be home by Sept. 1, but I think that if we are home in time to vote we will be lucky. I believe President Wilson has appointed a commission which will confer with a similar body appointed by the Carranza Govt. It will take time to form this body, and when they begin conferences it will take still longer before any progress will be made. I think we will be here until the results of that conference are made public. If a settlement of
the differences between the two governments is not effected, I don’t know what they will do. I am firmly convinced that there are no politics in this mobilization, and therefore think that as soon as the crisis has been passed we will be sent home. We were sent here as the result of an emergency order, and not for a period of military training, upon the completion of which we would be sent home. Therefore, just as soon as there is no emergency situation to meet we will be released, the New York newspapers notwithstanding. I do not believe that Gen. Bell or Gen. O’Ryan know any more about the date of our breaking camp than I do, which is nothing.

Here is what is said to be a positive fact: Between Matamoras, which lies to the southeast of us in Mexico, to a point opposite El Paso, the Mexican Army have 140 three-inch field-pieces, all of which were supplied by Japan and are manned with Jap gunners. There are also a great many Japs serving as officers in Carranza’s army. Interesting, isn’t it? I am sure it would be for us, if it became necessary for us to enter Mexico.*

We are encamped on the same ground upon which Gen. Zachary Taylor mobilized his forces prior to his entry into Mexico in 1846. He marched in and captured Monterey, which is about 140 miles from here, but I believe that is as far as he penetrated that devil’s country, Mexico. He had about 2,000 men. In the event of trouble, Monterey would probably be the first objective

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*“All during the Winter of 1914 in Berlin Germans from the highest down tried to impress me with the great danger which they said threatened America from Japan. The military and naval attachés of the United States Embassy and I were told that the German information system sent news that Mexico was full of Japanese colonies and America of Japanese spies. Possibly much of the prejudice in America against the Japanese was cooked up by German propagandists, which we later learned to know so well.”—Ex-Ambassador Gerard.
of this division. The country in Mexico is just about the
same as it is here for the first ten miles. After that there
is a great desert to cross, if a direct line to Monterey is
taken. This division would probably have to build a
railroad as it went along. Taylor marched across it,
but he had only a few troops.

We have had nothing but rain and extreme heat this
week. It has been hot even for this
place. But there is
a limit to the way
in which you feel
the heat. We don’t
care whether it is
120° or 140°; it
feels the same. I
am sore and stiff in
every muscle of my
b o d y today. We
went on a ride yester-
day morning on
horses and mules,
and the captain led
at a terrible pace.
We did about seven miles. I did it bareback on an ani-
mal with a spine four inches high. He was so bad that
I had to ride on his withers, and consequently got a ter-
rible shaking up. A few used saddles, but most of the
men used a blanket and surcingle. When it came to my
animal the blankets had all been used, therefore the bare-
back.
The Government allows us $42.75 for a clothes allowance. I am going to draw it all, and send home what I don’t need or cannot carry. Have drawn some socks, which are very fine, and cost me only 12c a pair. I am going to draw another O. D. shirt like the ones issued us in New York, cost $1.30, and worth about $3.50 for the same thing in N. Y.; also a pair of hip boots at $2.10; and I am going to try and get an extra blanket and send it home. The cost is $3.60. If you wanted to buy one like it in New York, it would cost about $8 or $10.

There is yet no sign of pay day. I hope it comes soon. There is a Mexican woman down by the Rio Grande who has some beautiful needlework and mantillas for sale. I want to get a mantilla and send it to you. They want a lot of money for them, but they are very beautiful.

Have read about the extremely hot month you have had. I suppose the weather has made the weeds grow as they did last summer. I can just imagine the corn and beans, which will soon be ready. Have Rob tell Walter I am waiting for another letter from him. He sent me some Machinery Club cigars, which I have just finished, and they were certainly fine.

Love to everyone,

Kenneth.
LETTER XVI

Camp Dysentery and Its Treatment.—A Texas "Norther."—Good Points of a Dry Atmosphere.—Weeding Out the Physically Unfit.

McAllen, Tex., Aug. 9, 1916.

Dear Rob and Family:

Received your letter and money-order. It was a most thoughtful thing for you to do. Nearly all assessments are finished now, with the exception of mess, so will have an easier time. I made a cot for myself, but even at that it cost me $1.30 for material.

I am all alone in the street with the mess sergeant, while the company is drilling seven or eight miles away in the cactus. I have had a rather bad case of the prevailing malady. Am well on the road to recovery, but still very weak. I could not have had better care or attention if I had been home. I am the last man in the company to get sick, but got it worse than anyone else. The treatment used for this and light cases of dysentery may sound peculiar. The first thing given me was a large dose of castor oil, with an oil-of-peppermint tablet before and after, and then two salol tablets. Every three hours I get a dose of castor oil in ice-water and two more salol tablets, which are made up of a saline solution, and are given to cleanse the intestines. In between these doses I take one calomel pill, and when they are all finished with the above, will get camphor and opium. Another day and I expect to feel myself again.
Next week the entire regiment goes on a nine-day hike. I don't know whether I will be able to write or not, so don't worry if you don't hear from me.

I have sent pictures and postals recently. Sent four of our mule detail with "yours truly" in them, and four or five panoramic pictures of the camp and camp site.

We experienced our first Texas "norther" Saturday night. I never knew the wind to blow so hard. All the officers' tents, which are A tents, and the cook tents were blown flat. None of the tents occupied by the men blew down, however, owing to the holding qualities of the ground.

The rain has stopped, and we are having beautiful weather again, with a steady breeze blowing from the Gulf. It is as hot as ever, but the breeze is cool. The air is so dry that I don't believe there is a man in the regiment that has found it necessary to blow his nose since his arrival here. You wake up in the morning with your head as clear as a bell.

The whole regiment will receive another physical examination tomorrow, and those who have developed anything serious since leaving New York will either be sent to the base hospital at San Antonio or back to New York, according to the nature of the ailment.

The pipes are fine. I have one almost broken in already.

Love to all,

Ken.
Dear Mama, Pop and Family:

Enclosed you will find some photos taken of us while packing our mules. I am registering this letter, as these pictures are worth more than their weight in gold to me. If they are lost, I would not be able to duplicate them. I have made a cross on the back of one I am in. I am on the extreme left-hand side of the picture, hanging on to the end of the check-ropes, and in a squatting position. Are not these pictures fine? There is plenty of action in every one of them, but even at that they look tame when I think of the reality. It speaks well for this company when you consider that we broke nineteen green mules in this way, and only one man was hurt, and he not seriously. Several got minor bruises and kicks that they hardly felt next day.

Am feeling much better today, and expect to be well enough in another day or two to get permission to ride to town and mail this letter. Have been treated like a king during my sickness. Every one has been so considerate that I cannot help writing about it. Major Fowler, who is the ranking officer of the medical staff, took personal charge of my case.

New York is certainly having a tough time of it, with the heat, infantile paralysis, explosions and strikes.

I see that the commission to settle the differences
Breaking a Green Mule (Billie) to the Pack.
between the U. S. and Mexico has not been created as yet. Carranza seems to be up to his old tricks of quibbling and procrastinating. Meanwhile we remain here and wait for the international conference to open. I don’t think we will receive an inkling of information as to our probable return until we see what the result of this conference will be.

At the Picket Line.

The Y. M. C. A. has done excellent work in the military camps. They very promptly erected twenty or more large wooden buildings, one to a regiment as a rule, throughout the entire military district. These buildings have been a great convenience to the men. The Y. M. C. A. provides paper, pen and ink, and a comfortable place to write for anyone who cares to take advantage of them. They also make excellent places to hold
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religious services. I hope money enough will be subscribed to keep up the good work.

Never mind about the shaving-brush. The N. D. O. sent some. I am going to ride to town to mail this letter, and then go and see Dick. Am off for all day, this being Saturday, which is always a holiday. Am feeling quite myself again.

Love to all,

Kenneth.

LETTER XVIII

Camp Conditions and Food.—Misleading Reports.—The Field Hospital Defended.—Business Friends.


Dear Pop, Mama and Family:

The man Pop refers to is Brig.-Gen. Dyer, who commands the Second Brigade of the Division, the brigade we are in.

Now I am going to put you straight on conditions in camp. You already know how I was treated while I was sick. Our grub is good. For instance, we had for breakfast this morning an orange, good porridge, omelet, fried potatoes and bread and coffee. We have meat three times a week, at night, generally steak. We are now getting more fresh vegetables. In the course of the week we will generally have boiled beets, cabbage, spinach, peas, string beans (the last two canned), plenty of onions and peppers (which seem to go very well in this climate), all
the fresh tomatoes we want, and plenty of corn, blackberry jam, and bread and hardtack. The only thing to complain of in regard to the mess is its monotony. The mess sergeant varies it as much as possible. I sleep on a cot, and even the men who do not can keep dry. A tent will get flooded once in a while, but is easily dried out. There is absolutely no kick on the quarters. We have done a lot of work on Sundays, but that has stopped now. We get Saturday off after inspection, which generally finishes about 9.30 A. M. We can then leave camp until 5.40 P. M. Sundays are about the same. We worked this morning until 9.00 o’clock, but have been idle the rest of the day. I have a little more work than some of the others, because I am on the mule detail, and they have to be fed and watered three times a day. We are allowed to sleep until six o’clock on Sunday morning, also, which is almost like home. I am rather surprised that you ask me about these things.*

All packages are delivered direct to the men. The Chaplain has nothing to do with them. He has enough work of his own without filling his tent with the men’s mail. This report is a good sample of the absurdity of a lot of the newspaper reports.

There has also been a lot of criticism of the First Field Hospital and the treatment of patients. I have read that the Field Hospital had no cots for the men and no floors. This is a deliberate lie, yet I read it in the *Times*. They have comfortable cots, a raised wooden floor, and, besides that, the whole structure is screened. A man

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* Newspaper reports and persistent rumors had it that the men on the Border were badly treated.
from our company was sent there, and he came back well satisfied with the treatment given him. Bad conditions may exist in other camps, but they certainly do not here. The sanitary precautions taken I have mentioned before.

Falfurrias is located about thirty-five or forty miles to the north-northwest of McAllen. The way by train is very roundabout. The best way is across country through the cactus. Therefore it is about as accessible as New York.

I think that when all is said and done, we have received the better deal in the matter of weather. You have certainly had a tough summer so far. When we have clear weather we need our blankets at night. I will not be surprised if we are here for another three months or longer.

It was absolutely necessary for the Hewitt Press to put another man out. They have to supply the loss of the Tousey magazines. The hard part of it is that some one else will get my "prospects," from whom I had hopes for estimates for eight or ten jobs, mostly periodicals.

James Gabler, of the Stillson Co., the highest class and most expensive printers in New York, is down here with us, being a member of Company F. I knew him very well in New York. Chas. Parker, the owner of the Peck Press, a very fine house, is in the same street with me here. He is the first sergeant of the Hospital Corps. I knew him when I was with Mr. Hopkins. He is a very fine man. If Pop sees Mr. Hopkins, let him be sure and tell him about Parker, as they are great friends.

I did not get my letter finished, as you see. Our hike has been postponed. We start a week from today, and will make about a hundred miles. We will march along the border. The whole division will go, about 18,000 or 20,000 troops.

Sometimes I have a saddle and sometimes I have not. The military style of riding is hard on a beginner, and the easiest way to learn is bareback. Send me two more rolls of film.

Am feeling fine again.

With love,

Kenneth.

LETTER XIX

The Great Hike.—Another Texas Storm.—A Mule Ride.—Pay System "Considerable of a Puzzle."


Dear Mama and Family:

Have been extremely busy since last writing you. Received both the cookies and fudge, which were fine and came in at just the right time.

We start tomorrow morning on our ninety-mile hike.
Have been very busy preparing for it. Will be gone ten
days on field rations.

We had a terrible hurricane all day Friday and Fri-
day night, the like of which I hope never to experience
again. McAllen was entirely cut off by road, wire and
rail for two days. The storm tore up everything.

Am absolutely O. K. again; in fact, better than I was
before. After I was sick I weighed in at 155 lbs.—quite
a drop. Everyone seems
to be better after they
have had what I had
than they were before.

Another man and I did
fifteen miles yesterday
afternoon on mules. We
used a couple of pack-
mules which, I think,
never had had saddles on
before. That is why we
went so far. They went
h—bent-for-election un-
til they got tired, and
then we had a pleasant ride home. Consequently am a
bit galled today, but do not stiffen up any more.

Will try and send a card while on the hike, but do
not expect there will be much opportunity. Will be back
in camp on the morning of my birthday, Sept. 1st.

We were paid last week. Received $15 for the hard-
est month's work I ever put in. Have $3 more coming
to me, owing to a mistake in the pay-roll. Will get this
next month, when I will receive $21. We also received
the difference between the State pay and the Government pay for the week we were in the armory. This was paid by the State. We will receive the balance from the Government. I received $5.25. We will also receive the difference between the State and Federal pay-roll for the month of July. I receive $18 per month from the Government. The State pay is $1.25 per day, the State making up the difference. At least, this is the way we understand it. It is considerable of a puzzle. The U. S. paymaster paid out $29,172 to our regiment.

Kenneth.

LETTER XX

THE REGIMENT BEATS THE RECORD ON THE MARCH.—
STERLING RANCH.—SUPPLY TRAIN DOING
GOOD SERVICE.


Dear Rob and Family:

Just a few lines to let you know I am all right. The regiment has reached here in great shape. We averaged eighteen minutes to the mile all the way from McAllen, which beats all records set by other regiments.

Sterling Ranch is a great place of 27,000 acres. They raise stock chiefly, both cattle and horses. A great deal of it is cultivated. It was ploughed with a Winchester rifle slung over the handles of the plough. Sterling Ranch was raided by Villa not very long ago. It certainly looked good to us after fifteen miles of barren waste, with not a house to be seen. It lies all by itself in the middle of a howling wilderness. There is plenty of
water here, but it is necessary to pump it from a depth of 1,700 feet. The water is hot and the color of milk when it comes to the surface. Our next stop is La Gloria, which is only a water-hole.

We are being well taken care of and well fed. Our wagon train is rendering excellent service, in spite of terrible roads. Supplies are sent out to us from our base.

We carry only about four days' food supplies for men and animals. There are about 1,200 men and 201 horses and mules. Supplies are transported by Truck Co. No. 35, with Packard five-ton trucks. We get up at 4 A. M. and break camp and are on the way by 5.20 or 6.00 o'clock.

The next town that we will see is Edinburgh, the capital of Hidalgo Co. It is about three days' march from here.

Kenneth.
LETTER XXI
On Hike.


Dear Mama:

Arrived here today from Sterling Ranch, which we hit for the second time. Arrived at 10.45, marching a distance of eighteen miles. Am well, and making the hike in good shape. We will reach home tomorrow; that is, McAllen; which will complete a total milage of ninety-eight miles. This is the first place at which we have hit a post-office since the first day out.

Kenneth.

LETTER XXII
The Seventh as Marchers.—A Sportsman’s Paradise.—Itinerary of the Big Hike.—Some Lemon!


Dear Mama, Pop, Marj. and Rob:

We are back in camp again, at which we arrived at 7.30 A. M. yesterday, after doing thirty miles in twenty-six hours, which time includes making one camp and sleeping. The regiment is in excellent physical condition. We left Edinburgh at 2.50 A. M., and arrived here at the above-mentioned hour, a distance of thirteen miles. It was a great march. We covered ninety-seven miles in ten days and sent only fifteen men back to camp, who were either sick or overcome by the heat.

I have discovered that this country is a sportsman’s
paradise. The deer were thick all through the line of
march. Quail called along the road the entire day. They
would sit on the top of a mesquite tree preening them-
selves within twenty-five feet of the road while the whole
column marched by. They are larger than a bantam. We also saw a great many wild turkeys and wood pigeon.

From McAllen, we marched to Mission, the last settle-
ment we were to see until we got to Edinburgh, which is
the county seat. From Mission we hiked to Alton, only
a water-hole, and from there to Sterling Ranch. Our
next point was La Gloria Ranch, which is only a water-
hole. The barns and house were raided and burned by

Mexicans, and never have been rebuilt. From La Gloria
we marched back to Sterling Ranch, and the next day
headed for Laguna Secca. This was a terrible march,
as we had to hike twelve miles through sand which was
ankle deep. From Laguna Secca we went to Young’s Ranch, which is a good camp, but with very poor water.
This place was the scene of a lively fight a little while
before the troops were sent down. The house walls are
full of bullet-holes. Young himself shot and killed three
Mexicans and wounded two others, and proudly showed
us the place where he had “planted” them after the fight.
The raiders were finally driven off. From Young’s we
retraced our steps to Laguna Secca, camped for the night,
and then went back to Sterling Ranch again. We left the next morning at five o'clock for Edinburgh, and the following day arrived at McAllen.

As you undoubtedly know, three regiments have been ordered home, and we are not one of them. The 71st leaves tomorrow morning. There is a good deal of mystery about it all. No reasons have been given out. The order may be rescinded, and then again the troops may be going in anticipation of the threatened railroad strike. We may follow, and we may be here for three months yet. You see how much we know about it.

Received Mrs. Reed's letter, which simply states that the house will be opened as usual; also got Votivey's wedding invitation.

If I am to hunt up X's fiancé, I will have to get more particulars. I will simply have nothing but labor for my pains if I do not know his initials, rank, and the battery he is in. You see there are twelve batteries here in two regiments. There are four guns and 120 men to a battery, and six batteries to a regiment. So it would be like hunting the proverbial needle in a haystack looking for him.

I bought a lemon at Edinburgh from a farmer, and watched him pick it, which weighed four and a half pounds, paying 20c for it. There were about twenty-five
more just like it on the tree. This is another good one for Rob to tell. Shall have to stop and get to work cleaning equipment.

Kenneth.

LETTER XXIII

A "Howling" Wilderness.—Coyotes.—Inspections. —Climate Now Beginning to Feel Fine.

McAllen, Tex., Sept. 6, 1916.

Dear Mama:

Received your cake and a fine letter from Pop dated at Boston. The cake was great, and arrived without a crumb being shaken off. We ate it all at one fell swoop, and it was voted the best one yet received in the squad.

I have spent most of my birthdays away from home, but never one in such a place as this last one. We were on the road from Sterling Ranch to Edinburgh, and passing through a howling wilderness. It was impossible to see through the undergrowth for more than ten feet. An added feature was a pack of coyotes, which howled on our flank until daybreak, and then suddenly stopped, and we heard no more of them. I shall never forget it. That was part of the day in which we made thirty miles in heavy marching order.*

Yesterday we had field inspection, and this morning a complete inspection of clothing and equipment. Tomorrow comes quarters inspection. This is all being done by Regular Army officers from the Inspector-General's Department. It is most thorough, and a man receives a

* See Letter CLVII.
severe call-down if he has so much as a spot on any part of his clothes or arms. Have not had a minute since we returned from our hike until now. It has been clean, clean, and clean everything.

You spoke of some pictures. I have not had time to have any taken; besides, they are pretty punk, so don’t think I will bother. If Rob will drop in at Myers’, in Summit, and ask to see Sergeant Edward Willis’s pic-

![Preparing for Saturday’s Inspection.](image)
tures, he will see a plenty. Am going to order prints from Willis’s films when I get home, anyway.

The climate here is beginning to get very fine, or else we are thoroughly acclimated. Have applied for a twenty-four-hour furlough to visit Corpus Christi, but do not yet know whether it will be granted.

Received another letter from Marj. and one from Aunt A., telling me of their thirty-mile hike. Sounds
kind of fishy, after having seen strong men flat on their backs after ten miles.

Kenneth.

LETTER XXIV

Ordered to Harlingen.—$15 a Month Does Not Go Far.—Doctoring Mules.—Convinced of the Benefit of Military Training.—Very Comfortable in Camp.


Dear Marj.:

As you know, three New York regiments are home, and here we still are, with absolutely no intimation as to when we will leave. As near as we can tell, general opinion seems to favor the story of our withdrawal about Oct. 15th.

My company has been ordered to Harlingen, Tex., with the Third U. S. Cavalry, for machine-gun practice. We leave Oct. 1st, to stay there for a period of two weeks. This does not look as if the War Dept. is in a hurry to send us home, although the order may be cancelled at a moment's notice.

Have tried to get some Mexican needle-work, but there is so much imitation stuff that I don't dare buy it. The Mexican women around here have a lot of stuff for sale, but it is not worth buying.

I am going to Corpus Christi on a three-days' furlough with another fellow* on Saturday. It is a round trip of about 350 miles, and the fare is only $5. I am dead broke again, but we expect to be paid soon. $15

* Corp. Billy Tailer.
does not go very far when it is stretched over five weeks' time.

We are very busy getting ready for our target practice at Harlingen, consequently are getting a rigorous drilling in machine-gun fire-control, range-finding, wig-wagging, etc. Most of my work is now with our animals. I am acting corporal in my squad, and am on the mule detail. The stable sergeant* and I have all the doctoring to do, and the general welfare of the animals to look after. Day after day we spend the whole day, excepting drill hours, on the picket-line, and I find a great deal of satisfaction in the work. I have learned to throw a lariat a little, and can rope and throw an animal. We have had considerable trouble with screw-worms. They work in a circle just around the top of the hoof, and if let alone the animal's hoof will drop off. We have four cases at present, and three of the animals we have to throw in order to treat them.

The regiment is losing quite a few men, owing to a new ruling by the War Dept., to the effect that a man who, on his second enlistment, signed up for five years, and has served three of those five, can be furloughed to the reserve. Our company has three men going out on it, and I think a good many throughout the regiment will take the advantage offered.

Our Q. M. sergeant, Richardson, is the man who called you up. He went home on an expired enlistment, and I asked him to get in touch with Pop.

I am thoroughly and absolutely convinced now that some form of universal military training ought to be enforced on every able-bodied youth in this country.

* Sergt. Harry.
If you could only see what it has done to the men of this regiment! Think what six months' discipline, enforced cleanliness, constant physical exercise of the proper kind, abstinence, instruction in personal hygiene, first aid, the use of tools, living in the open air, and the many other things that are the results of training of this kind would do for every boy between the ages of eighteen and twenty or twenty-four and twenty-five! Think what it would mean if every man in this country learned that cardinal rule of the soldier: Do what you are ordered to do in the way you are ordered to do it! And suppose they had a period of it every year for four or five years?

I read with a great deal of interest the article in the Review of Reviews which Pop sent. It is very good, and, so far as I know, is true.
LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

If you have received the *Seventh Regiment Gazette* for August, you will have seen my picture on page 326.
We are now as comfortable as can be, with cots, wooden floors in our tents and shower-baths. Am well; in fact, never felt better.

Kenneth.

LETTER XXV

**DIVISIONAL MANŒUVRES.—THE FLOODED ROADS.—HEALTH OF DIVISION REMARKABLE.**


Dear Rob:

I did not get my furlough to go to Corpus Christi. On Monday we begin a two-days' divisional manœuvre, so our trip had to be postponed a week, owing to the fact that we would be unable to get back in time.

Those manœuvres are the most extensive yet planned. They will take place along the banks of the Rio Grande, which will make them very difficult. Our problem will be to drive back a supposed army which has managed to cross the river. Great care has been taken in the past to stage all operations away from the border, so we were very much surprised
when announcement of the above was made. About 10,000 troops will take part, and will operate through the towns of Hidalgo, Madeiro City, San Juan, etc.

On page 312 of the Seventh Regiment Gazette is the picture of a truck stuck in the mud, loaded with a piano. This happened just opposite our picket line. There is a regular lake where the road ordinarily is. This is a good sample of the condition the roads get in when it rains. The men on the truck are all from Squadron A, and the man playing the piano is the son of Augustus Thomas, the playwright, who spoke at one of the Athenæum meetings.

Am well. The health of the whole division is remarkable. Beats all records for a military camp, I believe.

Kenneth.

LETTER XXVI

Furlough at Corpus Christi.—The Seventh Praised by Gen. Parker.—Ford Cars Not Suitable for the Border Country.—"The Rio Grande Rattler."


Dear Mama:

Let me know about Barnegat and what luck Rob had fishing. By the way, I wish Rob would take out the gun I use in trap-shooting, and give it a good cleaning.

We had a fine little outing at Corpus Christi. The finest thing there was the bathing. The water is very warm, of course, and we were bothered somewhat by sea-nettles. We put up at a fine hotel, where the meals were as finely cooked and served as at any of the first-class New
York hotels. We had some typical Southern cooking. We took a room with bath, which had a fine bed with an Ostermoor mattress and good springs, but we could not sleep. Our cots on the ground feel more comfortable. They had an A1 orchestra, which played nothing but the best of music, and two excellent soloists. You cannot imagine the relief of getting away like that after three months of discipline and doing everything in a prescribed way. If we are here for some time yet, as it looks at present, I will try and go there again.

The country between here and Corpus Christi is all much the same, except that there is nothing but grass on the plains. The railroad runs for miles where there is nothing to be seen but an expanse of plain as flat as a
table, without so much as a cactus plant against the skyline. This part of Texas is very poor, and land sells for about $60 an acre.

We are very busy now, mostly with manoeuvres. Saturday morning the whole division was reviewed by Gen. Parker of the Regular Army. About 15,000 men were together on a cleared field about six miles from camp. Every branch of the service was represented. It was the greatest military spectacle I have ever witnessed. The Seventh was greatly honored by a note from Gen. Parker to Col. Fisk, which was read to the regiment, and in which this officer stated that he had never seen a regiment that marched better or that had made a better appearance than the Seventh in all his career. He included both militia and Regular Army. We had the honor position and led the review. But the regiment
would appreciate the order to break camp and entrain for home a lot better than it does these praises. On Oct. 6th we go to Harlingen for machine-gun practice.

Have read both editorials you sent. They are good, and the one regarding the Lewis gun I believe is true. All of the other regiments here have been equipped with it. They are allotting four guns to a regiment, which is not enough. The guns are carried on Ford cars, which are useless in this country. On all divisional and brigade manoeuvres we have about 80% of the machine-gun work to do, because with our mules there is no place where we cannot go, and the regiments that use autos for machine-gun carriers cannot leave the road, and when it rains they cannot leave their camps.

The enclosed picture was taken at Mission while we were on our hike. The tent is known as a pup tent, and is what we use while on the road. Each man carries a half, and two halves are buttoned together and then pitched.

Geo. Hodenpyle is down here with the regiment, a member of Co. I. I ran into him while on the Hidalgo manoeuvres, and of course was very much surprised. We were both on the combat patrol.

Since starting this letter we have received our orders to report at Harlingen. We leave tomorrow morning. Our mail will be forwarded.

Under separate cover I am sending a copy of the *Rio Grande Rattler* for you to look over. It is written, edited and published by the men of the New York Division.

Am well and have no news as to when we will return
home. Border conditions seem to be rather unsettled again. The weather has been very hot. It is hard to realize that it is the first of October. We are very busy getting in shape to get away at 4 A. M. tomorrow. This letter is rather disjointed, as I have had to stop on nearly every page and go and do something.

Kenneth.

LETTER XXVII

The March to Harlingen.—The Camp There.—Machine Gun School.—Wild Game Plentiful.—The Coyotes and Wildcats.—A Horse and Mule Stampede.—Some Harlingen History.—Undesirable Reptile and Insect "Citizens."—San Benito.—The Seventh's "Pull" Imaginary.—Thoughts of Home.


Dear Rob:

We arrived here at noon, Saturday, Sept. 30. We were a little mixed as to the distance, Harlingen being forty-three miles, instead of thirty-eight, as we thought. We made twenty-seven miles the first day, five or six miles more than we thought we had made. The twenty-seven-mile march broke all records for the division. We did the balance the next day. It was some march. Men and animals came in in fine shape. Of course, it was only a company march, and a company can make better time than a regiment.
LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

We have a fine camp here, the best we have had. We are situated about one hundred feet from the edge of a beautiful arroyo which is about two hundred feet deep and 500 yds. or 600 yds. wide, with a beautiful stream of clear water about twenty feet deep and thirty feet wide in the bottom. The machine gun range is right on the grounds with us. We fire across the arroyo into the bank on the other side, and also up the ravine. Every conceivable kind of a target is used—have not time to describe them. This is a regular army camp. The machine gun troop of the First Illinois Cavalry are here with us. They leave Saturday, and the machine gun troop of the Third U. S. Cavalry came to the school with us, so we will be entirely with regulars. All of the makes of machine guns are here. We will probably shoot
all of them, but will receive instruction in nomenclature, etc., on our own gun only, and possibly the Lewis, four of which may be issued us. We would then have both guns. The Lewis guns we have at present in the army are not a success. Capt. Hatcher, our instructor-in-chief and the inventor of some of the heavy guns used in coast defence, says it is due to faulty construction. He believes that the Lewis is a good gun, and should be adopted and used with the gun we now have, the Benet-Mercier, or Hotchkiss, as it is sometimes called. The Benets are shooting rings around all the other guns here. This is not due to the fact that they are understood better either, because the ablest and most efficient machine gun experts of the regular army are here. Every machine gun now in use all over the world is the invention of an American. I suppose all this is very dull to you, so I will stop. It is a very absorbing study.

We have game galore here; quail and pigeon very thick. I started a whole covey right behind our picket line the day before yesterday, and got two. Another man and myself have gone halves and bought a cheap shotgun. I just could not resist it, the game is so abundant. We go out without dogs, and consequently lose a great many birds. This country has too much cover for easy shooting, and very often when you hit a bird and he drops, you cannot find him. But it is grand sport. We get all the snipe and pigeon we want. We do not get much time to shoot, but we manage to make a good job of it when we do go.

We are bothered a great deal in this camp with coyotes and wildcats. The wildcats have a peculiar howl,
which is very similar to a child crying. They are dangerous. The coyotes completely surround the camp at night, and yelp and howl nearly all night through. We have heard them very close, but have not been able to see any. If one remains very quiet on our picket line for a long time, they will slowly creep quite near. Then, if suddenly a noise is made, away they go, yelping like the imps of hell that they are, only to repeat the performance when everything is quiet again. I am going on picket guard tonight, and am to try some experiments. We go on guard here with our automatics cocked, one cartridge thrown into the barrel and a full magazine. There are several other beasts and birds that howl, or growl, or whistle at night which I have not been able yet to find out the names of.

Something stampeded our animals the other night about twelve o'clock. I never imagined anything like it. Our picket line is about two hundred feet from camp, and on considerably lower ground. A trail leads to it through a thick growth of chaparral. I had not been able to get to sleep that night, mostly on account of mosquitoes, which are bad here. (I now have a mosquito bar.) I suddenly heard a sound which brought me sitting up straight on my cot. It sounded like a machine gun going about ten miles off. Then it dawned on me what it was—hoofs beating the ground. A second later I saw the animals rounding the corner of the trail into the company street. They swept by at full gallop, just a black mass and a cloud of dust, with the picket line, pins and shears clattering behind them. I thought that surely they would take every tent in the street with them; but
they got through without hitting even a guy-rope, which was a miracle, as I do not see how it was possible. At the head of the street is situated the mess shack, making necessary a sharp right-angle turn. They negotiated that in great shape. After that there was only the whole State of Texas before them. We finally got them rounded up and a new picket line down. We think that some of the animals tripped on the trailing picket line and halter-shanks and were thrown, which eventually stopped them. We suppose that coyotes or a wildcat started them. It sure was exciting for about fifteen minutes.

Bandits have been active around San Benito, which is just about seven miles from this camp. They killed a Mexican rancher and a regular of the 16th Inf. the night before last. Posses are out hunting them. We are all very careful where we go alone.

Enclosed are two birdseye views of Harlingen. On one I have placed an arrow at the top of the picture. It points to our camp—the white spots which show away outside the town. The tents which show distinctly are those of the 26th U. S. Inf. Right beside our camp, and to the left of it, you will find a railroad bridge. This bridges the arroyo of which I have written. A year ago this bridge was blown up by Villistas and eight regulars killed. The Mexicans lost all of their force in a desperate fight in the ravine below. All but three were killed, these three being captured and turned over to Rangers to take to Brownsville. The Rangers killed two on the way there, and the third was sentenced to fifty years’ imprisonment by a U. S. court.

Our camp is about a mile and a half from the point
where the picture was taken, so you will see what an excellent photograph it is. The photographs give an excellent idea of the typical Texas frontier town.

I am glad you had a fine time at Barnegat. Walter's log came in the same mail. It is very amusing, but made me feel bad to read it—that is, the menus did, for you certainly lived on the fat of the land, or the water. September is the month on the Jersey coast.

We have excellent bathing here, in the stream I have told you about. We also have rattlesnakes galore, centipedes four to six inches long, and jiggers by the million, all very undesirable citizens.

Oct. 6, 1916.

I will get this letter completed some time. We have very little spare time. I must stop now as the captain has just ordered me to saddle up and accompany him and the first sergeant to San Benito.*


Had a fine ride to San Benito yesterday. It is quite a town, with cotton-gins, sugar and oil refineries, and seems to be the commercial centre of this part of Texas.

Am very busy, as the stable sergeant has gone back to McAllen for a few days, and I have his place until he returns. You may congratulate me; I have my stripes. Was made a corporal last night. This also gives me the position of gunner on our machine gun crew, which consists of four men to a gun.

Nothing new about our home-coming. I think the guard will be kept on the Border all winter. Troops

that are moved out are replaced immediately by others. All of the National Guard will see Border duty. We may be lucky in getting out, and we may get stuck. All of the "pull" the Seventh was supposed to have had has got them nothing. People will probably stop talking about it after this.

Am well; in fact, was never better. Have forgotten what physic tastes like—that is, almost—and have also forgotten that I ever had indigestion.

Received a letter from the shop, in which they say that they still have my job waiting, and have put no one on.

I would like to know how the National Dairy Show is progressing. I suppose Pop is putting in a good deal of time there.

How is the Grafonola? Don't forget to oil it once in a while. The springs ought to have graphite put on them. The motor will have to be taken to the Columbia Co. to have this done.

Can you send some fudge? Ask M. if she will make some,

Kenneth.
Good Sport at Harlingen.—Made Corporal and Gunner after Training and Competitive Test.—Jiggers.


Dear Walter:

Received the "log," which I enjoyed ever so much. Am awfully glad you had such a fine trip. It made me feel bad to read it, especially the menus. I quite agree with you, that September is the only month for the Jersey coast.

We have a fine camp here, with the finest of quail and wild pigeon shooting you can imagine. I have bought a shotgun, which has been a fine investment. We have a dandy swimming-hole twenty feet deep.
I have got my stripes—just received my corporal’s warrant. I am also gunner of Gun No. 3, M. G. Co., 7th Inftry., N. G. U. S. The gunners were selected after a competitive test by regular army officers. It extended over a period of ten days, and consisted of a test in nomenclature and the principle of the gun. Our gun has 142 parts, all of which must be named and their functions explained. The test also included speed in dismounting and assembling, reducing jams while on the firing line, accuracy and speed of fire, and emplacement and intrenching positions. A favorite trick that our instructors pulled on us was to have our guns brought to the firing line and then order the gunners to the rear out of sight. They would then replace good parts with defective ones that would not function properly. We would then be called back to diagnose the trouble and correct it. They also would fill the strips with defective ammunition, thereby causing jams, which we had to reduce. These last two things were the most difficult of the whole test, and the things which tripped most of the men.

We have here rattlesnakes, coyotes and wildcats galore, also jiggers,* a bad dose of which I am just recovering from.

Kenneth.

* An insect which burrows under the skin.
LETTER XXIX

NEVER BETTER IN HEALTH.—A WORD ABOUT A "BUNKIE".—MADE PERMANENT GUNNER.—THE TEST PASSED.


Dear Marj. and Family:

Received your letter of the eighth in tonight's mail, and with it a copy of the Jersey Bulletin. The article about the Dairy Show is just what I wanted. Tell Pop to send news of it once in a while. Glad everyone is O. K. Don't worry about my thinness. Have never been better in my life.

You ask me who the fellow is in one of the pictures with me. His name is W. H. Tailer,* of a prominent N. Y. family, and he is a fine fellow. He is a descendant of the first governor-general, or whatever he was called, of the territory which now comprises the New England States, whose name was the

Wm. H. Tailer.

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* He afterwards joined the Lafayette Escadrille, and was killed while flying in France.
same as his (William Tailer) appointed by the King of England. He is the man who accompanied me to Corpus Christi.

I am most happy to be able to tell you that I am the permanent gunner of Gun No. 3 of the M. G. Co., 7th Inf., N. G. U. S. We have completed all but half a day of our period of instruction. The gunners were chosen in a competitive test in nomenclature, speed in dismounting and assembling the gun (which, incidentally, has 142 parts, all of which we must know by name and be able to explain their functions), and accuracy and speed of fire. This test covered a period of about ten days, and was judged mostly by the regular army instructors. We also received instruction in and fired the Lewis gun. To compare the Lewis gun and our gun is like comparing a Ford automobile with a Pierce-Arrow. Each has its proper uses.

We have had a very hot week. It is hard to realize that it is the middle of October. I don’t know when we will be ordered home. Everyone wishes it will come quickly. I am glad Boston won the World’s Series. Will write when we get back to McAllen.

Ken.

LETTER XXX

Back at McAllen Camp.—The Machine Gun Co. Gets an Ovation.—The Texas Rangers.


Dear Pop:

We are back in camp at McAllen again, after a hard march of forty-one miles through rain and mud hub
deep. We did it in a day and a half. At some places we had to haul our wagons up on the railroad track and drive along the ties.

We had a fine time at the machine-gun range, and covered ourselves with glory. Capt. Hatcher, the instructor-in-chief, told us at the end of the school period that we were the most efficient company, either regular or militia, that had yet attended the school. We beat all records in time in taking down and assembling the gun; equalled the best time in the army in a speed test to ascertain how many shots per minute we could put into a given target; and to wind up we pumped 1,200 rounds in four different sectors at invisible targets, the exact location of which we did not know, in two and a half minutes and averaged sixty-five per cent. of hits. My sector was at a distance of about 500 yds. and covered both sides and the bottom of a deep arroyo. We are a very proud company, and the regiment is proud of us. The news preceded us on our way home, and as we turned into the regimental street on our way in the whole regiment was waiting, and they gave us a cheer that was heard back in McAllen.

Enclosed are some more pictures, taken on our trip to Corpus Christi. The ones with crosses on the backs are pictures of the depot and hotel at Kingsville, a very beautiful place and the home of King’s Ranch, one of the largest in Texas. This place is near Mr. Lasater’s farms; that is, near as distances go in Texas. On the picture where the name of the hotel, Casa Ricardo, appears, “yours truly” can be seen in the foreground. The group of men just in front of me are all Texas
Rangers, of whom you have read so much. They all carry two Colts, long-barreled forty-fives, one on each hip, and sometimes one slung under the left armpit. The picture of the small railroad station is at Robstown, a junction point. I am leaning up against the fence near the palms in the foreground.

Mama was asking about my glasses. I have not worn them since I came down here; they are too much of a nuisance. I don't miss them, and the lack of them did not interfere with my shooting.

I have bought a small Navajo blanket, which I am sending along. The blanket, or mat, as I suppose it really is, is genuine. Am sending it for Aunt A. It is about the only thing I can get that I feel is real. If you want one, let me know.

Will you send me another ten d.? I simply cannot, it seems, make my pay last from one pay day until the next. My old trouble, you see. I will get $21 per month from now on. The Harlingen trip put me in a hole.

Hope you are well, and that the Club banquet was a success.

Kenneth.

LETTER XXXI
Souvenirs.—Personal Matters.


Dear Mama and Marj.:

Just received your letter and fudge, which were very welcome. Glad everyone is well. Your warning about
the Navajo blanket came just too late, as I bought one today, as you will learn from my other letter. It was not made by Indians, of course, but is real wool nevertheless. I could not get anything else. I am also going to send home my warrant. Take good care of it, as it is very precious. This is the document which authorizes my corporalship.

The weather is improving, it now being only 80° at nine o'clock in the morning.

I will try and get some needlework later. There are lots of leather things which appeal to me, but they all cost too much, and I simply cannot buy them and have money enough to carry me through the month for laundry, etc., and for what I may spend. For instance, before I leave here I intend to get a horsehair lariat, Mexican made. They cost about $10.

The 1st Field Artillery are leaving for New York tonight, to be replaced by the 3d Field Artillery, which is equipped with the new 4.7 howitzers.

Kenneth.

LETTER XXXII

A Hike on the Ties.—Praise for the Company.—The Barnegat "Log" Appreciated.—Thinking of the Opera.—Stable Sergeant.—Talks About "I" with Apologies.


Dear Walter:

We are back in camp after a hard forty-one mile march in rain and through mud that was hub deep for
miles. The road from Harlingen to McAllen runs along the railroad track, so we simply cut down the fence which all the railroads in the State build along their right of way, and drove our wagons and mules along the ties. The road was impassable in many places.

The company made a great record at the Government school. Capt. Hatcher informed us at the end of our period of instruction that we were the most efficient machine-gun company of either regulars or militia that had yet attended the school.

Have re-read the "log" a couple of times, and enjoyed it more each time. "Junior" Willis* read it also, and appreciated it very much. He is one of the finest men I have ever met, and has become a warm friend of mine. He is to be a second lieutenant in the M. G. Co. Will get his commission in a day or two.

What have you done about your opera subscription? Have not heard anything from Otto as to his plans. . . . After reading the prospectus, I wish that I was home.

Didn’t you and I have a bet on the election? I think I bet $10 on Wilson. My company are all for Hughes.

*Lts. Wilson and Willis

* Killed in action in France, Sept. 29, 1918.
This is going to be a close election, and I think Wilson will win.

I am going to talk about "I" some more. Since starting this letter I have got added one more stripe to the two on my sleeve. I was appointed stable sergeant last night (Oct. 20). Next to the first sergeant, it is the biggest job an enlisted man can get in a machine-gun company. I have the entire company at my disposal, and am in supreme command of our animals, picket line, pack and leather equipment, such as saddles, etc. I am now a mounted man, with an animal of my own. Most of my work has been with our animals. In the absence of our former stable sergeant, I have always had charge of the work, so I have gradually worked into it. Last week I branded all our mules and horses. Have learned to throw a lariat a little, and can rope and throw an animal and truss him up. Have even put a shoe on when occasion demanded. We have not had a veterinarian in two months. I have treated all our cases successfully, and they have been many and varied. The army does wonders, Walter. Don't think I am become
conceited, because I am not. The way we get our education prevents that. I learned all these things only after a lot of hard knocks and hard work. Four months ago I could not have talked of myself in this fashion, but now it seems perfectly natural, although it probably sounds very much like blowing. I am going to rub it in some more: there is only one other man in the regiment who came here a private and is now a sergeant. We think a good deal of it, because it is always figured that a sergeantcy in the Seventh is as good as a second lieutenancy in any other outfit.

Kenneth.

LETTER XXXIII
A Comrade’s Promotion.—Lots of Game.—New Riding Seat Being Learned.—The Company Rated “Excellent.”


Dear Walter:

I have received a box of fudge from your people and a letter from you. Thank them for the fudge. It is what I want more than anything else.

Eddy has a corporalship. His company has lost a great many men. E has lost more men than any other company. I am glad Ed got it. A corporal in a line company covers position No. 4 of the front rank in the squad, and has charge of a squad while in the tent. There are eight men in a full squad. A corporal’s principal job is to keep his line dressed while marching at attention.
LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

Hope you get to the bay for ducks. I only wish you were here with me for about two weeks. I would show you more game than you ever imagined lived. I am going on a week's furlough with the Captain after Nov. 1st, on a deer hunt.

We got our vote all right; received my ballot to-day. It is the regular soldiers' and sailors' ballot. I mark it, fold it, place it in an envelope and then swear before my captain that I am a bona fide voter in New Jersey and have lived there for at least one year. I get two witnesses to sign. This affidavit is then sealed up with the ballot and placed in an envelope. In this envelope is also enclosed a blank, which must be filled in and signed by the person who casts my ballot.

I have seen Vandy W. several times. He is in K company, the finest in the regiment.

I now weigh 150 lbs. I weighed 179 the day I was examined at the armory just before we came down. I am now attending daily the army equitation school, being mounted. I learned the old cavalry seat when we first came here, and have been riding it ever since, but have to learn all over again, because it has been all changed in the last two weeks. All cavalry, regular and militia, are now receiving instruction in the new style. They have
gone back to posting* in the army, which is a radical change from the old long stirrup.

Very glad to know that the European war will be over in a year! Was getting worried.

I am enclosing a copy of a communication from the Ordnance Department to the commanding general of the Sixth Div., U. S. A., relative to the work of the M. G. Co. of the Seventh Inftry. while at Harlingen. It speaks for itself. More could not be said. You will notice that the word "excellent" is used in it. That is a word very rarely used in the criticism of the work of an individual, company or regiment by regular army inspectors.

The weather is still hot, but the nights are wonderfully cool. The orange, lemon and grape-fruit crops are just being picked. In about two months the strawberries will be ready. It seems strange that it is almost the first of November.

Don't know when we will be home. Have stopped thinking about it. A lot of us are going to be here all winter. We are now figuring that our chances of getting home or going into Mexico are fifty-fifty. Wish they would do either one or the other.

Kenneth.

LETTER XXXIV

Voting by Proxy.—Anxious to Cast Ballot.


Dear Pop:

This is just a hurried note explaining my vote, which you will cast for me. We received our ballots yesterday,

* Rising in the saddle.
which I have marked in the prescribed fashion. The ballot is sealed inside of a white envelope, with my affidavit as to residence on the outside. Sealed with the ballot is my affidavit of residence in the State and my citizenship. You take the white envelope to the polls, and they open it, look at the affidavit and then deposit the ballot in the box.

Read the law, a copy of which is enclosed in the manila envelope. Note particularly the marked paragraph. Form 2a you will have to fill out as per directions in pamphlet (par. 228).

If you should happen to be away, Rob can vote the ballot, as I have simply made the name R. M. G. I hope this is all clear. I am particularly anxious to get my vote in this year. It is for Wilson.

I received the Springfield paper last night. Have not had a chance to read it yet. Am well, as I hope you all are. Will write again tomorrow. I am now a sergeant. Will tell you about it later.

Give the copy of the voting law to Walter S. when you are through with it.

Ken.
LETTER XXXV

Solicitous about Ballot.—Promoted to be Stable Sergeant.—Duties of the Position.—The Equitation School.—Views of the International Situation.—Reduction of the Regiment.—The Fruit Harvest.


Dear Mama and Family:

I sent a very hurried letter along with my vote yesterday. I had hardly a minute to write it. I hope the instructions are clear. Everything is in the 4 pp. circular I sent, so I don’t think that there will be any question. Pop simply gives the white envelope with the seal unbroken to the election officer. He also fills in the affidavit, swearing that he is the person authorized to cast my vote.

I am now the stable sergeant. I received my appointment last week. It is the biggest job, next to the first sergeant, in the company. I have the entire company at my disposal, and rank all the other sergeants, with the exception, of course, of the top sergeant. I am in command of our picket line and the men when working there, have charge of the animals, harness, leather equipment, such as saddles, packs, etc., and am directly responsible to my commanding officer for the welfare of the animals and condition of equipment. I have all the treatment of sick animals to direct. Also, I am now a mounted man, with an animal of my own.

I think that I have told you that most of my work ever since coming here has been with our former stable
sergeant and the animals. In the absence of the stable sergeant I always had charge of the work, so you see I have worked into my present position gradually. We have not had a veterinarian in two months. I have doctored all of our cases successfully, and they have been many and varied. Of all the non-com. places in the company, I would rather have got this than any other. Lord knows it is bad enough to have to stay here when you have work to do that interests you. You can imagine what it is when one cannot or does not find any satisfaction in his work. Have learned to throw the lariat a little, and can rope and throw an animal and truss him up. This is necessary every once in a while with a mule.

I am attending daily the cavalry equitation school. All mounted men and cavalry, both militia and National Guard, are receiving instruction in a new style of riding, which is a radical change from the old style. I learned the old seat when we first came here, which I have been riding ever since. Now I have to learn all over again.

Don't think I am getting conceited, although I have talked mostly about "I" in this letter. You can't get a
swelled head in the army, the way you get your education. I have learned what I know only after a lot of work and hard knocks.

Glad to hear that the Club banquet was a success. From the headline in the Springfield Republican, the whole show was a grand success.

It looks as if we may be here all winter. Carranza seems to be slowly but surely losing his grip. I don’t see how anything can be accomplished by a conference, at least no permanent settlement. There is only one way, and I think that that will come eventually—send the army in.

Let me know when you get the package I sent, and my warrant. Does the Seventh Regiment Gazette come regularly? My picture was in the last one. Don’t know what I can do about my insurance, if we do not get home.

Did I tell you that Geo. Hodenpyle is down here with the regiment? We now have 1,146 men in our regiment. We came down with about 1,300. Have lost the difference by physical disability, discharges, expired enlistments, furloughs to the reserve, etc. Eddy’s company has lost the most men. We have been very lucky.

The orange, lemon, and grape-fruit crops are being picked now. Oranges directly off the tree taste entirely different from what we get in New York. You don’t know what a real orange tastes like until you eat them from the tree.

The Schalchas sent me a box of fudge right after Marj. sent hers. It was very fine.

Enclosed is some Mexican money given to me the other day. It is worth 25c.

Hoping you are all well,  

Kenneth.

Dear Mama, Pop and Family:

Received Pop’s letter two days ago. Many thanks for the M. O.; it is most welcome. I have not had an opportunity to cash it yet, so have not spent any of it.

I shall certainly try to get to Falfurrias. If I go, I think that I shall get the Captain to go with me. I don’t suppose Mr. Lasater would object. I would be surer of getting away then, you see.

Enclosed is a copy of a communication from the U. S. District Ordnance Dept. to the commanding general of the New York Division relative to the work of our company at Harlingen. It speaks for itself, and will prove to you that there is a reason for all my crowing. Let me call your attention to the fact that the word “excellent” is very rarely used in the regular army in the criticism of the work of any individual or unit. This same sort of criticism has characterized the reports on the work of the entire regiment in every test made by the regular army instructors. All of the regiments in the division had three weeks’ target work on a range built at La Gloria, an isolated spot in the centre of a wilderness. The targets all were disappearing and partially hidden; that is, the figure of a man would suddenly bob up
out of a pit at various distances between 200 and 1,000 yards, and the gunner would have to fire at it from all positions and at all gaits from a slow walk to a fast run. Our regiment averaged 56% hits. The next nearest was the Sixty-ninth with 29%. It was the same thing over again in range-finding, etc.

So you see the regiment is head and shoulders above any other in this division, and, we believe, any other on the Border. It has had practically no arrests for breaches of discipline or drunkenness. To my own personal knowledge, no man of our company has taken a drink since leaving New York, and that is what counts, discipline like that. As long as we are here we have to make the best of it, and it is gratifying to be a member of such an organization.

I saw Dick today. He leaves for home on the 15th inst. His enlistment runs out Dec. 15, but he is going home on a thirty-day furlough, and will take out his discharge in New York.

Lieut. McQuaid is our first lieutenant. He is home
on a thirty-day furlough to attend to his business. I am glad he called you up.

What do you think of our poster stamp? We think it a very clever design. You would have to come down here, I think, to really appreciate it.

Have you received my warrant and the package yet? Did Rob get my letter asking him to look after my shotgun—the single-barrelled one, I mean.

The weather is very beautiful. The days are hot, but the nights are cool. I am going to give you the company menu for Sunday, as I think you may be interested to know how we are faring. We had fresh vegetable soup, roast beef, as fine as you would want to eat, French fried potatoes, fresh corn and spinach, apple-pie, ice-cream, coffee and crackers and cheese. Our Sunday dinners are all like this. We get fresh meat three times a week, and all of our meals, although not so elaborate, are on a par with Sunday’s. For breakfast we have good oatmeal or other cereal, fruit two or three times a week, and on alternate mornings boiled eggs, fried eggs, plain omelet, ham omelet, etc., and all we want of coffee and toast. We are running our own mess, and the beauty of it is that the mess assessment stopped two months ago. We take the money allowed for each man per day from the Government. The amount is governed by the price of beef; or, to make it more clear, a man is allowed one pound of beef per day or its equivalent in cash. I think that at present this is 31c. It does not seem like much, but you see how high we live on it.

I am feeling fine. I met Capt. Bates yesterday and
had a long talk with him. He is from Summit, and is a fine fellow.

I have been very busy. Have just finished having all of my animals at the blacksmith’s. We had a great deal of trouble; had to put all but two in the stocks. The shoeing is done by regular army blacksmiths of the quartermaster’s corps.

Co. A of the Seventh captured five Mexicans who tried to sneak across the Rio Grande at Madeiro City, where they are patrolling, the night before last. They had a big load of goods they were trying to smuggle in. No shots were fired. Three men effected the capture. They observed a boat in midstream quietly floating down with the current, and followed it through the canebrake for about a mile. When the boat landed the patrol ordered hands up, and marched the men back to camp and the guardhouse, to be turned over to the Customs authorities.

Kenneth.

LETTER XXXVII

An “Order” From the Ordnance Department.


Dear Walter:

Enclosed is a copy of the order I spoke about in my previous letter. After you read it you may understand the reasons for some of my everlasting crowing. It speaks for itself. You can imagine how a militia organization has to toe the mark to get such a criticism from regular army officers.
LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

ENCLOSURE

Harlingen, Tex.,

From District Ordnance Officer
To Commanding General, New York Division.
Subject: Militia Companies at Machine Gun School.

1. You are informed that on this date the Machine Gun Company of the Seventh New York Infantry completed the two weeks' course in the nomenclature and operation of the gun with which they are armed. The application and attention to duty of this organization was excellent, and at the completion of the course they could be rated as excellent in the mechanical handling of the gun. The only criticisms of this organization that I can offer are—none.

(Signed) E. S. Hughes,
Captain, Ordnance Dept.

1st Ind.
To the Commanding Officer,
7th N. Y. Infrty., F. E. B.

Have not time to write much. I have been extremely busy this week getting the animals shod. Had a great deal of trouble, it being necessary to put all but two into the stocks.

Ken.

LETTER XXXVIII

Voting in Camp.—Going on Border Patrol.—Reaps Fruit of Former Work.—The Riding Class.—Moonlight Brilliance and Sandstorms.

McAllen, Tex., Nov. 9, 1916.

Dear Mama:

Received your letters last night, and was mighty glad to get them. I am going to get some drawn-work or a scarf or mantilla for you and Marj. on pay day. I
have found three Mexican women who make them. I have seen them working, so know the things are genuine. I am glad my vote arrived O. K. We don’t know yet who has been elected. I shall be terribly disappointed if Wilson does not win. We had a very hot election. Feeling ran very high, and sentiment seemed to be about evenly divided. The New York Division voted as a district, the voting being done in camp, election judges, etc., being elected first by each company. Polls closed at 11 A. M., and the day was declared a holiday.

We leave Saturday for Madeiro City, on the Rio Grande, for eight days’ patrol. Infantry and cavalry have been patrolling regularly a thirty-mile strip along the river. Some officer thinks there ought to be machine guns mounted along the border, so down we must go. It will mean a lot of hard work, for machine-gun trenches must be built and rifle-pits made. This implies that a first-line trench must be dug and communicating trenches run back to a second and third line set of trenches. Facines, gabions, etc., will also have to be constructed.

I am very busy, as usual. I have just finished a complete descriptive list of all my animals for the files at the headquarters of the Southern Department. It seems strange at times to think that some work you have done at some time or another helps you in an entirely unexpected way. My reading of Jersey cow descriptions for Pop for six months or so has helped a lot in this work. I knew how to go about it.

Will look for the fudge, and hope it gets here before we leave for Madero.

The riding class is progressing at the cavalry school.
They now have us riding kneeling on our horses bareback, with our arms folded across our chests. The horses are started off at a walk, and then trotted. We have to dismount and mount while the horse is at a walk, a trot and a canter. All this is done bareback. We soon will get ditch and fence jumping, both in the saddle and bareback. It is great stuff, but not very pleasant if you should happen to fall.

Dick goes home next week. I spent all day Sunday with him. Had him at our mess. We expect to be here all winter. Every indication points that way.

You wrote of the moonlight nights. Will you believe
me when I tell you that we can read a letter or write one by the moonlight, when the moon is full. I never have seen such bright nights.

We have just gone through a three-days’ sandstorm. The wind blew steadily, and everything we have is just covered with fine dust. Nothing keeps it out.

I notice by the Summit paper that the fall activities in the town are proceeding as usual. It seems like five years since I left. Will have to stop and get ready for the riding class.

Nov. 10th.

Marj.’s fudge came in last night’s mail. As usual, it is very fine, and is the best candy we get in our tent. We leave for Madeiro tomorrow. Will Rob look after my gun? Said goodbye to Dick yesterday.

With love,

Ken.

LETTER XXXIX

Ordered Home.—A Cold Spell, But a Happy Camp.

McAllen, Tex., Nov. 17, 1916.

Dear Mama, Pop, Marjorie and Rob:

As you know from my telegram, we are coming home. This is certainly a happy camp. We will probably be out of here in ten days. We will start packing tomorrow, and as soon as the cars get here. I want the money to enable me to get some things to bring home, and also to have some on the trip.

We have just had an exceptionally cold spell. The thermometer went down to 34 deg., which is exceptional
here. We were very uncomfortable. We boarded the tent in, and all bought mattresses and some of us heavier clothes, all of which cost money, which is practically thrown away.

I am crazy to see you all, and will advise as to further movements. I may not come home with the regiment, as I probably will be sent in charge of our equipment on the quartermaster's train. It will probably arrive in New York about the same time as the regiment. We will probably be in service for about two weeks after we get to New York, in order to check up and be mustered out.

Kenneth.

LETTER XL

Ready to Move.—Looking Forward to the March Up Fifth Avenue.

McAllen, Tex., Nov. 21, 1916.

Dear Mama:

The regiment entrains tomorrow for New York. We expect to arrive Monday morning, if we get off as per schedule. Everything is packed, and there is not a tent standing. I am to sleep on the picket line tonight with my animals. My one regret about leaving is to leave the animals.

I hope Pop, Rob and Walter will make it a point to view the regiment when it marches up Fifth Avenue. It will be worth the trouble. The papers will probably keep you posted. I will wire. We go home by the way of New Orleans and then over the Queen & Crescent route through Mobile, Chattanooga, Jackson, W. Vir-
Virginia and Washington, a fine route. I think we will be dismissed as soon as we reach the armory. Have a regular meal that night.

With love,

Kenneth.

The Border Service Medal.
Training Period
Camp Wadsworth

27th Division Insignia

July 16, 1917, to April 7, 1918
Order Sending the Seventh to
Camp Wadsworth

Headquarters 7th New York Infantry.
New York City, Sept. 9, 1917.

Regimental Order No. 75:

1. The usual morning assembly calls on Sept. 11 will be changed as follows: First call, 9.50 A. M.; assembly, 10.00 A. M.

2. At this assembly men will fall in without arms or equipment.

3. In pursuance of orders from superior authority, the regiment will proceed to Divisional Training Camp, Spartanburg, South Carolina, on Tuesday, Sept. 11th; service uniform, including cotton coats and equipment as far as issued. First call, 1.30 P. M.; assembly, 1.40 P. M.

4. The line of march will be Park Avenue to Fifty-seventh St., to Fifth Avenue, to Twenty-third St. and West to the ferry. Commanding officers will see that the field lockers and company rooms are searched immediately preceding the departure of the regiment, to ascertain that no public property which should be taken has been left behind.

5. All locker keys will be left in the locks.

6. The guard will be relieved at 10.00 A. M., Sept. 11th, by a guard to be furnished by the Depot Battalion, and the custody of the building will be turned over to that battalion at that hour.

By order of Colonel Fisk.

(Signed) DOUGLAS C. DESPARD,
Captain, Adjutant.
(Official.)
En Route to Spartanburg, S. C.—Men Well Taken Care of.

On Train, Sept. 12, 1917.

Dear Mother:

We have just left Washington after the slowest trip imaginable. Left Jersey City at 5 P. M. and arrived in Washington at 10.05 A. M. Left Washington at 1 P. M., about fourteen hours behind schedule.

We are very comfortable, having Pullmans. I am in a stateroom with two other men. We each have a berth to ourselves, and the room also serves me as an office.

Washington looked very beautiful as we passed through. Men were not allowed off the cars. The Red Cross have established a refreshment station in the Washington railroad yards for the benefit of passing troops. They took our mail and served coffee and buns. These women told us that troops are constantly passing night and day.

We received a great sendoff from New York. We had plenty of good things to eat, as the men's folks came to see them off, and nearly all left boxes. I had a cold roast chicken for supper. There is more candy and cake on the train than we possibly can eat and remain well. You might save one or two of the best accounts of our departure.

I am glad I didn't let you come to the depot, because the crowd was very great, and the Jersey City police had evidently made no arrangements to handle it. Walter
 LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

has probably told you all about it. Let me know how the regiment looked [on the march in N. Y. City].

There are twenty troop trains ahead of us, so I suppose that explains some of the delay.

Will write again at the first opportunity.

Ken.

LETTER XLII

En Route to Camp Wadsworth.

Salisbury, N. C., Sept. 13, 1917.

Dear Mother:

We are leaving Spencer, from which I sent you a card. This country is beautiful, and the weather has been delightful. We are due in Spartanburg tonight, and the railroad officials will probably dump us off the train as soon as we get there, because the Government will not pay for the occupation of cars after their arrival at destination. So it looks as if we will have to make camp at night. Pleasant thought! It is the railroad’s fault, of course, for not running us through on schedule, but that evidently makes no difference.

Sent a card to Rob. Have to depend on whoever we can find to send our mail, as we cannot do it ourselves. Have even run out of stamps and cannot buy more.

The scenery is very fine, but gets rather monotonous, as it is all the same—gently rolling country, heavily wooded and very sparsely settled. Most of the people are very miserable-looking, and seem to be as poor as church mice. They live for the most part in log cabins chinked with clay, and have a little corn and tobacco
planted. There are niggers and niggers, and then more niggers. There are very few towns of any size at all, and no big cities so far. The hills are covered mostly with pine and oak. The air is wonderful.

Things are running very smoothly aboard train. All of our movements are well regulated. The men all seem to have survived the junk their loving folks loaded them down with at Jersey City. Most of it has disappeared, for which I thank Heaven.

The train is standing in the Salisbury depot, where I have bought an apple-pie. Everyone seems to know the Seventh by reputation, and charge us accordingly. It is a crime. At a small town in Virginia named Culpeper, where we stopped for water, a group of women and girls came running down the main street and asked us who we were. When they learned that we were the Seventh New York they said: "Oh! yes, we know all about you. We have been waiting to see you go through for a week." They immediately despatched two of their number to collect the rest of the clan, but we pulled out before they returned.

This has been the slowest trip you could ever imagine. There are twenty-two troop trains, not twenty, as I wrote you yesterday, ahead of us, so the road is just about absolutely crippled.

Have command of the company on the train.*

KEN.

* He was First Sergeant.
LETTER XLIII

The First Day in Camp.—Clearing Ground and Grubbing Stumps.


Dear Mother and Family:

Here we are at the end of the first day. The company is dead tired, of course, most of them writing. We arrived at 7.45 last night, and the colonel received permission for the battalion to sleep on the train, so we were backed on to a siding. Reveillé sounded at 5 A. M., and we detrained at 6.30, arriving in camp about 8 A. M. The country and the camp location are perfect. The camp is very incomplete, and its size is inconceivable. Total lack of organization; that, of course, will come later. Half of our camp site is situated on land that was heavily wooded, and the other half on what was a cotton-field, the crop never having been picked. We drew the woods. The trees had been cut down, but the stumps were left, consequently the company had to grub. It was exceedingly hard work, most of the timber being oak. The ground is very rough. We seem to be situated on a plateau. The camp runs up and down hills, a level piece of ground being a rarity. Mess-shacks only are built, with, of course, latrines and shower-baths. The mess-shacks are very fine, with electric lights. We will have lights in the tents in a few days.

There are not many troops here yet, mostly odds and ends, such as signal corps, engineers, field batteries, quartermaster corps, ammunition trains, military police, engineer trains, various hospital and ambulance companies,
etc. The soil is either sand or a very heavy clay. It makes bad holding for tent-stakes. The amount of work to be done fairly staggers one. I am having the unique experience of sitting on a stump and bossing the gang, waxing very proficient at the same.

The country between Charlotte and Spartanburg is more prosperous. We passed through many large mill towns, Spartanburg, it seems, being the commercial centre of this whole district.

We were told that we could have our animals as soon as we were ready for them. The men pitched into the work with a will.

Let me know how the regiment looked in New York. Have had the most tedious trip ever. The last section to leave Jersey City was the first to arrive at Spartanburg.

With love,

Kenneth.
Dear Marj.:

This being Sunday, we are not doing very much. We are gradually getting into shape, although there still remains a lot to be done. I have a board floor all ready for my tent, and yesterday I went to Spartanburg and ordered a table and chair. I still have quite a few things to get, such as a pail, basin, lumber for the sides of my tent, etc. It costs about $10 to floor an A tent alone. We thought lumber would be plentiful and cheap here, but we guessed wrong.

Spartanburg is a typical Southern city. It seems very old-fashioned to us. The merchants are very obliging, and evidently are making a sincere effort to give the troops a square deal. The people are sociable, and very much inclined to take things easy. If you try to hurry them, you are worse off than ever. There is a very good hotel here, the Cleveland. The rates are reasonable, a room and bath being $2 a day. Lt. Harry says that he got an excellent meal there for $1.25, which is cheap.

The more I see of the country the better I like it. I am writing this in the mess-shack, and from where I sit I can look across the plateau and see the Blue Ridge mountains about ten miles away. The country in between is rolling. It is a paradise compared with southern Texas, and you will like it when you come down. The weather is very cool, but we are as comfortable as
can be, having plenty of blankets and each man having a sweater besides, which we are wearing constantly, which will give you an idea of what the temperature is.

Have no word about our animals. I am impatiently waiting for my horse, for when I get him I am going to make a bee-line for those mountains.

I am glad you came in and saw us go away, and I am also glad that Mr. Geistweit’s feelings were not hurt. I am going to write him in a day or so and tell him how sorry I am.

The wind has blown great guns out of the northeast ever since we arrived. The dust is bad. The roads the contractors have built are a joke; in fact, it is an insult to a good road to call them such. The present road to town is seven miles long. Gen. O’Ryan is having a military road built which shortens the route to Spartanburg to three miles.

If an enterprising merchant would open a store here, he would make his fortune. The storekeepers in the town have not the slightest idea of what they ought to carry. At the furniture store where I bought my table and chair I also tried to get two canvas folding-chairs for Lt. Wilson. The owner said that he had ordered a big shipment of them, and that he expected that they would arrive at some indeterminate date in the future. I asked him how many he had ordered, and he informed me that his order called for a hundred. Just imagine! And he thought that he was plunging very deeply. He could sell a thousand of them right now. I told him to order five thousand, and went so far as to say that the M. G. Co. would guarantee the sale, if he would put in
"I AM TO MAKE A BEE-LINE FOR THOSE MOUNTAINS."
an adequate supply of them and of other things which we would suggest. We made no headway at all, succeeding only in convincing him that we were reckless fools.

With love,

Ken.

LETTER XLV

The Seventh to be a "Base" for the 107th.—Negro Singing.—Indigestion and Sore Throat Epidemic.

Spartanburg, S. C., Sept. 18, 1917.

Dear Pop:

Work here is progressing slowly. We have not started our training programme yet, and have only three hours' drill daily. The rest of the time is spent in camp preparations. Still no word of our animals.

It was officially announced by the colonel this afternoon that we will be the 107th U. S. Infantry. This pleased everyone, of course, on account of the "7." We will be one of the base regiments, therefore do not lose our identity. Around us will be built, under the new tables of organization, an infantry regiment of 3,750 men. The reorganization will be effected as soon as practicable.

The nights are very cold. I had to buy a mattress and also I bought a pillow, the one M. made being too small after all. I will use the latter when we go on hike, as it will be just the thing for that. Today was extremely warm, and it is cold again tonight.

I heard some darkies singing the other night, the
first time I have ever heard this far-famed Southern darky singing. It is the weirdest thing I ever heard. Their melodies are very primitive, and seem to revert to what might have been African dirges. We asked them to sing "My Old Kentucky Home," "Suwanee River," "Old Black Joe," or some other darky song, and (will you believe me?), they never heard of any of them. They chant when they work. Foremen, I believe, encourage them in this, as they then work better. They are the slowest workers I ever saw.

We cannot get fresh vegetables or milk here. Milk is very scarce, and what you do get is like water. There are very few milch cattle here. We see hardly any vegetables in the stores, but plenty of fruit. Nearly everyone's digestion is upset. I suppose we are all undergoing the process of acclimation. I wish you would send me a bottle of alkaline throat tablets and a nose syringe. I have had a sore throat ever since arrival. This terrible dust irritates the throat badly. Most of the men are bothered the same way.

Hope you are all well.

Kenneth.

LETTER XLVI

Dress Regulations.—Hot Days and Cold Nights.

Spartanburg, S. C., Sept. 19, 1917.

Dear Mamma:

Received your letter, and certainly was glad to hear from you. Also wanted to know particularly about Rob. You might tell Rob that a man has the privilege of dress-
ing almost any way he pleases while inside his own camp limits (that means not only his own street, but the whole camp), except when on and in regular military formations. A good company commander considers first his men's personal comfort before he quibbles over picayune things.

I find it a good deal different being first sergeant than a private or a line sergeant. In the first place, I am in a tent alone, so have no one to help out on expenses. That makes it very expensive. I have my tent floored, but will have to wait until pay day to finish it.

Regarding our future status, I don't know anything more. Feel a little better today, physically. Yesterday and today were very hot, but not a bit muggy. The nights are cold, and the cold goes right into the marrow of our bones. We put on our cots everything we own, including tent-pins and tent-straps.

The men in the company are making a reptile collection. They have some very fine specimens, including two chameleons, and have built a cage.

Write as often as you can.

With love,

Kenneth.
LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

LETTER XLVII

THE 107TH INFANTRY FORMED.—TRAINING TO BE A CORKER.—A FINE COUNTRY TO LEARN MACHINE GUN TACTICS.

Camp Wadsworth, Spartanburg, S. C., Sept. 20, 1917.

Dear Walter:

We have some definite dope regarding our future status at last. It came out in the form of a verbal regimental order. Written orders and memos are being dispensed with as much as possible, owing to the problem of transporting them, as the Army Regulations specify that all correspondence must be retained and carried as part of the company records. We will be the 107th U. S. Infantry, and will be one of the four base regiments around which will be built, under the new tables of organization, an infantry regiment of 3,700 men. The “7th,” of course, pleased the whole outfit, as did the fact that we were chosen as one of the bases. The 1st N. Y. Inftry. will be amalgamated with the 7th. No officers, sergeant-majors, regimental quartermaster sergeants or first sergeants will be transferred to us. All other non-commissioned officers come over with the entire enlisted personnel of the 1st. This means that there will be too many non-coms, so a competitive examination will be held between our non-coms and the ones we gain by the transfer. The winners will get the warrants. The reorganization will be effected as soon as practicable. The 1st Inftry. is an up-State regiment, and is a very good outfit.
Third Platoon, M. G. Co., 7th Infantry.
We have not started on our training program yet. It is going to be a corker when it does start. It is now a conviction of the 7th N. Y. Inftry. that a pine stump is the toughest and hardiest plant that grows. They are slowly disappearing though, thank Heaven. The line companies are not doing any more than is necessary, because we will have to move when the reorganization comes. Think we will have our animals in about two weeks. Rations came in for them today.

Expect to go into Spartanburg tomorrow night. Roger has invited Helmuth and I to dinner at the Cleveland. That is where you will stay when you come down; and, believe me, I am going to be glad to see you. This is a wonderful country, Walter, and we are going to get over as much of it as possible. One can get an automobile for $15 per day, which is certainly cheap. The Govt. has ruined acres of cotton in the making of this camp. We had the guns out this morning, and this is the most wonderful country for machine-gun tactics I have ever seen. You can stand on an elevation and get ranges for an hour. Have used your compass a lot. It is about the truest one in the company.

Kenneth.

LETTER XLVIII

Throat Trouble Bad.—"Die Meistersinger" in Camp.—Most Men "Flat Broke."

Spartanburg, S. C., Sept. 22, 1917.

Dear Marj.:

Your letter and fudge came today. It is great, the best thing I have tasted yet since coming to camp.
Summit (N. J.) Boys in M. G. Co., 107th Inf.

The cotton is not ready to pick yet. That comes about the middle of October. It is all in pod now.

The dust here is terrible. My throat is in a fearful condition. The whole camp is affected. The surgeons paint with iodine or nitrate of silver, and that is extremely unpleasant. You cannot smoke, and food tastes like rubber, so I am waiting for the alkaline tablets. A great many of the men can hardly talk.

It is a beautiful, still night, and the men are singing all over the camp. It makes one feel very melancholy. The band is in the next street to us, and they are practising very softly. They have just finished "Walter's prize song" from "Die Meistersinger," which is most beautiful, and are now playing, as I write, "Carry me Back to Ole Virginny." A bugle can be heard for miles tonight. The weather has warmed up. Today was actually hot.

I am sending you a book of pictures. They are of the mountains and the country around Asheville, just a few miles from us. That is the country you will see when you come down. You will not be able to resist it.

Have gone flat broke, as usual, and have had to borrow some money; but I am in good company, as most of the men are in the same state.

Jun has announced his engagement. She is a fine girl. He told me going down on the train. He has it bad; would sit with me, and still does for that matter, and talk about her. I was the only one outside of his family that knew it until he announced it to the Summit men last night.

Love to all,

Ken.
Dear Mama and Marj.:  
Receiving your postal today, and will look for the package. The fudge was great. Send some more whenever you feel like making it. Received a letter from Rob and have answered it, also a letter from Walter.

We are busy getting ready for the reorganization. The weather is extremely raw and cold. We are all wearing our sweaters, coats and overcoats. I put on a pair of Lilly's socks this morning and they feel great. I met Roy Underwood in Spartanburg.

We have thirty U. S. Reserve officers detailed to the regiment for their instruction. We have two in our company. I had one of them to instruct in administration and first sergeant's paper work all yesterday afternoon. I get $51 a month and they get $141. I have to tell them all I know. It gets your goat, no matter how good a soldier you try to be. It would not be so bad, but they display all the pettiness and arrogance which goes with ignorance. The one that I had started in by patronizing me, but I knew so much more than he did that his manner soon changed and he was ready to listen to what I had to say. Don't think me conceited; I am just stating facts.

There seems to be a good deal of peace agitation. Now that we are in it, I imagine that I will be disappointed if we don't go through with it.
I went to church this morning. Two adders were killed in two of our tents last night. They came in out of the cold rain to get warm. What did you think of "The Land of the Sky" pictures?

The discipline to which we are being subjected is iron-bound and relentless. Gen. O'Ryan is out to make soldiers. I am enclosing a copy of General Order No. 1. It speaks for itself. That examination is a corker, particularly for sergeants. All of the sergeants in our company passed it without special preparation, something very few U. S. Reserve officers can do. The manual of interior guard duty, included in the examination, is a very complex affair, and fills about sixty pages in the drill regulations. We are required to know it from start to finish. We also must know the articles of war.

KEN.

ENCLOSURE.

General Orders
No. 1.

Headquarters, Camp Wadsworth,
Spartanburg, S. C.
September 18, 1917.

Based on information from our Expeditionary Forces, which shows the necessity for a discipline far stricter than anything in our previous history and for a proportionate outward manifestation of same, the following is published for compliance by this command:

1. With the exceptions below indicated, no enlisted men will be permitted to leave the camp reservation until they have qualified in the following:

(a) Shown by a test demonstration, held under a commissioned officer, that they can execute the prescribed hand salute; that they can assume the proper position when reporting to or when being spoken to by an officer; that they can properly salute when they meet an officer; that they can stand at attention when the circumstances require such action; and in general that they can in letter and spirit comply with Par. 4 A. R. All the above-mentioned outward manifestations of discipline will be executed with
the snap and precision that should characterize everything military.

(b) Shown by a test demonstration, under a commissioned officer, that they can deliver a message in the customary military language and manner.

(c) Shown by a test demonstration, under a commissioned officer, that they know how to properly wear each article of uniform issued to them, and in this they will be instructed to wear head-gear squarely on the head.

(d) Passed a satisfactory examination by a commissioned officer in the following portions of camp regulations:

I. Administration, Pars. (a) 1 to 5 incl.

   VI. Credit Sales.

   XXI. Traffic Regulations, Pars. (a) 1 to 9 incl. (b).

   XXII. Sanitary Regulations, Pars. e, h, i, and l.

   XXIII. Tents, etc., all.

   XXIV. Miscellaneous Regulations, Pars. a, b, c, d, and e.

(e) Passed a satisfactory examination, by a commissioned officer, on the duties of guards and sentinels and the honors and courtesies rendered by them under all circumstances and execution of same. Each non-commissioned officer, subject to guard duty, will be required to pass a like examination in regard to the duties of the non-commissioned officers of the guard.

2. Except as below indicated, all of the enlisted men now present in this command will be restricted to camp reservation limits until Reveillé on September 30th. All of the enlisted men of each unit arriving after the date hereof will be likewise restricted for eight days after arrival. At the end of the periods indicated, tests enumerated in Par. 1 may begin.

3. When an enlisted man has qualified, as required, he will be given a qualification card, in the following form:

Camp Wadsworth, .......................... 1917.

Name ........................................
Organization ..................................

has qualified as required by G. O. 1, Headquarters, Camp Wadsworth, S. C., Sept. 18th, 1917.

APPROVED

(Signed) ..........................
(Rank) ..........................

Commanding .............. Unit.

(Sig) ..........................
(Rank) ..........................

Commanding .................. Regt. or Unit.
Such cards may be printed and paid for out of appropriate funds by regiments, companies or corresponding units. The size of the card will be 3x4 inches.

He will carry this card whenever he leaves camp, and will show it whenever required to do so by an officer, a member of the Military Police on duty, or by any member of this command authorized to demand same. Officers will be detailed by the Division Commander to observe the conduct of enlisted men in camp, in town and on the roads. They will be directed to question enlisted men along the lines set forth in Par. 1, and in case any men are found deficient, their cards will be immediately taken up by such officers, and their company or equivalent commander will be held responsible for the deficiency. All commissioned officers and Military Police on duty will take up and forward to Division Headquarters the card of any man who is not in proper uniform, who is not wearing his uniform properly, who is untidy in appearance, who is seen to fail in the requirements for saluting, or whose conduct or appearance is unmilitary. Accompanying the card will be sent a brief memorandum as to the reason for which it had been taken up. Any man whose card has been taken up will be restricted to camp for at least ten days and then re-examined. Additional punishment will be awarded if merited by the offense.

4. The qualification card is not to be considered as a pass, and passes will still be required as prescribed by Regulations.

5. Enlisted men who have not qualified may leave the camp limits under the following conditions:
   (a) When on military duty requiring such action,
   (b) When sent beyond camp limits by their Commanding Officers on errands affecting the welfare of the command. In all such cases they will carry passes, approved and signed by their regimental or equivalent commanders, clearly stating the nature of the errand.

6. This order as soon as received will be kept posted for ten days on the bulletin board of each organization, and will be read on three consecutive days at Retreat formation.

By Command of Major-General O’Ryan.
(Signed)  H. H. BANDHOLTZ,
Colonel, Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL—
(Signed)  Franklin W. Ward,
Adjutant General, Adjutant.

This is a true copy.
(Signed)  Kenneth Gow,
1st Sergeant, M. G. Co.
Training Started in Earnest.—The First Sergeant’s Strenuous Job.—Didn’t Know What Work Was While in Texas.

Camp Wadsworth, Sept. 25, 1917.

Dear Mama, Pop and Marj.:  
We have started on advance problems in machine-gun fire, range-finding and fire control. We have also started bomb-throwing drill, climbing out of dugouts and over parapets and redoubts and going through barbed wire entanglements.

The new schedule runs like this: First call, 6 A. M.; reveillé and assembly, 6.15; first call for drill, 7.25; drill
call, 7.30; recall, 11.30; first sergeant's call, 11.35; mess, 12; first call for drill, 12.55 P. M.; assembly, 1; recall, 5; first call retreat, 5.40; retreat, 5.45; taps, 11. You can figure out the time we have for ourselves. Personally, I have none at all. Well, we have started. The sooner it is all over the better.

I am enclosing some clippings. The Herald did its best to get my name, but made a bad job of it. "A. Loud" is supposed to be "K. Gow."

The weather is still cold. When are you coming down? I guess there will be plenty of room, and I am crazy to see you. I wish I could lay my hands on those grapes. There wouldn't be a surplus then, I'll warrant.

I talked with Gaddy* all last evening. I have met but one or two men whose friendship is such a source of quiet satisfaction.

I am terribly busy; nearing the end of the month, and I have the pay-roll, ration and company returns, etc., and I must do it all outside of drill hours, because first sergeants must make all drills. I haven't yet found the thing I don't have to do or be responsible for. Great job this! This camp reminds me of Texas, because it is so radically different. We didn't know what work was there. We only thought we did.

Write often. I look for a letter every day. Mail time is always the best time of the day.

Love to you all,

Ken.

LETTER LI

A STIFF SCHEDULE.—NO TIME FOR NONSENSE.—AN IMMENSE CAMP.

Spartanburg, S. C., Sept. 27, 1917.

Dear Walter:

The fudge came last night. It is great. Thank your people ever so much. Have split both the fudge and taffy with Al.

Have started our training school. It is also the end of the month, and I can hardly get five minutes to myself. Reveillé and assembly at 6.15 A. M.; mess, 6.35; sick call, 6.55; fatigue, 7; stables, 7.05; first call, 7.25; assembly for drill, 7.30; recall from drill, 11.30; first sergeant’s call, 11.35; mess, 12 noon; first call for drill, 12.55; drill 1.00 P. M.; recall, 5.30; first call for retreat, 5.40; assembly, 5.45; retreat, 5.55; mess call, 6; tattoo, 9; call to quarters, 10.45; taps, 11 P. M. As you will see, our actual drill periods are from 7.30 to 11.30 in the morning, and from 1.00 to 5.30 in the afternoon, eight and one-half hours. All of such endless work as tent-dressing, cleaning out showers and latrines, etc., must be done outside of drill hours. It is a stiff schedule. We have Wednesday and Saturday afternoons off.

Am taking up advance machine gun work, bomb-throwing, and hours of drill in going “over the top” and through barbed wire entanglements. An elaborate system of trenches, redoubts and parapets has been constructed. So, you see, we have started. It is going to be hard plugging from now on, and no time for nonsense.

The Third N. Y. pulled in last night. On the way
down I noticed that the So. Ry. was making improvements at many places along the route. They are double-tracking from Charlotte to Spartanburg, and putting in miles of sidings and many spurs around here. The quantity of supplies, lumber, oil, tar, cracked stone, etc., that is coming in is inconceivable. Immense corrals are being constructed in the camp, also stables. If the corral fences were stretched out in a line, there would be twenty miles of them. The camp has 30½ sq. miles in it.

I use your compass a great deal. It is the most accurate one in the company.

Yours,

Ken.

LETTER LII

Rain and Mud.—The Mess.—Immense Supplies Being Brought In.

Spartanburg, S. C., Sept. 29, 1917.

Dear Mama:

It has rained steadily for three days, consequently the camp is transformed into a sea of mud. The weather has seriously upset the drill schedule.

I don’t seem to be able to write as I did in Texas. In the first place, I have been out of camp only twice, once in the evening and once to buy supplies. When I went to Texas, camp and army life were a new experience to me. Another thing, the Border was like a new country, while South Carolina is much like New Jersey.

No new information regarding the reorganization as yet. We will have 110 more men. That means some work for me.
Have forgotten about my chances for a commission, the best thing to do; expect nothing, never disappointed. Haven't heard anything yet regarding the reported assignment of U. S. R. officers to the regiment. They say we will get a lot of them. I am plugging along, keeping very busy, so am contented, more or less.

Marj.'s fudge was fine. You can send some cookies some time, if you want to. We are not messing as well as in Texas. They don't seem to find out just where the trouble is. The Government is issuing good stuff. The trouble is in our own mess-shack. There is plenty of beef on issue, but they seem to have cut down on the bacon and ham allowance. It will take a little time to work things out.

The quantity of supplies that is coming in here is staggering. In the northwest corner of the camp, that is near us, a remount station is being established. Immense corrals are under construction. The mules are beginning to come in, but I have seen no horses, with the exception of mounts brought down by artillery and cavalry units.

Most of my work is temporarily completed.

Ken.
LETTER LIII

Bracing Weather and a Practice March.—Inoculation.—Kindness of the Men of the Company.—Merit Bound to Win, So Not Much to Worry Over.


Dear Mama, Pop and Marj.:

The weather cleared up beautifully Sunday, and has been perfect ever since—clear as a bell, with a snap and crispness in the air that keeps the men on their toes. It is very cold. I sleep under all my blankets, my sweater, overcoat and a pair of Lilly’s socks on.

We had a practice march this morning, covering about fifteen miles. We developed an advance and rear-guard action. I never took a more delightful walk in my life, the country fresh after the rain, and very little dust. The woods are beautiful, with numerous cuts and defiles. The hills are all heavily wooded with pine, oak and maple. I wish with all my heart we had our horses. The country here just seems to be made for military manoeuvres.

B Co. is only two streets from us. They have an excellent octet and a soloist with a very fine voice. They are singing as I write, and it sounds very sweet.

Jun Willis and I are going over to see Capt. Bates, to make certain arrangements. We received a combined inoculation against typhoid and paratyphoid this afternoon, consequently I have a very sore arm. They are doing it all over again. It seems to affect us all worse than formerly. The doctors say it is the combined dose.
My throat is much better, and I am feeling fine all around.

Jun says when I next write home to tell my sister how much he appreciates her fudge. I have had my picture taken about one hundred times. Every man that has a camera has come to me and asked if I wouldn’t let him take my picture. Will send some home. The men are fine. Whenever anything to eat comes, they always send up some of it for me. Have found out that this county has more cotton-mills than any other county in the U. S., except the county Lowell, Mass., is in.

Still no news regarding the reorganization. The First Infantry is here now, which we are to draw from. The regiment is much upset over a rumor that our vacancies are to be filled by U. S. R. officers. It seems to me that every man will reach his own level, and that merit is bound to win in the end. It certainly is the only common-sense way; so if we do get officers who are hopelessly incompetent, they will not last; they cannot. So I don’t see that there is a whole lot to worry about.

Hoping you are well,

Kenneth.

Oct. 3.

The whole company knocked out today by the typhoid-paratyphoid inoculation. Physical impossibility to drill.

Ken.
LETTER LIV

Their Last Review as the Seventh.—The Bayonet Manual.—The Best-Situated Camp in the Country.—Demoralizing the Chaplain.—Good Work of the Y. M. C. A.

Spartanburg, S. C., Oct. 6, 1917.

Dear Mama:

I received your note yesterday. Was certainly glad to hear that Rob came home, especially the night you were alone.

We have just returned from a regimental review, tendered to Brig.-Gen. Phillips, who is division commander during the temporary absence of Gen. O'Ryan. The regiment made an exceptionally fine showing, for the men all realized that it was the last review that the Seventh New York Inftry. would ever give, as we take our new designation on Monday. It is not a cheerful thought, this one of losing our identity, and it has more or less made the old men unhappy when they realized that they would not parade again as the Seventh.

The weather is still holding beautiful, air very bracing and the nights cold. When we are paid I am going to buy a comforter in town, as we hardly have enough bed-clothes to keep comfortably warm. I have bought an Ingersoll, so that I would have something until you can return my good watch. It is impossible for me to get along without one.

Work has been rather easy this week, as there has been so much readjusting to do before the First Inftry. start dumping their men on us. The work then will be
stupendous. I am almost afraid to think of it. We all will be glad when it is over.

I attended an exhibition drill of the new bayonet manual given by fifty of the non-commissioned officers of the line companies of this regiment. It was a very remarkable demonstration. They have it down to perfection, and it is a terribly efficient way of doing away with a man.

Walter has written saying that he is making plans to come down before Thanksgiving. We haven’t the slightest idea of the length of our period of training. The programme covers sixteen weeks. We may finish it and we may not. Do you want to come down about the middle of November, or at some later date? The Cleveland Hotel is the best in town, and is brand new. Will be awfully glad to see you whenever you come.

The climate here is perfect. Everyone says that this is the best-situated camp in the country, and I am beginning to think so. It is hard to get conveyances into town. Gen. O’Ryan has set a maximum price of 15c per man for fare, and a lot of bus operators have taken their cars to Greenville and other camps where the regulations are negligible quantities and they can charge what they please. About one hundred cars have been withdrawn by their owners. You see, the commanding general has the right to keep all privately-owned cars off the reservation if he sees fit. So if these Turks don’t live up to orders, they are run off the reservation. There is an electric railroad that runs through one corner of the camp. They are trying to get a permit to extend a spur that will tap most of the regimental headquarters and the
division headquarters, but the Government hasn't seen fit to grant it yet.

My throat is all O. K. again. The alkaline tablets fixed it. It is about all I can find time to do to write you and Walter, with an occasional letter to Rob. If you have plenty of grape jelly, send me down a jar; it will go fine.

Charlie Chaplin has just interrupted me. That is our chaplain. He has just brought an announcement stating there will be a big church service tomorrow at 9 A. M., at which the Colonel and the colors will attend, with the band and the brigade staff. I have been waiting for this, as a service of this kind is worth going a long way to attend. The Chaplain is the subject of much kidding by the other officers, amongst whom his nickname originated. All the way down on the train they tried to get him into a poker game, and have taught him to smoke a pipe.

The Y. M. C. A. is doing fine work here, as they did on the Border. Its representatives are all good men, and they are certainly doing their bit for their country in the association work. The entertainments that they produce are excellent, their speakers the best that can be had, and the Y. M. C. A. buildings are always crowded with soldiers. They seem to have an almost unlimited supply of baseball equipment, footballs, basketballs, quoits, etc. Their representatives go through all of the companies of each unit here and quietly watch the men. If there is a lack of any of the above-mentioned articles, they supply them. They are making it a policy to have one of their men mess with a certain regiment for a period. We have
a man with us now. He pays into the company mess fund 50c a day for his chow. He is a very fine man, named Jennings, who has made himself very solid with the men; consequently his influence for good is quite marked. I shall be sorry when he moves to the next company.

Will write as soon as I can.

Ken.

LETTER LV

Turns Down an "Office" Commission.—An Enjoyable Trip to Hendersonville.—Intensive Training Exacts all One's Time.—First Sergeant's Job No Sinecure.

Spartanburg, S. C., Oct. 6, 1917.

Dear Mother:

Received your letter of the 6th inst., one from Marj. and one from Rob today. Also received a letter from Pop from Springfield, Mass. Was awfully glad to hear from him. I have missed getting a letter from him, although I knew he was extremely busy.

Marj.'s cake has arrived. It is fine, and made a fine time for us. Thanks ever so much. Also received my watch. Was surprised to get it back so quickly.

I have received a letter from Vernon Henry stating that I can get a commission in the machine gun section of the Ordnance Dept. They are looking for trained machine gun men. The head of the department is Capt. Hatcher, our old instructor at the machine gun school at Harlingen. Henry, who is a first lieutenant in the same
department, recommended me. I don't know what to do. It is not a case of what I want to do, but of what I ought to do. In accepting such a commission there would be no satisfaction to me. It does not come because of any personal merit on my part, and I hesitate to accept for that reason. And, again, I want field work, or at least executive work in the field. The ordnance job would keep me closely confined in an office or factory all the time. My station would be at Washington. I am in a dilemma. Will thrash it out tonight by myself, although I don't think there is much doubt about what I shall do.

I got away for the whole day Sunday. Roger and Gaddy have bought a Studebaker. It is a dandy machine. We went to Hendersonville, N. C. It is in the midst of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It was without exception the most beautiful and delightful trip I have ever taken. A great many of the picture postals I have sent you were taken along the road to this town, commonly called the Clinchfield Route. Hendersonville is 2,500 feet above sea level, and only twenty miles from Asheville. In fact, we could have gone to the latter place if we had wanted to hurry. Will make it the next time. The round trip from camp to Hendersonville is 112 miles. The road winds and twists and turns and doubles in a most confusing manner over the mountains. For miles it is cut out of the side of the mountains, with a drop of one or two hundred feet on one side and the hills rising sheer on the other. If we had met a car coming the other way, the Lord only knows what we would have done. The hills are beautiful, all heavily wooded, the leaves just beginning to turn, giving a
In the Blue Ridge Mountains—"The Land of the Sky."
dozen different shades to the mountain-sides. The road climbs over a hill and then suddenly plunges into a valley on the other side; or it seems to come to an end against the base of a great mass of rock, with no apparent way out. At one point, after climbing for half an hour, we could look down and see the road over which we had just come almost directly beneath us. In many places the trees form a complete arch over the highway. Oak, birch, buttonwood, poplar, maple and beech, with, of course, the ever-present pine, are the commonest of the trees. There was a conspicuous absence of bird life, and practically no game seen at all. The thermometer at Hendersonville registered 51 deg., and the air was very bracing and fragrant with pine odor. We ate at a hotel there, dinner 75c. We had chicken, ham, yams, mashed potatoes, wax beans, corn, celery, beets, lima beans, hot corn bread, apple fritters, all the milk or coffee wanted, ice cream and angel-cake. All this was laid on the tables in big platters, and as soon as one was emptied a waiter carried it away and filled it again. I never saw the beat of it, and everything well cooked and just as nice as it could be. In all, Sunday was about as enjoyable a day as I have ever spent.

Our real period of intensive training began on Monday. Everything is laid out on a schedule and strictly adhered to. Added to the drill hours I have already told you of, we now have non-commissioned officers' school on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday nights and Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. These afternoons were the holidays, and still are for the privates. So you see we have no time at all to ourselves except Sundays.
Pop writes that he hopes in the reorganization something comes my way; but, if it doesn’t, that the great thing in life is the consciousness that I have done my duty. That is the way I feel. I have never worried about getting a commission. My chief concern has been to hold down the job I have. I believe that personal merit is bound to count in the long-run, and that every man will find his own true level. So if I become qualified in the eyes of my officers to hold a commission, and there is a call for recommendations, my name will go in and I will get a chance for examination.

I did not finish last night when I told you about Henry’s letter. I shall answer him accordingly. I suppose that if I did go into the Ordnance Dept. I would be commissioned a second or first lieutenant, but that is as far as I would probably ever get. And, furthermore, I am convinced that I am more valuable to my country as a first sergeant of a machine gun company than as a lieutenant in the Ordnance Dept. If advancement should come, I decided some time ago that I wanted it direct from the ranks of my own regiment, or through my own officers, and I am going to stick to that resolution. If I happen to be the man for a certain job, they will find me. I have written a whole lot more about this than I intended.

The weather has turned bad, a severe storm from the northeast raging. The camp is a sea of mud again, and very cold and disagreeable. I am sitting writing with everything I have on me, and my fingers numb. It is going to be pretty darn cold here this winter.

The company is running fine. We will get 107 more
men in the reorganization. I will have a hard job for a while. My work requires every bit of concentration, tact, sense of justice and diplomacy that I can exert. I have all the petty squabbles, grievances, real and fancied, to straighten out, and when it is necessary the “hell” to give. Lt. Wilson runs the company through me absolutely. I have learned that discipline must be enforced to the last degree, and that the only way to handle men is with firmness, kindness and justice.

I have not been paid yet; something wrong in the Q. M. office. I am going to buy a pair of rubber boots, the only thing to keep one’s feet dry this wet weather.

Hoping you are all well,

Ken.

LETTER LVI

Spartanburg, Oct. 12, 1917.

Dear Mother and Marj.: 

Just a few lines to let you know I am well. With the non-commissioned officers’ school I have very little time, and will have less time in the future, for these classes will entail more and more instruction as time goes on. We have not received our men from other regiments yet. I wish it were over with and we were settled. We have already received a tremendous lot of officers from other regiments. We lose only one officer in the reorganization, which proves that the regiment’s rating is excellent.

The weather is beautiful, but very cool; the air wonderful. Received the Outlook Pop sent.

Ken.
LETTER LVII

Digging Trenches.—Every Man Allowed to Transfer to Where He Will Be of Most Use.


Dear Walter:

We dig trenches this afternoon and tomorrow, so you see the instruction is going ahead in spite of Saturdays,

Sundays and rain. Have non-com. school Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday nights, and Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. This with my regular work gives hardly any time at all. Any extra time that I may have has to be spent in study, in preparation for these classes.

Have not received our men from other organizations
yet, save two officers, which proves that our rating was excellent. Get a great many new ones in, of course, but no U. S. R.’s. There is a great deal of transferring from one company to another in the regiment. We have lost six men, who have transferred to the H. Q. Co., one of these being D. Have gained five men who have been transferred from other companies to us. So it goes on, every man being allowed to go where he will be of the most service to his country. The H. Q. Co. will have 297 men in it. They will be the mounted orderlies, intelligence department, cannoneers, motor cyclists, couriers, cyclists, etc.

Kenneth.

LETTER LVIII
Decides to Stick With the Regiment.—Appreciation of the Men Who Entertain the Others After Hard Days of Drill and Work.

Spartanburg, Oct. 16, 1917.

Dear Mama, Pop and Marj.:

Have just got your letter of the 14th. Will look for your box.

I have turned down Henry’s proposition. I absolutely could not see how I was qualified for the job. I cannot feel that I am such a genius that the Government is being cheated in not commissioning me. My work is here, and I have a job that I understand, so am going to stick with the regiment.

The reorganization is progressing rapidly. I have received some of our men, and will get fifty-six more
tomorrow. Six of the line companies are filled to 250 men. These companies seem enormous, and give a tremendous amount of work. The seriousness of the proposition is just beginning to dawn on us. Wednesday and Saturday afternoons and Sundays are the only times men can now leave camp. Non-coms are cut down to Sundays. It is all a good thing, for it will keep the men's minds on their work.

I got over to an entertainment, given by the regiment and a few other men from other organizations, last night. I could only stay about fifteen minutes, but the thought struck me that it is a Godsend to have men who can entertain and who are willing at their own inconvenience, and for no profit, to help others to forget the job that they are stacking up against, and after a hard day's drill. These men have drilled or worked hard all day themselves, and are in constant demand, and they always cheerfully go on the programme whenever they can. There is evidently a lot of good material in the regiment.

Hope you are all well. I am feeling fine. Must stop and turn in, as it is long after taps, and I am dog tired mentally and physically. Am keeping industriously at my diary, but find it a hard job and a nuisance.

Ken.
LETTER LIX

The Best-Disciplined Division in the Army.

Spartanburg, S. C., Oct. 16, 1917.*

Dear Walter:

Nothing mysterious about the order I referred to. It covers the disciplinary measures taken in camp. When you see it you will understand why Gen. O’Ryan has the best-disciplined division in the army.

There is a rumor that we will have eight or nine vacancies after all the available officers have been assigned, and that eight or nine commissions will be given to men who will be picked from the whole division and assigned to us. Naturally there is some speculation as to how our non-coms will shape up in comparison with those of the rest of the division, for it is Div. Headquarters that has the say, and not the Colonel, which makes it some proposition for a man to get by, but is the only way.

The weather is a little warmer today. It has been very cold, but the climate is wonderful. The cotton crop in this State is the best in years, and is bringing the highest price it ever has, but it is almost impossible to get the labor to pick it.

Ken.

* On the anniversary of this day, Oct. 16, 1918, Kenneth Gow wrote his last letter. It also was addressed to "Walter."
LETTER LX

A Welcome Visit From Friends.—Return of the Captain.—First Sergeant's Job Man-Size.—The Personnel of the Reorganized M. G. Co.—A Cosmopolitan Roster.

Spartanburg, Oct. 22, 1917.

Dear Mama, Pop and Marj.:

I got the box today after a good deal of trouble. I managed to get one of our supply trucks which was in town to bring it out. The jelly is certainly fine. It is the only thing I have opened yet. That man of Pop's must have thought that he was sending the box to France, it was so well packed.

The "Irving's" came to Spartanburg yesterday. I saw them at the Cleveland last night, and they came out to camp for a little while this morning. They were very nice and I was glad to see them.

Captain Gardner came back last night. I never was so glad to see anyone in my life. He goes as an instructor to the division school, so I will see very little of him, which is exceedingly unfortunate. We have 3,699 men in the regiment now. Just think of it! I have 172 men. Have no time for anything, hardly. This is written after taps, when I ought to be in bed, but I have no other time, so terribly busy. The pay-rolls and muster-rolls are Herculean tasks this month. About seventy-five per cent. of the men we have received have lost clothing, equipment, etc. This is all to be charged on the pay-rolls, and I have to do it. The Machine Gun Co. has received men
from each of the twelve line companies of the First N. Y. and from the Machine Gun Co. of that organization, from the Twelfth N. Y. Inftry. and from our own line companies. Each detachment was transferred to us on a separate order, which makes just that much more work on the muster-roll. I cannot give you any conception of the work, so will not try, but I never had so much to look after in my life. This first sergeant's job is man-size.

We have got a very mixed assortment. Here are a few of the new names on my roster: Dieffenbacher, Hoffmeister, Patrick Finnegan, Salvatore Poliodoro, Chaffotte, Denis Donnelly, Balzano Pellegrino, Zajii, McGuigan, Sammy Weinstein,* Karl Stressel, Murtha, Muthig, Schwartz, etc. Some are not as bad as their names sound, and some are worse. For instance, Pat Finnegan is a gentleman; a man that I have named Byron Lorenzo is a roughneck; so there is very little in a name. I have two fine men who are a delight to talk to and watch work. Both came from the First Infantry, Geo. Campbell and Gordon Cobb, both born in Scotland. Campbell is very steady, conscientious and reliable. He is a sergeant, and comes from somewhere near Glasgow. Cobb is from Aberdeen, is a horseshoer and blacksmith, and will be used by us as such—a fine man. I wish I could tell you the hundred and one experiences I have almost daily with the men, but cannot because of having no time. Until after the first I will have to buckle down to work and forget everything else.

This climate is delightful, but the weather very cold.

*Afterwards cited for gallantry and meritorious service.
What news from Rob? Received Marj.'s letter from Mineola. Thanks ever so much for the box.

Love to all,

Ken.

LETTER LXI

Cold Weather and Discomfort.—Hard Work and Long Hours.


Dear Mama and Pop:

Received your letter of the 21st, and glad to hear that you are well. The jelly is gone. We certainly did enjoy it. I put it on the table, and the other sergeants praised it to the skies.

I am fearfully busy, and will not be able to write much until after the 3d November, when most of the rush will be over. I have got my horse, but haven't had time to get on his back even. I am at it from six in the morning until twelve at night.

The weather has been extremely cold; four inches of ice in our pails every morning. The men are very miserable, but they are issuing winter clothing as fast as possible. I had to get an oil stove for my tent. The big tents have Sibley stoves in them. They have a bad effect. The men coop themselves up and then run out. Result, hundreds of cases of bad colds. I have to watch them as a cat does a mouse.

I must stop, as I am stupid from want of rest. It is now 1 A. M., and I must be up at 6 again. I never imagined one man would have so much to do. I have
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Gaddy with me constantly. He is very reliable and dependable. I am very well, and I think have put on weight. When are you thinking of coming down?

Ken.

LETTER LXII

Details of a First Sergeant's Work.—Recommended for a Commission.—Getting Hardened Up.


Dear Mama, Pop and Marj.:

The rush is over, thank Heaven, and I have time to at least breathe again. I have never been under such a strain in my life. My pay-roll was in on Tuesday, and the muster-roll I completed Wednesday morning. The pay-roll comprised thirty-eight pages, 12 in. by 12 in. page size, and written solid. There are 172 men on the roll, with a complete chronological history of how they were transferred to the regiment, etc. Nine-tenths of the company have allotments running; that is, a man allots to his mother, wife or sweetheart a certain percentage of his pay. An explanation of this must be made in the "remarks" column on the pay-roll, with the name of the allottee; the amount must be deducted and the period stated for which the allotment runs—six months, twelve months, or whatever the period is.

Since Tuesday, Oct. 23, I have been so busy that I could not even take the company at formations. That day I worked from 6.30 in the morning until taps at eleven o'clock P. M. Wednesday the same until mid-
night; Thursday the same; Friday the same. Saturday I turned in at taps. Sunday I worked until about twelve. Monday I finished my payroll at 2.30 in the morning. I was up again at six, and worked all day on a draft of the muster-roll and a lot of other detail work. I had the muster-roll ready for the typewriter about nine that night. Took Gaddy* to help me. We started at ten Tuesday night and finished it to the last name at a quarter of six the next morning. I wrote on the machine as Gaddy dictated from my draft. Between ten that night and 5.45 the next morning I got up from the typewriter only once. By working all night, we had it ready for the Colonel Wednesday morning. Our roll was the only one in the regiment in on time.

When I got up after writing in the last name, I was so dizzy I could not stand. I worked the machine like an automaton. I never had such an experience in my life.

*Sergeant Paul Helmuth Gadebusch.
Strange as it may seem, my muster-roll did not have a mistake, although I was almost exhausted before I began it. From Sunday until Wednesday night I had exactly ten and a half hours’ sleep. I figured my company’s monthly return Wednesday morning and got my ration return in at noon. These are both nasty things to figure. The company return shows gains and losses for month of men and animals, and must balance. The ration return is figured like this: We draw for ten or eleven day periods. A ration is the allowance for the subsistence of one person or animal per day. We have 172 men on our rolls. We draw only for our present strength. So if on the tenth of the month I requisition for eleven days, I draw 1,892 rations for that day. If we gain men during the period we draw for, we requisition for an addition to the return on the next drawing. For instance, we draw for an eleven-day period on the tenth of the month; on the fifteenth we gain ten men. That means that we are feeding ten extra men for a period of seven days for whom no rations had been drawn, so we requisition seventy additional rations on the next return. The same holds good for losses. If we should lose ten men, we would deduct the seventy rations from the next return.

Soap, toilet paper, candles, etc., I figure this way: We are allowed of soap 0.64 oz. for each ration; of candles 0.24 oz. for each ration; toilet paper, 1,000 sheets for each sixty rations requisitioned for. Forage for our animals I figure the same way. The allowance is 3 1-3 lbs. of bedding per animal per day; 14 lbs. of hay per animal per day; oats, 12 lbs. per horse per day, 9 lbs. per mule per day; bran, 3 lbs. per animal per day; salt, 8-10th oz.
per animal per day; vinegar, 1-10 gill per animal per day. I thought you would be interested in all this, as it is very absorbing to me. My pay-roll was also without an error, and the second one in to the adjutant. Almost seventy-five per cent. of the men who came to us from the First Infantry owed the Government money for fines and lost equipment and clothing. All this had to be figured on the pay-roll.

I went to bed at 7 o'clock Wednesday night so "all in" that I could hardly think, and positively could not see straight. I slept through all the calls the next morning, and didn't even hear the reveillé gun, which generally almost knocks us out of our cots. The Captain* would not let them wake me up.

Now I am going to tell you a secret, which is going to be hard for me to say much about; so don't think I am conceited, for I am anything but that. There will be a few vacancies throughout the regiment for lieutenancies. Sixteen men of this regiment have been recommended for commissions from a picked list of ninety-five. My name heads this list with the Colonel's notation that I am the most efficient first sergeant in the regiment. My commission may come through and it may not. Don't expect too much. I expect nothing, so will not be disappointed if nothing happens. It is quite some consolation to know that, although I am the junior first sergeant in the regiment, I am rated at the top. Maybe it doesn't say much for the other first sergeants, but I have an idea that we have the best first sergeants in the division.

Must stop, as I am still very tired. The captain made me go for a ride with him yesterday afternoon. We have

* Capt. Kenneth Gardner.
very fine horses. I expect to go for a long one Sunday. One of the men snapped the enclosed when I wasn’t looking [referring to a photo]. Have put board sides in my tent since this was taken. I was making out my morning report at the time. You can just see my cot at the back.

The weather has been very cold. I go out in the open and take a cold shower with the thermometer at 30 deg. I work all day with my tent wide open. Can you imagine it? I guess we are hardening up all right. The nights are very cold, and we have a hard job keeping warm. They are holding a big State fair here, and I notice there are prizes for the best Jerseys entered. Did the Club donate these?

We will be reviewed by the Governors of New York and South Carolina tomorrow. Show this letter to Walter. I haven’t time to write two of this length.

Ken.

LETTER LXIII

“Everlastingly” Cold.—The Pleasures of Cross-Country Rides.

Spartanburg, Nov. 6, 1917.

Dear Mother:

Just a short note. I am feeling fine, but it is everlastingly cold. I never saw such heavy hoar-frosts. This, of course, means that the nights are very damp. There is a chill in the air, outside of the fact that it is cold, that there is no getting away from, and it seems to get into the very marrow of your bones.

I have taken out a $10,000 Government life insur-
ance policy. Will carry it entirely out of my army pay. I can have the money delivered direct to you by the Government, or can leave it with them, at four per cent. interest. This seems to be the best plan at present.

When do you think you will come down? I would not like to have you put it off until so late. I will have to know a good while ahead of the time, in order that I may make reservations for you.

I go riding with the captain on all off times. There is nothing better to be desired than a good horse, a bracing day, the pine-clad hills and the company of a man you admire and respect. Other men and officers always go off in bunches, but the captain and I always alone. There is no one else in the company who can ride with us anyway, for we always go across country and over streams and fences, and the captain doesn’t want anyone who can’t stick by him. He has the spirits of a schoolboy on these occasions.

Enclosed are some pictures. One picture is the company street before the reorganization, taken from the

Capt. Kenneth Gardner (left) and First Sergt. Kenneth Gow.
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mess-shack. You can see the shower-baths at the foot of the street.

Kenneth.

LETTER LXIV

Christmas Furloughs.—Horseback Riding Only Recreation.

Camp Wadsworth, Nov. 11, 1917.

Dear Marj.:

Received your letter from Mineola. Walter is coming down Saturday, and I shall certainly be glad to see him. Have not heard from Rob since he went to Allentown. I just received a telegram from Walter, in which he mentioned that Rob was home for the week-end.

I should like to get home over Christmas, but it will be impossible. There has been about fifty requests for furloughs from this company. I don't think that any of them will be granted. If headquarters started that sort of thing, the whole division would want to go home for the holidays. I suppose that I could get away, but have another thing to consider. It is unfortunately one of my duties to set an example for the rest of the company to follow. If they should see the first sergeant going home for no better reason than to see his family and be with them over the holidays, they would see no reason why they shouldn't do the same.

My diary has gone to the dogs. No time to keep it. It is just a nuisance, and with so many other things on my mind I simply cannot remember the confounded thing. The only recreation I take is on my horse. The
captain and I go out every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons. We have got all the persimmon trees spotted within a radius of five miles from camp. Not one out of a hundred men in the division seem to know what they are; consequently they are plentiful.

The training is being pushed in a very rigorous fashion, and they ought to have us ready by the end of January. Lights were connected up all through camp last week, so we now have electricity in the tents, which is a great convenience. Am feeling well. I seldom feel in the mood to write long letters, as I write a great deal in connection with my work. That commission will probably be a long time in coming through, if it comes at all.

Ken.

LETTER LXV

Bayonet Drill.—Collecting for Thanksgiving Dinner.

Camp Wadsworth, Nov. 15, 1917.

Dear Mother:

The weather has been beautiful, and I have been working very hard. The administration work is ever on
the increase, and I am trying to keep up as much drill as possible. Gadebusch and I have been detailed to a divisional school in the British bayonet drill under a Major Sharp of the British Army. It is work of the hardest kind, terribly realistic, but very absorbing and a wonderful training physically. There are only twenty-six of us.

I am closing in my tent, which will cost a lot of money, but I must be comfortable. Our company fund is low, so I cannot get any assistance. I bought a quilt for $4.50, and some other things I badly needed. I will be glad to see Walter. He will tell you all about things when he gets back.

I wrote you for a fruit-cake. If you can manage to buy enough sugar, send it for Thanksgiving. We are going to give as big an entertainment and dinner here in the company as we can, and I will add the cake to the collection of food for the company.

I hope you are all well.

Kenneth.
LETTER LXVI

ELIMINATING UNDESIRABLES.

Camp Wadsworth, Nov. 19, 1917.

Dear Mama and Pop:

You will probably have seen Walter before this letter reaches you, and he will have told you all about everything.

We have discharged six of our "cripples" to date. About five more will go during the next week, and on Wednesday we get rid of seven more undesirables by transferring them back to their original regiments.

We are progressing in fine shape in the bayonet school. It is the hardest and most difficult thing I have ever tackled. The instructor takes every ounce of vitality out of us by the time we are ready for dismissal.

With love,

Kenneth.

LETTER LXVII

THE STRENuous BAYONet CLASS WORK.

Camp Wadsworth, Nov. 22, 1917.

Dear Mama:

Enclosed is a receipt and notification of my insurance. The policy will be delivered to you. Beginning with December, the Govt. will send you a check each month. This is the allotment from my pay. I am paying for the insurance here, the premium being payable every month. The $10,000 costs $84 a year.

The bayonet class is the hardest work I have ever had, for both muscle and brain. One of the things we
have to do is to jump backwards into a trench eight or nine feet deep. We have been having three hours daily, and it is going to be increased to six. In the three hours we have five minutes’ rest. There are only twenty-six of us, it being a picked class. We were rated today as to ability and athletic qualities. I got fifty per cent.—that is, they rated me as average, half the class being better and half worse; which is not so bad in a picked class. The other men all have had weeks’ more experience in handling the rifle than Gaddy and I, who practically never had any work along that line, the company, as you know, not being armed with the rifle. I have no doubt about going ahead, and when we are rated again I should have at least 85%.

With love,

Ken.
LETTER LXVIII

Welcome Visitors in Camp.—Training for Trench Warfare.

Camp Wadsworth, Nov. 26, 1917.

Dear Pop:

I have been intending to ask you for a good while whether the Seventh Regiment Gazette has been coming. The last issue is a very good one. The Gazette will keep you in closer touch with the regiment than anything else, and it will always have accurate accounts of our doings.

I am busy on the pay-roll again, which is a still bigger job than last month. I have all the insurance and other allotments this month, as well as a tremendous amount of work in addition, caused by changes in a man's status. I am almost alone in the company street, as the company is living in the trenches for two days. Helmuth* is here writing beside me. He is the best company in the world, and my right-hand man in the company, always there when I want him. His mother was down over Saturday and Sunday. I had dinner with them on Saturday night. On Sunday noon I was a guest at a very select dinner given by Mrs. G. There were Lt. Willis and Mrs. Willis, Capt. Gardner, Helmuth and myself. It was served in a private dining-room at the Cleveland, and was a most enjoyable affair. Jun says he called you up when he was home.

Can't you set a date for coming down? I received a letter from Rob saying they were to have ten days at Christmas. That will be fine. I am not in the trenches

* Sergt. Gadebusch.
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on account of the bayonet school and my payroll. Your newspaper clipping is fine. Gen. Bell is O. K.

The occupation of the trenches is done just as it will be in France. Troops sneak in at night through long communicating trenches. Each battalion or regiment, as the case may be, goes in for two days. This time will be gradually increased. There are umpires, most of whom are English, Canadian or French officers, on the watch all the time. Troops coming in at night must get there unobserved. Flares are used, scouting parties are continually sent across no-man’s land, charged barbed wire entanglements are cut, etc., etc., simulating the European battle-front in every respect.

Love to mama and Marj,

Kenneth.

LETTER LXIX

Thanksgiving Dinner in Camp.

Camp Wadsworth, Nov. 29, 1917.

Dear Marj: 

Just a few lines to let you know about our Thanksgiving Day. First I must tell you that I received a letter from Rob last night saying that Ambulance Co. No. 33 were coming to Charlotte, N. C. That town is only about seventy miles north of Spartanburg, and it is a very fine camp as far as I can find out. The cake was wonderful. We had a very fine dinner today. The Government furnished turkeys, which were very good and cooked to a turn, the cooks staying up all night preparing our meal, which they had ready at two o’clock this afternoon. We
had turkey, chestnut dressing, turnips, mashed potatoes, butter, celery, coffee with milk, oranges, bananas, pie, ice-cream and cake, all we wanted of everything. We will probably half starve for two weeks on account of it, but it certainly went fine today.

One year ago today we had just returned from the Border. A lot of things have happened in that year. I suppose Mrs. G. has called you up and told you some more about us all. You see, now that you have heard so many accounts of us, you will have to come down yourself and see if they are all true. Can’t you set a date? Tell Pop the h—— with business. I want to see you all, and, besides, the trip will be a good vacation for you all, and I will have lots of things of interest to show you.

Am enclosing Jun’s wedding announcement, which I would like to keep.

Ken.

LETTER LXX

FEAR OF LOSING THE CAPTAIN.

Spartanburg, S. C., Nov. 29, 1917.

Dear Walter:

Have been very busy since you left—end of the month, and I have pay-roll, etc. Very hard this month, on account of insurance premiums, compulsory allotments, etc. Also, the ruling entitling men to continuous service pay for previous enlistments in the National Guard has gone through, making more work for us.

Weather has turned very cold since you left. Sunday night everything froze up solid, and we had no water
the next day. Tommy O'Shea's flivver also froze, with disastrous results.

I think we are going to lose Captain Gardner. Last Friday Gen. McCain, adjutant general of the army, telegraphed Gen. Philips, commander of the 27th Division, to send Capt. G. to Washington, relative to a transfer to the Embarkation Dept. of the Q. M. Corps, to handle the admiralty situation. Facing the future without Capt. Gardner seems almost a hopeless proposition. He is one of the ablest admiralty lawyers in New York, and of course his services would be a hundred times as valuable in that department as here. He just had a h—— of a time deciding between what he ought to do and what he wanted to do.

Thanksgiving Day! A year ago today we had just returned from the Border. A year from today the Lord only knows where we will be.*

Ken.

LETTER LXXI

THE M. G. CO. ON GUARD FOR THE FIRST TIME.


Dear Walter:

Pen, wristlets and helmet arrived to-night. Thank you for your trouble, and your people for the other things, which will be very useful.

The news in today's paper is very disheartening. Italy does not seem to be able to make any resistance, and it seems quite possible for Russia to make a separate peace with Germany.

* The writer was in a soldier's grave in France.
Jun has arrived back in camp with his bride. She is a wonderful girl, and has started to run things already, including me. She has a thousand and one ideas for the company Christmas party, which we are going to make as much of as possible.

The weather is rather mild again after our cold snap. The company is on guard. One battalion of the regiment is living in the trenches, one battalion is on exterior guard, and the other has just come out of the trenches, so it was up to us to furnish the interior guard, the first time this company has ever gone on.

Ken.

LETTER LXXII

A. W. O. L. and its Consequences.—Apprehension in Regard to Losing the Captain.—The Path of Duty Not Always Plain.


Dear Mother and Family:

Well, I guess that hospital crowd were lucky. Being absent without leave is one of the most serious breaches of discipline on the books. We deal without mercy with men who commit this offense. Our company now has a man at hard labor for this. He was tried by a summary court and sentenced to forty-five days at hard labor and to forfeit thirty days’ pay, and he was absent only two days. He is a marked man for the rest of his military career, for he cannot get advancement with that black mark on his service record. When a man is absent without leave, a commanding officer has no choice in the mat-
ter, but must have the man placed under arrest as soon as apprehended and bring charges against him before a general court-martial or a summary court. Failing in this, the commanding officer is himself open to charges. I don’t blame these men, because their commanding officer has probably never taken the trouble to read and explain the Articles of War to his men, nor to discipline them in the right way. Disciplined troops never take French leave. The way we look at it is this: if a man will do that now, he will do it in France; therefore he is not dependable, and we don’t want him. Of course there is no excuse for one of our men, because the first thing we do is to acquaint him with what he can and cannot do. At present there are nine cases of absence without leave in the regimental guard-house. The enlisted strength of the regiment is approximately 3,500, so you see these cases are reduced to about the minimum.

It looks as if we were going to lose the captain. If he goes, whether or not I stay with the company will depend to some extent on who we will get as our next captain. My own promotion is very dubious. The new commissions were to have come through several weeks ago, but there is a hitch somewhere, and I doubt very much if they ever materialize. There is an excess of officers in this division now, and I can’t see the sense of commissioning more when they already have more than they know what to do with. The captain ordered me to make application for the next series of training camps, which I have done, much against my will. If it is certain that the captain will remain, I shall withdraw the application. Of course I may not be recommended, as
Capt. Kenneth Gardner. Afterwards promoted to rank of Major, then to Lieutenant-Colonel.
only 1.7 per cent. of the total strength of each organization will be selected. The next training camps open in January, and are only for enlisted men.

Without Captain Gardner the future seems somewhat dubious, and I have never felt so badly in my life about anything. Under him I have earned the reputation of being the best first sergeant in the regiment. This was told him by the regimental adjutant, Captain Despard, the man most qualified to judge impartially. I enjoy Captain Gardner's confidence to the fullest degree. Papers that I prepare which, if sent in wrong, would result in the captain being court-martialed, he always signs without looking at. The pay-rolls he never verifies, leaving this entirely to me. The muster-rolls he accepts as I give them to him. If a man's status is mis-stated on a muster-roll, it results in a summons to Washington. And so with everything. The administration of the company in the street he never interferes with.

Captain Gardner is recognized as one of the ablest captains in the division. He never had a high-school education, but worked his way through college, working at whatever came along. Two summers he mixed concrete with a gang of laborers, and when I tell you that he weighs only 119 lbs., you can appreciate what that means. He started in the law in New York without knowing a soul, and became one of the ablest admiralty lawyers in New York. This reputation is what will probably take him away from us.

The commanding general of the 27th Division received a telegram from Gen. McCain, the adjutant-general of the army, directing him to transfer the captain
to the Embarkation Service, Q. M. Corps, National Army. They want a man to take care of the ship question, which seems to be in a tangle. The captain is that man without a doubt. He would be of more benefit to his country serving in that capacity than in almost any other. The Q. M. Corps must be full of incompetents. The men who were so hopeless in the officers' training camps that they could not possibly be recommended for places in the line, were shoved into the Q. M. Corps, with the result that it is the most inefficient branch of the service, and at the same time it is the most important. A man like Captain Gardner would be a Godsend. But you can appreciate how I feel personally.

The captain is terribly upset about it, for his heart is in this company. All the men in it whom he trusts with its running enlisted as privates under him, and were selected by him for the positions which they now fill. He sent for me and asked what I would do under the circumstances, and I told him that there was only one thing to do, and that was to accept. His duty to his country, to his wife and his two children pointed only one way.

In the German Army they select the best men they have for their Quartermaster Corps, for that is the way battles are won. Transportation and all supplies depend on the efficiency of this department. It is on the man at the desk that success in battle often depends. He is away from the din and glamor of battle, and is always denied popular favor, yet he clothes, feeds, pays, shelters, transports and otherwise looks after the man behind the gun, whose health, comfort, contentment and success depend on the unspectacular work of the man at the
desk. All this the captain had to consider. But there is nothing to do now but wait and see what happens. Lieut. Willis is in temporary command of the company.

I did not go into the trenches on account of the payroll. I could not have completed it in time if I had gone, so kept my clerk also, and when the company returned to quarters Tuesday night I had it ready for the men's signatures. The next tour of trench duty will be for two days, and the one after that for three days, and so on. We will also probably go to the range very shortly for a period of ten days. The work is growing more and more every day.

Can't you make some plans about coming down? With all this trench duty, etc., coming, I can hardly say when the best time will be. We never know until the last minute when these things will come, and you might come down and I wouldn't be able to see you. This you will have to take a chance on.

I must stop and turn in, as I am tired, and bayonet school, five hours of it, comes tomorrow.

With love,

Kenneth.

LETTER LXXIII

Furloughs in Prospect.—Cold Weather for Trench Duty.

Camp Wadsworth, Dec. 7 and 10, 1917.

Dear Mama:

I can get home on furlough over either Christmas or New Year's for five days. Authorization has just come in to allow five per cent. of the company strength on
leave. More good news is that it looks now as if the captain will eventually return to us.

The company is living in the trenches again, but they wouldn't let me go on account of a sore throat. It is much better. For four days I could only speak in whispers. The weather is very cold, the thermometer being down to ten degrees above this morning, and everything frozen up. They had to use axes on the watering-troughs. There is no water running, the mains frozen and burst. They did not lay them deep enough. The men are having a miserable time in the trenches. When they went in a cold rain was driving down from the north, and during the night came the sudden drop in the temperature. Gen. O'Ryan is back with us again after a long absence.

Kenneth.

LETTER LXXIV

Inspection in a Blizzard in the "Sunny" South.—Great Preparations for Celebrating Christmas.—Their British Army Instructors.


Dear Mama and Pop:

I received your letter tonight, and will let you know a little later regarding the time I will be able to leave for home. I will not get away until the last minute, as this is my busiest month. I want to be home for New Year's, if possible.

We are experiencing the same cold wave that you are. The thermometer has remained in the vicinity of
six degrees since the first of the week, and we have about eight inches of snow on the ground. It is impossible to keep warm. Everything is frozen up, and we have to melt snow for water to wash in. On Tuesday afternoon the regiment was suddenly ordered out on an inspection evening parade by some Regular Army inspecting officers. We stood for an hour shivering in a blinding snowstorm coming from the North, with a biting wind

Digging Out After a Snowstorm in the "Sunny South."

driving the snow into our eyes and ears. I sat on my horse, and it was all that I could do to prevent him from bolting, and when we returned I could hardly get off him. The fellow who called this the "Sunny South" was a humorist.* You seldom have weather as severe as this at home so early in the year.

I wrote that I had received the fudge, which was a surprise, and, as usual, was fine. You might send a

*It was the hardest winter on record in this part of the United States.
cake for Christmas, as you did for Thanksgiving, and I will use it in a similar way. We are arranging for a big party on that day. Mrs. Willis, of course, has a prominent part in the arrangements, with the first sergeant [the writer] as a close second. We will have a tree for each man, with something on it, mostly socks and tobacco. Mrs. Willis sent a letter to the family of each man. She has also managed, the Lord only knows how, to get an appropriation from the Ladies' Auxiliary, which will be used to the best advantage possible. The division will also have a community Christmas tree. This will be set up on the parade grounds in front of division headquarters. A chorus of 400 voices is now being trained to sing carols, etc., and the rest of the division will be expected to join in.

The tension cord on my typewriter has just snapped, so I will have to continue with a pen. The machine is rendered totally *hors de combat*.

I have made fast friends with the British sergeant-major* who has been instructing us in physical and bayonet work. He is a remarkable man, the typical Kipling Tommy Atkins. He served twelve years in India; he also served in Egypt, South Africa and Australia. At the outbreak of the war his regiment was in the mountains somewhere in India, and two months later they were in France, a part of the 27th Division, the same number as ours. He got to France just as the German advance was about spent. He was through the battle of the Marne, served eighteen months in the Ypres sector, and was in several other districts which I don't remember the names of.

* Sergt.-Major Tector.
I went to this man's tent last night, which is situated at headquarters, and I never spent such a fascinating and interesting evening. There was a sergeant from one of the Scotch regiments, two other English sergeants, this sergeant-major and also a French sergeant who speaks very good English. Well, I just wish you could have heard them. Between them all, they had been in nearly every big engagement on the western front, and we heard and learned a lot of things we never knew before. They had all been in the trenches from two to two and a half years. Incidentally, they are all unfit for active service. They are all very fine types of soldiers. England has sent her very best men here as instructors.

My cold is better. I had it bad, but managed to get rid of it without lying up. The captain will, I think, be back with us by Christmas. I hope you are well, and you cannot guess how anxious I am to see you. I wrote Rob, telling him of my plans. It certainly would be great if he could get home, too.

Kenneth.
LETTER LXXV

Preparing for Furlough.—A Frost-Stricken Camp.

M. G. Co., 107th U. S. Inftry.,
Camp Wadsworth, Dec. 16, 1917.

Dear Pop:

I expect to leave for home on the 30th, two weeks from today. The P. R. R. has just announced the withdrawal of fifteen daily through trains, and also their intention to run no more trains over the Southern Railway. This necessitates a change at Washington, with consequent delay. The service here is wretched. Will you send me $40 by P. O. money order. We have not been paid for November yet, and information from the Q. M. is that there is no prospect until about Christmas.

The weather is terrible here also—continued cold. Snow since last Monday; will be a week tomorrow, and it hasn’t melted a bit. Just think of that in South Carolina! The men are suffering a great deal. The thermometer has risen some, but still averaging between ten and fifteen degrees, which is some cold in a tent. My feet are frostbitten, and they are bothering me a good deal.

I already have a thousand and one things to do in New York. About twelve men have given me addresses to go and personally see their people, which, of course, will be impossible. I spent last evening with Lieut. and Mrs. Willis at their house. It was the first time I really got thawed out in ten days.

I can hardly wait for the 30th. I will have about
forty-eight hours straight of work to make it by then, and, believe me, I am going to make some drive to do it, even if I half kill a half-dozen clerks. I intend to dictate my muster-roll, which I estimate will take about fourteen hours.

Will stop, as it is so infernally cold.

Kenneth.

LETTER LXXVI
Pay Comfs Quicker Than Expected.
Camp Wadsworth, Dec. 18, 1917.

Dear Mama:
We have just been paid. We had to attend to this ourselves this month—that is, each company paid by company, Lt. Willis and I officiating here. With all the allotments, the pay-roll was small this month, only amounting to about $3,000. When we finished we were $5.50 to the good, which is the proper way to have things come out. No one was short, so it is on the Q. M.

The weather is a little warmer, the snow melting some today. I think I will be home some time on the 31st.

Kenneth.

LETTER LXXVII
There's Many a Slip.

Dear Mama:
I cannot get away on the 30th, as I thought I could. It is simply impossible, and even if I did manage it, could
get only seven days. I think I will be able to leave for home on the 4th or 5th of January for ten days. My application may not be approved. Furloughs are extremely difficult to get for just ordinary reasons. The men who are leaving over Christmas and New Year's are going under special regulations promulgated for the season. So here's hoping. I think it will go through O. K.

I was terribly disappointed when I learned that I could not be with you on New Year's day.

A merry Christmas and my love,

Ken.

LETTER LXXVIII
MORE MEN AND MORE WORK.


Dear Mother:

I received the money-order yesterday, and the leggings and cake today. I don't know any more than I did when last I wrote regarding furlough. I am terribly busy again, have all kinds of perplexing problems this month, and am almost at my wits' end. I have just completed my pay-roll, and at the same time received an order stating that we would receive five more men on Wednesday from the Tenth Inftry. This renders useless four days' work. So it goes.

I have been interrupted by the captain, who has just arrived from Washington to spend Christmas with us. I was never so glad to see anyone.

The weather is beautiful again, after our long period
The men are out playing ball in their shirts. We have our Christmas eve party tonight. I must stop and get on with my work. Thanks again for all the things.

Kenneth.

LETTER LXXIX
Christmas Presents.

Dear Mama, Pop and Marj.: Mrs. Willis presented me with your package on Christmas morning, and, although you had written me that you were sending her some socks, I was not prepared for such a pleasant surprise. The tobacco I needed badly, for I have not been able to buy it here, or, in fact, any kind that I could enjoy smoking. The cigarettes were just as welcome as the tobacco, and the same with the candy. In fact, it was all most welcome, and I think that without a doubt it was the most appreciated Christmas present I ever received.

Otto Raetzer also sent me a hundred cigarettes, and Walter has advised me that he has shipped some, and B. C. sent me five hundred as well as a dandy toilet set. So you see I have been well taken care of. George Slate, of Summit, sent me 5,000 cigarettes for the company, which I distributed at the party, which was an immense success. I will tell you all about it when I get home, which I hope will be about the 5th or 6th of January.

The regiment is involved in another big transfer, and
the amount of work is staggering. The pay-roll and muster-roll are rendered useless, and I have them to make all over at the last minute.

Thanks again for the things you sent down.

Ken.

LETTER LXXX

A "Thousand" Things to Do on Furlough.


Dear Mother:

Just a short note to let you know that everything is fine. I am hoping to get away by the 4th or 5th of January, but cannot count on it, and will probably not know until the last minute.

I received a fine box today from the Hewitt Press, with cigarettes, tobacco, nuts, candy and a dozen other things—Mailliard candy and nuts, etc.

I am rushed terribly, as usual at ends of months. The period of every month between the 25th and 30th is always like a nightmare to me afterwards. If I get home, I have a thousand things to do. I will have to spend a little time at the armory, to dig up some records we left behind. I will probably also want to go to the opera* and to New Haven. There are a lot of things I want to buy for the company. Will let you know about furlough by wire.

Ken.

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*The writer was passionately fond of music.
LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

LETTER LXXXI

"Nose-Wipes."—More Transfers.


Dear Walter:

Your box arrived today. It is hard to express in words my appreciation. It could not have been better. Your choice and your mother’s and L.’s of the things to send a man in camp are perfect. Thank you. Have portioned it out as per your letter. Made a hog of myself and kept the socks and handkerchiefs. The handkerchiefs were the things I wanted badly. Our English instructors tell us that O. D. “nose-wipes,” as they call them, are the only thing in the way of handkerchiefs permitted in the trenches; for a red, white or blue one, if inadvertently shown above the parapet of a trench, is detected immediately by the enemy, and brings a fusilade of shots from snipers. The cigars and candy are fine, and came in good shape.

I am, of course, distractedly busy. Have had a tough month, with a lot of annoying situations arising. The regiment is involved in another big transfer, as a result of which we are again up to our authorized strength of 3,700. Some of the questions relative to the transfer are not settled yet. This holds up my muster and also the pay-roll until almost the last minute; then it is a nerve-racking ordeal to rush them through and finish them on time. A mistake is inexcusable, and dire results may be expected to follow if one is so unfortunate as to make one.
A very nasty snowstorm is driving in from the north on a high, cold wind, making things very uncomfortable. My chances of getting home are dubious. I had a furlough to leave here tomorrow, but had to give it up on account of the work there was to do, and also because of the captain's absence. It would have left Jun all alone. Hope to get away, if at all, on the 4th or 5th of January.

Ken.

LETTER LXXXII
FURLough Assured.

Hotel Cleveland,

Dear Mother:

It seems now to be an assured fact that I will leave here on the evening of the 4th. Will get home in any event; if not on the 4th, a day or two later. I saw the Colonel tonight, and he granted me my furlough immediately.

I came in here for dinner, because I just had to get away from camp, or felt I would go dippy. I always feel that way after a long, hard drive, which I have always at the end of the month. Expect to be pretty much on the go when I get home. Crazy to see you. Should a letter come from Capt. Gardner for me, hold it till I reach home.

I am going to try and bring home sugar with me, so that you will have enough while I am home. I can
buy it for seven cents a pound at the camp O. M., but limited to five pounds at a time.

We are having it bitter cold again; two degrees below zero this morning.

With love,

Kenneth.

LETTER LXXXIII

THE GREAT TRY-OUT OF MILITARY TRAINING.—
WATCHING THE AXE FALL.—EXPERIENCE GIVES CONFIDENCE.

Camp Wadsworth, Jan. 1, 1918.

Dear Pop:

Now another check. It is doubtful if I can get home after all. I have been selected from the company, along with Gadebusch and two other sergeants, to attend the officers' training camp opening here on Jan. 5th. So it looks as though my chances have gone. I will try and get permission to report late. My only chance of getting through on this will be my record. It will stand inspection all right, but whether it is good enough I have no way of telling.

Last month was the weirdest time to me in all my experience. Work, work, work, annoyances, exasperations, expectancy, keen disappointment, satisfaction and great mental strain all at once, until I feel as though I had been drawn through a knothole and then halved, quartered and placed on a griddle. Orders issued upon orders, rulings changed, one order placed in execution, and before its provisions are fairly complied with, it is
rescinded. Common sense has gone astray; such a thing seems to have ceased to be. A nervous disposition or a head slightly off balance means that the one who is so unfortunately possessed is going to sink.

I am sitting here watching them go one by one. And some time my chance is coming. There is always a day of reckoning, and there must be a balance struck. The axe is beginning to fall with a disconcerting disregard of rank and precedent. I am convinced that the 27th Division is going to be the best one to go to France, and I want the position that will give me the power to play my part of assisting in shaping its destinies in one or two specific things which I will not put on paper. And I shall get it. Every day I see men high in power whom I wouldn’t have as clerks. And they are beginning to shake with apprehension, for, if they are not blind, they see the shadow of what is about to fall. We have had one explosion that has vibrated through the division to its very core, and it is only the first. You probably have read of it in the papers.

Don’t worry about me, Pop; I am all right; but I must express myself or blow up, like a boiler with no safety-valve. The captain is my safety-valve, but he is not here. When I get promotion, I shall take it with the supreme confidence of the man who has learned by experience, who has made mistakes to his own great profit, and who has been in a position where he could observe and feel the direct effects of grave errors of both commission and omission on the part of others.

We have had another very cold spell, two degrees below zero Sunday morning. I have to thaw out my ink
every morning before beginning work, and melt ice or snow to wash in. My work for the month is all completed, and I have spent all New Year's Day in bed without getting up for meals.

I will get home, if at all possible. I sincerely hope that you are keeping well, and I certainly never wanted to talk to anyone more than I now do to you, Pop.

Kenneth.

LETTER LXXXIV

Back in Camp After Furlough.

Camp Wadsworth, Jan. 13, 1918.

Dear Mama and Pop:

Just a few lines to let you know I am back in camp. I arrived shortly after noon today, and immediately plunged into work. It is 1 A. M., so my letter must be short. Gadebusch and the captain met me at the depot. The captain said he almost wired me to return six different times. He has been having a tough time of it. I go before Gen. O'Ryan tomorrow, or, I should rather say, this morning, for examination. I don't know just what my status is, but it does not look as if I would go to the school.

Rob was not at the depot at Charlotte. I don't know, of course, what prevented him, but I was very much disappointed.

Kenneth.
Dear Mama and Pop:

I appeared before Gen. O’Ryan yesterday morning at eleven o’clock, and received a grilling. I came out all right, and now, as far as I can see, the only thing that stands in the way of my commission is my physical examination. The eye test worries me a little. I have been excused from the officers’ training camp, and have been directed by the General to report to the division machine gun school for officers. I started in this morning. Such is my status.

Received a letter from Rob, saying that he did not
receive my telegram until two o’clock Sunday afternoon. He is coming to camp on Sunday, and I shall certainly be glad to see him.

Enclosed is a picture of Walter, Gadebusch and myself taken in front of my tent just after Walter arrived. I have a lot more pictures which I am sending by registered mail.

We are to be inspected by the Asst. Secretary of War and the Chief of Staff tomorrow. Ed. Willis left for Fort Sill, Oklahoma, today to attend the automatic arms school. I, of course, am terribly busy. We had a severe storm last night, and as a result the entire camp is just a sea of mud.

Kenneth.

LETTER LXXXVI

At the Machine Gun School.

Camp Wadsworth, Jan. 1, 1918.

Dear Mama and Pop:

I am attending the machine gun school every morning, and am with the company in the afternoon. In the evening I coach the man who will succeed me as first sergeant, if I am commissioned. I am not now officially first sergeant, but am doing the work of a second lieutenant. I hope to be able to have dinner with Gaddy Saturday night. I saw Eddy for a minute at the training camp Monday night, but could not talk to him, or any of them, as they have a study period from 7 to 9 P. M.

The weather has been beautiful, but walking is almost
impossible, owing to the fact that the frost is coming out of the ground, and in this clay the walking is terrible.

Send down my other wool uniform. Better insure it, because one like it cannot be bought now. Palmer has received his commission in the Ordnance Dept. Am very anxious to see Rob.

KENNETH.

LETTER LXXXVII

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION PASSED.

Camp Wadsworth, Jan. 20, 1918.

Dear Mama:

Rob came to Spartanburg today, arriving at camp about 9 A. M. Gaddy and I saw him off on the 6.45 tonight. You can guess how glad I was to see him. He told me of Pop's bad fall. I was worried about just that thing, the danger of one of you falling on the ice-covered roads. It is very upsetting to hear of him being hurt, especially when I know so little about it.

I was ordered over to division headquarters for my physical examination Saturday, and passed O. K. If I am commissioned, of course I will need a lot of things at once. I cannot get a uniform for less than $55 or $60, and will need a lot of stuff besides. Prices of things are terrible, and then the quality is far from satisfactory.

Jan. 22.

Weather is cold. Have been in court all day, called as a witness against a man from the company who deserted, and was caught last month. He is being tried by a general court martial. Sent two pieces of music to M., compositions of our band master.*

KENNETH.

* Band Leader Laurence Mansfield Matt.
Dear Mama:

I am dead tired, so this letter will be short. I went out on the range with our guns this afternoon. We had Colts, Benet-Merciers and the Lewis all working together. We now have sixteen guns in the company. We worked hard all morning getting them in shape and inspecting, preparatory to the firing in the afternoon. It is hard work and quite a strain with a lot of new men who have not even heard a machine gun fired before. There was some very accurate shooting. A week from today we go into the trenches for four days, and will be subjected
to a series of gas attacks. Chlorine gas will be used. So you see we are getting along.

Enclosed are some more pictures. I have marked them on the back. I am doing practically no first sergeant's work, except in an advisory capacity.

Kenneth.

LETTER LXXXIX

Commissioned in the Old "Seventh" Way.

Camp Wadsworth, Jan. 27, 1918.

Dear Mama:

I have been commissioned a second lieutenant, and will be assigned to the 107th Inftr., and to duty with the Machine Gun Co. I appeared at retreat tonight with my shoulder-bars, collar insignia and black-and-gold hat-cord. I cannot begin to express in words the satisfaction that I feel in being commissioned in my own regiment in the old Seventh way. The Colonel and all of our old officers enlisted as privates. I received the notification from the Adjutant-General of the army this morning, and was sworn in this afternoon, and am now living at the head of the company street with Lt. Harry. Write and send your approbation, without which my promotion would be hollow.

Kenneth.
Getting Equipped as an Officer.—Confinement to Camp by Quarantine and Impassable Roads.—A "Seventh" Welcome to the New Officer.

Camp Wadsworth, Jan. 29, 1918.

Dear Pop:

Your telegram received yesterday, and your more than welcome letter came tonight. Am delighted to hear that your knee is improving, and most sincerely hope your complete recovery will be sure.

My uniform has arrived in good shape and has been duly turned in and credit given me for it. My overcoat I am keeping, having it charged against me on my final statement. It will cost me $12.50, and I am spending another $9 on it for alterations, which are necessary to convert it into an officer's coat. Thus I get a coat for $21.50 which cannot be bought for any price now, and which a New York firm charges $110 for, and not near as good a piece of cloth at that. The things which I need are appalling. I may have to ask for some more money before the end of the month, but will do the best I can with what I have. I have ordered a serge uniform, price $60. I am buying the best I can get, for it is the cheapest in the long run. Some of the officers bought a lot of stuff as cheap as they could, with the result that it has gone to pieces. I think that I will get one cheap uniform to knock around in, about $18.50. There is a uniform made of some new goods called Funston cloth, which looks like cotton and seems to wear very well.
We have had almost a full week's rain, with very warm, spring-like weather. I had never imagined such mud, eight inches to three feet deep; in some places very heavy, and in others just like soup. Spartanburg has been quarantined on account of spinal meningitis, and no man is allowed out of camp. Officers are excepted, provided they have good reasons for going in, such as shave-tail lieutenants, or minnows, as they are called by their seniors, buying themselves outfits. The town is absolutely cut off from camp by road anyway, as the roads are altogether impassable, so it doesn't make any difference about the quarantine.

I entered immediately upon my duties as lieutenant. The other officers, from the top down, have been exceedingly cordial, and they welcomed me on my first appearance at the mess in true Seventh fashion. I was surprised at the number who knew me by name and came to congratulate me. I was very soon presented with a bill for my next month's mess assessment, and was invited to contribute towards a fund to provide a wedding present. So you see I have started.

Drill outside is impossible, and the trenches are untenable. We will resume our machine-gun firing as soon as the rain stops. I think I told you that we had the Lewis, Benet-Mercier and Colt machine guns all out on the firing-line and agoing. I have fired all of them personally, and have the Colts under my own supervision and am instructing in their use. They are all of the heavy type, and we will be armed with a similar weapon.

Enclosed is my order of assignment. Send me my raincoat, as I can use it for a while until I get a regula-
tion slicker. I understand that Rob’s camp (Camp Greene), is quarantined for the same reason that Spartanburg is.

My commission has nothing to do with the machine gun school, which is exclusively for the machine gun officers of the division, and which I attended as an enlisted man until my commission came through, by the direct command of the Major-General, because of the fact that I was to be recommended for a commission. At the same time he excused me from the officers’ training camp. I have secured my promotion in the only way that I wanted it, and it seems too good to be true. Mr. Gadebusch wired his congratulations.

The Captain asked me to remember him to you, and he expressed his sympathy. Hoping that you will get into shape again quickly.

Kenneth.

LETTER XCI


Dear Walter:

Your welcome and interesting letter received. This is just a line to let you know of my commission. I was appointed a second lieutenant Sunday. The order was issued by the Adjutant-General of the army from Washington on the 26th. I received my notification on the 27th at 11 A. M. Telegraphed acceptance at 11.45 A. M., and was sworn in at 4.20 P. M., thereby becoming a full-fledged second lieutenant, or, as my seniors call me, a shave-tail. This was speeding things up to the
limit. I cannot express in words, Walter, the satisfaction to me of being commissioned from the ranks in just the way that I had dreamed of for so long. It was the only way I wanted the appointment, and it seems too good to be true. I entered on my duties at once.

It has rained for almost a week straight, and I have never seen so much mud, eight inches to three feet deep. We are cut off from Spartanburg completely by road. The roads are impassable; the trenches are untenable. The weather has been exceedingly warm and spring-like, bringing the frost out of the ground. I never dreamed there could be so much mud. It is so bad that we do not have retreat formation, and do all our drilling inside.

Am going to fire on the range as soon as weather will permit. Have sixteen guns now. Had Lewises, Benet-Merciers and Colts out on the firing line last week, and all going together. Some music! The Colts are my particular responsibility; have charge of them for instruction, etc.

Kenneth.

LETTER XCII
Mostly Financial.

Camp Wadsworth, Jan. 31, 1918.

Dear Mama, Pop and Marj.: 

I am glad M. likes my friend Mr. Matt’s music. He is an excellent band leader. To date I have ordered one serge uniform, $60; bought one pair of shoes, $7; one pair of leggings, $16; one Funston cloth uniform, $18.50; two suits underwear, $2.60; one
set collar ornaments, $1.65; one hat, $5; $9 to have coat altered; total, $119.75. I will receive no pay until the end of the next month, and get hardly anything on my final statement, as allotment insurance and $12.50 for my overcoat comes out, so will need some more money. I also have mess assessment to pay. It is terrible getting started.* I have sweater, bed-roll, blankets, more shoes, etc., etc., to get, and the prices of everything are sky high. My cap is of no use to me, as it cannot be converted into an officer's cap, so do not send it. I need my raincoat badly, with this everlasting rain and sleet. The natives say that, in a normal season, February brings always a continual rainstorm.

Enclosed are one or two more orders affecting me which I should like inserted in my scrap-book. Mama will be interested to note that I was promoted on the same order with Griswold Daniell, who was promoted from second to first lieutenant. He is the only one of the family left in the regiment. The other brother was promoted some time ago and assigned to the National Army as an instructor, and the father was discharged, I think, before we went to the Border.

I am tremendously busy; drill and school all day and lectures at night. I may be sent to Fort Sill, Okla., to the machine gun school. The captain sent my name in, but I may not be picked, owing to seniority of others. Only five men of the division will go, so you can easily see what my chances are.

With my best,

Kenneth.

* Officers have to furnish their own outfits, and an enlisted man, on promotion, has to turn in the clothing supplied him by the Government.
Dear Mama:

Enclosed is my discharge from the U. S. Army, which please keep. I made out my own discharge. My commission is not in the U. S. Reserve, but in the U. S. Army, so don’t worry on that score; and don’t worry about what an officer has or has not to do. I already have a dog-robber, or, as they are semi-officially designated, a striker; in other words, a servant. It is not compulsory, of course, but is absolutely necessary, and an unwritten law in the regiment. He costs me $5 per month, and he carries my water, shines my shoes, makes my bed, airs the blankets, brushes my clothes, etc., etc.

I have reason to believe that a move is imminent. I will not be near home again, as we will not go as I told you.

We were “gassed” this afternoon. We passed through the gas chambers, equipped, of course, with masks. Chlorine gas and lachrimatory gas were used. Chlorine is terrible stuff. It chokes to death, breaks down the tissues of the lungs, also the blood-vessels, and if the victim recovers, consumption generally sets in. We were in this gas for about ten minutes. The gas masks are great things, and a positive preventive against being “gassed.” We took the lachrimatory plain. Its effect is practically all on the eyes—makes one blind for a while, and causes a very painful irritation of the eyes.

With love,

Kenneth.
Dear Pop:

Am so busy there seems hardly time to think. . . . We are now having a beautiful spell of warm weather. The thermometer is about 75 deg. The men are all drilling in their shirts. I took my platoon with four machine guns to the range yesterday. It is part of an officer’s training at the school. I was as nervous as a cat, as I, of course, had never been responsible for the direction of fire, control, target designation and discipline of men on the firing-line before. However, the platoon got a score of 270 out of a possible 320, and I was rated “excellent” in conduct of fire, fire control and squad discipline, three different counts, and the first “excellent” rating received by any officer. The machine gun officers of the 105th, 106th and 108th Inftry. and the 104th Machine Gun Battalion had preceded me. On operation I got a “very good,” and received the same on my fire
orders on a landscape target which none of us had ever seen before, and which was put up behind our backs; the point being that I had to turn around, look at it, get my gun crews on their guns, figure the range, which was unknown, designate the guns which were to cover the right and those to cover the enemy left, so that my fire would cross, and to allot to each gunner his sector. You see, a target of this kind must be traversed with a crossed fire. I opened fire in 10.5 seconds, being the first, but missed out on an “excellent” rating owing to the platoon’s fire direction.

I have thirty-two animals to oversee. They are my responsibility; in other words, I am boss of the picket-line. I must also look over the first sergeant’s work, to see that he is going all right, until he is thoroughly familiar with his work. I have too much to do and too much responsibility over too widely-scattered departments of the company. I have never felt this way before. I am going to kick to the Captain for a readjustment. We are short an officer—two, in fact, for one we have is valueless. I have all the physical drill to give the company, also. Lt. Harry is just as busy, and the captain has to spend a great deal of time at the division machine gun school, of which he is executive officer.

Can you send me $60 more? This ought to pull me through until pay day. It costs me $30 a month to eat at the regimental mess, and it must be paid ahead.

Kenneth.
LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

LETTER XCV

A New Horse and an Exciting Ride.—The First Member of the Old M. G. Co. Gives His Life in Battle.

Camp Wadsworth, Feb. 10, 1918.

Dear Marj.:

Just a few lines, as I have an hour before retreat. We are having a perfectly wonderful spell of weather. I am sitting outside my tent door in my shirt and with no hat. The thermometer today was 80 deg. I have just returned from a long and rather exciting ride with the Captain. We have started our rides again. As soon as the weather gets fine we both head for the picket-line and our horses. I have a new horse, one that was assigned to the regiment for an officer's use, and he is a beauty.

Today we had ridden for about an hour and a half, when we came to a long, straight piece of dirt road which was dry. The Captain said: "Shall we let them go?" I said, "Yes," and away we went. We covered about a mile and a half, and the horses were beginning to blow, when the Captain's horse went into a soft spot and they both went down in a heap. The horse rolled right on the Captain, and I thought sure that he was a goner. A fall from a horse on a dead gallop is a serious thing. The horse was frightened, of course, and started off full tilt. The Captain wasn't hurt, so I took after his horse. At first he stuck to the road, but soon left it for cotton-fields, corn-fields, woods and every other kind of landscape, at a full gallop. I chased him for over three miles before I caught him.
The enclosed clipping please keep among my papers and pictures. It was quite a shock to me when I first heard the news last night. Billy Tailer* was one of the finest men I ever met, and died in a way we would expect of him. He is the first of our old company to pass on. It brings home with a smash the fact that we have men at the front. Billy’s father died only last month, and it is harder therefore for his mother and sister. The Captain and I are writing them. It just seems a crime that a man who has everything in the world to live for should suddenly be snuffed out like a burning candle. The picture (in the newspaper) is wretched, and even I wouldn’t recognize it for Billy. The paper is wrong as regards his rank. He was a first lieutenant, a pilot in Pershing’s forces, having been transferred from the Cigognes (the Storks).

There is a prospect of Gaddy being commissioned soon and assigned to this company. The Captain is working for it hard. We have one vacancy. It will be great if this can be accomplished.

Hoping you are all well,

Ken.

*Lt. William Hallett Tailer, killed while fighting the Germans in France in an aeroplane.
LETTER XCVI

Mimic Trench Warfare as Carried Out at Camp Wadsworth.

Camp Wadsworth, Feb. 16, 1918.

Dear Mama and Pop:

We came out of the trenches this morning at 9 A. M.,
where we had been since 8 A. M. Tuesday, four days.
It rained most of the time during our entire tour of duty,
giving us a most realistic idea of what conditions are
abroad when it is wet. I had my headquarters located in
a dugout thirty-five feet underneath the ground, in what
is termed a supervision trench, which is generally the
fourth or fifth trench from the front line, and is situ-
ated in front of the reserve trenches and just back of the
support trenches. The dugout filled with about two feet
of water the second day, and stayed that way until we
were relieved by the incoming battalion this morning.
We were absolutely plastered with mud, and of course
the men were soaked continuously. The game was played
fair all the way through: no talking in the front line, no
smoking except in shelters and dugouts, and not a head
sticking up over the parapets in the daytime.

I had command of four guns on the front line of
what is termed the south sector. The company head-
quartes, with Capt. Gardner, were situated in a dugout
in the rear almost a mile away from me. Our three
platoons, with twelve guns, were scattered over the entire
trench zone, and we were all connected up by telephone
and buzzer. It is all very wonderful. I had one sergeant,
one corporal and five orderlies in my headquarters. Our
headquarters men are specially trained for the job. They are all expert signalmen, runners, buzzer and telegraph men. We were gas-shelled several times by the "enemy," and had one night attack, the same occurring at 1.05 A. M., Thursday morning. It was adjudged a failure, owing to the fact that Sergt. Roger Jones was right on the job and mowed the "enemy" down in windrows with his machine gun while they were cutting through our wire entanglements.

We had an elaborate system of gas alarms all over the entire trench area, bells, iron bars suspended at intervals, etc. As soon as a man smelt gas, or if a cloud gas was used, as soon as he saw it coming, he would immediately put on his own mask and then give the alarm by beating on the suspended bar, can or bell. This would be taken up all over the entire sector; and if the attack was discovered to be general, this fact was telephoned to headquarters. In dugouts the alarm is given by placing a pail full of iron plates, tin cans or other such things at the head of the steps leading down. A sentinel is always on duty at this doorway, and as soon as he hears the alarm he kicks the pail down the steps, making a h—— of a racket, thereby communicating the alarm to those within, who get into their masks immediately and come out of the dugout as quick as the Lord will let them, for dugouts are not gas-proof, although curtains with a chemical mixture on them are hung over the entrances.

We had our dressing stations (medical corps) systematized, etc., etc. This gas alarm system is what the English and French use abroad. I would like to tell you all about it, but cannot, for I am dog tired, and would have
to write all night. I have had no sleep in the last forty-eight hours. The experience was most instructive and interesting, in spite of the water and two feet deep mud. The men actually looked as if they had rolled in it, as in many cases they did, for they lay right in the bottom of the trench in the mud and water and slept. It is wonderful how an exhausted man will sleep.

We dug and fought at night. The "enemy" were about 500 men situated in an opposing set of trenches. We had only about 2,500 in the sector this time, and we were the only M. G. Co.

I hope you can get down here before long.

Kenneth.

LETTER XCVII

Expense of an Officer's Outfit.—A Scarcity of Officers in the Company.—The Horses and Mules.

Camp Wadsworth, Feb. 20, 1918.

Dear M. and P.

I received the fudge, which is fine. . . . My house is just about completed. It is built on specifications of my own, and is therefore just as I want it. I sent two men into town today to bring out the door and sash and my electric lights, and it has taken about all the money I had left. Will you send me $25 more? We will be paid about the 5th or 6th of the month, and I will be all right then. A second lieutenant just commissioned has an awful time, for his salary does not begin to equip him, particularly in a M. G. Co., for six months at least. I
will have to get a pair of what is known as the EE type of prism field glasses, with the mil scale and inverted musketry sight engraved on one of the prisms. This is one of the instruments with which we figure our ranges. They cost wholesale from the Gov. $50, and retail somewhere in the neighborhood of $125. I will also have to get a prismatic compass, a graticule and a chronometer, all very delicate instruments used in figuring range data for indirect fire; that is, when the target cannot be seen. These things I will have to acquire gradually. I have not yet bought any blankets, cot, pack, belt equipment or anything of that sort.

A bill has been introduced in Congress providing for the selling of all clothing and equipment to officers of the army at cost.* We now have over 100,000 officers in the army, and they have spent easily on an average $300 per man for equipment. Men being commissioned now have to pay about $500 for a complete outfit. About $300 of this is nothing but rank profit earned by private concerns and individuals by charging officers exorbitant prices. The officer has been commissioned and then turned loose

* This bill was passed.
to provide for himself on an inadequate salary. Now
the War Department is beginning to realize the handicap
this is to newly-commissioned men. You are expected to
set an example to the enlisted personnel by your appear-
ance, and an ill-clothed officer comes in for some severe
censuring. So there we are. I don’t dare discuss it in the
terms I should like to use, and have already written more
than I should.

I am busier than I ever was as first sergeant. It is
getting more and more difficult to get an hour for myself.
Capt. Gardner and I are now here all alone doing six
men’s work. We should have six officers, and that would
not be enough. The weather is very wet, with occasional
warm and clear days, the ground very muddy. In fact, all
the days are warm, and the grass is as green as it is at
home in April.

We have our full quota of mules and horses now, and
it is one of my duties to instruct in their care, and in the
packing and care of pack equipment. I just seemed to
naturally gravitate into this work. As a matter of fact,
though, no one else is qualified to do it except the Captain,
and he, of course, cannot do everything.

The quarantine on Spartanburg has been lifted. I
hope to be able to tell you that Gadebusch has been com-
missioned in this company in a few days, or, at the furth-
est, in two weeks. If it goes through, it will be a fine
thing for the company, and to me personally a source of
great satisfaction.

It is almost ten o’clock, and I have to get to bed or I
shall be dead. The company goes on guard Sunday and I will be officer of the guard, a twenty-four hours' tour of duty.

Hope you are all well,

Kenneth.

LETTER XCVIII

Canadian Instructors Liked.—French Instructors Liked and Admired.—English Instructors Antagonize Men.


Dear Mama:

Enclosed is my commission, which is not a very inspiring thing to look at, but is precious nevertheless. I am supposed to keep it in my possession always, but that is not practicable, so am sending it home for safe keeping.

We are just as busy as ever. Lt. Harry came back today. This will make things a little easier for me. It has been quite a strain on the Captain and I, so much work. Lt. Willis will be back in about ten days, and we hope to have another officer in a little while, as I told you in my last letter.
The weather is ideal. We are working at present on a machine gun precision drill, which is being taught by a Canadian sergeant* who went through the entire Vimy Ridge engagement, and is most interesting. We have about fifteen Canadians in camp now as instructors. There is a growing resentment against the Englishmen who are here, except Sergt.-Major Tector, who instructed in the bayonet class. Their attitude is intolerable, and they antagonize us. They are overbearing, and there is only one way which is right—their way. I can easily see how hard feeling crops up between the English and other nationalities.† When on the other side the men all hope we will go in with the French. Our real instruction is coming from the French officers here. They are considerate, polite, will always take suggestions, and are everlastingly efficient, both officers and non-coms.

I moved into my new house tonight. It is the best in the company street. Al Harry is in with me, which makes it very fine.

Love to all,

Ken.

LETTER XCIX

Officers Have to Pay Income Tax.—Driving Hard in Training Work.

Camp Wadsworth, Mar. 1, 1918.

Dear Pop:

Your letter with check received. Thanks ever so much. I was certainly glad to receive it, as I had but

* Sergt. Henderson.
† This feeling changed afterwards. See Letter CXLIX.
$4.13 left and a $14 mess assessment staring me in the face.

I received a letter from Mr. C. I. Hood, with two pairs of socks and fifteen boxes of ointment. The latter made me smile. Rob, I believe, got the same. I have written Mr. Hood a letter of thanks, and have also told him a little about our work and the camp.

I have also received a letter from one of the men we transferred to the 69th Inftry.* He was on the Border with us. His letter is very interesting, and informative to the extent that they are getting just the training that we are here, with the exception that they have had no experience with real gas. In this we are ahead of them.

The weather continues beautiful—real spring, with the thermometer varying between 75 deg. and 85 deg. As a result, the training schedule is progressing rapidly. I now have income tax to pay, and have the form in front of me. I must turn it in during the next day or two. An officer gets it in the neck every way he turns.

I must close and get to bed, as we are driving hard these days—actual drill from 7.45 A. M. to 5.15 P. M., and lecture and class work until about 9 P. M. I am dead tired and just ready to flop into bed when we are through.

Kenneth.

* About 350 men were transferred from the 7th to the 69th before the former was sent to Camp Wadsworth.
LETTER C

THE COMPANY LOSES ITS CAPTAIN AT LAST.—END OF TRAINING PERIOD IN SIGHT.

Camp Wadsworth, Mar. 6, 1918.

Dear Mama:

Enclosed are some pictures for my collection. They are very interesting, especially the one in which the French officers appear. This was taken during our last tour of trench duty. We were out on the top studying the ground and re-laying the machine gun positions. You can identify me by a white hat-band. These are worn by all machine gunners to differentiate them from infantry, signal corps, engineers, grenadiers, bombers, automatic riflemen and all the other special units which go to the making of a modern battalion.

Capt. Gardner has been taken from us, transferred to the 106th M. G. Battalion. We all feel too sick over it to even talk about it. It came like lightning out of a clear sky, and has left us more or less stunned. There is
no use of my writing how I feel about it. You can understand, in the first place; and in the second place I don’t feel like discussing it. Capt. Gardner is a man who by his personality so dominates everyone that he comes into contact with, that his going has left a gap which it seems impossible to fill.

Lt. Willis gets back tonight, and will probably report tomorrow. We go on guard again tomorrow, and on Saturday I have to report to the Quartermaster of the camp with a detail of 150 men picked from the regiment, to take up some work in that department. It will probably take Saturday and Sunday. So it goes. Whenever they want something done which must be done well they come to the M. G. Co. for it. It is not fair, for we have more than we can do ourselves, without having to take care of so many other things. We are not supposed to get guard duty at all; but with over half the regiment at the range, we have to take our turn.

We will be just two months more in this country. Cannot you all arrange to get down here, say, in April? That is the limit of time. I don’t believe that I shall get home again. The port we leave from I must not tell you, nor our destination, but you can guess.

Must stop and study, for we have a formal guard mount tomorrow when we go on guard, a very intricate and impressive ceremony.

With love,

Ken.
LETTER CI

Military Orders Disregard Sentiment.

Camp Wadsworth, Mar. 11, 1918.

Dear Mama:

Just a few hurried lines. Our new captain reported tonight. If Capt. Gardner stays with the 106th M. G. Btn., I probably will be transferred over to that organization. The Captain builds up the most efficient Machine Gun Co. in the division and then is suddenly yanked away from the head of it. There is no sentiment or consideration in military orders. They are harsh and abrupt.

Have you the illustrated section of the *Times* of Mar. 10th? There are a lot of pictures of the division in it. If you haven’t, I will send it on to be added to my collection. I hope M. will be able to fix them all up some time.

I went on again as officer of the guard on Thursday. I was up for thirty-six continuous hours, then attended a lecture, after which I worked until 12.30 that night (Friday), and on Saturday I took a detail of 150 men on an all-day job at the Q. M. C., attended another lecture when I got back, and finally turned in so tired I could not sleep. I had command of the company over Sunday, as Lts. Willis and Harry were away.

With love,

Kenneth.
LETTER CII

Looking Forward to a Visit From His Family.

Camp Wadsworth, Mar. 15-19, 1918.

Dear Pop:

I have managed to reserve rooms for you. Make your plans to come on the 29th. . . . The shrubs, violets and other flowers are in full bloom, the peach-blossom beautiful. I will have hundreds of interesting things to show you, if I can get the time.

I have been placed in absolute charge of the physical and bayonet training of all the machine gun companies and battalions in the division, a total of 2,752 men. It is a big responsibility.

I am most anxious to see you all. Are you going to stop at Charlotte? If Rob could arrange to get away for a few days and be with us, the family would all be together again.*

You ought to try and run down to Charleston. It is one of the most interesting cities in the country, men who have been there tell me. I want to go, but I guess I never will have the time.

I shall be unable to write again until Sunday, as we go into the trenches tomorrow morning, to remain until then. If you come on the 29th, you will be here over Easter Sunday, which will be fine. The fact that we go into the trenches now makes it more or less certain that I will have nothing except my divisional work on when you get here.

* This did eventually come about, and on Easter Sunday, in the hospitable home of Mr. W. S. Glenn, a resident of Spartanburg, the entire family for the last time sat down together at dinner.
Am very busy, but feeling all right again. Capt. Whitney* made me stay in bed one whole day, and I did nothing but sleep, and that fixed me up. It is raining, and we will have a wet, muddy time in the trenches.

Kenneth.

LETTER CIII

Forty Feet Underground.

Camp Wadsworth, Mar. 21, 1918.

Dear Pop:

I received your card tonight while in the trenches. I sure am glad you all have made arrangements to come down. I will go in to Spartanburg Sunday night when we get out of these trenches and see if the Cleveland has definitely held rooms for you. Go to the Cleveland on arrival on the 29th and ask for the rooms which have been reserved in the name of Thomas O'Shea.

Am now forty feet underground in my dugout headquarters. It rained hard yesterday, making the trenches very disagreeable, but today the wind boxed the compass clockwise and came up fresh from the northwest, assuring us of clear weather.

Bring money enough to buy me about two good meals.

Kenneth.

* Capt. Whitney was put in command of the company after the transfer of Capt. Gardner.
Dear Mother and Pop:

I hope you are now home again safe and sound. Will look for a letter from Charleston tomorrow. We go to the range for two days tomorrow, come back on Saturday and go up again for ten days on Tuesday. Al and I went to the Ordnance Dept. this afternoon. I bought two blankets and a canvas bucket, also a pair of shoes. The blankets cost $6 apiece, the bucket $1.68 and the shoes $4.75. Blankets in town are $13.75 and shoes $7 a pair. Quite a difference!

Apr. 6.

Your letters and arithmetic from Charleston received. The arithmetic is just what Al and I wanted, and we think that we can now pass the examination and find the square or cube root of a number by the simple method and by the use of logarithms.
We leave for the range for ten days' shooting on Tuesday. The range is in the heart of the Blue Ridge mountains, and every one who has been there says it is a perfect paradise for beauty.

I took the company for a long hike yesterday, and we stuck to the woods. They are very beautiful. I have never seen such large dogwood blossoms and violets as in South Carolina. We found a great patch of yellow jasmine, which is very rare. It is very fragrant, and will run to the top of an eighty-foot pine tree.

Our brigade paraded in Spartanburg this afternoon in the interest of the Third Liberty Loan. The men carried full packs and paraded with fixed bayonets. They looked fine and fit. I am in command of the company until Monday morning.

Did you see Rob's camp? If so, tell me what your impressions of Camp Greene are. To the uninitiated eye, all the camps look identical.

Capt. Gardner came in, and stayed until 11.30, so I got no further with above. He wants me to consent to a transfer to the 105th M. G. Battalion, of which he is to be major, as battalion adjutant. It would carry with it promotion, the grade of first lieutenant. I don't believe I want it. I do not care to leave field work and take up administration work, for there is nothing greater than the handling and training of men, and the consciousness that, if they are good, you have had your part in making them so.

It is a miserable wet day, with a northeast storm. I hope it gets thoroughly rained out before we start for the range, and hoping you are all well after your trip South,

Kenneth.
LETTER CV

"You Know Me, Al" Coming to New York.

Camp Wadsworth, Apr. 9, 1918.

Dear Mother:

Just a few hurried lines before we leave for the range. Our show, "You Know Me, Al," will open either next week or the week following with the same cast as we had here. Tell Walter about it, and tell him I won't forgive him if he doesn't get Otto or somebody and go—or take the family.

It has rained for three days, and the roads are bottomless. Still raining, and we start in about half an hour. Have seventeen miles to make today.

Don't forget about the show.

Ken.

LETTER CVI

On the Range.

Glassy Rock, S. C., Apr. 12, 1918.

Dear Pop:

We left camp Tuesday morning, and after three days' hard going in almost continual rain arrived here yesterday noon. The weather is extremely disagreeable, wet, and very cold as we got higher in the mountains, a climb of about 2,000 feet in about thirty-three miles. It is partially clear today. The country is beautiful, the mountain-sides covered with blooming dogwood, azalea and laurel.

I spent all of today on the automatics range. The
Glassy Rock Mountain, S. C.
Government has an enormous reservation here in the mountains. Artillery, infantry and machine guns can just go ahead and fire as they please and not be afraid of hitting anything. Barrage problems on a large scale are being worked out every day. The infantry varies from one regiment to a brigade, and artillery and machine guns are used to an unlimited extent. You never heard such a noise. The artillery are so far back that their noise does not disturb us much. Their fire falls about seventy-five to one hundred yards ahead of the first infantry skirmish line. The work is very absorbing.

Let me know about the divisional show in New York. The mail is disarranged owing to our duty here. This spot is very difficult to get to, and there has been a hitch somewhere in the mails.

Kenneth.

LETTER CVII
A Real Barrage Drill.

Glassy Rock, Apr. 13, 1918.

Dear Pop and Mama:

Received your letter of the 8th today. The machine gun regiment of which our company are part left this camp to take part in a big artillery barrage problem. The company was under my command, the other officers having been through the barrage last week. In the lower valley we met the 107th, which came up to take part in the problem. They brought our mail, which I collected on the way back this afternoon.

My experience today has been the most thrilling thing
of my life. I wish I had time to tell you all about it. We pulled into position before a network of trenches at 1:45 P. M. The regiment (the 107th) was in wave formation in front of us. The 1st Battalion dropped into a trench, and the 2d and 3d Battalions were about fifty yards to the rear of it with us. The zero hour was 2:20, and at 2:20 to the second there was a great shrieking directly over our heads, and the shells commenced dropping just about fifty yards in front of the trench occupied by the 1st Battalion of the 107th, and about one hundred yards in front of us, which is d—-d close. This continued for five minutes, the shells dropping so fast that the explosions made one continuous roar. Forty-eight guns were firing on a front of only 500 yards. Precisely at 2:25 the infantry jumped out of the trenches and started their advance. They got to within thirty yards of the bursting shells when the barrage was suddenly lifted to one hundred yards. The advance continued until the first wave was about thirty yards behind where the shells burst, when the barrage was again lifted and dropped behind the “enemy” trenches, and the infantry then occupied their objective. Shrapnel shells were used. It was the most marvellous, miraculous and impressive thing I ever witnessed. The deadly accuracy of the artillery was wonderful. The guns were four miles away from us, and had to fire over two mountain ranges at a target they could not see. A slight mistake would have meant death to dozens of us.

The regiment looked worth a million dollars. Its discipline was perfect, and it advanced right up to the barrage as steady as seasoned veterans in lines as straight
as a chalk-line. One wave followed the other with fixed bayonets until the entire 3,000 men were advancing in the impressive wave formation. Their bayonets shone in the sun and added much to the showiness of the formation. The shells send a queer shiver down one's spine as they shriek just a few feet above one's head. I wish I could write more about it, but Milton is standing here waiting.

Dispatch case and watch came tonight. They are fine; thanks ever so much. The weather is just perfect, and these mountains are wonderful.

Kenneth.

LETTER CVIII

Excellent Shooting at Unseen Targets.—A Wild Ride.—The Mathematics Exam.—The Beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains.—Moonshine Stills and Indian Relics.

Glassy Rock, S. C., Apr. 18-20, 1918.

Dear Mama:

Have just a minute to tell you I am well and all O. K. We are still at the range, the work wonderfully absorbing and the mountains beautiful. We are camped at the foot of Glassy Rock Mountain, 2,550 ft. high. We have a big barrage problem tomorrow.

During the last three days the weather has been bad, just rain, rain and then more rain. It hasn't hampered our work much, but has made a great deal of it very uncomfortable. We fired our big barrage problem yesterday (Apr. 19), in the rain. The sun was shining brightly when we left camp. About an hour later it was
pouring. We all left camp for the day, without blouses, let alone rain-coats.

I am going to boast and brag some in this letter, so am warning you beforehand. The gun positions were three miles from camp. We figured our data the day before. The whole M. G. regiment participated, thirty-two batteries of machine guns. The target was two companies of infantry in wave formation, represented by heavy pasteboard figures of men, and could not be seen by the gunners. We put our guns into position, put our C. B. or direction on them and our quadrant elevation,
which was a minus, as the targets were down a valley about fifty yards below us. The figuring had all been done the day before; in fact, it took two days to figure the entire barrage. Batteries were fired one behind the other, so that some were firing over the heads of others. The range was 1,680 yds., about a mile. Zero hour was 2:15 P. M. We started "ranging in" promptly, and when the reports came in on range corrections from the observing station, right beside the targets, we were directly on them; our figures were absolutely correct. So you see we hit it without ever seeing the target. Each battery had a sector. A careful check was made on the number of targets hit, and after the count ninety per cent. of them had from one to eighty shots through. That is excellent shooting.

After we had arrived at the gun positions, as I have told you, it began to rain like sin. So I borrowed a horse from the commanding officer of the 105th M. G. Bt. and started back to camp to get our raincoats, over a road which is one steep grade after another. The rain had made a quagmire of it, and it was as slippery as grease. I made the three miles in fifteen minutes, in the storm. I was absolutely soaked, not a dry inch on me, and covered with mud from head to foot. The horse slipped all over the road, went down the hills on his haunches, and fell with me twice. It was a foolhardy thing to do, but I have made these cavalry men sit up. You see, all of the machine gun battalions were cavalry before they were converted. I wish you could see what they call a road here. Tuesday night I rode six miles in forty minutes, with six dozen eggs under my arm. I left at 11 P. M,
and got back to camp at twenty minutes of twelve. This, let me modestly inform you, is some going in the dark over mountain trails.

Captain Gardner is now major of the 105th M. G. Battalion, commissioned yesterday. As soon as we get back to camp, which will be next Saturday, I will be transferred to his battalion, and my nomination for first lieutenant will go to the War. Dept. Things are moving quickly back in camp. They are beginning to pack.

I almost forgot the greatest wonder of all. We had our mathematics examination on Thursday. Al and I had been boning ever since we received Pop’s book. I received ninety-five per cent. In grammar, spelling and punctuation exam. I received ninety per cent. This was easy for me, although most of the men had a harder time of it than with their mathematics. Isn’t my arithmetic mark wonderful? Don’t ask how I did it. It is a mystery, one of the seven wonders. We had a lot of metric system problems, such as this: Add 7 km., 9782 cm., 1 myriam., 985 hectom., 4561 decim., 650 decam., and 4895 mm. The result had to be in the metric table in sequence. Another problem was: Convert 9672 feet to the metric table. Then we had one like this: Find the area of a circle whose radius is 9.75 ft. And another: Find the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle whose vertical side is 8.1 ft. and the horizontal side 6.9 ft.

We had also a lot of square root and fractions, some of the latter being like this: Add 3-16 + 1-3 + 56-128; add 4-19 + 81-161 + 98-125; change to a decimal $8\frac{772}{9768}$.
“These Wonderful Mountains.”
change to a common fraction \(0.9625\); subtract 0.56 from 7-8; and more addition, multiplication and subtraction of simple and common fractions, such as \(12\ 7-9 — 5\ 6-7\), etc. Then we had some problems, a little algebra, some simple geometry, etc. It would have come harder, I suppose, if I hadn't been doing a lot of figuring along with my work, and so got my hand in. Can you do these all, M.? Square root came back after we worked it out from the book.

Pruning boards are sitting all over the camp, and an officer in the division has to watch his P's and Q's or he will come a cropper. We have had a lot of examinations, and I hope they are about through.

I wish you were here with us in these wonderful mountains.* The strawberries are ripe and they are delicious. There are all kinds of flowers and birds. We never take water with us when we go out for the day. You can always find a mountain stream, with water cold and clear as crystal. We have found all kinds of Indian relics, including some perfect specimens of arrow-heads. We have also found two abandoned whiskey-stills—"moonshine" ones. They are very interesting. Instead of copper piping for their coils (or worms) they use bark pipe. There are yet some working stills near the range, but the M. P.'s are getting them cleared out. Some men have been shot hunting them down; one was a first lieutenant of the M. P.'s. So you see there is some excitement and romance left in these hills.

The longer I stay here the more I am impressed with

* Within a hundred miles circle are sixty-four peaks, 6,000 feet and upward, twenty-four higher than Mount Washington, among them being Mount Mitchell, the highest mountain in Eastern America, 6,711 feet.
the beauty of the place. Pop is right. We have a won-
derful country. The more you see of it the more you admire it, and it is worth living for, worth fighting for and worth dying for, if necessary.

Love to all the family, 

Ken.

LETTER CIX

THE LAST LETTERS FROM CAMP W.—ORDERS TO LEAVE.

Camp Wadsworth, Apr. 23-27, 1918.

Dear Mother and Pop:

Apr. 23.—Am back in camp again, ahead of the com-
pany. Willis is with me. We are making rapid prepa-
rations to leave on a detail. Don’t know exact date, but believe in a day or two.

Apr. 27.—According to later information, I have an even chance of seeing you about the 30th. Exact date and time of possible arrival I cannot state. Start tomorrow for some place—where, we don’t know.

11.20 A. M., Apr. 27.—From latest news I am very much afraid that I shall not get near you. Further than that I cannot say. I have turned down a first lieutenancy under Major G., for reasons I cannot state in writing, for it would involve other things which I am forbidden to speak of.* Everything had been arranged for my transfer, but I have been given a greater opportunity. Hope with all my heart and soul I come north.†

Ken.

* He was sent on detached service at an officers’ school at Chatillon-sur-Seine, France.
† He did come north and sailed from New York.
"Retreat."
Major-General John F. O’Ryan.
Commanding General of the 27th U. S. Division in France.
(From a portrait by Sargent.)
Service in Flanders and France

May 8, 1918, to Oct. 17, 1918
Letters from France

LETTER CX

ON THE EVE OF EMBARKATION.

Camp Merritt, N. J., May 6, 1918.

Dear Mother:

I arrived O. K. at camp, reaching here about eight o'clock. I took M. to the Pennsylvania station and left her there. I bought a book and a few magazines. I have had a terrible time packing. I made a mistake in not taking two trunks, but will manage to get all of my extra things in my bedding-roll, and will trust to luck that it won't run overweight.

We have been very active today getting baggage, etc., out. It is hot and every effort brings the perspiration streaming. We never had a day as hot as this in the South.

Gave M. address and told her when to start writing. I am feeling fine and everything is sure to be all right, so you have nothing to worry about.

So long, with love to the family

KENNETH.

LETTER CXI

ON BOARD SHIP.

May 8, 1918.

Dear Mother:

Just a few lines, as my time is very much taken up. I don't think that this letter will be mailed until port is safely made, but it will get to you two or three weeks ahead of my next letter. I am very comfortable and
feeling fine, and living extremely well. We are not allowed to cable, so the port authorities will send a telegram I have already prepared.

Kenneth.

LETTER CXII

AT SEA IN A GERMAN SHIP.—ENJOYING COMFORTS PROVIDED FOR QUITE ANOTHER KIND OF PASSENGERS.

No. 1.—Postmark, May 23, 1918.

Dear Mother:

This letter is going to be rather hard to write, for it has to pass the censor, and there are so many things that we cannot say or talk about that it seems hardly worth while to write. So I guess that most of the things which are of the most interest will have to wait until my return.

The enclosed are copies of a daily sheet printed on board ship. The name of this paper is significant.* You can all get together and put your think-tanks to work, and perhaps you and Walter can guess the name of the ship we are on.†

The first three days out were perfect, like days in June. Yesterday we got a heavy wind on our quarter, which resulted in a heavy sea, which hit us broadside. It is still blowing from the same direction, but not quite so hard, and the sea has gone down a little. But it has got in its work, and there is considerable running to appropriate depositories, and the mess-halls today were not

* "The Hatchet."
† The George Washington.
quite so crowded. It is also easier now to get a steamer chair on deck.

I shall number my letters, so that you will be able to keep some kind of track of them.

There is a lot of satisfaction in reaping some of the benefits of the much-talked-of German efficiency. We have the satisfaction of knowing that this great ship built by the Germans is so constructed as to be almost unsinkable. We are eating off German dishes, sleeping under fine woollen blankets paid for by the Germans, etc. The trip and ship are comfortable in every detail, and we are living like the kings of all creation.

I had an interesting time day before yesterday watching the ship's crew at target practice. We have seen the usual schools of porpoises and several whales. You will notice that "Bill"* is on the trip with us by looking at the "Hatchet."

I am well, with the exception of a large and Beauteous carbuncle on the back of my neck, from which I have suffered tortures, but which is easier now since the surgeon has lanced it.

Save the "Hatchet." I will forward more of them. Address: 27th Division Advance School Detachment, A. E. F., via New York.

Kenneth.

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* Lt. Streeter.
Dear Pop:

In writing me mention the number of the letter or letters you receive, so that I will know which ones get home.

The weather is perfect again, and the sea beautiful. We have seen nothing except schools of porpoises. One school played in the ship’s bow wave for an hour this morning, then left us as suddenly as they came. The expanse of water is wonderful, and at times almost inconceivable. I can now fully appreciate the feelings of Columbus’s crew.

I have read more than ever in my life in the same time. I have consumed several magazines, “An Orkney Maid,” which I enjoyed; most of Bryce’s “American Commonwealth,” although it seems strange that I should have the inclination to read such a book at this time; “Richard Gordon,” “Matthew Porter,” Scott’s “Bride of Lammermoor,” which I did not care for very much; “Peter Ibbetson,” and am now finishing Doyle’s “Micah Clarke.” The ship has a wonderful library, with only good books in it.

Our meals are excellent. For breakfast we have fruit (oranges, grapefruit, bananas or apples), cereal, eggs (poached, boiled, fried, scrambled or in omelet) with fine bacon or sausage, marmalade and fresh-baked bread, biscuits and coffee. Dinner runs like this: Roast turkey or chicken, roast beef, pork chops or veal cutlets,
with potatoes, lima beans or corn, spinach, parsnips, etc.; soup also, and the usual relishes, such as pickles, olives, celery, etc. Dessert is usually ice cream and cake or pie, all made on board ship. We have some wonderful pastry-cooks. Then coffee and crackers and cheese. Supper is much the same, soup, corned beef and cabbage, boiled tongue, ham, etc., and all we can eat of it. We have been entertained while at mess by a pianist, a violinist, a baritone soloist and a quartet. There is nothing like going to war de luxe.

Enclosed are some more “Hatchets.” Carbuncle at last on the road to recovery. Can now turn my head a little. A more painful thing one could hardly have. Am feeling fine otherwise, and enjoying the trip to the fullest degree. Dave Flood, from Summit, is on the ship.

With love to mother and M.

Kenneth.

LETTER CXIV

En Voyage.

No. 3.—May, 1918.

Dear Marj.:

Have just come down to my stateroom after watching one of the finest sunsets I have ever seen. The sun sank below the horizon at just twenty minutes of nine, and at nine o’clock it was still daylight.

Enclosed are some more “Hatchets,” which have some things of interest in them. We are not allowed to cable on arrival in port, because it would probably be too severe a burden on the cable lines. I prepared a telegram
which I left at port of embarkation. The authorities will send it on safe arrival of the ship in port.

I have had a salt water shower-bath every morning. More luxuries!

Ken.

LETTER CXV
THE ARRIVAL.—FASCINATED BY THE NOVEL SCENES.—AMERICAN PRODIGALITY.—DOUGHBOY FRENCH.

No. 4.—May, 1918.

Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.:

We have arrived in port* safely. The weather is perfect, and oh! the beauty of it all. I wish I could describe it to you as I see it. Ridges of hills rising one after the other, a quaint, picturesque old city nestling among them and running down to the water's edge. Beautiful green fields, all with hedges running around them, giving a peculiar symmetry to the landscape, like a checkerboard. Clumps of trees, and here and there a heavily-wooded area. Sheep grazing, some old castles, with their moats and walls. Some church spires rising above the other buildings; and then the city itself. A wonderful picture here from the boat.†

Everything looks as though it had just received a thorough scrubbing with sapolio. I dare not describe it too accurately, for it is against the censorship regula-

* Brest, France.
† Brest has a very beautiful roadstead, one of the most wonderful natural harbors in the world. The small bays, isles and numerous headlands, the river, forts and lighthouses, lend to the horizon an unique beauty, fascinating charm and grandeur.
tions. It comes hard, and will be an embarrassment until we get used to it. Just imagine! Here I am with more to tell you, and more interesting things to write of, than I ever have had before, and I must not. It seems almost impossible to realize the fact that this is war, and not a pleasure trip.

The harbor is a wonder, and extremely interesting. Small boats of every description, with all kinds of rigs, some with lateen sails, some yawl rigged, some with sloop or schooner rigging, some with a combination of both, and some being propelled by means of a sweep, after the fashion of sculling. The harbor brings back stories that I have read: “Midshipman Easy,” “Micah Clarke,” “The Three Musketeers,” etc. Descriptions of similar scenes to the one here appear in all of them. Frenchmen come scurrying to the ship’s side in boats of every description, punts, sailboats and such, and the troops, with true American extravagance, fling coins, cigarettes and candy by the handful, fifty per cent. of which goes overboard. A month from now they will be ready to sell their souls for a pack of cigarettes, and they knew it, but it didn’t make any difference. They tickled themselves by talking to these boatmen in what they were pleased to call French. Some of it sounded like this: “Ooly, ooly, voo a voo”; “fermy alla fortay”; “feely minyon,” and such-like nonsense. A common question was: “Metres alla Paree?” meaning, I suppose, “How far to Paris?” It was very amusing. Everyone feels very lighthearted and “kiddish” after the strain we have been under for the last few days while coming through the danger zone. We had some excitement, which I shall
tell you about, perhaps, when I find out the censorship regulations concerning it.

We will spend the night aboard, and then proceed to camp. Enclosed are the last two numbers of the "Hatchet."

One day later.

We have landed and have been billeted all over the city. I am in what was once a private house, with some forty-five or fifty others. It is all most interesting. I am sadly handicapped by a lack of knowledge of the French language. The peasants are very quaint in their odd costumes.

I went all over the city yesterday afternoon and evening and today. It is a remarkable sight to see officers from practically all the armies and navies of the world sitting around in the cafés. We will move to our school in another day or two. I am dead tired as a result of my tramping all over the city. Nearly every woman you meet is in black. We have a terrible time in the restaurants trying to order what we want.

With love.

Kenneth.

LETTER CXVI

The Beauties and Wonders of Brest.

No. 5.—Brest, May 21, 1918.

Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.:

As you will see from this letter-head, I am in Brest. Get a good map and take a look at it and you will see why I raved so about its wonderful harbor. Permission
was given to us yesterday to tell our folks where we are if we cared to. We were also given permission to send picture postcards, and after I had bought ten francs' worth that permission was withdrawn, so I am out about $2. We exchanged our money at the rate of 5 frs. 60c; that is, for $1 we received 5 frs. 60 cts. We will make more on our pay checks.

This morning I went through the Château de Brest, and never had a more interesting time in my life. It is a great castle and fortress which the Phœnicians started eleven hundred years before Christ. Brest is one of the oldest cities in the world. During the time of the Gallic wars, when Cæsar's star was in the ascendant, it was occupied by the Romans. Cæsar enlarged the castle and greatly strengthened it, using it as a stronghold and prison, and later occupied it himself. After the fall of the Roman Empire it fell into the hands of a long succession of Brittany noblemen, all of whom enlarged and improved it. It covers square miles—great walls and casements and moats. In its day it must have been impregnable.

I went down into the old prison-cells, the chapels,
the dungeons, and through a labyrinth of subterranean passages, all of which were as dark as night. The outer defences were built by Bourbon, a famous engineer who lived sometime just before the reign of Louis XIV of France. I had a guide, of course. The dungeons are terrible, and how prisoners could live in them passes all comprehension. Most of them did not, I guess. There is one big room the floor of which is lined with long, sharp knives. It is many feet under the ground. Prisoners were dropped into this place and cut to pieces on the knives by means of a heavy roller passing over them. Their bodies were left there to rot, and when it was thought that they were unrecognizable the room was flushed with water by the opening of a gate, which is still intact, and the remains washed out into the bay. The enemies of the Romans thus never knew what happened to their captured comrades.

The great walls of the fortress run down to the water-front, and are some fifty or sixty feet thick at the base. The whole place is in a wonderful state of preservation. The outlook from the old towers is marvellous. They are 300 ft. above the bay. I saw the guillotine and cells where men and women were sealed up alive. Their skeletons are in the museum.

I was in the chamber where the Princess Azinore was imprisoned for sixteen months, until she consented to marry the King of France. This was in 1400, and the Dukedom of Brittany had descended to her. The Privy Council of the King of France desired the match, and finally won over the princess' advisers, who imprisoned her in her own castle until she finally, in despe-
ration, consented. That was the end of the indepen-
dence of Brittany, and it became part of the French Em-
prise, that, of course, being the reason of the forced mar-
riage.

Louis XIV made extensive alterations on the château. He tore four stories off of all the towers and used the stone to pave the streets of Brest. He closed up a lot of the Roman wells and passages. An estuary from the harbor divides the château into two parts and added greatly to its strength. The two parts are connected by tubes and tunnels which run under the harbor. The whole work is immense, and the way in which it has lasted through the ages is wonderful. The giant drawbridge and portcullis are marvels in them-
selves.

I suppose you have had enough about all this, so I will stop. My guide spoke only about ten words of English and I about the same of French, yet all the above information I managed to get from him. It took over half a day and cost me a franc. We drew pictures, used our arms, hands and everything else available. When we came to a place on the battlements which was used to precipitate stones upon an attacking force, he would pick up a stone and drop it. So in such fashion we got along.

There are a thousand other interesting things I have seen in this city, and I cannot hope to write you of them all. I am like a schoolboy suddenly let loose, and have been running all over and poking my nose into every-
thing and having the time of my life. This Old World is so new to us. We see things at home which date
back to the Revolution, but here are things which are older by a thousand years than the Christian era. I am told that there are but very few spots so far west as this which show evidence of having been occupied by the Phoenicians, who, as you know, were great traders and merchants.

We leave here very shortly; when, I cannot say. I had my portrait taken today with my overseas rig on, and I hope it comes out all right and that you will eventually get copies.

The French are very interesting, and the politest people I have met. Their customs seem strange. The restaurants all have set hours for serving meals. You cannot go into one at any odd hour and get a meal, as we can in New York. The food is excellent and well cooked. The strawberries are the finest I ever ate, finer by far than ours. They are about the only dessert.

Have Walter read this letter. I cannot write another of equal length to him, and I want him to know what I am seeing. I am so full of things to tell you of already that I guess I will talk for a year when I come back. You can imagine how glad I was when the censorship was lifted enough to allow me to tell you where I am and something about the place; for if I cannot write and tell you of the things I see, I don’t feel like myself.

The weather has been perfect—very hot, but cool at night. We are quartered in a house at one franc a day. Some officers are quartered at this hotel (Hôtel Continental), which costs them six francs. The concierge takes care of us at our house.

So long for the present.       Kenneth.
Dear Pop:

I have a few minutes, so am writing a few lines. I have received my pictures, which are "punk," but I am sending them along just the same. According to censorship regulations, a picture cannot be enclosed with a letter, so am sending them separate. I will put one in an envelope from time to time and mail it. Then at least one ought to reach you. I had to stand on the bias on account of the bandage around my neck, as I didn't want it to show. There have been no facilities for a change of uniform, and no opportunity to have my clothes pressed; hence the wrinkled condition of my suit.
We are still having a merry old time of it making ourselves understood. Several of us will sit down in a restaurant, and after a long consultation and a comparison of our respective knowledge of French, we will call a waiter and say: “Garçon, apportez le menu”; and he will say very politely: “Why, certainly, gentlemen.” We have had several experiences like this where English was spoken. The joke of it is that the officers persist in trying to talk in French when they could get along very well by speaking English.

The thing that happened on our trip over, and which I said, in a previous letter, I might tell you of, was this: We had one incident near the end of the voyage which was hair-raising. What happens often on the high seas almost happened to us. We all heaved a big sigh of relief when we got safe and sound into port. I hand it to the navy. They are wonderfully efficient and wide-awake.

I hope you received all the papers I sent you from the ship. Take the name of the paper* and then think of a cherry-tree and you may guess the riddle I put up to you, unless the censor deleted it, in a previous letter.†

I am feeling fine. I have been all over this town, as much of it as can be seen, I guess. It has a population of over 90,000.

Will write again tomorrow, if I have a chance. Love to Mama and Marj.

Kenneth.

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* "The Hatchet."
† The name of the transport, the George Washington.
Dear Pop:

I have been traveling for the last three days, and arrived this morning at our destination,* a beautiful place, situated on a famous river, at an altitude which has made this section of the country very well known as a health resort. France is the most refreshing country I have ever seen. Gardens, flowers, etc., are advanced to about the same stage that ours are in June and July. The whole country is so clean and fresh, and well laid out! The cities are beautiful, just like grand parks, and kept so clean that it continually surprises you. You overlook it for awhile, and then it suddenly impresses you anew, particularly when you consider the shortage of men.

I have never imagined a cultivation so intensive as that which exists in France today. It is marvellous; they don’t waste a square inch. I cannot express satisfactorily in words the impression the country has made on me. It is a perfect paradise, and to think that a great part of it has been devastated by a ruthless and wanton enemy is unbearable. The French people are wonderful, and, O Pop! I just wish you could see them and talk to them and hear their comments and their views on the war. I am beginning to understand and appreciate the Frenchman’s love of his country and its institutions. It was beyond me before, although we always heard and read so much of it. The war is pinching them, as you

*Chatillon-sur-Seine.
know, yet they smile and say: It is war, and we must win; no useless reviling of the enemy, no senseless cursing of the luck or fate which has plunged the whole country in mourning, but a grim determination to sacrifice everything for their country and their principles; although with the average man it seems to be more his country than anything else.

* Chartres Cathedral.  † Orleans.
in each of these places, in most cases long enough to hurriedly see all of them. I was, of course, terribly handicapped by my lack of knowledge of French, as I always went off by myself, not caring to have anyone with me. Life is surely worth living when there is so much beauty in the world, and it is a noble cause which has brought us all the way from America.

We have been billeted in the town here. It is 8.30 P. M., and I am sitting out in a pretty garden, amidst the most pleasant surroundings, writing this letter to you. The sun has not yet set, and there are a dozen different varieties of song-birds, each one singing as though trying to drown the next one out. The garden belongs, with the building in which some of us are quartered, to an old villa which has been standing some three or four hundred years, and is of some size.

Most all of such things as I am writing of, Pop, I know that you have seen, but I am so full of them that I suppose I must mention them. The censorship regulations are very stringent, and it is hard to write a letter and have to keep thinking of them all the time.

Roy Underwood is here. He was the first man I met. I have met some one I know in nearly every place I have been. I am feeling fine, a little tired after the long trip in a French railroad coach—no toilets or anything—but a great experience. We will not be here very long, and we will be worked as we never have been worked before, so will probably not have time for many long letters. Love to Mama and Marj.

Kenneth.
Dear Walter:

After three days' traveling I have arrived at the school point,* where I shall be for only a short time. By the time you receive this letter, or shortly thereafter, I hope to be at the front.

Roy Underwood is here. He is doing statistical work at H. O. Have also met Leith Speiden, who is stationed here, and Clarence Bailey is not far from here. So you see I feel quite at home. This town is beautifully situated on the banks of France's famous river. We have had perfect weather ever since landing. The country is the most refreshing I have ever seen, and one of the most beautiful. Have visited several large cities and one great cathedral; also visited the city made famous by Jeanne d'Arc. Have never seen a country so intensively cultivated, not a square foot being wasted.

Don't expect any news. There are so many things that we cannot write about, that it is difficult to write a letter with anything in it. Willis got here yesterday.

The Y. M. C. A. is doing a noble work here, and deserves all the support the people back home can give it. Wherever the American soldier is, there also is the Y. M. C. A. They give the highest exchange on money, because they do it without profit; have the only places where you can buy cigarettes, which they sell at cost price; provide baseball material, a fine library, with magazines, etc. The average soldier soon tires of walking

* Chatillon-sur-Seine.
around during his off hours. He wants to go for his recreation to some place where he is understood, and where he can speak his own language, and there is the Y. M. C. A. ready waiting for him. They furnish interpreters and guides, and on your arrival will tell you everything you want to know about the place you are in. They also provide meals.

I cannot date my letters. If I were home today I would be parading up the avenue with the old regiment in honor of the G. A. R.

Paul Bradley has been wounded, but will recover. Look occasionally at the casualty lists, as there are a bunch of our friends at the front now.

Give my very best to your father and mother and remember me to Peel. Will try and write him before I leave here. Don't forget to run down to the house once in a while, Walter, and if B. should call you up, give her all the news for my sake. Write often.

Kenneth.

LETTER CXX

The Officers' Club at Chatillon, Established and Maintained by the Y. M. C. A.—A Musical Evening.—Praise for the Y. M.—Veterans' Parades in the Future.

No. 8.—May, 1918.

Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.:

I have thoroughly explored the place in which we are located since last writing, and the farther I get the more interesting this country is. We are limited to an area
which extends four kilometres from the boundaries of the town. I am billeted in an old monastery which was built in 1226, and is still as solid as ever. It was one of Gen. Joffre’s headquarters.* We were moved after one night in the building from which I wrote my first letter from here.

The Y. M. C. A. have established an officers’ club here in an old French mansion. It has been repaired and furnished with old French furniture. There is an excellent grand piano and an organ, with one of the finest collections of music I have seen, including the scores of nearly all of the operas. The house is surrounded by spacious grounds and beautiful gardens, and

sits up high on a hill, with the river running through the estate at the bottom of it. It is a wonderfully fine place. It is open only to officers of the Allied armies. There are writing-rooms, reading-rooms, a fine lounging-room, and an immense dining-room, with Louis XIV furniture and a great candelabra. Magazines and a fine library are for the convenience of all, and it costs not a cent. The Y. M. C. A. made all the arrangements and maintain the house. It is under the management of two very fine American ladies, who make excellent hostesses.* One is made to feel at home and at his ease at once. There is a most interesting register. Each officer registers the first time he visits the club. It contains the names of officers of nearly all the Allied armies, men from all over the world. Nearly every State in the Union is represented. An officer registers his name, rank, organization, home address, college and fraternity. Then, as new ones come in, they can find men whom they may know.

I take this opportunity to tell you of the work the Y. M. C. A. is doing over here. Wherever a man in uniform goes, he finds the Y. M. C. A. hut. They provide meals, interpreters, reading, writing-rooms, paper and ink; give the highest exchange on money; supply baseball material; have tennis courts, handball and volley-ball courts, etc., etc. The average American soldier soon sees all that he wants to of the place that he happens to be in, and it is only a short time before he has a violent desire for the amusements he has always had, and the company of people who understand him and speak his language. These desires of his are gratified at the Y. M.

* Miss Julia Hurlburt and Miss Alice Macy.
C. A. He spends nearly all his off time there, in a clean atmosphere. If people ask you why they should donate money, books and so forth to the Y. M. C. A., tell them all this. We recognize the association as a very essential part of the army proper, and an institution which can do more for the morals of the men than all the regulations in the world.

At the officers' club last evening the Y. M. C. A. arranged a concert for us. Two singers, a tenor, a man enlisted by the Y. M. C. A. for the purpose, and a contralto, together with a pianist, entertained us until the singers grew hoarse. The singers were fine artists, the tenor very much like McCormack, and the contralto, a young American girl, had a beautiful voice. They sang some of my favorites, "Ai Nostri Monti" from "Il Trovatore," "Che Gelida Manina" from "La Bohème," "One Fine Day" from "Madame Butterfly," "My Laddie," "Land of the Sky-Blue Water"; and the contralto sang a series of Indian songs by the American composer Thoreau which I had never heard before, and which were beautiful. They sang in three languages. I have never spent a more enjoyable evening, principally, I suppose, because it was all so unexpected. Can you not imagine what this means to us here? Another fine thing the Y. M. C. A. is doing: These singers travel all through the zone of the advance singing to the soldiers.

We are having only two hours' drill a day this week, until school opens on Monday. I took a long walk out in the country this afternoon, looking for L'École d'Agricole, which we were told was not far outside the
city wall. I failed to find it, but had a beautiful walk, also visited the aviation field.

I suppose that if I were to be home tomorrow, and still in the old regiment, I would be parading up "the avenue" in honor of the G. A. R.* Mama used to say that when the G. A. R. went marching by she thought the end of the column would never come. Just think, Ma, what it is going to be like when we all go marching by after the war. We will make the G. A. R. look like pikers.

Let me know if the pictures get to you all right. Some of my mail may not reach you, as I find that I have addressed it wrong. The regulations in force at Brest do not hold here, and I have been following instructions received there. The censor here destroys mail not addressed in accordance with his directions.†

Am feeling fine. Remember me to Aunt A. and anyone else who may be interested.

With love,

Kenneth.

LETTER CXXI
A Memorial Service on Decoration Day.—A Dinner with Friends from Home.

No. 9.—June, 1918.

Dear Mama:

The weather continues absolutely perfect, we having had but one light shower since arriving, all the rest of the days being cloudless.

A very impressive memorial service was held here on

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* Grand Army of the Republic, veterans of the Civil War.
† Not one of his letters failed to arrive.
Decoration Day, which I attended. The graves of four Americans killed in action, and buried in a beautiful little French cemetery, were decorated and the customary military honors accorded them—three volleys and the sounding of taps. An army chaplain read Pres. Wilson’s Memorial Day proclamation and made a few well-chosen and appropriate remarks. The service was beautiful. I think the dead men were the best off of all of us in the cemetery. They have made their peace, and this world, with its Titanic struggles, its fight for existence and all its pettiness, worries them no more.

The Y. M. C. A. give another concert Sunday evening at the Officers’ Club, to which I am going. I have been invited out to dinner by Roy Underwood tonight.

I have been all over the town and seen everything two or three times over, so will be content to devote myself to my work and nothing else. The course lasts four weeks, so will be on my way by the first of July.

Willis got in yesterday. He had a day in Paris while “Bertha” was bombarding the city. He says the big gun did practically no damage.

I am feeling fine. We have an excellent mess, which costs us five francs per day, and is worth it. I have ordered a new uniform from a tailor here, price 280 francs, or $56. It is a serge, English cloth, which is far finer than ours and heavier than anything that can be obtained in the serge line at home.

Will write again tomorrow, as I will be unable to write quite so often after that, because the course begins Monday morning. Have written Rob. Let me know about him,
A day later.

I did not get this letter off yesterday, after all. Had dinner with Roy Underwood and two friends of his last evening, and it was very fine. One of his friends has a fine suite of rooms in a French house. His landlady prepared the meal. We all had a most enjoyable evening.

This is our last day of rest. We have been the luckiest detail that ever came to France, having had so much time to see the country, almost three weeks. I am feeling splendid, as I hope you all are. Of course, I am anxiously looking for mail. The delivery of mail here is more or less problematical. If a man is lucky, he will get it.

Love to all,

Kenneth.

LETTER CXXII

THE FRENCH PEOPLE AND THE Y. M. C. A. AGAIN COMMENDED.

France, 1918.

Dear Mr. Geistweit:

Have time for just a few lines to let you know I am here safe and sound. We had a perfect trip across, with fine weather all the way, with one incident highly exciting, which you will have to guess at. I spent five days at one of the great French ports, and three more travelling to my section.

You will be interested to know that I picked up a copy of the “Motion Picture Classic” in a French hotel. It certainly looked like home to see it . . . The attitude
of the French people in regard to the war is a very wonderful thing to see. They have given their all and many lives. I wish some of their spirit could be instilled into the souls of some of our stay-at-homes and non-supporters of the government. I have visited some of the famous cities of France, and many historical spots. It is all most interesting and absorbing.

If you meet anyone, Mr. Geistweit, who wants to help the man in uniform, tell him to donate to the Y. M. C. A. I cannot speak too highly of the wonderful work they are doing for our men here. Wherever the American soldier goes, the Y. M. C. A. is there ahead of him. They are along the front, behind the lines, at debarkation points—in fact, all over. . . . They are always there with just what a man in a strange country wants. I cannot begin to try and show you what these things mean to us here. The Y. M. C. A. furnishes a fine, manly, healthy environment for us all, officers and men alike. It does more to help a man to live the life his mother wants him to than any other one thing outside of his own conscience. So it deserves the support of all of our people.

Remember me to George, and tell him to give my best to his sister. Hope business is good. Write me soon.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Gow.
LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

LETTER CXXIII

HARD WORK AT THE CHATILLON SCHOOL.

No. 10.—June 9, 1918.

Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.:

Our course began on Monday, as I wrote you, and I haven’t had a single minute since to write. This is Sunday. I wrote last a week ago. We begin work at 7 A. M. (reveillé at 5.30 A. M.) and continue straight through until 9 P. M., with three-quarters of an hour for mess. The course is terrible. I have never had to work before like this. They are shooting the stuff at us faster than you would think anyone could possibly absorb it—lecture after lecture and then field work. You sink or swim, are rated either good or deficient, and we have to work like fiends or flunk the course, and it is the finish of us if we do.

Today, Sunday, I spent all morning at the school, going over some work I thought I needed, and all afternoon in the field on map work. It is all very intricate, and needs practice, practice and then more practice. It is simply work all the time. Men come home at 9.30 in the evening and just flop into bed.

I have written Rob only once. Be sure and let me know about him. I hope none of my mail was on the President Grant when she went down. Have read of the sub raid along the coast of the U. S. Cannot comment on it, of course. The weather still continues perfect, with a cloudless sky. The days are very hot and the nights very cool—a beautiful climate. “Sunny France” is right, but I am afraid it won’t be always so. The win-
letters are very disagreeable, according to our men who have been here.

I am going to the officers' club for a little while this evening, for some relaxation. Tell Walter how busy I am, and why I cannot write. I ought to hear from you shortly, if my mail finds me, which is always doubtful. Am feeling fine, and am as brown as a berry.

Hoping you are all well.

Kenneth.

LETTER CXXIV

A Military and Athletic Tournament.—Georges Carpentier.—Lectures by Officers of Highland Regiments.—Exams.

No. 11.—June 16, 1918.

Dear Marj.:

Our course goes merrily on. I have certainly put in a hectic two weeks. Mail is coming in to a lot of the men, so I am on the lookout. I really cannot expect any mail here, because I told you all to address it care of the company, and it will go where it is. By the time mail addressed to me care of the 27th Div. School Detachment gets here I shall be gone. I acted on instructions, but it is rather mixed up.

The authorities, in conjunction with the French Army, gave the entire school an exhibition of bayonet fighting, grenade throwing, fencing, all kinds of athletic stunts and gymnasium work, straight wrestling, Roman wrestling, jiujitsu, personal combat, boxing, etc., etc. It was very interesting, a great sight. About thirty of France's famous athletes, who are instructors in the
army, and all of whom are unfit for service now by reason of deafness, loss of an eye, etc., gave the exhibition. It was staged in a great field beside our barracks, and the many-colored uniforms of the French officers, mingled with those of nearly every other allied army, and mixed with the more sober color of our own, was a great sight. The athletes were fine specimens, and their work as good as can be seen anywhere.

The famous Georges Carpentier gave a wonderful exhibition of boxing. He is perfectly built and exceedingly good-looking. He does not look like a Frenchman; has very regular features and thick yellow hair. He is a second lieutenant in the French Army. France's two champion fencers also gave an exhibition. It was all very fine and a great relaxation from the grind.

We also had two interesting lectures this week, one by a captain of the Gordon Highlanders and the other by an officer from another Scotch regiment. Both are instructors here. Exams are coming thick and fast. One I passed, one I just got by on, and the other I flunked flat. So it goes. Things are coming fast.

I suppose you know that Gaddy has been commissioned. I don't know whether he has landed in our company or not; haven't been able to find out. News we get none. I buy the Paris edition of the Herald every day, but, of course, it has no news in it. I see that the subs are still around the coast and that New York is dark. Has Pop managed to get the garden made? Send me all the news. Remember me to Aunt A.; I cannot write her. Am well.

Ken.
Dear Mother:

Your letters of the 15th and 21st of May came today, just exactly one month to a day after the last one was mailed. Believe me, I tell you I am a happy gink. I cannot tell you how glad I am to get your mail; almost two months is a long time. Al* forwarded them to me from the company.

Your news of Rob most interesting. I shall write him immediately, in the hope that I can get in touch with him. I am sorry he did not get home, but you were fortunate in being with him for a day.

In the same mail with yours I also received a letter from Palmer and a wedding announcement from Don Walker, which latter was mailed to me at Camp Wadsworth and went all the way to America and back again to France to me.

I left you on a Sunday night, boarded the transport on Tuesday and we left the dock on Wednesday evening just between 5.15 and 5.45, about the time Pop would be going across the Hudson on his way home, and I have often wondered if he saw a great transport ship backing out from right beside the ferry slip. We were all ordered down below and not allowed on deck until the harbor was cleared. So the last I saw of our country was only the faint outline of the shore in the setting sun.

I will be looking for mail regularly now. You should have heard of my safe arrival before the last let-

* Lt. Harry.
ter was mailed, as we were in five days before you wrote it.

Am feeling fine and working like Sam Hill. Al wishes me to remember him to you. I don't know where the regiment is. Gaddy is commissioned in our company.

Love to all.  

Ken.

LETTER CXXVI

"Sunny" France Shows Another Side.—Going to the Flanders Front.—The Last Word in Machine Guns.—Getting Better Acquainted with the Britisher.

No. 13.—June 21, 1918.

Dear Pop, Mama and Marj.:

This is just to wish Marj. many happy returns of the day. Our fair and sunny France has completely disappeared. It has been raining all week, and now we understand why so much woollen clothing is recommended. You certainly need it when it gets wet.

June 23.

I received a letter from Rob yesterday telling me of his safe arrival in this country . . . The weather is still wet; it has rained steadily for a week. Today (Sunday) it looks as though it might clear, but the weather is very fickle. The sun may be shining brightly, and, before you notice, it has clouded over and is pouring . . . When it rains here you need something which is very warm as well as waterproof.
Do you remember me talking about the Irish sergeant-major who was our instructor when I took the English bayonet and physical course? Do you remember me saying what part of the front he had been in, and that I hoped we would never go there. Well, it is a funny thing, but that is just where we are going. If you can recollect, you will know where I will be.*

The Browning Machine Gun.

We had a wonderful demonstration of nearly all the machine guns of the world yesterday, including German guns which had been captured and the latest success of our own country. We have the last word in machine guns in our own, the Browning. We have not got them for use here, but all troops home are being equipped with the Browning, according to latest advices.

We pull out of here one week from today. I expect to visit France’s big city. While here I have had a better opportunity to meet and know the Britisher, and I certainly like him. The few that I have heretofore met

* Flanders.
and known—referring to Englishmen—have not been typical. There are a great many Scotch officers here of the Gordons and the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, and they are fine fellows, as are the English officers. We have a lot of French officers also who are fine men and speak excellent English. Two of them are Cornell graduates.

Ken.

LETTER CXXVII

NEARING THE END OF THE SCHOOL COURSE.

No. 14.—June, 1918.

Dear Pop:

I have just come back to our barracks after the evening session. We are getting only field work this week, with a lot of night work. We fired a barrage over the heads of our own men last night, using twenty-four guns. It was a raid problem, and was very successful.

It has cleared again, and the weather is beautiful. We leave here on Monday, so have just four days more. I will be more than glad to get back to the regiment, for I have missed the company.

I suppose you have read Gen. March’s statement concerning the number of U. S. troops here now. It is mighty fine.

The stories about discomfort are grossly exaggerated. Our greatest hardship is the terrible scarcity of cigarettes and tobacco. I am going to be in a bad way when my present supply is exhausted. It is almost done now, and, as you probably know, we cannot have any parcel post mailed to us.
I bought myself a rain-coat for 255 francs, and right afterwards the Q. M. announced that they would sell these coats for $19.50. A lot of our men have bought Bedford cloth breeches, which cost from 250 to 350 frs., and the Q. M. now sell them for $6.50.

I will write again before I leave, for we shall be two or three days on the way, and I will be unable to write.

I hope you are all well. I am feeling fine and weigh about 190 lbs. Enclosed is a “snap” taken here by one of the men.

Love to Mama and Marj.

Kenneth.
LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

LETTER CXXVIII

Burrowing Like a Mole.—Unearthing Fossils.

No. 15.—June 27, 1918.

Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.:

I have only two more days of school. I will be here one day, and then we leave to rejoin the division. I have just received a letter from Helmuth, who is in the company, as I wrote.

We are doing altogether field and night work now. I have been burrowing in the ground like a mole; have three or four blisters on each hand. Yesterday I broke three picks, and today I "bust" another one. Pretty like me, you will say. The soil here is the rockiest I ever saw. I don’t understand how they ever plough it, or how they raise such fine crops. It is almost solid rock, which breaks into small flat pieces when you drive a pick into it. There is much lime in the soil, and the rock is full of fossils. We broke it open and found perfect moulds of fish, shells and all kinds of what once had been sea life. It is most interesting.

Tomorrow we spend in camouflage, and the day following we wind things up with a big manœuvre. We will have all branches of the service represented, including aeroplanes.

I will write once more from here, and then probably will not have a chance again until I get back with the company.

Am feeling fine, and we are having delightful weather again.

Kenneth.
LETTER CXXIX

Clothing Required by Orders Now Found Useless. — Fifty Pounds of Baggage Only. — Cherry Time.

No. 16.—June 30, 1918.

Dear Pop:

I am all packed up, ready to leave tomorrow morning. We are reduced to fifty pounds baggage; all else has left here already for storage. The chances are that we will never see it again. Those things which we were required to buy just before we left the U. S. are nearly all useless. I have had to throw away five or six suits of light summer underwear, my cotton and linen shirts, a lot of handkerchiefs and heaven knows what all. I did not have room in my luggage to pack it. I have packed two of my blankets, which are surplus, and my overcoat in my trunk. I hope that it will be some place where I can get at it when winter comes.* We haven’t the slightest idea where our baggage is being sent. Three other officers have some of my things. One has packed a wool uniform for me, one my cotton uniform, and another has leggings and some other things. I tried to get another trunk, but could not find one in the whole town. So my effects are scattered all over. From all this you will gather that we will go “right in.” We get our travel orders at four o’clock this afternoon. We finished our course yesterday with a big manœuvre, and there are certainly a lot of happy men here.

It is cherry time in the Province of Côte d’Or. The cherries are fine, and you will know that I have eaten

* These articles were in his trunk when sent home.
my share. I expect to find some mail waiting for me when I rejoin the company. I will have a chance to read it with one eye and watch the Hun with the other.

Am feeling fine. Love to Mama and Marj.

Kenneth.

LETTER CXXX

Chasing the Division.—Beautiful but Devastated France.—The Inconceivable Panorama of War.—A Gathering of the Nations.

No. 17.—July 4, 1918.

Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.:

We have been chasing the division for four days and have not found it yet. I am in a British officers' club and rest-house in a town on the North Sea.* I have had many and varied experiences these last four days, the chief of which is the loss of every blessed thing I own except what I have on my back. That means about $600 worth of equipment. It happens to every one sooner or later, so I may as well be philosophical about it and start in again. I have talked to British officers who have lost their kits four and five times. When you get into the lines you always lose everything. It is an expensive game. In my case the railroad did it. There is no come-back.

I witnessed an air raid on Paris. We came down the Seine valley to Rouen, one of the most beautiful sights imaginable. All of the country up here is war-torn, the towns practically levelled flat by bombardment. I was in Abbeville, which is more or less of a wreck.

* The English Channel.
Pop, I guess, has seen the Seine valley, so he knows how beautiful it is. I spent six hours in Mantes, a fine city. By a good map you will see where these places are.

We have ridden in all kinds of cars and trains. Our last lap was made in an Italian freight car, which was as dirty as a pigsty. All in the game. You see nothing but troops, troops and troops. I have seen and talked to all kinds of officers, French, English, Scotch, Australian, Canadian, Senegalese, Moroccan, Algerian, Portuguese, Italian, etc. It seems as if the whole world were here. War equipment, big guns, soldiers, nurses, etc., all in a never-ceasing stream come and go. It is a marvellous sight, and absolutely never conceived by the most imagin-
ative fiction writers. People at home cannot begin to realize what France and England and their colonies are doing in this war until they have seen what we have.

All through this forward zone or area the British have great rest-camps established, with fine clubs for the officers. Hundreds of English girls have been sent out as waitresses, chambermaids, cashiers, etc. They are all enlisted in the W. A. A. C.* Ask Daisy what this is; I don't know yet.

I like the Britishers, particularly the Australians. The officers are all gentlemen. The Englishman has a reserve very hard to break through, but once it is down he is very much a human being. Most of the Scotchmen I have met have been bully fellows, but certainly I have bumped into a couple of sour ones. These two I refer to would curdle the very milk they drink. We had some fine ones back at the school. I came up on the train with an officer of the Seaforth Highlanders. The Australians seem to be the particular cronies of all the American troops. They are more like ourselves than any of the other allies. They think the U. S. troops are great, and tell us so. They are grand fighters themselves, and have a fine reputation with the allied armies.

I have seen a great deal of France, all the way from near the Swiss border to the sea, and I am not through yet. I have been all through the ground over which the battle of the Marne was fought, fields dotted with the graves of the French soldiers who fell there. People have come back to their homes and have cultivated the ground again, field after field of crops planted all around the graves and wooden crosses, which have not been dis-

* Women's Army Auxiliary Corps.
turbed. There are many, many things of which I am aching to tell you, but the censorship regulations forbid.

The division is on the move, hence our long chase. Last night I slept in a hotel, and the floor of the room I occupied was covered with broken glass, the effects of a bomb dropped a short time previously. It is expensive as the dickens, this travelling. Will stop, as I am to go bathing in the Mer du Nord. I expect it will be cold as ice, but I am going in.

I hope you are all well and that everything is fine. Have Walter read this letter and tell him to remember me to his family.

Ken.

LETTER CXXXI

TOASTING THE FOURTH.—PRACTICAL JOKING WITH SERIOUS RESULTS.

No. 18.—Officer’s Rest-House & Mess,

July 5, 1918.

Dear Mama, Pop and Marj.:

I have just finished a fine English breakfast and have bought me a Corona cigar. There was a great celebration of the Fourth here last night, which I must tell you of.

There are several hundred British officers here,* Canadian, Scotch, English and Irish, and fifty-six Americans. Things were quiet in the afternoon, but along toward six o’clock they started to look up. By nine o’clock at night things were whooping. About seventy-five per cent. of the club were roaring drunk,

* Etaples.
and the drunkest of the bunch were gentlemen named Wallace, Brennan, Cameron and the like. Our men behaved very well and those who drank carried their liquor like gentlemen. Most of these officers are just out of the line, so you can imagine how easy it was for them to cut loose. No one disgraced himself, but the Fourth was certainly toasted with vehemence.

I didn’t finish this letter as I had hoped to do, but went to the beach instead with a crowd of our men, all from our party, which resulted in an accident which has made us all feel pretty much cut up. There were four British aviators flying over the town and up and down the beach. They started getting funny almost as soon as we arrived. They would suddenly swoop down at a group on the beach, and, just before getting to them, would elevate enough to clear their heads. They kept at it so much and came so close that some of us got off the beach for fear of getting hurt. Four of our men remained, and after a while one of the aviators came back and did the same thing again—flew down the beach a few hundred yards, turned around and headed for the same four officers, whom he had just made to flatten themselves on the ground, only this time he miscalculated his distance and hit two of them. They are second lieutenants, both fine fellows, and were in my squad at our school. The other two, a captain who was my squad leader and another second lieutenant, managed to flatten themselves out in time and escaped uninjured. One of the men hit, whose name is Perkins and an old friend of Dick’s, is not hurt very badly, and will probably get out of the hospital in about two weeks. The other man got
it in the back. It broke several ribs, and the doctors are afraid that both his kidneys and liver have been punctured. Both these men were commissioned from the officers’ training camp just before we left home. It was certainly a strange idea of a joke. These blasted aviators had been terrifying every one on the beach all morning. We are, of course, mad through and through. We got the number of the machine and have sent in a complaint through channels which we are certain are going to see it through. We have sent in a report to headquarters. British officers who witnessed the accident have helped us in every way. The incident has put a gloom on our stay here, which otherwise has been very pleasant.

There are some wonderful hospitals here, and hundreds of Canadian and English girls and women, who are nurses, clerks, waitresses, truck-drivers, automobile drivers; in fact, everything. England must have an enormous army of women in service, and they are doing fine work.

We are off after the division again tomorrow morning. I don’t know what I am going to do for clothes and an outfit. It doesn’t seem possible to get a thing so far up. This place has been a famous resort, and we would have enjoyed it more if it had not been for this damnable accident. It is bad enough to lose men in battle, but to have them put out of commission as the result of a practical joke, by some irresponsible kid of an English aviator who was showing off, is the limit.

I am feeling fine, and think that I shall have some tea and biscuits, like the Britishers here, as it is four o’clock. Ken.
LETTER CXXXII

Rejoins His Company.—Attention from “Fritz.”
—Every American Proud of His Country.
—Comfortable and no Cooties.

No. 19.—July 8-9, 1918.

Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.:  

Have found the company at last.* July 9.—This is as far as I got yesterday. I have been very busy, and everything has been suddenly and unexpectedly upset by the transfer of Capt. Whitney. The company is terribly cut up over it, for Capt. Whitney has a wonderful personality which wins everyone.

We had a long chase after the company and arrived at a small town of the same name as the mill Pop’s people had.† Then came a series of “lorry jumpings,” as they call it; that is, riding truck trains. After about forty miles of this I finally found the company, receiving a fine welcome.

There were three letters, one from each of you, waiting for me, the last one dated June 2d. Pop’s letter fine. Glad you received my first mail and that everyone is well. The A. J. C. C. exhibit was quite a success, which is gratifying.

This country is very interesting. The company has been continually on the march until yesterday, when they rejoined the regiment and have settled down to work. We are camped in an open field, with the stars

* At Winnezeele, Belgium.
† Watten, about thirty kilometres east of Calais. There is a parish named Watten in the North of Scotland, County of Caithness.
for cover. A woman prepares the officers’ meals in a nearby house. We take our rations to her and she cooks them. We are eating remarkably well.

We had two showers last night, one of rain and one of shrapnel, both heavy and both equally harmless. Fritz took a notion to bombard the whole landscape, and succeeded in keeping us awake for a little while. The men are all out picking up bits of shell this morning for souvenirs. Our artillery got busy, and Fritz called quits.

It was very considerate of the P. O. to call you up about my mail. I received a letter from Otto, but none from Walter. Show him this letter and tell him to write all he can. I also received a church calendar of May 26 from Mrs. H. L. Austin.

Wasn’t the Fourth a grand day? I am sending a copy of the continental edition of an English paper. You probably have read of the honors accorded our country in London and Paris. The announcement of our million men and the report of the Shipping Board made every
American here hold his head up with pride. These are great times.

I can’t tell you how glad I am to be back with my own men. I was disappointed in not seeing Al and Gaddy, who are away at school. This is about all the news. I want to turn in early, because Fritz is going to wake us up when he starts his damnable guns agoing a little later.

I am comfortable as can be, and have not made the acquaintance of a cootie yet. Mr. Cootie has been vastly over-estimated. He presents no terrors, and if he does happen to have the temerity to put in an appearance, he is very easy to put the quietus on. Let Aunt A. read my letters and give her my love. It is absolutely essential that I cut my correspondence down to the minimum, so I will not attempt to write her.

I will write again in a day or two, and meanwhile will look for more mail every day.

Ken.

LETTER CXXXIII

Getting Into Harness Again.—Regiment Quite Spread.

No. 20.—July 11, 1918.

Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.:

I am beginning to feel at home again with the company. It is very hard to step right in and take a hold of things after so long an absence. The sudden transfer of Capt. Whitney also upset things considerably. This morning I took our transport out to an inspection by
certain division authorities. You wouldn’t recognize the company. We look more like a battery of artillery than anything else. Everything is carried in limbers.

We are having a very showery week—the sun shining and then suddenly a downpour of rain. Fritz left us alone last night, so slept uninterruptedly. I don’t know why; perhaps he was short of ammunition. He will probably make up for it tonight.

All the men from Summit are well. I have not seen Eddy; in fact, I have seen but one or two companies of the regiment. We are scattered over a large area of ground. It is very difficult to find billets, and more difficult yet to find a field for drill and camping purposes, owing to the fact that nearly every bit of ground is cultivated, and fields that are not are pasture.

I met Capt. Bates on the road this morning. I was glad to see him. He gave me all the news he had of Summit. He has received letters up to June 12th. The mayor seems to have got into a real rumpus with Hearst, and there is a threat to suppress the Summit Record. So you seem to be keeping things on the move. Send me the Summit Herald.

I did not come through England, as you must know now from my letters. Rob did. I hope you have heard from him. Tell Walter to get on the job and write, and if Pop sees Otto let him tell him that I received his letter.

Everything fine. Affectionately,

Ken.
Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.: 

I received a letter from each of you today, two from Walter (which I was certainly glad to get) and one from Mrs. Austin, these letters dated June 8, 10 and 15. Am glad you are all well.

Marj. is thinking that I am getting ahead of her in French. I am not; my knowledge of the French language is very limited. Here is a sample of Yankee French that I heard one of our men handing out to the woman who owns the farm on which we are billeted. She has a lot of hens which do not lay, and after a long harangue succeeded in conveying this meaning to the man. He said: "Oui, I compre. Beaucoup chick mal de mort." By which he meant: "You have many chickens which are of no use; kill them." He emphasized this remark by drawing his finger significantly across his throat. To appreciate this, you should see the absolute confidence with which they get off stuff like this. The people listen with patience to this terrible slaughter of their language, and furthermore always seem to understand. I have no time to try and learn any French. People here understand either French or Dutch, or a mixture of these.

It is awfully good to hear from home. I cannot be-
gin to express in words just how much it means. Pop's letters are particularly fine, and worth a million. Mrs. Austin's letter was very fine indeed, written in the name of some organization of the church. It is a really good letter and much appreciated—so good that I feel impelled to answer it.

Marj.'s letter from Oyster Bay says she will finish her school work on the 28th. That is good, for now she will be with you, and I hope she stays home next Fall.

I saw Eddy tonight for the first time. He has been turned down on his commission; no reason given.* I am sorry, for it would have meant so much to his mother. He says he does not want to write home and tell them. I talked the best I could to him.

My lack of French has been a serious handicap, for I have been over so much of the country, and travelling in a very leisurely manner. I can read a little of it—know what "Defence d'uriner" means, for instance. This is not a very genteel thing to write about, but it has an amusing side. The whole of France is plastered with these signs, particularly the cities. This became necessary, an indignant Frenchman told me, when the English Army began to appear in large numbers in French cities. The English, it seems, shocked even the sense of propriety of the French in this particular, which is going some, as Pop will appreciate if he remembers Paris. In case English-speaking people should not understand, there are also many signs in a queer mixture of French and American slang. Don't know why I should write so much about such a subject, but it struck us all at first as a peculiarity.

* This commission came along all right later on.
I have a beautiful little chestnut mare to ride. She is a blooded animal and very high-strung, but gentle as a kitten. She is just out of the hospital, having been gassed. She has a wonderful gait, and is well broken as a saddle animal, the finest horse I have had yet. I will try and send a picture of her. She is going to come in fine on cold nights on the march, for I shall sleep beside her.

Jun received some Summit Heralds, and I read in the issue of May 24 of my safe arrival in France, and of some other happenings. Mr. Franklin has certainly started things, and has put Summit on the map. Glad to meet here anyone I know. I think that I would even greet old man X—— with some degree of cordiality if I should meet him, it seems so good to meet anyone from home.

This is a long letter, but I felt like writing tonight. It is now getting dark and I must stop. Jerry’s big guns are beginning to register, which warns me that it is time to get below the level of things. “Jerry” is the Cockney appellation for the Germans.

Glad you connected up concerning the name of the transport. She is next to the biggest and finest. Will take Marj.’s advice and try and not go near a German. All I want to see of him is his back. We have had a solid week of rain. My new coat has been worth all I paid for it. I almost forgot to tell you my baggage miraculously turned up yesterday, after we were informed that all chance of us getting it was gone. I needed it badly.

Love to all,

Ken.
LETTER CXXXV

The Grid System Explained.—A Thousand Things to Tell About, “If I Ever Get Back.”

July 13, 1918.

Dear Walter:

Received your letters Nos. 2 and 3 today. They are the first I have received from you, and I cannot tell you how welcome they are. No. 2 is one of the best letters I have ever received from any one.

Received two letters from Rob in the same mail with yours. He also speaks of Gene’s* death, and evidently feels quite cut up about it. They were very great friends, as you know. It brings the war awfully close. I heard today that Paul Bradley had been killed, but have not been able to verify it from the casualty list. He appeared on it in June as being wounded, but not fatally. Ruford Franklin got his, too. He was terribly burned when his aeroplane took fire. He will recover. He has made a big name for himself over here by the sterling quality of his work. About six other men whom I know more or less have been either wounded or killed.

I have been back with the company just a week. For my experiences in finding it, I will have to refer you to my letters home, which I have asked them to show you.

Glad you went down and took a look at old Barnegat. You bet, Walter, a long vacation for us when I get back! A cruise it will be, and I shall be able to navigate for us. My training on the subject has been most intensive, for, as you probably know, all of our work is done from a

*Lt. Eugene P. Hubbard, Summit, N. J., killed in action March, 1918.
map, the like of which you have never seen. Every move we make, we have to chart our course, so to speak. It was slightly confusing at first, for in Europe they use what is termed Grid north, and all compass variations, in figuring bearings, are converted into Grid bearings. The Grid line is a true north and south line, like a meridian,

Kenneth Gow in his Boat on Barnegat Bay

which runs through Brussels. At home, as you know, we use magnetic north, or, if we want to use true north, the compass variation is simply deducted from the magnetic reading, which gives a true north bearing. But here, if we use a compass, we convert all of our magnetic bearings to Grid. If we have no compass, we take Grid
bearings direct from our map by means of a protractor. On the move we have to resect our positions continually; that is, ascertain our position on the ground when we don’t know it on the map, or our position on the map when we don’t know it on the ground. This is just what the mariner does. They had a terrible battle beating it into my bean, but it seeped through finally. It is wonderfully interesting work. So you and I, Walter, will go a-cruising as never before.

Your letter from Cleveland reminded me of Peel, and some one else also, now that I think of it. Give Peel my best and tell him to write. I wish he were over here with us.

We get copiously sprinkled with shrapnel and shell at odd times, which adds to the zest of life here. Rob is now up right behind the lines. Our regiment is scattered over a wide area, some of them billeted and some camped. We are in shelter-tents. There are a dozen
things I would give a thousand francs to be able to tell you, but cannot and comply with the censorship regulations. If I ever get back, I am going to have enough to talk to you about for months.

Our guns have just opened up on some Hun aero-planes as I write. Shells are bursting all around them, and they are climbing. This is an every-day occurrence. The company is in excellent shape, and everyone from Summit well. Alan Eggers, Tommy O’Shea and Jun send their regards. Packages are “defendu.”

I have the most wonderful little chestnut mare you ever saw. She is blooded, and has just come out of the hospital. She was gassed up at the front, but is now as sound as ever.

Ken.

LETTER CXXXVI

An Aerial Combat.—A Summons to Appear Before the British Chancery Court.

July 14, 1918.

Dear Marj.:

I have just witnessed the most thrilling thing I have ever seen or hope to see, an aerial combat,* and I am going to tell you about it while my impressions are vivid. It happened just fifteen minutes ago.

Looking up into the sky, we observed three Hun planes flying almost over our heads. While we watched two other planes suddenly appeared above them and headed almost straight down at them. The three scattered, and one of our planes went after two of the Ger-

* Near Winnezeele.
mans, who beat it like scared bats out of Hades. The other took on the remaining German right over our heads. There was a succession of ducking, diving, falling and flying upside down, nose dives, tail spins, and all the tactics of aeroplane fighting, such as you cannot imagine. The Hun one time got over our plane and dove straight at it, but he was out-maneuved in the neatest possible way. The other aviator threw his plane out of control and dropped head-over-tail for a thousand feet, then suddenly righted his plane, shot up in the air again over the German, who was plunging straight down. The German straightened out, but our plane was above and behind him, and the aviator cut loose on the Hun and it was all over with Fritz. He dropped like a plummet.

There was fighting in the air all night long last night right over us, so our sleep was interrupted considerably. Night flying must be a thrilling experience.

Today is Bastille Day in France, and a holiday for everyone. Our army is joining in the celebration, but the fact that it is a holiday makes no difference with us up here.

The enclosed* was delivered to me by mistake. I have taken it up with the British P. O. They say there is no use now in forwarding it; so I have written the attorneys that their summons was delivered to the wrong Lt. Kenneth Gow. It was meant for a lieutenant of the same name in the British service. He could not be found, and it finally was forwarded to me. Pop may be interested. He might look up the family tree and see if there is any connection. It is an odd coincidence.

We are to be relieved tomorrow morning, and will go away back of the lines. We will be separated from the regiment again.

Love,

Ken.

LETTER CXXXVII

The Low Country and Its Bogs.—Navigating the Transport.—Vile Beer and Worse Water.—A Typical French Farm.

No. 22.—July 17, 1918.

Dear Pop:

We have been on the move for the last two days, and have now settled in a small hamlet* for a week anyway. In coming back we passed through country that is very interesting. I had to take our transport around an enormous swamp,† interlaced with canals, on a road built up on the marsh. The heat was terrific; it reminded me of the Missouri Valley when we passed through it on our way to the Border, very hot and sultry. The humidity must have been one hundred per cent. The natives build their homes in the midst of all this water. Their foundations must be on artificial elevations; in most cases a large fill in the rear of the houses, with luxuriant gardens and a soil black as night. There are great peat bogs. Every house had a big plot of peat, cut and turned over to dry. They use boats, and the canals are their channels for transportation and conveyance. It is hard to conceive how such a life can be healthy, but it evi-

* Etrehem, about ten kilometres northwest of St. Omer, west of Cassel.
† At St. Momelin.
dently is. I wondered if any of the dozen kids every home seems to have ever fall off the back porch and get drowned.

The roads were terrible, as a result of incessant rain. I had the worst job I ever had in my life, moving my transport over them. Two mules and their driver went off a bridge on one occasion, and we lost a lot of precious time getting them out of the bog, which had to be done by block and fall. Another time a limber went the same way, but finally I brought the whole transport in. I simply have to get there, or the company does not eat.

I always take a different route. I am given my destination and the rest is up to me. I have map and compass, and that is all. If I am in doubt at any time, I just get out my instruments and resect and then intersect my position. That is, I find my position on the map when I know it on the ground, or find it on the ground when I know it on the map. If I don't know either, I have to employ another method. All this is just about what the navigator of a ship does when he wants to place himself on his chart. Absolutely everything is figured from maps which are furnished us, and are the most wonderfully helpful things I have ever seen.

We cleared out of our last place* in good shape. The organization next to ours had twenty-four casualties. I was just a few hundred feet from them. We are intact.

The accounts we read before we sailed of German atrocities were not exaggerated a bit. I have seen the evidences of them with my own eyes, and have been in places of absolutely no military importance while the

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* St. Momelin, near Nieurlet, about five kilometres from St. Omer.
Hun was bombing them at night from aeroplanes. All towns are systematically harassed. The people sleep in the fields at night, and come back into the towns again during the day. Old men, the women and the boys are working the farms.

Here at our present station are the largest farms I have seen in France, and, if possible to judge in a country where the farming is universally so good, they are the best. At my billet there is a man seventy-nine years old who limps off to work at five o'clock in the morning and works until 8.30 or 9.00 at night. This is typical; they all do it, men and women. All farms have fine herds, but I cannot make out the breed. They are larger and heavier than Jerseys, but somewhat similar in type. I have seen hundreds of them, and they are without exception of one color, a very dark reddish brown, without any distinctive marks. They may be Guernseys, but I doubt it, and they may be Brown Swiss. You can perhaps tell from the description.

The weather is the hottest we have struck in France, and very muggy, due to the low altitude. Capt. Andrews is fine, and very efficient. He is the famous Ham Andrews of Princeton, the football player. I saw him play once in a game between Princeton and Yale. He is twenty-nine.

The water problem here is very serious—that is, to find water fit to cook with and to drink. We have to haul it for miles. This is true nearly all over the country. We drink a lot of beer simply because drinking-water is so scarce. There is any quantity of beer and vin ordinaire. It is vile stuff.
The country in this area is luxuriant, with everything growing rank, due to the warm rains. I am decidedly taken with the country and its people. The house where I am billeted* is a tremendous construction of two stories, built around a big court-yard, forming a complete square. In the middle of this square or court is the dung-heap. The buildings all run together, and include the living-quarters, help’s quarters, barn, granary, tool-house, etc., also the hen-house and pigsty. Every door opens out into the court. The children walk in and out of the house and my room with an air of impudent familiarity. It’s a great life. I would like to write lots more, Pop, but the light is failing very fast.

We have left the regiment and are miles away from it. Mama can tell Mrs. Jones that Roger is fine, and the best soldier in the company. Am exceedingly well, and awfully glad to hear that you are all the same.

Affectionately,

Kenneth.

LETTER CXXXVIII

DETACHED ON RANGE WORK.—ON BRITISH RATIONS.

No. 23.—July 20, 1918.

Dear Mama:

It is late Saturday afternoon, and we have finished work for the day. I spent all day yesterday on the range very profitably, and will probably go on it again tomorrow. I haven’t the slightest idea how long we will be here. I have not had a letter since we left the regiment, and probably will not get any until we rejoin it. Our

* At Etrehem.
company has been with the regiment only one week during our entire tour of duty overseas. It seems to be an assumed fact that we eventually will be detached permanently and corpsed. However, that has not become official, and we are still a part of the old regiment.

The officers (there are only three of us, Capt. Andrews, our U. S. R., a second lieutenant temporarily attached, and myself) are eating at a farmhouse a short distance from our billet. We furnish our own rations, which are drawn from the company, and consist chiefly of beef or mutton, potatoes (new ones now), ham, beans, bacon, sometimes fresh pork, etc. We have all the jam we want, mostly marmalade, damson, plum or apple, all put up by Keiler, of Dundee and London. You see we are on the British ration. One of the women cooks for us, and our meals are just as fine as one would want anywhere. We have fresh butter every day, made on the farm, which is the finest I have ever eaten; also lots of cheese made by themselves, and their own brew of beer. We have salads too, and the farm furnishes us
with fresh eggs for breakfast every morning. The French can fry potatoes such as I have never tasted before, real French fried. I almost forgot to mention the turnips. I remember Pop talking of how turnips tasted in Scotland. I never really cared for them until I ate them here, and now I am quite crazy to get them. Until you have tasted a European turnip, you don't know what turnips should taste like. Everything is most pleasant and agreeable here. The water shortage is the only thing, and that is more or less typical of the entire country.

You have undoubtedly read of the brilliant success of the latest French offensive. It is grand news, and we are intently watching our sources of information for news of a farther advance.

I am sitting in a billet, an old stable, where we keep our picketline material and harness, writing this letter. Roger is sitting beside me at the same thing. It is raining very hard, which it manages to do every day, or rather at least once every twenty-four hours. I am feeling fine, but all-fired tired. Running a company with but three officers is hard work.

With love,

Ken.

LETTER CXXXIX
About Water, Wine and the Y. M. C. A.

France, July 20, 1918.

Dear Walter:

I wrote you a long letter about a week ago. For subsequent happenings, which were certainly interesting, would refer you to Nos. 24, 25, and 26 to home.
We are here for range work. When that is finished I haven't the slightest idea as to where our next move will be. We are in one of the most fertile parts of France I have yet been in. The very things that I feel most like writing you about are "defendu." We are again detached from the regiment. In fact, the company has been with the regiment but one week during its entire tour of duty overseas.

Heard from Rob again, and he is O. K. I have been told that Bradley, instead of being killed, was awarded the Croix de Guerre for conspicuous bravery. Everyone in the company from Summit is well.

I wish you were over here with me. It is wonderfully interesting, absorbing and thrilling. If I come out I know that I shall never crave for more excitement, and will probably be willing to stay put.

Roger Jones is sitting beside me, and he has asked me to be remembered to you. The water question here is very serious. It is almost impossible to obtain water that is fit to cook with and drink, and we have to haul it for miles. Am billeted very comfortably, and living on the fat of the land. There is no water to drink, but all of the beer and *vin ordinaire* that one wants. It is vile stuff, though. In southern, central and western France the wines are fine. Each locality is famous for its particular wine—the Bordeaux country, the Bourgogne or Burgundy districts, the Champagne country, etc. Excellent champagne can be had for ten francs, or about $1.90, per quart bottle. It can be had cheaper than that, and you can pay as high as twenty francs occasionally, but this is exceptional. If by any chance through your
work you have the opportunity to come to France, jump at it. It will be a wonderful experience.

The Y. M. C. A. is doing a fine work here. They have their huts everywhere, and are often the only people who can supply cigarettes. It is a serious thing to be out of cigarettes when you want one. I think we would all stand hours of discomfort and exposure for one smoke.

Write all that you can, for you cannot appreciate how welcome your mail is. Give my very best to your family, and my love to L.

Kenneth.

LETTER CXL
A Stirrup Note.

No. 24.—July 21, 1918.

Dear Marj.:

I had planned to write you a long letter today (Sunday), but it is impossible, for I have been ordered to report at another town some miles from here by four o’clock, and I won’t be back until late tonight, so I am scribbling this note while the orderly is saddling my mare.

It rained all morning, but has cleared up beautiful and cool this afternoon, so I am going to have a delightful ride through some grand farm country—fields and fields of grain and turnips, which dip into valleys and rise in long, gentle slopes on the other side and disappear over the top of the next hill. How I wish that you might see it! We have nothing like it. No wonder the French have put up such a fight for their country.
Enclosed are some films I cannot get printed here. Have them printed and give a set to Mrs. W. and send back a set to me. Most of them were snapped when we weren’t looking. You can easily spot me, for I am the biggest of the gang—in fact, I am bigger than I ever was. The other men are Willis and men from the division at the school, all machine-gunners.

We lost another officer today, and now there are only the captain and myself. Some work! I wish you were going with me on this ride.

Ken.

LETTER CXL1
Hiking.

No. 25.—July 24, 1918.

Dear Pop:

I haven’t written since Sunday, for we have been on the move until today, arriving here* about 2 P. M. I am very busy, as I am in command of the company and am the only officer with it. The captain left yesterday for a short time. Moving a company around in France is a big task for one man, there are so many things to be seen to. We are moved on a schedule which must be kept to. There are a hundred and one regulations governing the march of A. E. F. troops which must be enforced, and a continual watch must be kept to insure compliance with them. Billeting must be seen to, you must continually watch your map and compass, etc.

Yesterday it rained hard all day, the roads were bad, and when we pulled in last night we were drenched to

* Kickeput Crossroads, near Wormhoudt.
the skin and covered with mud. We are well forward again.

Must stop for this time, as I am so tired.

Love to Mama and Marj.

Ken.

Going to the Front.

LETTER CXLII.

A French Home.—Agricultural Operations.—A Division Show at the Front.

No. 26—July 26, 1918.

Dear Mother:

Your letter mailed June 26 arrived last night. I received a letter from Rob, who has been up to the front and out again, so we are both in the thick of it now. I go up again in a short time for a period (am back now),
then back again for twelve days, and then up again for another period, and so on.

We are now at a large farm,* the biggest I have yet seen, and a very prosperous one—an enormous big house, with a fine Thibaut piano, and a young girl of fourteen or fifteen who plays very well. I heard her last night practising, and she finally started Chopin’s (I think it is his) Fifth Nocturne, the composition Marj. used to play when she was taking lessons. I went in and she played for me for an hour and a half. She played several pieces that Marj. used to play, and it all reminded me so much of her. The atmosphere of these French homes which we walk into is most pleasant, peaceful and homelike.

They are thrashing their grain with flails, and are also treating their flax, one of the most interesting things I have seen. The flax-stalks are bundled and cast into a pond, where they remain for a period of eight days. This softens them and starts a kind of disintegration. When they are taken out the stalks pull apart in fine silky threads. If you twist them, they make a very strong string, even when they are still wet. There are a dozen other things which are so new and odd to me, yet are thousands of years old. It has all been a wonderful education to those of us who are at all interested in things in general. We live right with the people, and so get so much out of our stay in any vicinity. One could never see what we have seen on a tourist’s trip.

I read that Cape Cod had been shelled. You have read of the wonderful advance made by the French and

*La Grande Ferme, Kickeput Crossroads, near Wormhoudt, north of Oudezeele and northeast of Cassel, near Belgian border.
Americans on the Marne. This you probably don’t know, that Gen. Foch used our men on the flanks of his counter-attack. This was a signal honor, for the most important and dangerous parts of a line in an advance are the flanks. By the time that you receive this letter, there ought to be good news from another point.

Rob, as near as I can figure things out, is on the eastern front, somewhere in the Vosges sector. This is simply doped out by the knowledge of where his division is and by adding a few other things.

Have received my first letter from Aunt A., also a long one and a good one from Mr. Geistweit. Thank both of them. If Pop sees Mr. G., let him tell him how much I appreciate his letter, and will write as soon as I can.

The captain and I went to a division show last night, the same men and company you saw in “You Know Me, Al.” They were excellent. These men are doing fine work. There were between two or three hundred British officers at the show, and they certainly enjoyed it. It is a strange thing to see this organization performing at a point where a “Jack Johnson” or some similar bird might land at any minute and spread performers, stage and audience all over the landscape.

They had a lot of new things. The man who played the tragedian in “You Know Me, Al” was particularly good, also the crazy nut who came on in the last act, if you remember, and got off a lot of rapid-fire nonsense.

It rains nearly every day—the sun shines, then suddenly comes a downpour. No matter how clear it may be in the morning, you don’t dare stir out without a rain-
coat. Al* is back with the company, arrived yesterday, and just now asked me to send his regards to you.

With love,

Ken.

LETTER CXLIII
HOW IT FEELS TO BE UNDER FIRE.
July 27, 1918.

Dear Mr. Geistweit & George:

Your most welcome letter of June 24 arrived yesterday. It certainly was a surprise to learn that twenty-four men from the plant are in service. It is great. The men you mention I know, of course.

We have had our first baptism of fire, and we go in and come out for our rest-periods on a regular schedule. So you see we are in the thick of it. I wish I could tell you how I felt when the first big shell came at me—passed just over my head and detonated a few yards back of me. I could only stand as though petrified, and all of my past misdeeds rushed through my mind. You have a queer feeling down in the pit of your stomach, and you would just as soon lose your last meal. I had an almost uncontrollable desire to stick my head in a hole in the ground. After the first one, the others are not so bad, and pretty soon you don’t mind them. You can hear those big ones coming for a long way, and have time to speculate as to whether one of them has your name tagged to it, or lay down a bet where she is going to hit. The worst things of all are the aerial torpedoes used by aeroplanes. Those d——n things always get our goats.

* Lt. Harry.
In the lines you are not bothered with them, but behind the lines we are apt to get them every night. They come, and that buzzzzz over your head, and the knowledge that each machine can let go a ton of high explosive at once and blow you into Kingdom Come is a goat-getter. They rarely do much harm, but the concussion when these things detonate is awful. A little while ago I was knocked flat by the force of the explosion of one. It is a great war, Mr. Geistweit.

Meanwhile we are all having a fine time, learning more than any of us thought we could absorb, and are eating very well. It is a wonderful experience. You have read of the wonderful success of the French and American troops. You may not know it, but Gen. Foch used our men on the flanks of his counter-attack. This was a signal honor, for in the defense, the attack, advance or a retiring movement the flanks are the most important and vital points.

It is going to take a long time, Mr. G., and men and men and then more men. But Germany is going down as sure as there is justice in the world. I have witnessed with my own eyes, so many times that it makes me sick to think of it, the results of Germany’s wanton destructiveness and butchery. Have seen places of no military value bombed, where the only sufferers were women, old men and children. I think that those of us who ultimately get back to the States will be a hundred years older than our actual years. That is all for this one. Will write as regularly as I can, and will certainly look for your letters. Best to both of you, and remember me to Mrs. W.

Kenneth Gow.
Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.:  

Just a few lines to let you know I am O. K., and busy as can be. This is written from the front.* Heavy shell-
I have two duties. I alternate between running the transport and commanding a platoon. When with the platoon I am comparatively safe, for I am in the trenches all the time. With the transport it is a bit different. I run up to the guns our rations and supplies at night from a point away back in the rear. This is a thrilling and exciting job; for, as you know, and as Capt. Beith explained in his lecture in Summit, all communicating roads and thoroughfares are harassed continually by the Boche guns, and it is quite a game of tag ducking them. I run this job on horseback. It is great. Jerry doesn’t do much damage with his shells. You can hear them coming, and, after the first one lands, know just what he is shooting at, and then you proceed to clear out.

Eddy has been commissioned and sent to another division. Roger is now our first sergeant. It came to him as a reward for faithful and efficient service. Tell his mother, and tell her we are all proud of him.

A big mail came in, but none from you, owing, I think, to the fact that you are directing it to a P. O. which is miles and miles from me. Letters are apt to be a bit irregular now.

Love to you all, and my best to Walter.

Ken.

LETTER CXLV

Running the Transport Under Fire.

Aug. 3, 1918.

Dear Walter:

This comes to you from right behind the guns. We are in it right up to the neck. I have two duties which I
alternate between: commanding a platoon in the trenches and running the transport. Am on one for a period of days, and then on the other for a similar period. When in with the guns I am more or less safe, but the transport is another thing. By this is meant running up rations and supplies for the guns from our base in the rear. This is all done by horse transport and limbers, and in the dead of night. My worst trip was last night. The Boche harasses all roads and communications with his artillery continuously, and we have to run this gauntlet of fire. Last night he let loose with everything he had—whizz-bangs, shrapnel, high explosive and gas right on us, and we were in a perfect hell for fifteen minutes. Then he let up for half an hour, then started in again with shrapnel. This is mean stuff to have breaking about your ears, but it does very little harm unless you are unlucky enough to have one detonate beside you. It is a great experience, and surely this is a man's war. The infernal din of battle is a terrible thing. All hell seems suddenly let loose. My ears are O. K., which is a consolation, as many men get their eardrums punctured by the detonations. My nerves, too, have settled. At first it was fierce, and I don't mind admitting to the world that I was positively frightened, and my legs wanted to go the other way. Perhaps they would have, only I was on a horse. She reared up straight at every explosion, cut up high, and this took a lot of my attention.

Our men are doing wonderfully well. Met Major Gardner, my former captain, coming out with his outfit for a rest. They did great work, and are enjoying a (Remainder of this letter was never received.)
Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.:

I am sitting in our forward company headquarters, and, having everything well in hand, am taking some time to write. I have just returned from a reconnaissance of our position, which takes about five hours. We are hard at work improving everything we can, and, of course, we are much interrupted by active enemy shelling, but nevertheless are making fine progress.

It is all wonderfully interesting and fascinating. There is no need of me writing a long letter about a day's routine. It has all been done so much better than I can ever hope to do by Ian Hay, whose book you all have read. His descriptions are very accurate.

The company is the healthiest crowd I have ever seen. There is some little trouble with cooties. The weather is very warm, with a lot of rain. This makes the trenches a mire of mud. I am returning to our base
in the rear tonight, and will come up again tomorrow. So it goes. I am getting to know this part of Europe like the back of my hand. This is absolutely essential on account of the night operations and activity.

We received our first news today of the entrance of French troops into Soissons, also of the cleaning out of the Bois de Cierges by Americans. This is wonderfully encouraging, and we all wish we were down there.

Helmuth rejoined us last night,* after an absence of over a month. It was the first time I had seen him since leaving Camp Wadsworth last April. I certainly was glad to see him. Everyone from Summit is well. Am in tip-top shape myself.

Things are beginning to whoop up, so I know the regular evening "strafe" is on, so will stop.

Love to you all.

Ken.

LETTER CXLVII

Learn or Die.—American Rifle Fire Surprises the Germans.—Queer Freaks of Exploding Shells.—Recommended for Promotion.

No. 29.—Aug. 5, 1918.

Dear Pop:

I am back at the company base for a two days’ rest, after which I am going forward again. I am dead tired yet, even though I had about ten hours’ sleep this morning. I had only nine hours’ sleep in fifty-five hours in the lines. We are learning fast. The circumstances won’t

*Aug. 3, at Beauvorde.
permit of one's not learning. When gas comes over, for instance, we have learned that there are just two kinds of people, the quick and the dead, and we are all numbered among the quick in getting on our gas-masks.

A great majority of the Hun shells which were hurled at us were badly directed, and about twenty per cent. of them were defective, "duds," as they are called, or shells which fail to detonate. We fire twenty shells to the Boche's one during every twenty-four hours. He is unquestionably running short, and evidently finds it necessary to conserve his material for his supreme efforts.

Today begins the fifth year of the war, and, I pray, the last. It has commenced auspiciously with the combined French and American success on the Soissons-Rheims line. It begins to look as though this salient can be straightened out with very little effort. The superiority of American rifle-fire is making itself felt. The Germans do not understand it. When they come over the top they are met with volleys of accurate rifle-fire which are continuous. In going back they get the same thing, and continue to get it as long as they are in sight. This is new to them, for both the French and British, in their frantic rush to train their troops in the handling of the hand and rifle grenade, and in the bayonet, neglected to a great extent musketry training, which is just as important now as in our Civil War.

A lot of humorous things happen during the occupation of a trench system. Here are two of them,* and remember when you read them that truth is stranger than fiction. A man was sent out from our company head-

* These incidents happened when they were on the East Poperinghe Line.
quarters to dig a sink, or hole for refuse, and he was prowling around wondering where the dickens he would dig it, and probably wasting precious time cursing his luck at getting sent on such a detail. Then, with the roar of an express train, a Boche shell came sailing through the air and dropped only ten feet away from him. He flattened out on the ground, and, after the explosion, dug himself out from under the dirt which was piled on him, came in to headquarters and reported the completion of his detail. The shell was a 9.2 in. and made a hole six feet deep and fifteen feet across. Thus Fritz dug our sink for us, and it cost him about $800. The same thing happened at one of our emplacements. We were ordered to build, or rather to dig, a new shell-proof shelter, as some gun positions had been changed and the old one was too far away from the guns. After a lot of consideration and careful study, the new site was selected, taped out and camouflaged, and the necessary orders issued to proceed with the work the next night. Two hours before work began the Boche started his blasted evening "strafe." Two shells landed within the tape on the site of the proposed shelter and made all the excavation necessary in about one second. This cost him $1,600 and saved us sore backs and blistered hands. All that remained to be done was to clean out a little, then the foundations were started and two nights' work finished it—heavy corrugated elephant iron lowered in—and we had our shelter. So it goes. We have some discomfort from mud and cooties. We will have a short period more, and then back for a blessed rest!

I am feeling fine. A recommendation for my promo-
tion to first lieutenant went in to headquarters this morning. It has been approved by the division machine gun officer, so the promotion will come along in due time. So you see I am extremely happy.

Everyone from Summit in the company is O. K. Incidentally, we are no longer in the regiment, but are part of a provisional battalion.

Love to Mama and Marj.

Ken.

LETTER CXLVIII

Running the Transport in Darkness, Fog and Shell-Fire.—The Tales of Romance Surpassed.

No. 30—Aug. 8, 1918.

Dear Pop:

I am well, and as comfortable as may be. I am working hard and getting very little sleep. I leave at seven P. M. for the front line with the transport, and get back, as a rule, about four A. M. the next morning. I was a little later getting in this morning, because I was held up by the shelling of a certain area and dared not take a chance and try to run it. My worst trip was last night. The roads are in a terrible condition, and we were caught in a heavy fog through which you could not see two feet. I avoid all the main roads I can and take to tracks and trails, in fact anything that I can get a limber over. I use a road now which winds around shell-holes through a country once fertile, but now a desolate and depressing waste, with every town and house a total wreck. I used to read of the cowboy post in the early
days of the West, and of the courier service of the Indian wars, the Revolution and later the Civil War, and wished that such thrilling experiences could happen again. But none of these, even as painted by a writer of fiction to impress the vivid imagination of a boy, compares with running a transport up to and back from the lines in this highly and scientifically organized war.

I am gradually developing a bitterness towards the Boche which I did not think would ever be developed in me. The British have it, even though you are told and read that it does not exist. The Boche has already killed some of our fine officers and men of the division.

I am eating extremely well at a British officers' mess when I am at the base. I am going in tomorrow to take charge of a platoon. Everyone from home is well. Eddy, as I wrote you, was commissioned and transferred to another division, Helmuth is back, and Lt. Harry has been transferred to a desk job, through physical incapacity for duty in the line. His transfer is a distinct loss to the company.

I must stop, Pop, and get things ready for my night's run. Our men are doing fine work and delivering everything that was expected of them. Have Walter read this letter. Love to Mama and Marj.

Ken.
Dear Mother:

We are just about at the end of our tour of duty in the line. I will be very busy for the next two days, so am taking advantage of the present opportunity to write.

We are associated with the British, and find them a fine lot of men. They do everything they can to make us comfortable, and give us all the assistance they possibly can in the way of instruction. I am coming to the point where I have a great admiration for the fighting and striking qualities of Tommy Atkins. They have had the worst front to hold on the whole line. I know, for I am here wallowing in the mud with them. However they could have stopped the Boche in 1914, and forced him back in 1915, with the comparatively few troops they had here is almost a mystery. This is something the world does not know yet. In studying the map and the battle line, and actually participating in the fighting along this line, I have a thorough understanding of its main tactical features, and every bit of territory held by the British is in itself a monument to the gallantry, efficiency, and bulldog tenacity of that first British Army. I do not understand, now that I have seen them, the prejudice against them back home, a prejudice which I almost shared my-
self, due mostly to the fact that I had met a few Englishmen whom I have now discovered were not typical and caused me to sort of lose my perspective.

The English and Canadians do not like each other. The same holds true with the Australians, but they all pull together in the mutual cause. The English and Scotch get along together finely. One English quartermaster sergeant told me the Scotch were all right, with the exception of their bagpipes, which they *must* have with them always. As he said himself: "Hi cawnt staund their blawsted pipes, with their bloody drone. Hit always mikes me want to 'eave a 'arf a brick at the drum-major."

Back at our base there are several bands of pipes and drums, and they strut up and down the parade ground playing until I find it hard to stand still. I love to listen to them. They bring one up standing when they come swinging along, and they seem to forget where they are, why they are here and everything else. I can't think of an appropriate word to describe their playing unless it be fierceness, for that is the impression they give. They are members of famous regiments which I remember Pop speaking of when I was a kid, and all the more interesting to me for knowing something of their history and traditions. They are a grand sight coming down the parade ground, with their heads up, their long, easy stride and every kilt swinging in rhythm. The Scotch are the sturdiest troops here, and everyone with a drop of Scotch blood in his veins is proud of that fact when these magnificent regiments march by. I wish I could tell
you who they are, but that is against the censorship regulations.*

I think I must be the luckiest man in the army. To date I have ridden my transport in twelve successive days a total of 220 miles, half of it through shell-fire, effected all of my reliefs, always got in on time with the rations and supplies for the men in the line, and have succeeded in conducting men and guns in safety to and from the lines. The horse next to mine was wounded on one occasion, and at another time the limber I was riding beside was hit in four places. At one time, standing on one spot, eight shells landed within a thirty-yard radius, and all of the eight were "duds"—that is, failed to detonate. All of this has been done in the darkness of night, and does not include my daylight perambulations, which I haven't kept track of. I have but two more trips up to the line during the present tour of duty, and then we will be through for a little while.

You have undoubtedly read Lloyd George's speech on the commencement of the fifth year of the war. The tone of everyone is very hopeful now, on the continued successes of the Allies at Amiens, on the Somme and the Aisne. The Hun has made a temporary stand on the

* The Gordon Highlanders, the Royal Scots Greys, the King's Own Scottish Borderers, the Highland Light Infantry, the Cameron Highlanders, the Black Watch and the Liverpool Scottish were all represented on this front.

Five hundred pipers died in the British armies during the war; six hundred were wounded. The Gordons played "War or Peace," at Waterloo, and the Gordons played it again at the Battle of the Somme. Piper Richardson played "The Dell in the Kitchen," at Regina Trench, when the Canadians were bombing the German dug-outs. A British unit crossed the Palestine frontier with pipers striking up "Blue Bonnets Over the Border," and many a regiment packed up in the early dawn to the tune of "Bundle and Go." One player was awarded the Victoria Cross for piping his men out of gas-filled trenches at Loos. The Black Watch, the Seaforth Highlanders, the Tyneside and London Scottish, the Canadian Kilties, all went into action to the accompaniment of bag-pipes, which adapted themselves better to the trenches than other music.
Four of the Summit (N. J.) Boys Who Gave Their Lives in the War.

Vesle, but he will have to go back over the Aisne, particularly as he is being pressed so hard between Morlan-court and Montdidier. He is attempting to get his vast stores out, a great part of which he has already lost. Military experts here say Foch's drive was one of the most brilliant and tactically sound attacks in all military history. The Boche won't be able to deliver again any such offensive as that of March 21, which almost carried him to Paris.

The German object, of course, was to cut in between the French and British Armies and smash the British. In this he almost succeeded, for the British were just about all in. This may be hard for you to believe 3,000 miles away, but it is true. The battering they had got was more than human beings can stand. That was the reason for the sudden rush of American troops overseas. They were rushed into the line, and they have made good. The Boche lost his last opportunity, thanks again to the bulldog spirit of the British Army and the supreme leadership of Foch.

Now things have switched around, and some indications of a settlement are looked for this winter. If they don't appear, this "blimy" old war will go on for another year, I suppose. Germany must be wofully short of raw material; in fact, we know she is; and she has a thundering big job on her hands to keep up the morale of her army. We need aeroplanes to carry demoralization and destruction into the heart of Germany and shake to its foundations the morale of the entire country. Nothing is so terribly demoralizing as an air raid. I speak from experience. These blasted things get my wind up always.
I have seen and experienced an attack.* I wish I could describe it to you, but I am afraid it is beyond me, the magnitude of the thing is so great and the individual’s part so small. In fact, mine was purely passive. Silence reigned supreme for hours before the zero hour, the time for operations to begin. At the zero hour to the second, as I was looking at my watch, down went our barrage. The earth trembled and the sky was illuminated with a brilliant, weird light, caused by the muzzle flashes of hundreds of guns of calibres ranging from three inch to fourteen inch, rifles and howitzers. The din is indescribable. I thought of the Boche over in his trenches being blasted out in pieces by tons of high explosive. The barrage was lifted and the infantry went over the top. A sudden cessation of the artillery fire, the sound of hundreds of machine guns and the detonations of hand grenades and bombs, and then the signal flashed into the air, “Objective reached.” Then the S. O. S. signal, and down came our barrage again to protect our consolidation. The first minute the barrage came down at the opening of the attack the Boche, of course, got his wind up and shot dozens of star shells into the air, lighting up the whole country for miles around. That is the best I can do. I can understand now why men who had been in action here and came to the States as instructors could not describe an attack if they were asked about it. The thing is so tremendous that one’s mind simply cannot grasp it. It just can’t be done.

This has been a long letter, mother, and I have really taken too much time. I hope you are all well. I received your last letter a good while ago, and none from Walter

* By the 41st and 6th British Divisions near Mont Kemmel.
in nearly a month. Something wrong again with the mails. Have Walter read my letter, as usual. Tell him if he doesn’t write I shall wring his neck when I get home. Have only about twenty days more, when I shall have seven days’ leave coming to me, which I shall probably not get.

Love to you all.  

Ken.
THE PRACTISING PIPERS AT FINS.*

(Reprinted by permission of the Author and of "The New York Times.")

Oh, the practising pipers at Fins!
’Twas a dull, dripping day when we met them.
We were waiting a call at the first crack of day,
When beside our brown billets they started to play.
Can we ever forgive or forget them?
The squealing, appealing to bandy-legged Jock,
Set our nerves all on edge by the discordant shock.

* The town of Fins is in the Somme district, about eight miles northwest of Peronne. F Company of the 11th Engineers, of which the writer of the above poem was a member, had a camp here in the Fall of 1917, prior to the first attack on Cambrai. The famous “pick and shovel” fight, in which this company took part, Nov. 30th, 1917, was at Gouzeaucourt, about two and a half miles north of Fins.
Picture of pipers by courtesy of Dr. MacDougal, The Caledonian.
Oh, the practising pipers at Fins!
The kitten-like women of Hades!
Melody varies in fancy and theme,
But the Yank understands not the Highlander's scream;
'Tis uncouth, like the dress of these ladies.
"From the moaning and groaning from morning 'til night,"
Said the Yankee, "no wonder these devils can fight!"

Oh, the practising pipers at Fins!
The music torrential and bitter!
'Tis no piping of Pan by the woodland and rush—
The harmonious note of the evening thrush;
'Tis the song of the bayonets aglitter;
'Tis dreaming and screaming of conquest and blood—
Victorious passion let loose like a flood.

Oh, the practising pipers at Fins!
The music of stern consolation!
The high, strident strains of militant men,
With the crash and the cadence recurring again—
The Purpose—the Soul of a nation.
In battle, the rattle of rifle fire there
Is lost in the shriek of a wild Highland air.
Oh, the practising pipers at Fins!
The call of the wounded and dying—
The song of the Scotchman until his last breath,
Of flirtation with Life, and of banter with Death—
The wail of the fatherless, crying.
For hiking, or striking the heart into flame,
'Tis the music to follow to death or to fame.

William V. V. Stephens,
11th Engineers, U. S. A.

LETTER CL

Back for Much-Needed Rest.—A Cootie Hunt.
No. 32.—Aug. 13, 1918.

Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.:

We are back out of the line for a blessed rest. I got the transport, with our guns, ammunition, equipment, etc., out of the line at about 10.45 P. M. when we were relieved, and got to our rest camp* at 4.30 the next morning. We pulled straight through without a stop, and made, I think, record time for the distance covered. Of course, we are mounted. Men driving limbers (four animals to a limber) ride the nigh horse.

We have had a most successful tour of duty, killed lots of Boche and came out remarkably lucky ourselves. Everyone from Summit is O. K. Our men are superb, and their keenness amazes the British.

I received your letter No. 14, and was certainly glad to hear from you. The last letter of yours I received

* St. Laurent, near Winnezeele.
was No. 9, so all of your mail and all of mine between the dates of June 25 and July 18 is missing. I am glad to learn that you are all well and that you have heard from Rob.

Very much pleased to learn that Mr. and Mrs. G. called on you, and that you have met Mrs. J., for they are nice people. I have written you about Roger, and why he was made our first sergeant, so that you can tell his mother. He is fine, and his chance for a commission will come, if he lives, probably with the next officers’ training school. Remember me to Mr. and Mrs. J.

I am falling asleep. Fourteen days with an average of four or five hours’ sleep daily, and that in the daytime, added to the severe strain and physical hardship, wears one out terribly, and I am stupid with weariness. I was slightly gassed, but nothing at all serious.

The company has come out with the finest assortment of grandfather cooties you could imagine. The men are on the hunt now, with a pot put up for the man who can exhibit the biggest one.

Love to all. Kenneth.
Dear Mother:

I received Marj.'s letters of July 2d and 20th yesterday, and yours dated July 24th today. The latter came in fine time, less than a month. Marj. shouldn't worry about my not having wax-beans, for we are getting all that we can eat of them, and they are fine. Marj.'s nursing course ought to be interesting, but tell her to stay at home, where there is always plenty of work to do. There are thousands of women engaged in war work here now.

I am glad Mrs. F. and Mrs. W. were down. Mrs. F. is a fine woman, and has been exceedingly nice to me, and so has Mrs. W.

I came out in good shape at the training school. Willis received the highest rating and I the next highest, so we made out extremely well. It was the hardest work I ever tackled. An officer who fails in one of these courses is taken out of the first-line troops, and a great many are sent home. There is this "home" bugaboo staring you in the face all the time. For the most part it is considered a dishonor for an officer to be sent home, no matter in what capacity, before he has served at least six months in the line, for it is nearly always the incompetents who go.

I told you that I got my kit back. I have stored most
of it, and am down to fifty pounds of baggage. All of the many things that we were required to bring over with us are in storage, or I hope they are; for we have no assurance that trunks ever reach their destination. A great many are broken into and the contents stolen, and we have no come-back.

If I said that I bathed in the North Sea, I was wrong, for it was the English Channel that I meant to write. It is odd that Jack S. should meet Mr. Helfenstein. I received a letter from Mr. H. two days ago. Walter sent him my address. He is at Barnegat Inlet.

There! I think I have answered all of your letters. The one Pop wrote on the 10th I have not received, and hope that I get it, for I hate to lose his letters.

I heard from Eddy yesterday. He evidently got to the south just in time to see the last Boche beating it across the Vesle. Old Jerry Boche can run when it is necessary, but he will stop, for this war is not over yet. This last success has been wonderful, the greatest features of it being that Amiens is now free, and a lateral dispersion of troops can easily be made, on account of the opening up again of the railroads in this vicinity, and the capture of so many big guns.

Helmuth and I had thirty-six hours' leave and we went to a large city* not far from us to purchase some necessary things, such as clothing, tooth paste and so on. We had an interesting trip. I had been through this city once before, but I was with the company, so, of course, did not see much of it. I always head first for the churches and cathedrals, as they contain the oldest relics, the finest works of art; in short, everything that is worth

* St. Omer.
seeing. I caught a priest who spoke English and knew the history of the Roman Catholic Church, and his own individual church and everything in it, like the back of his hand. The church contains some marvellous old Spanish wood-carving, and the finest stone carvings I have ever seen. There is one tablet, the Last Supper, a beautiful piece of work, all cut in a single stone and colored. It dates back to the eighth century, and the coloring is as good as when it was finished. The place is full of these things. There are also three wonderful old paintings, one of the Ascension and the other two symbolical of events in the history of the Catholic Church.

I spent the night in a good hotel and had a hot bath, the first in a long time. We got back this morning. We went and came in the only way it is possible to travel near the line, lorry-jumping. You can “jump” lorries to any point. It is a great game, and I have it down to an art now. A lorry is a giant auto truck. The British have thousands of them. They transport the entire equipment, rations, supplies, etc., for millions of men from the railheads to dumps right back of the lines, so you can estimate their number, which is legion.

I wish I could give you some kind of picture, lift a corner of a curtain that is ever closed, and let you see for a minute the tremendous organization behind the man in the front line. This organization has been perfected during four years of war, and has reached a high state of perfection. For every man in the line it requires five or six behind the lines.

I am feeling fine, have got rested and am ready to go in again. I received a second letter from Mrs. Austin.
LTS. GADEBUSCH AND GOW, August, 1918, St. Omer
Thank her for it, and tell her I appreciate her letters very much. I will cable you now and then when I have the opportunity, for we can cable home for about the same price you can wire from Summit to New York.*

We have had delightful weather since coming back from the front. We had it bad there for a while, and I had a perfect hell with my transport for a few days. There is always something to be thankful for, however. When it is wet it naturally is very muddy, and high explosive shells are then not so dangerous, for they bury themselves in the soft ground before they detonate, and the worst you are likely to get is a mud bath. If a shell hits a hard surface, it explodes on contact, of course, and if it misses you, you are still likely to get half a cobblestone in the bean.

I had some more pictures taken on the insistence of Helmuth, he and I together. I will send them along when they are finished.

Remember me to anyone who may be interested, and love to you all.

Ken.

LETTER CLII

ON A BIG FARM.—WAR WITHIN A FEW MILES SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE.

No. 34—Aug. 21, 1918.

Dear Marj.:

Just a short note written during a drill period, for we move again tomorrow, and I don't want to leave too big a gap between my letters. We are having a stretch of per-

* This privilege was afterwards abridged.
fect weather. The crops are all harvested and stacked. We are back just out of earshot of the big guns, billeted on an enormous farm,* with a large herd of cattle, sheep, hogs, chickens and twenty horses. The people are busy with their crops, and it seems impossible that a war is raging within a few miles, or that we have just left the firing-line.

Helmuth is splendid company. I don’t know what I would do without him. He is also one of the most efficient officers I have ever seen, and as cool as a cucumber under fire.†

Everyone from Summit is well. Billy Leonard is one of the regiment’s dead. You may remember him, as he wrote for both the Gas Attack and the Gazette. He was a sergeant and a fine man.

Love to all,

KENNETH.

LETTER CLIII

PLEADS A PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT.—HIGH LIVING ON A FRENCH FARM.—PROMOTION POSTPONED.

No. 35—Aug. 27, 1918.

Dear Marj.:

Your letter of July 31 came yesterday. . . . That was interesting about “Hearts and the Jersey.” I got the ticket, but unfortunately, owing to a previous engagement, it will be impossible for me to attend. To tell you the truth, I have a more or less important part in a great debate between Imperialism, Might, Ruthlessness, Bad

* Hazewinde Farm, St. Laurent, northeast of Cassel.
† See footnote, page 392.
Faith and Treachery on one side and Humanity and Peace on the other. I don't have to say a word in my argument; that is the beauty of it. Just a slight pressure on a safety-catch with the tips of my two middle fingers, a gentle pressure with my thumbs on two thumbpieces, and I am talking peace at the rate of 450 words per minute. There can be no answer to it but one, and some day that answer will be given. It is inevitable. So not this time, Marj.

I have not heard from Rob for a long time. Jerry Boche must have captured the whole unit. Have settled in our new billets. I was sorry to leave our last camp. We had a seven days' rest there after leaving the line, and it was very peaceful and delightful. I wrote you that we were on a big farm, and they were just completing the harvesting of their crops. Such crops I never saw. Their production of wheat, oats and rye per acre is tremendous, and must be many times greater than ours. We lived better than at any time since coming to France. Our mess, the officers', was finer than anything the Ritz or Waldorf could furnish at any price—butter made on the farm, fresh every day; all the milk we wanted, and fine milk, too; roast chicken; all the eggs we needed; new potatoes; salade, as they call lettuce; wax-beans, cooked in butter; and their wonderful turnips. Whenever I land on a farm like this, I always remember all that Pop ever told us of his days on a farm in Scotland. Remember, Marj., how fine he said everything always tasted. Well, I am appreciating it all now, for his descriptions always fit a good French farm. Their vegetables are certainly far finer than ours, the turnips the finest things you ever ate, like the rutabagas Pop talked of.
Aug. 28.

I had to stop last night and got no farther. In the meantime I received your letter of July 7 and Pop's of July 9. I certainly was glad to get them. I can't imagine where they have been.

I wrote you that I had been recommended for promotion. This went through approved by the division machine gun officer, and two nights ago I was summoned before my brigadier-general* and put through the mill. When it was all over he said that everything was satisfactory. So you see he approved. This morning word came that I could not be commissioned, as General Headqrs. A. E. F. were sending training-camp officers to fill all vacancies in the division. There are a certain number of excess officers in France, and no one can be promoted until all of these have been absorbed. This order came through very suddenly. Before it was received there was no doubt about my papers going through. So I will remain a second lieutenant for a while. All promotions are supposed to be made on seniority, except where exceptional ability or meritorious conduct is observed. I am not the senior second lieutenant in my division, but this didn't make any difference. However, vacancies will occur and surplus officers will be taken up, and then a man can earn promotion. I am almost at the head of the list, second or third, I believe. I am sorry I wrote you about it at all, but it was certain until this other thing came up.

Pop's fine letter is the one I have been looking for and thought I had lost. I hate to lose his letters. It certainly is quite a thing to get a Jersey film over on Broadway. I have written regarding the wonderful showing the good

* Brigadier-General Palmer E. Pierce.
Scotch regiments always make. This is apropos of Pop's remark concerning the impression they made in New York on the Fourth. I have seen many of the Scotch regiments which have been famous for generations. Surprised to hear that the D. L. & W. has come down to the use of soft coal.

Pop has quoted a line or two of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." If ever we get into Germany I hope to march down the Unter den Linden or through Potsdam with this great and glorious division of ours and hear every man singing the "Battle Hymn."

I am feeling fine. Everyone from Summit well. Remember me to the I.'s.

My love to you all.

Ken.

LETTER CLIV

Describes Transport Work.—Victory not yet in Sight.—Praise for French and British.—The Indiscriminating Cootie.

Aug. 27, 1918.

Dear Mr. Geistweit:

Your letter of July 23d received yesterday, and there is no use in my trying to tell you how glad I was to hear from you again. I wrote you immediately on receipt of your first letter, which I hope you have received.

We are back of the lines resting, after an arduous tour of duty in the front line. I was slightly gassed twice, but am entirely over the effects of it. I am what is known in the service as company transport officer. The trans-
port consists of the gun-limbers and other horse-or-mule-drawn vehicles that are necessary for the transport of the rations and equipment of such a company as this. One of the characteristics of the weapon with which we are armed is its mobility, and the mobility of a machine gun company depends to a great extent on its animal transport. We go into action; guns, ammunition, etc., are dragged off their limbers, which often remain in the immediate vicinity, and when an advance or a retirement is ordered the limbers are brought up, equipment packed in about two minutes and away we go. In twelve days in the line I ran the transport with rations and supplies from our base to the dump at the line almost 300 miles. This mileage is a total of nightly trips. As you undoubtedly know, all work must be done after dark and completed by daybreak, on account of enemy observation. I left as a rule about 7:00 P. M. and usually was back at my base again by 4:00 or 4:30 the next morning. About 150 or 160 miles of the above total was over shell-swept areas. Twice the man riding beside me was hit, and once the limber I was standing against was showered with high explosive. At another time eight 5.9 shells dropped within a radius of 30 yards around me, and every one was a "dud"; that is, shells which failed to detonate. This was enough to blast a hole 100 feet in diameter and 30 feet deep, had they exploded. Now you can appreciate my luck. That is the way it goes. A man will go through heavy shell-fire every night and remain untouched, and then get himself knocked off by a stray shell away in a back area ten miles behind the lines.

I shall not be on the transport much longer, as my
recommendation has gone through approved for a first lieutenancy, which will come through in due time. I shall not be sorry, as I have the most dangerous post in the company. A man actually in the trenches can always get cover when Jerry Boche begins to strafe; but when I am caught out I must get through with it as best I may, for I cannot drag my own horse and the men, with their animals and limbers, into a trench. We have to stick to them and run for it, for we know that if we fail a whole company is going without food or water. So you see the terribly responsible position I have. I have often reached my base after thirty miles or twelve straight hours in the saddle, too weary with the fatigue of the trip and the mental strain to do anything but just plain fall off my horse. What I generally do when I am caught on a road by shell-fire is to stop and watch for a minute to see whether Fritz is working towards me or away from me. If his shells are coming up a road towards me, or, in other words, if he is traversing, I have to time them, and when I figure the next one will land on the spot on which we may be standing, we leave that same spot as speedily as the Lord will let us, and take a chance that we have guessed right.

A letter came from my sister, in which she said that she and mother had dinner with Mrs. H., you and George at the Astor. She proceeded into a description of some kind of a lobster salad which you recommended, and wrote so much about it that it actually made me sick with envy. Some day I will be back, if I am lucky, and you are going to pay for that by buying me a large man's size portion.
Our men are doing wonderfully well. Their success has really been extraordinary. One must not forget, however, that we have had the benefit of English and French instruction, and have been warned against the mistakes they have made. We have the benefit of their four long, bitter years of experience, and go into action with the full knowledge of what not to do. The lessons which they have learned at the cost of human lives came to us before we ever saw the front lines.

You have read of the wonderful Allied success in the last month, so there is no use of me saying anything about it. It speaks for itself. I might say, however, that the people at home may be apt to feel a little too optimistic about it all, and lose their perspective. It is not going to be a grand gallop to victory yet. A long struggle is still ahead. That is, there can be no doubt of the outcome, but dark days are still liable to come, so too much must not be expected.

The morale of our troops is, of course, excellent, as it ought to be. I wish, Mr. Geistweit, that you might see for yourself the wonderful spirit of the British and French armies. It is a never-ceasing source of surprise and admiration to me, for I cannot forget that they have been in this shambles for over four years. With the French it is an ideal, with the British it is the old racial characteristic that has been typical of them during their whole national existence; namely, a bull-dog spirit that hangs on when every one else thinks they are licked, a spirit which never admits defeat. It is marvelous, for no one knows what a terrible buffeting they have taken, and
won't know until the war is over and there are no more censorship regulations.*

I am well and happy. Am glad the business is going along so well. I really thought you would all go to the wall the minute I left. (Oh! yes; I did.) Am glad you see father every once in a while. Give George my best, and have him read this, and if he doesn't take a half-hour and write me, I will everlastingly wring his neck if ever I set foot in Brooklyn again. I have had some more pictures taken, so will send one along as soon as I receive them. Just imagine the vanity of men, who go and have themselves photographed within the range of Jerry Boche's big guns. I weigh 190 lbs., and am getting to be a regular tanned and seared battle veteran. (At least it pleases me to think so, when, as a matter of fact, I am nothing but a rank amateur.) Remember me to C., I forget her husband's name; and if you think she is interested, let Geo. take this letter to her.

A funny thing I must tell you of. Every time we come out of the trenches the company has a big cootie hunt. A cootie, as you probably know, is what the vulgar call a louse. Every man throws tuppence, or possibly as much as half a franc (if they have just been paid), into

*"August 8," as Ludendorff begins his next chapter, "was the black day of the German Army in the history of this war." On that day it was revealed to him with a bang that the British Army was not beaten and that the German Army was. "By the early hours of the forenoon I had already gained a complete impression of the situation. It was a very gloomy one." It grew more gloomy still as the day wore on, and still darkened his mind while writing his memoirs later on in Sweden. "August 8 put the decline of our fighting power beyond all doubt... The war must be ended."

It proved, however, a more painful process to end the war than to begin it. On the first day the two armies [British and French] drove forward six or seven miles in so boisterous a fashion that for the first time since 1914 the cavalry was thrown in. In five days he had drawn back to the old trench lines of 1915. In five days, to quote Haig, sixteen British divisions captured 22,000 prisoners and 400 guns and advanced twelve miles.—Major T. H. Thomas, in N. Y. Evening Post, Aug. 30, 1919.
a pot, and the man who finds the biggest one wins. Cooties are at the same time both the funniest and the most unpleasant pest we have to put up with. They are all colors and sizes, and bite like a fiend incarnate. The only consolation one has when they make a sortie on one's person is the knowledge that they are no respecters of rank, file or station in life. They will tackle a field marshall or a lieutenant-general as quick as a buck private.

I have not seen my brother or your nephews. In fact, I have seen but a small part of my own regiment during my entire tour of duty in France, so you see how things are. Each unit has its own sector, and rarely gets out of it. When the division is all out they are scattered over miles of country, due to the billet system.

Write as often as you can, for you cannot know how much mail is looked forward to and appreciated.

With my very best to you and George.

Kenneth Gow.
UP WITH THE RATIONS.

By permission of the Author and of "Stars and Stripes."

Hovering of darkness and coverlids of dawn—
Up with the rations, where the boys have gone!
Creaking and crying the limbers rattle on—
Up with the rations—but the roads are gone!

"Which is the road to take?"
"How many miles to make?"
Never a nerve to shake—
On with the game!

Shriek of the whining shell,
Bursting with flares of hell,
Lighting the road so well,
Thank it the same!

Crooning of aeroplanes, hovering o'er you—
(Mind you, the Infantry made it before you!)

"Come, build this bridge again—
Cut through this field of grain—
Work and forget the rain—
Hustle those men!"

"Here, take this overcoat;
Cover that wounded blote,
Pull it around his throat—
He's kickin' in!"
How the mud oozes and clings to the ration cart,  
Clinches the rims of the tires till they hold!  
How the mules fret at the load when the wagons start  
Stretching the traces from lashes that scold!

"God! What a fierce barrage!  
There goes a team at large!  
Where is that transport sarge?  
Finding a hole?"

Never a chance to run for cover,  
This is the way he puts them over.

"Bring on that set o' spares!  
Pull off them murdered mares!  
Hitch on two other pairs  
And fix that pole!"

"Now—one at a crack as I give you the sign,  
Dig into her ribs and shoot for the line!  
Or find yourself drivin' a limber in hell  
And ball up my dope on the drops of the shell!"

Close enough now for a shot from a gunner's nest,  
To warn you that Fritz is sniping out there—  
Close enough now for a whisper to give you rest  
To last you a while with never a care!

* * * * * * *

"Sir! Your rations are delivered!"
Oh! it’s welcome to the dawn, lad,
When the night is long,
For here’s an empty cart, lad,
That sings a lively song.

Who would be part of the transport on a far-flung battle line,
With never a thrill of battle, with never a lip to whine?

But, oh! there’s a song in a limber
That stirs to the blood, my lad,
And swinging along with the rations
Is never one-half so bad;
For the glare and the gleam of a star-shell
And a teamster’s gay “gid-dap”
Hold enough for the life of a soldier,
For the blood of a nery chap,
And a lad lives close to his God, my lad,
And lo! his heart is true;
For it takes a person of parts, my lad,
To get the rations through!

J. Palmer Cumming,
R.S.S., 305th Inf.
Dear Mama:
I had a letter from Rob today mailed Aug. 22d. He is feeling fine, and has evidently just come out of the line. He says it has been impossible for him to write anyone. I was certainly happy to hear from him.

I am enclosing two clippings from the London Daily Mail which are interesting. We hear more and more of the kind treatment our men receive from the English people, who take them into their homes at their face value. We hear a great many stories similar to the one I enclose, only, as a rule, minus the romance. I think it is a great thing they are doing, these women of England. Many of them have lost their own men folks, and they are all suffering the privations of war, yet they can forget their grief long enough to make hundreds of our men comfortable. All manner of places have been fixed up in England for the comfort of our officers and men, and no charge of any kind is made. Wounded Americans come back with the cockles of their hearts warmed by the treatment they received in England. Think of what all this is going to mean after the war!*

* "On behalf of five million Americans who on land and water became comrades in war of those of the British Empire's fighting forces, I convey to you the greetings of the American Legion on the sixth anniversary of the day Great Britain made the heroic decision that brought the English-speaking people into the great struggle in defense of free institutions.

"United States forces have had the privilege of service under British high command. Thus, to the multiple ties of race, language, tradition and common institutions, which unite the people of our two nations, was added the bond of fellowship in war. The memories of the associations of those great days will never perish. They will perpetuate themselves in our hearts and thus serve to perpetuate the indissoluble friendship of the British and American peoples."—American Legion Message to Britain, Aug. 4, 1920.
officers have told me that they had met many people from the United States, but until the war they had never met an American.

We are having a damp, rainy spell of weather again. These come regularly, and the mud—I never imagined such mud. I don’t like to think of the coming winter, when we will have four or five months of it, with practically no sunshine.

Send me some reading material now and then. I saw the illustrated sections of the New York Times of July 16th and 23d and a certain other date today. They are fine, although a lot of pictures taken at the “front” are fakes. In the one the date of which I have left unmentioned was an excellent photograph of a famous point on the front,* the very place in the line where I was. In saying this much I don’t think I am violating any censorship regulations, as I am conveying no military information.

I am feeling “on the crest.” Best to Walter and love to you all.

Ken.

LETTER CLVI
A NEW OFFICER IN THE COMPANY.

No. 37.—Aug. —, 1918.

Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.:

I have caught up with my mail after our last delivery, which was an unusually large one. I seem to be devel-

* Mont des Cats, where there is an old monastery, where one of the Kaiser’s sons is buried. The Germans refrained from shelling this monastery, because one of the monks was the only man who knew where the grave is.

† Billeted at Abeele Aerodrome, about fifteen kilometres from Ypres.
oping a heavy A. E. F. correspondence. Every so often I receive a letter from some one who is over here, and it is a bit hard to answer every one. We have sent a good many men from our regiment to other organizations, and I like to keep in touch with them. I got a letter from Eddy the other day, and he is well. He is with the 26th Div., and is in another part of France.

We are in the midst of another rainy spell, and everything is submerged in mud. However, no matter how bad it gets, it takes about three or four days only of sun and wind to dry the ground out enough to be able to draw a transport over it.

One of our new officers has arrived.* He is a first-lieutenant and fills the vacancy that I was recommended for. When the captain found that my commission would not go through, for the reasons I stated to you in a previous letter, he immediately went after this officer, whom he knew and who has been in the division a long time. He is from one of the machine gun battalions. We will have only one more assigned to us now, to fill one more vacancy, a second lieutenancy.

I have been suddenly interrupted by an order. From a previous knowledge of the tactical situation here, I gather from this order that there will be great doings quickly. It is great news, and you will have read of it long before this reaches you. So I must stop and work quickly.†

Love to all.

Ken.

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* Lt. Adsit.
† The order was to move forward on thirty minutes' notice. The expected attack did not take place, as the Germans retired to Vierstaat Ridge.
Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.: 

I received a letter from Rob, which took only five days to reach me, and cabled Pop today stating that we were both well.

I spent my birthday (Sept. 1) on the road. The day was one of the most beautiful we have had in France, very clear and very cool, with just a touch of the coming fall in the air. I did forty miles in the saddle, and did not feel it, so you can appreciate how bracing the air was.

One spot on the road I shall never forget. We were riding along one of the many magnificent highways of France,* which runs as straight and true as an engineer’s transit could make it. A solid row of great Lombardy poplars lines both sides of the road. We had proceeded along this road for miles, when we came to a long, gentle down-grade with a rather abrupt drop for two hundred feet, and then a gentle rise on the other side. Looking from the point where the down-grade commenced, between the long rows of poplars, I could see ahead of me a beautiful church-spire and part of a partially-hidden hamlet, hidden by a luxurious growth of foliage; beyond it a grain-field with its newly-shocked wheat, and in the background a hop-field. Over all the sky was of an intense blue, flecked with an occasional fleecy white cloud.

* The Abeele-Steenvorde Road.
I had been over this road many times before, but ordinarily under very trying conditions. The serene beauty of it that Sunday morning struck me as it never had before. You see, the road and village that I am writing about are now far in the rear. When I first saw them and travelled over this road it was under shell-fire, and I had some narrow escapes in and on both village and road. Passing on through the town, it is found to be a wreck. Looking at it from a distance, this is not noticeable. By some chance or fate, the only part that has not been hit is a great cemetery hundreds of years old, in the centre of the town. Even the church has suffered.

Some day I shall tell you the story of this town.* It is very tragic and very sad, but its people were very brave. The picture I saw, which I have tried to describe to you, I shall never forget—a picture that no artist could truly paint, framed between the finest specimens of France’s favorite tree.

That was my chief experience on my twenty-ninth birthday. On my twenty-seventh birthday I was marching as a private in Texas. I have pictures of both days in my mind in juxtaposition. In one we are passing through a country where civilization has as yet failed to penetrate to any great extent. We are on the frontier, where even the wild animals have not yet developed a fear of man and his firearms, a land for the most part just as it was created, the primitive dominating. In the other picture I am riding at the head of my transport through a country which has reached the highest state of cultivation, and which has known civilization for many centuries, giving an impression of substantiality, character and strength.

* Steenvorde, near Cassel.
Both are beautiful in widely-separated ways. This all struck through my mind as I was riding along that road.

There has been a tremendous retirement. You will have read of it before this. It has us travelling. Don’t mistake me; it is Jerry Fritz Boche who is doing the running. I wish I could write you more of it.

Jun has just come in and brought some mail, a letter from Marj. dated August 6th and a fine letter from Pop dated the 7th. You should address Amer. E. F., as mail marked simply A. E. F. becomes confused with the African E. F. and the Australian E. F. Remember we are not the only pebbles on the beach. . . . All of your mail is fine, and I cannot begin to tell you what it means to me. A lot of men are getting something like this: “I am worrying to death about you, and I don’t think sister will live,” etc. Junk like this is not conducive to good morale in a soldier.

Some day, Marj., we absolutely must see France. You will fall in love with it and its people. I have seen a great part of it, by rail, bicycle, walking and on my horse. The mare is the envy of every other mounted officer I meet, so you see how fortunate I am. She is fast, wonderfully well gaited, bridle-wise, leg-wise, and has a head as light as a feather. It is a rare treat for me to get off on her alone for a long ride and a stop for something to eat at a hospitable farmhouse. Perhaps I am wrong, but I have a deep pity for the men who go off to the towns or cities they happen to be near and spend all of their liberty in an estaminet or débit de boissons, as they are ordinarily called.

I have read Pop’s letter and the clippings he enclosed
with a great deal of interest. The latter confirm what I have been writing you. Britain's part and her sacrifices in the war have been tremendous. We all like and admire Tommy Atkins and his officers. I know what I am talking about, for I have fought the Hun beside him, and once helped one to dig shrapnel out of his horse, which wounds were received when I was riding beside him away up forward.

The "German Lies" are certainly interesting. I would waste time and paper in expressing an opinion of fools who believe such statements. Our instructions concerning the treatment of Boche prisoners are quite the opposite of that story, and if it wasn't for the British mercantile marine and the British Navy we should have exactly sixty-five per cent. less American troops here now. Jun Willis came over on a British boat, and everyone was treated royally. I have written you a good deal on this subject, for I have felt that there would be a lot of groundless statements made concerning our ally. I have told you of the wonderful reception and treatment the man in an American uniform gets from the English people. They are doing everything in the world to make him feel at home when he lands in England, when he comes to England on leave, and when he is sent there wounded. Our men come back most enthusiastic and touched.

Europe needs no education from Americans. The shoe is on the other foot to a great extent, and is absolutely so in most things agricultural and architectural. Pop's story of his Country Life friend is very amusing.
The man would certainly broaden his own education by coming "over here."

Jun and Helmuth are both here writing beside me, and send their best regards. Let Walter read this. Love to all.

Ken.

LETTER CLVIII

THE DIVISION MAKES A BIG MOVE TO A NEW AREA.

No. 39.—Sept. 6, 1918.

Dear Mother:

This will have to be a very short note. I will write again this evening, if I can. In case I do not have the opportunity, I want to get off a short note.

We have moved many miles by train to another area, and are now back of a famous front.* The moving was a stupendous task. I loaded thirty-seven animals, thirty-two of them refractory mules, and our entire limbered and wheeled transport in thirty minutes, and received the commendation of the regimental commander. At the end of our train ride we had to unload in the dark, harness, get our limbers straightened out (there are two parts to each), unload the mules and start off out of a big city† to our destination,‡ at which I arrived with the transport at 5.15 the next morning, riding all night. I had to go through country I had never been in before, without a guide, on the compass bearing only and the

* The Somme.
† Doullens, twenty miles east of Abbéville, and back of the old Peronne-Arras front.
‡ Terremesnil.
name of my destination. During the night there is no one on the roads to help you out.

Save the enclosed clipping; put it in my scrap-book. The N. Y. Times has had a lot about us at various times. The country here is exceedingly beautiful. We will probably rest a few days after our train journey. I am well and happy. Our division has been highly honored in being sent on its present mission. Love to all.

KEN.

LETTER CLIX

PHOTOS.—IN A DOWN COUNTRY.—THE DIVISION’S DRAMATISTS.

No. 40.—Sept. 6, 1918.

Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.:  

I sent a short letter off this morning, with the promise of a longer one this evening, but it is late, and I don’t think that I shall write so much this time.

The pictures I wrote you of have arrived, and I will send them off in relays, as I did before. I think they are better than the others. Helmuth and I had them taken in a very famous town,* from which a most wonderful view can be obtained of the country in every direction. I promised Mr. Geistweit one of the pictures. I shall send them all to you, so give him one, and give Walter one of each. I had on a heavy trench coat, so I look more or less like a sack of bran tied round the middle. I think I am looking older; don’t know whether the picture shows it or not. The woman who took them insisted that I keep my glasses on, so of course my eyes look bad.

* St. Omer.
The country we are now about to operate in is beautiful. It is a regular “down” country, hills rolling one behind the other as far as the eye can see. The pastures are as green as they can be, the grain-fields are a pale yellow, and here and there a field of brown heather. Around the fields run hawthorn hedges, with here and there clumps of trees. All of this rolls and rolls over the hills as far as you can see.

We are billeted with some fine old French people.* I have had some interesting talks with them through one of the men of the company who speaks French. Now that I am back where they speak French, I may pick up a little more of it.

The Captain and I went off for a long bicycle ride tonight. We stopped in a big town† where most of division headquarters are, and saw the divisional show. It has been completely changed since I last saw it.

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* At Terremesnil.
† Beauquesne.
It is excellent. All the men whom you saw in Spartanburg are still doing their bit by working hard at entertaining the men. We have the best divisional dramatics in France.

The night bombing squadrons are passing over my head in great numbers. Jerry Boche's back areas will catch hell tonight.

Ken.

LETTER CLX

Discusses the War.—Troubles of the Transport Animals.—The Division Makes Terremesnil a Spotless Town.

No. 41.—Sept. 7, 1918.

Dear Marj.:

Paste the enclosed clipping in my scrap-book. The English papers have a great many of such articles, but this one is more typical than any I have read. It needs no comment. It is a very accurate description of the average American soldier, his appearance, his manners and his attitude.

The war news continues good. It looks as if there is a fine possibility of driving the Germans over their own famous Hindenburg line. Tonight's communiqué states that the Aisne has been crossed. This is great.

At the same time internal mistrust and alarm seem to be spreading in Germany. I read some extracts from a speech or letter of our old friend Herr Dernberg, quoted from a German paper. He seems to be souring on the Imperial Government. He says: "Our lies are
coarse and improbable, our intrigues are without salt and without grace.” He certainly ought to know his countrymen. The Crown Prince has just delivered himself of a lot of characteristic lies about the war, which he so largely caused, and I hope he has read Dernberg’s article. His object seems to be to stir up bad feeling between the French and British, representing the British troops as being led by clumsy fools, who are yet wise enough to elbow the French into the place of danger. He says the French are bleeding to death. It is not the first time that I have seen that remark attributed to his
Imperial Shysterness. He said it at the battle of Verdun. Now he and his army have learned only too painfully, during the last few weeks, how very much alive is the French corpse. It has inflicted on the Germans one of the heaviest defeats in their military history, and changed the whole aspect of the war.

The Crown Prince has blundered in picking the present time to intervene, when a British army has just stormed the much-vaunted Wotan line, taking thousands of prisoners, driving the Germans in disorder for miles before it. He might also notice the wonderful tributes the French people and press have paid the British troops, with that ungrudging chivalry which is one of the finest traits of the French character.

There, I had best stop before I write some things I shouldn’t. Didn’t mean to write that way at all.

Sept. 8.

I didn’t finish last night. It is almost twelve o’clock, noon, and today is Sunday, a holiday. I have just finished my work at the stables, so am through until 5.30, when I shall watch them feed and water. I am having a great deal of difficulty keeping my animals up and on the go. Have a bad epidemic of scratches and several cases of thrush. Both are very difficult to cure in the field, particularly if the weather is wet. It requires constant watching and working to keep a transport going.

I thought that I would take a long ride this afternoon, but I am too tired. It has been a strenuous week, so I think I shall lie down and go to sleep, something which I very rarely do in the day time, unless I have been running the lines all night.
This is a beautiful town.* If you could see only the houses and the high brick walls which hide beautiful gardens, and not see the constant streams of soldiers, Americans, French, Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders and British, with their transports, motor lorries and guns, etc., which pass twenty-four hours of the day and seven days in the week, you would never dream that a war was raging. This town has remained untouched by the ravages of war. It was very dirty when we came in, but the regiment has policed it from limit to limit. Men were sent into every yard and corner to sweep and clean. They carried out some 150 truckloads of debris—old cans, dead dogs, cats and rabbits, and a thousand other surprising things, and now we have a spotless town. The inhabitants were utterly amazed, and they must have thought a division of American junkmen had suddenly swooped down on them in the night.

Helmuth sends his best wishes to you all. I am feeling fine.

With love,

Kenneth.

LETTER CLXI

MATTERS IN GENERAL.

No. 42.—Sept. 10, 1918.

Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.:

Your letters of Aug. 2, 15 and 17 all came in the last two days. Some mail reaches us in good time, and some of it is extremely slow.

The fact that you get a P. O. number as part of an

* Terremesnil.
address does not mean that the particular unit to which the number applies is to be kept in one place. Each division has a P. O. number, and this number stays with it, no matter where it moves.

Rob was among the first of his company to go to the front, and I was one of two to go first in my company. The Captain and I went up for reconnaissance before the company took over their sector.

We have had some weather here as hot as ever I experienced in New York, but that is past and it is cold and wet now.

The pictures I am sending were taken just two days after coming out of the line. I was still coughing from the effects of my dose of gas.

Everything is literally floating in mud and water. It has rained steadily for five days, and the outlook for clear weather is bad. It has quieted things down a little on the battle line. We helped to drive the Boche out of the last sector we were in. Practically everything is mired in the mud, except our tanks, and nothing seems to stop them.

We are doing a lot of range work and big manœuvre work in open warfare, and will probably have our gaps filled up here.

Thanks for your cheerful letters. They are bully. I have made an appointment with our dentist for 4.30 tomorrow afternoon, so am looking forward to a bad time. They get after us in great shape on our teeth. The dentist keeps a history of every man, and there is no getting by him.

With love,

Ken.
Dear Pop:

Today is Sunday and a holiday. It has cleared up beautifully after ten days of steady rain. It will take a week of sunshine to dry the ground out.

I have just returned from a long ride on my mare. The country is very interesting.* The crops are all harvested, leaving only the turnips and beets to be cared for, and a few potatoes here and there, although most of these are up too. One thing I have particularly noticed is the prompt ploughing of the stubble. The grain is cut, shocked and thrashed, and, as soon as the old field has been thoroughly gleaned, well-rotted cow manure is spread and the ploughing then begins at once, followed, of course, by the winter planting. The French are scientific farmers in the true sense of the word. They waste nothing, neither time, crops nor land. They lay their farms out systematically: so much for rye, so much for wheat, a field for clover or alfalfa, which yields three or four crops a season; so much pasture for cows, sheep and horses, always a vegetable garden, etc. And when everything is planted, not a square foot is wasted. Their ground produces the maximum always.

The only sign of the coming fall is the brown stubble-fields and newly-ploughed areas. Foliage is as fresh and green as when I landed in May. I left the roads with my horse this morning and took to the fields and downs.

* Country around Terremesnil.
I don’t know when I have enjoyed myself so much. I love the country and its people. A French landscape is a beautiful sight. I presume Great Britain is just as pretty in very much the same way, and I am going to see it, if I can. The Old World has a certain charm that the New World lacks.

I met a farmer, who showed me his sheep, his cattle and his grain. About two-thirds of the latter he has to give to the government. He gave me a drink of milk. A great many of these Frenchmen speak a little English, as the British Army has been here for over four years; so that, with the aid of a few words of French, you can get along fine. It is significant that Frenchmen as a general thing speak a lot more English than Britishers and Americans speak French. We don’t seem to make any kind of an effort to learn their language, principally because we haven’t the time.

We are waiting for more news of the big American push. It has had a wonderful effect on everyone. The Captain and I took a half-day off and went into the nearest big city.* The Germans were in it once, but now it is

* Doullens.
twenty-five miles behind the lines. It is a pretty, quaint old place, like all other French towns. We did a lot of shopping, had dinner and then lorry-jumped back to our headquarters.

We have a fine captain. Did I tell you that he is the famous "Ham" Andrews of Princeton football fame. His father is a Scotchman, and the Andrews of Pratt & Andrews, the big varnish and paint firm. The company is almost a passion with him. He eats, sleeps and works with only the morale and welfare of the company in view. We are all well. I cabled you again yesterday, as I had just received another letter from Rob. I hope these cablegrams get through O. K.

This letter has been interrupted a dozen times, and is consequently rather disconnected. Remember me to Mr. Pritchard. You might show him my letter and tell him that I would be glad to hear from him.

Love to you all,

Ken.

LETTER CLXIII

RESTING BY WORKING HARD.

No. 44.—Sept. 18, 1918.

Dear Marj.:

Yours dated Aug. 21 came yesterday. . . . We are still back "resting," but I never worked harder. I received a letter from Mr. Pritchard and one from Aunt A. in the same mail with yours. Was very glad to hear from both of them.

I am still wearing the same eye-glasses that I wore
when I left home, and have worn nothing else; I have had them on all my rides, in all my work and through all of my battle duty, when shells were coming so fast that they couldn’t be counted, and I have never broken them. They have been knocked about and dropped on hard roads and stone floors. Isn’t that remarkable? I suppose that, now I have talked about it, I will break them sure.

The full news of the American-French drive is in. The St. Mihiel salient is entirely straightened out, and Jerry Boche has fallen back in disorder. It is very gratifying.

With love,

Ken.

LETTER CLXIV

No. 45—Sept. 21, 1918.

Dear Mother:

Your letter of Aug. 23d came yesterday. Your mail is coming through very regularly now.

I know you think of Rob and I so much, mother. That is why I make every effort to write as often as I can, and to cable when I can. I am always thinking of you, and I am always trying to be the man I know you want me to be.

I haven’t time to write more now, and don’t think that I shall be able to write for a few days.

Love to you all,

Ken.
Letter CLXV

On a New Front.—A Devastated Country.—The Eve of a Great Battle.

No. 46.—Sept. 26, 1918.

Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.:

Just a hurried note to let you know that I am well and safely located in our new area.* I arrived yesterday, after a fifty-mile ride. It was the most fascinating and interesting, and at the same time depressing, trip I have ever made. The regiment came by rail, and the transport hiked—that is, the mounted and wheeled detachment of the company—under my command. I was in

* Haut Allaines, near Peronne, southern end of the Canal du Nord, beginning of famous Wotan Line.
the saddle for thirty-six hours, and travelled only at night, under a full moon. It rained torrents for four hours the first night, but has been clear since. It is very cold, and consequently uncomfortable.

We came over the ground of a famous battle,* and we are now not far behind the retreating Boche. The country is wrecked. Once beautiful cities are just heaps of brick and debris, not a living thing to be seen, even the trees all shot off, leaving nothing but stumps, which look like ghosts in the moonlight. The graveyards are turned upside down by terrific shell-fire. The ground is covered with all of the signs of a great battle—smashed guns of every calibre, wrecked tanks, dead horses, and here and there a dead Boche overlooked by the burying parties.

I shall write as often as I can; that you must always know; but it will be rather difficult from now on. This letter I am particularly anxious to get off. If it is my fate to go this time, remember you have given a son to a great cause. Pray not for my welfare, but that I may have the strength and courage to do my duty and not fail those who depend upon me. I am your son and brother, and have done nothing you would not have me do.

I will cable when I have the opportunity, and the message will reach you before you receive this letter, so that I am not writing to alarm you.

With my love, in great thankfulness that my heritage has been what it is, and with not a fear for the future.

Kenneth.

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*Amiens, Peronne, Hamel, etc.
The Country Around Ronssoy and Lempire.—From a British War Map.
Dear Walter:

I am stealing the time to write you a short note, which I feel impelled to write. I am writing in a field, with guns going all around me. We are about to take part in the biggest thing of the war, and our company has been honored above all other companies in being awarded the danger post. The all-American cry is: "Over the top!" You will have read of it long before this gets to you, if we succeed. If we don't, you will read of it through the casualty lists. Our division has had a rare honor laid upon it, because we are the best,
and we are going in to sacrifice it all if necessary. A big
game can be played but once.

We may be fortunate, and you may receive a more
cheery letter soon, but I must write to you now, my
friend, and tell you what a rare pleasure your friendship
has been and is. If I am destined to go, it is for a cause
worth a dozen lives. My best to the family, Walter,
and my keen appreciation of a friendship which has
been an honor.

Kenneth.

LETTER CLXVII
AFTER THE BATTLE.

No. 47.—Oct. 3, 1918.

Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.:

I have come out of the line safe and without a
scratch. The division was sent over the top to smash
the Hindenburg Line, and we have done it. The price
we paid I am not permitted to write about. Men who
have been in the war since it started say it was the
bloodiest thirty-six hours they ever spent. I will not
write you more about the battle, because my heart is too
heavy, and I might violate censorship regulations.

Jun* is dead, killed in action at the head of his pla-
toon. He died a soldier, every inch of him, and he died
in a great and successful battle. I will write Mrs. W.,

Lieut. Willis displayed remarkable gallantry in leading his platoon of machine
guns for more than two thousand yards under terrific machine-gun fire. Even
after being mortally wounded and unable to advance further, he continued to
urge his men on.
and I dread my task. Two other men from home are also dead, but I cannot mention names. Roger is O. K., but Gaddy* has gone to “Blighty,” wounded. The Captain is wounded and in hospital, leaving two of us with the company. The muster after the company came out was the saddest, most heart-tearing experience I ever want to go through.

Your letters of Aug. 29, Sept. 1 and Sept. 6 all received today upon returning from the line. I must stop, as we have not much time. I am all O. K. I was badly congested from gas, but it has all worked off in good shape.

With all my love, and a prayer of thankfulness that I came out alive.

Ken.

* First Lieut. Paul Helmuth Gadebusch, of Summit, N. J., Machine Gun Co., 107th Infantry. For exceptionally courageous and meritorious service in making preliminary reconnaissance under heavy enemy fire, Sept. 27, 1918, in preparation for the attack on the Hindenburg line, France.

For gallantry and exceptional qualities of leadership displayed in the battle of the Hindenburg line, France, in the face of terrific enemy machine-gun and artillery fire, and for coolness, courage, and inspiring example to his men, after being severely wounded in that battle.
Hindenburg Line at Bellicourt.—Second Line Barbed Wire Defenses on Left.

From an Aeroplane Photograph.
Dear Mother:

Besides the letters I acknowledged yesterday, I received the letters dated Aug. 13 and Sept. 8. The latter came in good time.

The story of the machine gunners taking autos to keep up with the retreating Boche is a good one. The ones we had pitted against us fought like the fiend incarnate. They were the flower of the German Army, the Prussian Guard.

Pop's letters are always an inspiration, and I thank God for him. You have never been so close, Mother, as you are tonight. I feel as though I wanted you as I never have in my life before, I don't know exactly why. I guess I am not as old as I thought I was. I think it is the effects of my late experience, for I have witnessed things that will be vivid memories as long as I live, and
I have lost friends made under conditions which make friendships last.

I have one dominant feeling: God punish the Kaiser and the fiends he has collected around him. They wouldn't even let us bury our dead. I know, because I was helping to dig a great grave myself on the battlefield the day after the battle. They fired on our stretcher-bearers with their Red Cross insignia, the symbol of mercy. They fired with machine guns on our wounded who were crawling back. As there is a just God in heaven, they will pay for their atrocities. Perhaps I am wrong; perhaps it is un-Christian for a man to entertain such a sentiment, but it exists just the same. This outburst was unintentional, Mother. I do not want to disturb your mind, yet fear that I have.

Alan Eggers showed great bravery and heroism in the field, and I have pushed his recommendation for the military cross. He is every inch a man and a credit to his country and to the uniform he wears. I am going to write his mother, for I know she will be proud. Tell

SERGT. ALAN L. EGGERS, M. G. Co., 107TH INF. CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR AND BRITISH MILITARY MEDAL
her what I have written, in case my letter does not reach her.*

I am feeling all O. K., and hope I shall live to hear, as Pop writes, a hundred pipers marching down Unter den Linden skirling "The Cock o' the North," with ten thousand Americans also, singing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

With all my love,

KEN.

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* Corporal Alan L. Eggers, of Summit, N. J., Machine Gun Co., 107th Infantry. For extraordinary heroism in action near Venduille on Sept. 29. Corporal Eggers, with Sergeant John C. Latham, West Orland, England, and Thomas E. O'Shea, of Summit, N. J., both of Machine Gun Co., 107th Infantry, responded to a call for help from an American tank which was disabled in an open field swept by machine-gun and shell fire. With great gallantry and disregard for personal safety, they carried out a wounded officer and two soldiers to a shellhole near by, after which they returned to the tank, dismounted a Hotchkiss gun, and carried it with them to the shellhole, where they kept the enemy at bay until night, when they returned to our lines, bringing in the three wounded men and the gun. O'Shea was killed.
Dear Mother:

Your letter of Sept. 13th received yesterday. Things are looking brighter and brighter for the Allies, and it is the sincere hope of all of us that the finishing touches will be put on Germany by spring. She has asked for an armistice, and if it is not granted she will enforce it by her arms! Doesn’t that make you laugh? She has a motive which is quite obvious.

Roger left today for the officers’ training school, and I feel lonely with hardly a soul from Summit left. Gaddy, I hope, will be back when the hole he has in him is healed.

It is so dark I shall have to stop.

With all my love,

Ken.

LETTER CLXX

Some News of the Company Personnel.—Division Underwent the Acid Test and Failed Not.

Oct. 7, 1918.

Dear Weak:

Your most welcome letter received a few days ago upon our return from the line. I was awfully glad to hear from you, for I wondered about you often and wrote you twice, care of Springfield Armory, not having any other address.

*At Doingt, near Peronne.
Congratulations on the success of your gun. Your account of your work is very interesting, and it is odd that you should be in Elizabeth, only six miles from my home. If you continue there, run up and introduce yourself to my people.

Now, then, Weakie, you have asked for news about the company.* I cannot tell you much that will be satisfactory and still comply with the censorship regulations. You wouldn't know us. Jones, Vandervoort, MacDonald, Rhodes, Rich, Martin and Tobin are at an officers' training school. Milton and Scotty Campbell were also sent, but Milton missed out, and Campbell was returned to the company because he wasn't a citizen. Milton is somewhere in the south of France in a casualty company. Scotty is in "Blighty," wounded. Many of the men you knew are dead; Gaddy in the hospital wounded; Jun W. dead. Have no captain at present; but two of us with the com-


* The Machine Gun Co., 107th Inf. Men of this company were awarded three Congressional Medals of Honor, three British Military Medals, and seven Distinguished Service Crosses; and twenty-three others were cited for gallantry in action and meritorious service in the World War.
pany, another lieutenant you do not know, and myself. We have just returned from one of the biggest drives of the war. We took part in a great attack launched against the Hindenburg Line at one of its strongest points, if not its strongest. And, Weakie, we smashed it, smashed it into a shapeless ditch. We went over the top with the Australians, the cream of Britain’s fighting men, behind us, and when our objective was reached they went through us and carried on what we had made possible. You speak of filling with pride when anyone mentions the old regiment. Weakie, my old friend, you don’t know what pride in an organization is compared to the pride those of us who have come back have in the outfit. We were commended by our own corps and division C. O., by the Australian corps commander, and by numerous other British officers of high rank, for the magnificent work and self-sacrifice of the regiment. It is the pride of a division which has unusually distinguished itself. We advanced under the most terrific barrage of the war. To describe
the battle is impossible. Australian officers who have been in the war since the beginning say it was the bloodiest forty-eight hours they have ever experienced. Suffice it to say, the attack was a success, and the division was subjected to the acid test and failed not. Those of us who came out alive do not understand how we did it.

I am enclosing a Mexican Border service ribbon which we are all wearing.

Write, Weakie, and come to France if you can. We need you right here in the division as a fighting man. Your place now is here with your old comrades. Do this if you can.

With my very best,

Ken.

LETTER CLXXI

No Peace Desired Until Complete Victory.—Chasing the Hun.

No. 51—Oct. 8, 1918.

Dear Mother, Pop and Marj.:

I sent a copy of the Stars and Stripes with an account of our fight of which I have written you. I hope that it reaches you.

We have just come from an inspection by the general, who was much pleased with the appearance of both men and equipment.

I am living in a pup-tent out in the open at present, and have been both warmer and dryer, but it is not so bad. I keep warm at night anyway.

We have the latest news regarding the Kaiser's re-
quest for an armistice. There is only one way to talk peace with him: after his army is vanquished and he has tasted the bitterness of defeat. If he cares to now, he can surrender unconditionally. He undoubtedly hopes by this latest move to cause a division amongst the Allies over a peace propaganda. I hope the people at home do not lose their perspective.

Our colonel is to be a brigadier-general, a well-merited promotion. Once in action, promotion comes fast to those who live. I am to get my first lieutenancy. I think that Gaddy, too, will be promoted when he gets out of the hospital.

Oct. 12.*

Have had no chance to finish the above, as we have been chasing the Boche in his retirement, and it took us some days to catch up with him. I have just received your letters of Sept. 19 and 22. Interesting news in each of them. Enjoyed the clipping about Gen. Haig very much. He is a wonderful man, and the idol of the British Army.

* La Haje Menneresse, east of Bellicourt.
Enclosed is a newspaper clipping. We are nowhere near Mont Kemmel now. Lt. Harry is a provost marshal. I expect to be a first lieutenant in a few days. Must stop and be on my way.

Ken.

LETTER CLXXII

Scathless Through Many Perils.—The French Refugees.—The Toils and Difficulties of Transport in the Wake of the Retreating Boche.

No. 53—Oct. 12, 1918.

Dear Pop:

I wrote you this morning and also sent a money-order for $72. I paid 400 frs. for this money-order, so you see exchange is not very good. We are getting only 5.50 now, whereas the exchange was 5.71 when I came over, and the prospects are not good for a higher rate in the future.

I did not think when I hurriedly finished my letter this morning that I would be able to write you again for several days. I had taken the company into the lines the night before, returned to my base and left immediately, after addressing my letter to you, for the front again. I have spent the day there and decided to come back here for the night for several reasons which I cannot mention. My horse was wounded coming out tonight. So far I have been hung all over with horse-shoes. I have been continually running through Jerry’s counter-barrages, machine gun fire and shells of every
description and calibre, whizz-bangs, wooley-bears, Jack Johnsons, pound wonders, Tock Emmas, minnies, daisy-clippers, iron foundries and gas. These are all trench slang names for various types of Jerry's shells. These names tell a long story to the man who comprehends.

I haven't been scratched even. I got a piece of shell in the nape of my neck tonight, but it was spent and didn't even cut my coat. I have developed a very keen nose for gas. I have discovered that I have a very delicate nose and throat, which the slightest concentration of gas affects. So you see they cannot surprise me with the darned stuff. The gas-mask is a great thing, good against anything Jerry throws in the line of gas.

I wish you could see the French civilians, Pop, whom we are liberating as we advance. Their gratefulness, their joy at being in friendly hands once again, and their
pitiable condition brought a lump in my throat and a mist over my eyes—everything they own gone, their young women violated, ill-nourished, some of their families killed, many of them wounded, all of them dazed and numb from the terrific bombardment to which they have been subjected.

This afternoon I picked up a small party of them and brought them from a town* still partially in Boche hands, over a trail safe from artillery fire which I discovered on a previous reconnaissance, to a town farther in the rear.† I was decorated like a Christmas-tree with their things—a few clothes, clocks, etc., which they were bringing with them. I came along the trail this way, with three small children clinging to my coat-tails, with an old man and two women. I cannot write the things they told me, but some day I will be at liberty to talk.

It is the same old story from each of them. You have read Viscount Bryce’s report on the Belgian atrocities. I don’t need to say more. These people have been under German domination for almost four years. The British and our men are caring for them with a solicitude and tenderness which is inspiring and makes me feel proud of my race. All of our soldiers (by this I mean the Allies) who are here are repeatedly walking into the very jaws of death simply to help a dazed and bewildered refugee.

All these refugees, almost without exception, have French flags, which they hang out of a window of the house to which they are assigned after coming to the

* St. Souplet.
† Busigny.
rear. Their love of country and home is remarkable. I think the French are the greatest people in the world in this respect.

I have written a good deal about this, Pop, for it has made such a deep impression on me. The men responsible must pay, pay, PAY for the innocent blood they have shed, for the misery they have caused, and for their violation of every principle that is just, humane and Christian.

The weather has been bad, and the task of moving troops and transport is terrific, but we are doing it. The Boche is leaving the roads behind him in bad shape, of course, and the incessant rain combined with this makes the problem of getting transport over them a Herculean task which requires all the ingenuity, resourcefulness, skill and patience one can muster, for troops must be fed, watered and supplied with ammunition.

I am killing my animals and severely taxing my men. The men seem to be made of iron. Two days ago I was for twenty-eight hours continuously in the saddle,* took one hour’s sleep and then spent twelve hours more on my horse taking the company into the line. I was very tired, of course, but none the worse otherwise.

There has been a great deal about “I” in this letter, Pop; but you will understand. I try to tell you as much as I can of what I am doing, of what I see and of what I think.

I must close, as I have to be up very early. I am going to see that the company gets its rum issue, and

* Bringing up entire transport over roads entirely new to him. The transport was brought in safely, by short cuts and detours, over shell-torn country.
then away back to spend a few days with the company in the line.

Wishing you were here with me,

Ken.

LETTER CLXXIII

Written Under Fire.—Wants a Fight to the Finish.—A Premonition.

Oct. 16, 1918.

Dear Walter:

Your letter of Sept. 15th from Milwaukee delivered to me tonight. It is certainly an interesting one, particularly your comment on the country between Chicago and Milwaukee.

This comes to you, Walter, from my headquarters in the front line.* Just think, old Jerry Boche but 500 yards from where I am writing. I am in a cellar, and wish I could enclose some of the noise going on above my head.

We have given Fritz an awful tuning up, and he seems ready to pass off. He has asked for an armistice, and he is getting it in the shape of 45's, 6 in. rapids, 9.2 howitzers and 15 in. navals, which are all screeching over our heads and making him duck his. He pretty well has his wind-up now.

I hope Wilson grants no armistice, but will demand unconditional surrender, and then talk peace. Otherwise, the only way we want to talk it is with our guns. Have written home, Walter, concerning some of the things I have witnessed on this big advance. Look up

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*Imberfayt Farm, near La Haje Menneresse.
those letters, No. 53 or 54. Things I have seen have
stirred me as I never have been stirred before.

I am commanding the company, Walter. Just think,
I am the last officer that is left of five.* It is an odd
feeling to watch them go one by one until you are the
last. It makes one feel as though his time is coming with
the sureness of death. My recommendation is in, and
I will be promoted if I live.

Tell Peel I received his letter, and will write soon.
With my best.

Ken.

[This letter, dated Oct. 16, is the last ever written
by Lt. Gow. He was killed in the early morning of Oct.
17th, leading his company in the attack on the Selle
river heights, near St. Souplet.]

*After the Selle River attack, next day, but sixteen men of the company
were left out of 160.
U. S. VICTORY MEDAL.
LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

A SOLDIER'S BURIAL.

From Rev. E. F. Keever, Chaplain.

The chaplains were ordered on Friday evening, Oct. 18th, to report at headquarters in St. Souplet. We arrived there at one o'clock A. M. of the 19th, after passing through several towns and villages that were being shelled in a very lively fashion. At daybreak (Saturday, Oct. 19th) we learned that a number of officers and men had fallen the days previous, among them Captain Fisk and Lt. Gow.

It was necessary for us to ascertain where the Divisional Cemetery was to be situated, so as to avoid falling into the same confusion and lack of co-operation as obtained after the Hindenburg fight. At that time many men were buried in isolated spots, tags were lost and all sorts of irregularities occurred. The consequence was that, when the divisional details came on the field later, those bodies lying in isolated graves were disinterred and reburied in cemeteries.

At St. Souplet Chaplain Kelly assumed charge and Lt. Curtis assisted. On Saturday, Oct. 19th, we saw nothing attempted, but had heard that a certain field was to be used for divisional burial purposes. Sunday morning (Oct. 20th) a party was formed to identify and locate our dead. About one mile northward from Arbre Guernon, on the Le Cateau road, we met the rest of our party, a limber containing several bodies in charge of Chaplain Hoey, who returned with the limber to St. Souplet and deposited the bodies in the field which afterwards became our burial-ground.
On the morning of Monday, Oct. 21st, Chaplain Hoey and I went out to the cemetery and found there Chaplain Kelly and Lt. Curtis in charge of a good-sized detail, perhaps twenty or thirty, hard at work preparing the graves for our beloved men. The boys worked rapidly and carefully. Each grave was a separate excavation, about four feet deep and quite accurately squared. The bodies were well sewed up in burlap, with tags attached. The cemetery slopes gently for a short distance, and then more abruptly, toward the southeast.
Captain Fisk was placed in the first grave of the first row. Lt. Kenneth Gow was laid in No. 2, work on his grave being more rapid than on any of the others. Chaplain Hoey read his service over the lieutenant at about or nearly ten o'clock. Fifteen or twenty minutes later, when Capt. Fisk's grave was almost filled with earth, the Germans threw some shells into the next field. As I was reading my service the chaplain in charge of the burial operations rushed up and ordered every man to drop his tools and take cover. . . . I told the boy working at Capt. Fisk's grave not to stop, so he continued to fill in as I read, and finished the service. I returned to St. Souplet, to find that the regiment had left, having been relieved in the line by an English outfit.

Thus we left our comrades sleeping on the hills of France. It seemed unkind, almost treasonable, to leave them, but duty called.

"We carved not a line and we raised not a stone,
But left them alone in their glory."
State of New York
Headquarters National Guard
Office of the Commanding General

August, 19, 1920.

My Dear Mr. Gow:

When I visited the cemetery at St. Souplet, I visited the grave of your gallant son Kenneth.

I enclose a photograph of the grave which I took at the time and which no doubt you would like to have. It is situated next to that of Captain Clinton B. Fisk, which is at the end of the row.

The cemetery is in excellent condition, enclosed by a fence and beautified by flower-beds and gravel walks. It is situated on a rather commanding hill overlooking the village of St. Souplet.

I also visited the village and delivered your letter to the Maire.

Kind regards.

Sincerely yours,

John F. O’Ryan,
Major General.

Mr. R. M. Gow,
324 West 23d St.,
New York City.
Tributes From Comrades and Friends
FROM SERGT. CHAS. W. VEITCH.


My dear Mr. Gow:

It sure is a great gratification to me to be capable of telling something about your son's good work. I don't think any officer in the whole U. S. Army could have been more liked by the men who came in contact with him, and it was a great shock to the company when they learned of his death. Some men try to act like gentlemen, and by trying are so; but Lt. Gow did not have to try to be a gentleman, as he already was one, and a white one, too. He showed no favoritism; every man was free and equal as far as he was concerned; but that was only one of his many great assets.

I shall endeavor to tell you of some of the things that happened on the day he was killed and a few days previous. The Machine Gun Company was located at a farm known as Imberfayt Farm, near La Haje Menneresse, where the machine guns were distributed along a large hedge. The company headquarters were
THE COUNTRY NEAR ST. SOUPLET.
The Spot on Imberfayt Farm where the M. G. Co. of the 107th were posted Oct. 16, 1918, marked by a cross, to the left of the figure 8. (From a British War Map.)
located in a room in the cellar of the farm-house. All the other officers of the company were unfortunate enough to be wounded and in the hospital. Lt. Gow, who was commanding the transport, and perhaps three miles behind the line, was notified, and he promptly came up and took command of the company (Oct. 12th). Happy and proud are not words that can express his feelings.

Next day he was warned of an attack to be launched on the German lines that was to take place very soon, and he was given a few of the main details, and the rest was up to Lt. Gow to work out for himself, which he did, and he informed each man of his particular mission when the attack came off. The morning of the attack finally came, and at 2.30 A. M. Lt. Johnson, who had recently been assigned to the company, started with the men and transport to reach a certain point at a certain time. Lt. Gow, with several runners (Kinkel, Bastedenbeck, Hartert) and myself were to follow 1st Battalion Hdq. to St. Souplet, and there find a way by which the company could get the transport across La Selle River, and we were then to follow 1st Battalion Hdq. still further and locate positions from which our machine guns could be fired most efficiently.

Before we started Lt. Gow said to me: "Veitch, if anything happens, you will find the maps in this pocket and instructions here." He had his trench coat on at the time. After going through some very thick shell-fire, we finally reached the point from where we would start our advance further forward. It was then about 4.30 A. M., and the Germans were pouring hell in the
St. Souplet (Nord) and the Rising Ground Beyond the R. R. Station.
(From an aeroplane photograph.)
form of steel right at us; although I don’t suppose it was especially meant for us, but nevertheless we were on the receiving end. Shortly after 4.30* (I don’t remember the exact time) our barrage opened up, and a few minutes later the German counter-barrage came down on us, and those who were lucky enough to have entrenching tools dug holes, and thereby afforded themselves a little protection. But very few of our crowd had such tools, so the only thing to do was to lie flat on the ground. I flattened out, obeying Lt. Gow’s orders by doing so, and did not look up for a few seconds. Lt. Gow was standing when I lay down, and when I looked up he was lying flat also, in a most natural position. We thought that, after having seen the men all down, he got down himself; but he didn’t; he had been knocked down, hit in the neck† by a piece of shell, and died instantly. I know every one that knew him are hoping he gets his heavenly reward.

Sincerely yours,

CHAS. W. VEITCH,

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* Probably about 5:30 A. M.
† Behind left ear, at base of brain.
FROM THOMAS C. JANSON.

Baton Rouge, La., March 26th, 1919.

Mr. W. E. Gude, New York.

My dear Mr. Gude:

You asked me to write you in regard to my association with Lieut. Kenneth Gow. To the boys of our company his memory shall always be with us; and should you ask one of that Company what they thought of Lieut. Gow, the universal answer would be: "They don't come any better." He was more than an officer to me; he was a friend. Never have I felt worse than when the boys came back in the morning and said: "Janson, your friend is gone." But a few hours before he had asked me to guard some special equipment. He was short of men, and I was only attached to his little command, but to help him was my greatest pleasure.

In making inquiries as to how Lieut. Gow made the greatest sacrifice that man can give to his country, two of our boys, Sergeants Veitch and Van, one of the former transport men, told me they were lying prone,
waiting for the barrage to lift. The Germans were sending over their curtain of steel. Lieut. Gow ordered all hands to lie flat until the barrage lifted. After a half-hour's wait, it lifted; but it took an officer whom we all cared for, and as brave a boy as ever wore the uniform of Uncle Sam. The two men who had lain down on either side of Lieut. Gow called: "Well, it's over now; should we advance, Lieutenant?" But no answer! They went to see why Lieut. Gow did not answer, and could hardly believe their eyes: he had gone from this earth, but without a sound. If it were fate that he should leave us, it was a happy fate that he did not suffer.

They brought him down to our picket-line, and after they pushed Jerry back beyond the La Selle River, I thought it an honor to take my Lieutenant and place him as near as possible to the spot where he had laid down his life for his country. Before taking him up to the lines, I wrapped the body up in strips of waterproof canvas (we call them shelter-halfs or dog-tents)—cut up three, and bound him up! It was done then, for no other time could be had; but in this case it was in memory of a friend.

At St. Souplet, where the cross-roads of Busigny and the main road of Bohain come together to form a V, lies the body of Lieut. Kenneth Gow, beside an officer he knew well, Capt. Fisk, of D Company, 107th Inf., who was the son of our old Col. Fisk. Chaplain P. E. Hoey, of our regiment, placed him there, and had the grave registered. Lieut. Gow often told me he thought a great deal of Father Hoey, and Father Hoey told me
he felt very bad to have to bury Lieut. Gow, as he was very much attached to him. It is the St. Souplet Cemetery (I believe it is so designated in the registration), and is a beautiful little strip of ground rising gradually from the forked roads. It holds one of my dearest friends, my transport officer, Lieut. Kenneth Gow.

To have the friendship of Lieut. Gow you had to respect the horse and those ever-kicking mules. To abuse his animals was a crime. Treat them half-way decent, and you had the privilege of going up to Lieut. Gow and saying: "Lieutenant, it's a long time between pay-days; I need some francs." If you behaved and had your animals in good condition, you got the francs; if not, you got the riot act, and after a short while he would come around and loan you some money just the same; and the doughboy is no mean spender.

His transport was his pride. He had the best-looking animals and wagons in the division. The boys took pride in keeping them so, as they took pride in their officer. Lieut. Gow was the most pleased man in the world when Major-General O'Ryan came into the air-drome, near Abeele, Belgium. We were quartered there, and General O'Ryan just popped in unexpectedly. He gave our wagons and mules a critical inspection. "Lieutenant," he said, "I congratulate you on having a one-hundred per cent. transport; the best I've seen in the division. Tell me, Lieutenant, where did you get the paint? I've ordered paint for Divisional Headquarters, and can't get any from the British Quartermaster." Lieut. Gow didn't take credit for the paint; he said: "General, I have a man who mixed about nine different
colors and shades, and he should get credit for matching the British regulation paint.” He should have told General O’Ryan that the cost of the materials was out of his own pocket; but no! He was always buying little things to keep his transport up. Many a time he would take one of my brushes and try to daub around the hubs or fasteners at the side of the limbers; he wanted to have his hand in it. Many a time he would raise Cain and say we spoiled his mare by petting her too much, and in a few minutes he would be over petting her and stroking her mane.

There was a time before going into the lines that if you asked one of us, “What company are you in?” we would say, “We are in Gow’s Sunday-school.” The cause of this was that he called us together one morning and said: “You fellows can swear all you want to at the mules; I know they are exasperating at times; but if I catch one of you calling another an obscene name, into the guardhouse you go!” From then on we figured ourselves in his Sunday-school. Yet the respect for the man made us quit, as we thought if Gow said so it must be right. Personality will be respected, even by the “mule-skinner,” as we are called in the army.

Our officers in that company were as fine as the U. S. A. could boast of; there could not be found better in the A. E. F. I happened to be one of five men taken ill with cramps, caused by sleeping on damp ground. Capt. Andrews, Lieuts. Willis, Adsit, Gadebusch and Gow gave up their cots and slept in the straw of a billet, so that we, the sick men, could have comfort while in pain; and we were taken care of like so many children
—scrambled eggs on toast and eggnog to strengthen us. Is it any wonder that we stand by our officers in the Machine Gun Company of the 107th Infantry? Two were sacrificed on the field of honor; the three remaining were wounded. There never was and never will be a braver body of men than that little company, officers and men alike.

Lieut. Gow often spoke to me of the beautiful valley of the Somme. He passed through it going up with his transport to the area opposite the Hindenburg Line. I often told him: "Make it your honeymoon trip, and you can show Mrs. Gow where you travelled, and tell your experiences." He said I hit the nail on the head, and he would. Often after that I'd fool with him about it, and tell him not to point out anything but the valley—to leave the insect pest out of the Somme travelogue. There was someone he cared for 'way back in the U. S. A., and from what I saw of Kenneth Gow he certainly respected those he cared for by his behavior over there. I would gladly give my life defending the name of Kenneth Gow, for as a man he was a criterion for all of us to follow. His one thought was duty, and to do the best he knew how. His transport was always where it should be, and at the right time. The Hindenburg stunt saw Lieut. Gow at the most advanced ammunition dump, right up on the sunken roadway. Going up the following day to help lay out a little cemetery at Bony, I saw what had been his post during the day previous, when the division broke the Hindenburg Line. The dump was situated in a little hollow; the ground around it was a mass of shell-holes. Lieut. Gow was in gas fumes constantly,
Along the road shown in this aeroplane photograph Lt. Gow carried forward the rations as mentioned in his citation, page 23.
but when I mentioned that he surely had had a rough spot to contend with, he said: "Well, I expected to get it; but they haven't got my number yet."

Modern warfare is terrible, but as bad as it is it brings out the most wonderful characters, to be laid on the altar of sacrifice. The memory I most cherish of the best we left over there is of my officer and friend, Kenneth Gow, and I regret that I could not have been associated with him longer. To know him was a pleasure, and also to work under him. The mare he was so fond of was stolen from the picket-line one night; whoever took her had sense enough to take along a bag of oats, and we figured that, as the thief realized she had to eat, he might not mistreat her. That little animal knew she had lost a master who never beat her, but I cannot vouch for the treatment a few others gave her; they didn't know or respect animals like Lieut. Gow. He told me he was going to try to buy her when it was "all over," and let her eat her head off on New Jersey grass.

On my return to New York I shall try to get a picture of Lieut. Gow and put it beside my discharge, so that I can look upon my wall, see an obligation of duty I fulfilled, and also see a boy who was one of the finest specimens of American manhood I have ever come in contact with, whose memory I shall respect as my ideal of what a man should be. To me he was like a brother at times, and my little chats with him were a pleasure, because he always spoke of the better things in life. He just knew what the difference is between good and bad,
and was always there to advise his men for their own good.

In his home circle his father and mother will cherish his memory; some little woman, too, whom he told me he cared so much for, will keep him in memory; but that little band of men who worked under him during the most trying conditions knew the real Kenneth Gow, and that association will ever be a memory of the time when we lost the best we had.

I remain,

Most respectfully and sincerely,

THOMAS C. JANSON,

Formerly commanded during combat actions by Lieut. Kenneth Gow, Machine Gun Co., 107th Inf., U. S. A., A. E. F.

FROM LIEUT. PAUL HELMUTH GADEBUSCH.

In 1916, during the tour of duty of the Seventh Regiment on the Mexican Border, I was first closely associated with Kenneth Gow. There, during the months spent together in service, our friendship rapidly ripened, and by the time we were again called out in July, 1917, I had come to regard Ken as my best friend. I knew him as an enlisted man with me, as a friend, then as my superior officer, and lastly as my comrade and brother officer during the momentous months in France.

I remember, in Spartanburg, when I had at first been rejected for the Officer's Training School, owing to a slight injury to my hand, what a severe blow it was to Kenneth. My disappointment was his, and he felt the
keenest kind of regret at my misfortune. I had telegraphed the news to him, and most splendidly he went to break it to my parents, who with him were extremely ambitious for my success. Later, when the decision of the Commanding General was reconsidered, and I finally joined the Machine Gun Company as Ken’s brother officer, he gave me the warmest and heartiest kind of a welcome, and shared with me the realization of one of our greatest ambitions, which had been to serve together as officers in the Machine Gun Company of the 107th. Such a friend was he, he took keener interest in the prospects of my success than in his own.

Never have I been so moved as on the night before the 29th of September, when the M. G. Company was going forward to go over the top. Kenneth had brought up the limbers and came over to me to say good-bye. It was in a sunken road almost on the very front line. Artillery were coming up into position, and both our men and the infantry were making their preparations for going over. The only light was the occasional flash of a bursting shell. It was in this setting, amidst almost constant bombardment, that the finest friend a man could have came up to say good-bye.

Both Kenneth and I must have had a premonition that this was to be our last meeting on this earth, and that handshake stands out as the most stirring and impressive experience and vivid recollection that I have of the entire war. Both our hearts went into it, and we felt it was a real farewell.

I have hesitated a long time before writing a tribute to Kenneth; because no written word can possibly ex-
press the depth of my regard for him, or do justice to
the wonderful character and spirit of friendship, loyalty
and truth that was his.

He is to me today the best friend any man could
possibly have had. He was comrade, adviser and friend.
He stands forth in my memory as the finest character I
have had the privilege of knowing, and no other man
can ever fill the place he held in my heart and in his
affectionate relationship to me.

By his heroic death, until in the hereafter, the world
has lost one of its noblemen, his family a truly wonder-
ful son and brother, and I, in all the truest and fullest
meaning of the word, have lost a friend.

Paul H. Gadebusch,
M. G. Co., 107th Inf.

FROM MAJOR WALTER GRESHAM ANDREWS.

France, Nov. 20, 1918.

My dear Mrs. Gow:

I know how short a way this letter of mine can go
to let you know my real feeling and sympathy for you
in your terrific loss, but I cannot refrain from sending
you this note, which has been delayed owing to my hav-
ing been in the hospital, wounded, and out of touch with
the company.

I had only been with this company since July, but
a great friendship had sprung up between Ken and
myself, and I do not know of anyone I have ever known
that I admired and respected as much as I did him. The
men of the company all felt the same. He was an old
standby, and we all feel very deeply for you in these trying days. His spirit and devotion to duty and to the interests of all of the men were beyond measure, and I know that none of us had a better friend anywhere. He met death at the head of the company, which he was then command ing, and all of the men join me in heartfelt sympathy to you at this time. His death means a terrific loss to us all of a wonderful friend, a gentleman and a brave soldier.

Most sincerely,

WALTER GRESHAM ANDREWS,
Captain, M. G. Co., 107th Inf.

July, 1920.

I first knew Kenneth Gow at Camp Wadsworth, S. C., where he had the reputation of being one of the best first sergeants in the 27th Division. He was a tireless worker, a real student of machine gunnery and a marked success as a handler of the men under him. On recognition of his ability and all-around fine qualities, he was commissioned second lieutenant in his company, the Machine Gun Co. of the 107th Inf., and was shortly after sent overseas to an advanced machine gun school in France, from which he graduated satisfactorily and was returned to the company, then with the regiment in France, stationed in the rear areas of the Ypres salient.

My connection with his organization began only in July, 1918, in France, so I did not have the opportunity of serving in the same company with Lt. Gow before or during the long preparatory period in the United States. I say his organization, because I always felt that it was
his spirit which really made the organization what it was. He had enlisted in the company before it was sent to Texas for Border service, and he was the only officer, besides the late Lt. Willis and Lt. Gadebusch, who had grown up with the outfit, so to speak.

At that time (July, 1918) our organization was short of its regular number of officers, due partially to attendance at schools of some of those regularly assigned, with the result that all of the work devolved upon Lts. Gow and Willis with myself, a newcomer. One of the most important subdivisions of a heavy machine gun company is its transport-animals, mess and general service of supply; and as we approached the time when we were to go into the line, this became more apparent, with the result that Lieutenant Gow was assigned to this work, with a great deal of reluctance on my part, for we all considered him just the man to handle things in the line. He had the faculty of working with animals in addition to his other capabilities. He accepted his fate cheerfully, as was typical of him, and from that time on we never worried about our animals, food, transportation or supplies; and I know with what great earnestness he undertook and carried on this work. Many nights, after turning from one detail to another all day long, he would himself ride forward to our positions with our daily supply of rations, ammunition, etc. In spite of his natural desire to be with the guns, he carried on his work unselfishly, and was of invaluable service, not only to our own unit, but also to others with which we were working in conjunction.

Later on we went to the Somme for the Hindenburg
Line attack, and here he carried on the same work for us. On the night after this battle, when the action was still raging, he personally endeavored to furnish us with rations on a pack animal, over ground which was torn to pieces and partially still in the enemy’s hands. His conduct on this occasion is fully explained by his Distinguished Service Cross citation.

I recall his utmost concern for his men, his utter self-sacrifice at all times, and with it all a wonderful fund of humor, which meant a lot to all of us, men and officers alike. The men were heart and soul with him.

After I left the company; he continued the same work, and it seemed very hard that the fate of war should take him from us when at last he assumed command of his company to go forward. We all felt his loss tremendously, as only it can be felt under such circumstances. His spirit still lives with all of us who were among the fortunate to survive and return.

WALTER GRESHAM ANDREWS,
ex-Captain, M. G. Co., 107th Inf.

FROM FATHER PETER E. HOEY.
Church of Saint Paul the Apostle,
415 West 59th Street, New York City,
May 20th, 1919.

Mr. R. M. Gow,
324 West 23rd Street, New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Gow:

It was my very great privilege to know your son Kenneth very well. Indeed, we became great friends,
and to this moment I glory in the fact that I could call him such. He was one of the most lovable lads I ever met. Possessing as he did a most winsome disposition, it is little wonder that all his men loved him, and that we who were thrown into more intimate relations with him were refreshed by his spirit of gentle courtesy and refinement.

When I first heard that he had been called upon to pay the supreme sacrifice for humanity, I could not help but feel that I had lost one of the most perfect joys of life—a friend. But when I laid him in his grave and read for him the burial service, I began to realize that his life had been given for the holiest cause that man could die for, and from that open grave I have drawn a great inspiration and incentive to labor for that cause for which he shed his blood.

When I learned of his death I was up at St. Souplet, and his body had been lovingly carried to the rear by the boys of his company, who there prepared it for burial and then brought it up to me at the little American graveyard where he now rests.

It is very hard, I know, to accept the death of your
dear lad without grief, and yet that is the very thing I ask you to do. Remember he died as he would have wished, for God and his country, and in that you should glory.

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,

        P. E. Hoey, C. S. P.,
        Chaplain 107th U. S. Infantry.

FROM SERGT. JOHN C. LATHAM.

May 30th, 1919.

Mr. R. M. Gow,
            324 West 23rd St., New York.
Dear Sir:

The late Lieutenant Gow was indeed a friend to me, and his wonderful personality and his high ideals of life were an inspiration to many of us.

His was a shining example of life as it should be lived, especially under adverse conditions, and his memory is cherished and revered by all of his comrades of the company which he loved so well.

Very truly yours,

        JOHN C. LATHAM,
        M. G. Co., 107th Inf., 27th Div., A. E. F.

FROM SERGT. ALAN L. EGGERS.

Lieut. Gow had a fine personality which endeared him to every man in the company, and an ability to lead which caused him to be honored and respected by them. The whole company mourns his loss, and we feel that we have lost an officer and a friend whom we will never be able to replace.

        ALAN L. EGGERS,
        M. G. Co., 107th Inf.
My dear Mr. and Mrs. Gow:

I have just received word from my folks telling me the sad news of Kenneth’s death.

I received a letter from Ken on the 23d of October, which he wrote on the 7th of October, telling me about the terrible engagement they had just come out of victoriously, which I would be pleased to have you read, if you so desire.

In view of the fact that Kenneth and I were inseparable friends while in service together, I feel in duty bound to write you, his parents, expressing my sympathy. I haven’t a friend in this world who was as close to me as your brave son, a man whom I loved in a way that words cannot describe.

No nobler soul ever wore a uniform. He possessed all the fine traits that a man should have, and no others—courteous, kind, considerate, generous to a fault and
“Remember you have given a son to a great cause.”—Page 387.

ever ready to help those less fortunate. Beloved by all of us was Kenneth Gow. A noble character, a gallant
soldier of the Mexican Border service, a type of sterling integrity, always a kind, considerate, faithful friend and lovable companion, none will be more missed by every member of the company who survives. His death is a personal loss to me, and to every surviving member of the Machine Gun Co. of the 7th.

Thus passes one of our little band of machine gunners of 1916. When our reunion takes place and those living of Mexican Border fame (very few at this writing) meet at the old armory, Ken Gow, the name under which he was endeared to all of us, will surely be missed. His vacant chair will leave a gap that can never be filled. His character and conduct were so pure and high that his presence alone exerted a good influence wherever his pathway led.

And it will not be so long before we all shall join this noble officer, who so honorably wore the livery of the great Republic to which we devoted our lives and energies in the humble parts assigned to us by the accidents and exigencies of the service. May God grant consolation to you, his stricken parents, whom he so loved.

John McK. Palmer,
1st Lieut., Ord. Dept., U. S. A.,
(ex M. G. Co., 7th Inf., N. G., N. Y.)

FROM LT. OSCAR GELLETTE.
(Extract from a letter from France to his father in Louisiana.)

I have just learned that the son of Mr. R. M. Gow (Sec. A. J. C. C.) had died over here. I have had the pleasure of meeting this young man, and learned to love
him, as he was one of the bravest and most honorable young men it has ever been my pleasure to meet. To know young Gow was to love him, as he reminded me of our Louisiana boys in manhood and bravery; and I must say that he has done more to cause me to have a more tender feeling for the young men of the North than anything else that ever has come before me, as he was brave, honest, upright in every particular, and like a gentleman of the old Southern type. He was worth all of the Huns in Germany.

Oscar Gellette,
91st Division.

FROM MR. W. HENRY GRANT.

Kenneth Gow was a member of my class in Sunday school about the years 1905-1910, when he was between fourteen and nineteen years of age. Kenneth was playful and yet serious. I think of him in the class talking of those things which interest boys, of his coming to class meets at my home, and of excursions to New York, Northfield, Mass., and other places. He expressed his keen appreciation of these
at the time, and remembered and spoke of them years afterwards. One of these excursions was to the American Museum of Natural History and another to Chinatown, and both made a great impression upon Kenneth and opened his eyes to wider realities. He was also greatly stimulated by the books we all read: "Men of Iron," "Treasure Island," "Robin Hood," "Knights of King Arthur."

My last meeting with Kenneth was a farewell handshake at the Summit R. R. station. He had a way of pressing your hand which was more than words. No one more clearly apprehended that he was fighting for a great cause than he. These are his own words: "Remember that you have given a son to a great cause."

Kenneth Gow has won the honor among us which is above all praise. I feel proud to have been one of his Sunday school teachers, not that he was in any sense improved by my teaching, but because whatever was in him came through unspoiled and proved itself in the final test. We are all proud that the gold star on our service flag stands for beautiful, chivalrous Kenneth Gow. His memory will shine like that star. We are
proud that our hero was a Summit boy and a member of this church and Sunday school (Central Presbyterian, Summit, N. J.), not that he was an extraordinary boy, though he was far above mediocrity, but because he was our boy, our friend and our fellow-citizen.

FROM THE HEWITT PRESS.

When, in (1918), the fifth year of the World War, we bade farewell to Lieutenant Kenneth Gow, it was with feelings of pride and admiration that we wished him Godspeed on his journey to France.

He had been in close association with us for upward of four years; a period in which we had for long recognized his many sterling qualities and unusual gifts. Almost from the very beginning he brought to the discharge of his duties a keen business ability, to which he was continually adding; and it would seem that one so earnest and ambitious, so rarely conscientious as he, could not fail to make his mark in any phase of mercantile life that he chose to adopt.

To Kenneth Gow belonged the unfailing courtesy of the true gentleman; and, to those who knew him intimately, his whole personality and attitude breathed deeply of him who lives cleanly and thinks clearly. It is on those aspects of his fine nature that we desire, more particularly, to dwell, for they are the indestructible part of man, and the part by which he is longest remembered.

Indeed, it could not well be otherwise. Like begets like. We have had the rare privilege of a long acquaint-
anceship with his father, Robert M. Gow, both in his business dealings and in his home life at Summit, New Jersey; and it was evident, to those who crossed his threshold, that it was to the ideals inculcated and fostered in early life by his estimable parents that the worthiness in character and attainments of the son, Kenneth, was due.

How well we remember him as he looked the morning he took his leave of us for overseas! The erect and manly bearing; the glow and pride of purpose stamped on every feature, vibrant in every tone! Surely the long roll of America’s patriotic sons could furnish no finer manhood than his who bore with him the well-wishes of all those who knew him, or with whom he came in daily contact!

And now, as at the beginning, our feelings are still those of pride and admiration—in his achievements, in his memory. But, mingled with them is regret—regret that is in itself, perhaps, the highest tribute that can be offered to the memory of such an one as Lieutenant Kenneth Gow.

FROM REV. WALKER GWYNNE, D.D.

Out of sixteen men of Summit who laid down their lives in the Great War, Calvary Church has the remarkable record of claiming no less than six of that little band as her own, all of them faithful communicants at her altar: Major William B. King, of the Ordnance (the only one to die in America); Lieutenants Edward Willis and Oscar E. Hellquist; Sergeant William W. Drabble
and Corporal Thomas E. O'Shea, all of the 107th (the old Seventh of New York); and Corporal Philip M. Drabble, of the 105th Machine Gun Battalion. To this roll of honor from Calvary Church I would gladly, if allowed, add the name of Kenneth Gow as a sacred seventh, because as boy and man he had loved to sing God's praises in Calvary Choir. In spirit he seemed always with us, and he had often partaken of the sacred body and blood of Christ at Calvary's altar.

Willis and O'Shea were the first to lay down their lives in France, on the same day, and fittingly on Michaelmas Day, Sept. 29th, the feast of the great warrior Archangel. Five days later Kenneth Gow wrote concerning his fellow-officer and friend Willis to the latter's young wife: "Edward Willis, a gallant soldier, admired and respected by the men under him, and always an example of uprightness to all with whom he came in contact. Trusted by his superior officers, he died as a soldier's death leading his men forward in a great battle in the cause of freedom and humanity. His was a character that was lovable, gentle, and yet strong. He gave his life unflinchingly, willingly, for the country and the cause he loved so well." These words from the battle-front, which a few days later was to claim also as its victim him who wrote them, were not the mere language of eulogy, but the genuine words of one who knew his comrade as youth alone can understand youth, and as we older people cannot. But my reason for quoting them here is chiefly because of their pathetic fitness in so admirably describing the life and character of Kenneth himself.
For fifteen years and more I had always known him as the same true boy and man; the same as a little singing boy, always reverent, always happy, always straightforward and manly, a devoted and obedient son, and always loving his Heavenly Father's house and service. Long after his boyhood days, year after year, he would come back to sing in his old place, and in the service which he loved, and always there was the same warm smile of greeting and the same strong hand-clasp that was ever genuine and true.

It has often been told that many of our young soldiers in this war, who had not thought deeply of life, its responsibilities and its eternal future, have had their
eyes opened, like the young servant of Elisha, to behold the unseen realities, when they faced the combined horrors and the splendid courage of their comrades in the fight. It was not that they were absolutely without faith of any kind; that is an impossibility for anyone brought up in a Christian atmosphere. The secret germ implanted in a child’s heart and mind may be choked, smothered, crushed under foot, but it lives on, because it is a divine thing; and then some day there come the fire and flame of a great experience to cause it to rise out of the dust and spring forth into life. Kenneth Gow, as I have known him, was not of that kind. His was no buried germ of faith that needed to wait for that day of fire and spiritual resurrection. It was always a living thing, at once childlike and manly and strong. Long before he ever dreamed that his should be a soldier’s part, he had been fighting another warfare unseen by human eye. Ever since he said his first prayer at his mother’s knee he had been fighting that fight and winning that victory.

It does not detract from Kenneth’s honor to say—thank God we can say it!—that there were tens of thousands just like him fighting with the same high purpose, the same lofty aim; men who went forth with the conscious spirit of their chosen battle hymn as “Christian soldiers” fighting Christ’s battle, and “with the cross of Jesus going on before.” How real in fact must those words have seemed to them then—the cross in their hearts and “the cross of Jesus going on before” them in the fight! We can think of them saying: “Why should we fear? He is there before us; it is His fight. It is true that He is the Prince of Peace, and it is peace that
we also are seeking. But it must be sought as He sought it, by conflict against the powers of darkness and cruelty and brute force. It can only be won by self-sacrifice; it may be even by the laying down of life itself, as did He, not for this nation only—America, France, or Belgium—but for all nations, the whole round world.” That was the work that Kenneth Gow and tens of thousands like him were given by God to do. With the great apostle, as they rest this day in paradise with Christ, and look forward to their glorious resurrection, they too can say: “Henceforth there is laid up for us the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to us at that day.” For they also “fought the good fight”; they “finished their course”; they “kept the faith.”

Walker Gwynne,
Rector Emeritus of Calvary Church, Summit, N. J.

FROM MAYOR RUFORD FRANKLIN.
Summit, N. J., July 19, 1919.

To Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Gow and Family:

It is my privilege to transmit to you, in behalf of the City of Summit, the accompanying engrossed testimonial to your son, Kenneth, whose name and memory will be gratefully cherished by all of Summit as a precious memory and a real inspiration, for all time. Words convey little in such a case. You well know the sincerity of my personal feeling in the matter.

Believe me,

Faithfully yours,

Ruford Franklin, Mayor.
LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

FROM GEORGE B. HARPER

To Kenneth Gow

From "Flanders' fields where poppies grow"
   Thy dauntless soul winged sudden flight
To fields celestial, 'mid the glow
   Of glory, battling for the Right.
When Freedom's cause was at its height,
Thy spirit soared to realms above
   The carnage and the flaming sea,
To where thy Captain, God of Love,
   The victor's crown gave unto thee.

And when the summons swiftly came,
   "Ready, my Captain!" answered thou.
There was no falt'ring; through the flame
   Prest thou with calm and radiant brow.
Thy country's hero thou art now,
And all the world's; thy name shall live
   With those who manhood glorified;
Who gave the all they had to give
   To serve mankind; and giving, died.

Honor and praise to thee we send
   Up that far height where thou hast gone.
While sorrows with our plaudits blend,
   We know that thou art faring on;
That now thou lookest down upon
A world made blest by men like thee—
   A world that e'er will sing thy worth,
O gallant soldier of the Free,
   Immortal both in Heaven and Earth!
SERVICE IN MEMORY OF KENNETH GOW.

CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SUMMIT, N. J.
SUNDAY, DEC. 8, 1918.

VESPERS.
Four fifteen o'clock.

Service in Memory of Lieutenant Kenneth Gow, Killed in Action on the Field of Honor, October 17, 1918, "Somewhere in France."

Organ Prelude: Maestoso.—Chopin.
*Hymn 370, "Onward, Christian Soldiers" (the Marching Hymn of Lieutenant Gow's Regiment).
Anthem: "Hymn of the Homeland."—Sullivan.
Prayer: Rev. R. S. Brank.
Anthem: "In Memoriam." (Words by Lieutenant Gow's father, Mr. Robert M. Gow.)
*Hymn 505 (Pentecost): "Fight the Good Fight."
Reading of Letters from Fellow-Officers of Lieutenant Gow.
Memorial Addresses: By Mr. W. Henry Grant, Rev. Walker Gwynne, D.D., Mr. Charles D. Ferry, Mayor Ruford Franklin.
*Hymn 240 (Victory): "The Strife Is O'er, the Victory Won."
Placing of Gold Star on the Church Service Flag.
"Taps" by Oliver B. Merrill, Jr.

It was an impressive demonstration of a desire to honor the memory of one of the most conspicuous of that band of young Summit martyrs who sacrificed their lives for their country that was given at the Presbyterian Church last Sunday afternoon. It was a memorial service for Lieutenant Kenneth Gow, who was killed in action in France Oct. 17, and in the throng that assembled in the church to participate in the service were representatives of every creed and of every walk in life in the city. To a large proportion of them the gallant young soldier was personally known and liked. His lifetime had been spent in Summit, he had been active in a variety of directions in the work and pastimes of boys

* These hymns were Lieut. Gow's favorites.
and young men, and it would be strange if in a small community like this such a fine specimen of young American manhood would not be very generally known and his worth very generally recognized.

One feature of the service was the singing of some of Lieut. Gow's favorite hymns: "Onward, Christian Soldiers," the marching hymn of his regiment, the 107th U. S. Infantry; "Fight the Good Fight," and "The Strife Is O'er, the Victory Won." In addition to "The Hymn of the Homeland," by Sullivan, sung by the quartet choir, the quartet also sang an anthem, "In Memoriam," written by Lieut. Gow's father, Robert M. Gow, and sung to the tune, "Ten Thousand Times Ten Thousand," the words of which are as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{In mem'ry of the noble} \\
\text{The world to free who died!} \\
\text{The blood that warmed their gallant hearts,} \\
\text{A brave and gen'rous tide,} \\
\text{Has dyed the Nations' banners} \\
\text{A new and holy red;} \\
\text{Lest we forget their sacrifice—} \\
\text{The cause for which they bled.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{In mem'ry of our noble} \\
\text{Who sped with hearts afire,} \\
\text{Crusaders of a newer day,} \\
\text{To gain a world's desire,} \\
\text{Who bore the Starry Banner} \\
\text{In hope and faith serene!} \\
\text{Brave comrades in their pains and toils} \\
\text{Will keep that mem'ry green.}
\end{align*}
\]
They have not died, those noble!
   So dry all selfish tears;
The spirits of the loved and gone,
   Through all the future years,
Shall other hearts enkindle
   And other souls inspire,
Hand on the torch of human hope
   Lit at their altar pyre.

They have not died, our dear ones,
   But just gone "over there,"
In answer to a bugle call
   In higher things to share.
'Tis ours their sacred mem'ry,
   And theirs the guerdon great,
Who've heard the last reveillé sound
   Beyond the golden gate.

The pastor of the church, Rev. R. S. Brank, presided at the service and read the Scriptures, from Exodus 15: 1-13 and 1st Thess. 4: 13-18. Mr. Brank read extracts from letters received from fellow-officers of Lieut. Gow.

Brief memorial addresses were made by prominent men of the community who had known Lieut. Gow personally. Mr. Henry Grant spoke of the impressions he carried of Lieut. Gow some ten to fifteen years ago when a boy in his Sunday-school class. He felt a pride in having been his instructor. As a boy he described him as of positive character, but with a deep sense of duty, and when he was entered in the class he brought to it a
personality that furnished a much-needed element. The Lieutenant, he continued, won honor from us above all praise; whatever was in him came through unspoiled, as he proved in the final test, and no one realized more than he that he was fighting for a great cause.

Mr. Charles D. Ferry, president of the Y. M. C. A., told of the opportunities he had had to observe Gow as a boy and young man. He was always active at the Y. M. C. A. Describing his rugged nature, the speaker declared that those who knew him best loved him most; one could never forget the grip of his hand and knew instinctively that here was every inch a man. He was a natural leader whom all were glad to honor and respect. The speaker had never known a more beautiful, sunshiny character, nor a life that was cleaner and more worthy to serve as an inspiration and an example. He was strong in mind and body, but above all strong in spirit. It was one of the pleasures of his life to have known Kenneth Gow.

Rev. Walker Gwynne, D.D., had known the Lieutenant for fifteen years, from the time when, as a boy, he sang in Calvary Episcopal Church choir. If asked to sum up his character, the speaker would use the expression of the Psalmist, "Thy gentleness hath made me great." There was a radical connection, he pointed out, between gentleness and greatness. Of the deceased he declared his faith was always good; he was a splendid soldier, not only of his country, but of the Cross. Character, he declared, never came to a man by accident, but by belief in Jesus Christ. All great soldiers today, he declared, are Christian men and always remembered
their God, citing Kitchener, Beatty, Foch and Pershing. So it was with Kenneth Gow.

Mayor Ruford Franklin told those present of the many visits made to his home by Ken Gow to visit Edward Willis, both of them now lying in hallowed French ground. If good old Ken was a Crusader 800 years ago, we would be glad to honor his memory, but now he is gone and we wish he could come back. He told of the pleasure always derived from his visits to see Lieutenant Willis, and of an hour which he spent with Gow on the day before he sailed for France. "If Ken could speak to us now," he continued, "the message he would give would be to thank us for honoring his memory, but to remember that he just did his duty. That was Ken—fight the good fight—and as a result we have victory for us, for decency and for God through him and the others who served with him. I remember the talk I had with him the day before he went to France. I liked the boy and I liked the things the boy stood for. We miss him and we miss him sorely, but let us glory in it. These boys have died as Christ died, to make men free. God bless the memory of dear old Ken."

The church service flag, which has ninety stars on it, was hung from the pulpit, and following the last hymn a gold star was placed on the flag for Lieut. Gow by Mr. Theo. L. Beck. Then with unusual sweetness and clearness "Taps" was blown by Oliver B. Merrill, Jr., which closed the service.

Co. B, State Militia Reserve, attended the service in a body.—(Compiled from the Summit Herald and the Summit Record.)
SERMON AT MEMORIAL MASS FOR OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE 107th INFANTRY WHO MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE.

By Father Peter E. Hoey, C. S. P., Former Chaplain, 107th U. S. Infantry.

Father Hoey took for the text of his sermon Job xvi, 23, "For, behold, the short years pass away, and I am walking in a path by which I shall not return." He spoke as follows:

"I am sure, my dear brethren, that you will not expect a mere sermon from me on such an occasion as this. When the heart is fullest it does not always find the most ready utterance in words, and your hearts, as mine, are teeming this morning with a wealth of sentiment and feeling which we may not express. Physically present here in the temple of the Most High God, to do reverence to the memory of those who are gone, we are actually reliving at this moment the deeds of other days, and our imaginations are once more enkindled with the hopes and the aspiration, nay more, with the glorious accomplishments of a day that is done. Who is there so dead to the finer things of life that he is not carried on the wings of recollection to Abeele, to Poperinghe, to Dickebusch Lake, to the sullen heights of Mont de Cats and the bristling defenses of Kemmel? Who is there so phlegmatic that his very blood does not pulse with vigorous haste through every fiber of his being at the memory of Haut Allaines, of Roissel, of Gillemont Farm, of Bony and St. Souplet? Ah! yes, indeed, our
minds are steeped in vivid recollection this morning and our hearts are joyous with the remembrance of the past, for in the vigor of our youth we have answered the clarion call of duty and our souls are conscious of a task well done.

“And yet our spirit of exultation is tinged somewhat with sadness, for victory came only with sacrifice, and many of those whom we loved as comrades and friends sleep the long sleep which has its awakening only in eternity. It was not given them to share the glory of return, for their blood was the price of victory, and it has not been shed in vain. There is consolation for us who mourn in the thought that in the very path of death they found peace and rest and surcease from all pain, and in the end the heart of God Himself, for such a sacrifice as theirs could find no other fit reward. Surely for them death is not the end, but rather the beginning of an eternal day. Life as we know it is but a fleeting time of labor. Short at best and filled with vexations and trials, it is but a preparatory way that finds its perfection and culmination in the life that lies beyond. It matters little then whether life be short or long, whether we live to wither into the decrepitude of old age or perish in the bloom of youth, death comes to all alike with its summons to a fuller life. Sufficient for us, therefore, if we live out life’s little day, being ever mindful of eternity, which is inevitable, seeking under God to fill the moments as they come and go with glorious effort and accomplishment, so that the seeds thus sown may find their fruition in eternity.

“There is no doubt within my mind that the men
who are gone, they whom we love to call comrades and friends, have found life's perfect peace. For although the natural exaltation of battle has passed, although the enthusiasm of triumph has waned, I still repeat the sentiment expressed in haste the first time we met around God's altar, when the tide of battle had receded and the thunder of the guns had somewhat ceased. It was a wondrous privilege for the youth of America to stand upon the blood-sodden fields of Flanders and France to battle for an ideal. And yet more wonderful still that the youth of a nation trained in the school of materialism should without hesitation respond to the call of the ideal and with ready heart shed its blood, without hope or expectation of reward, for a cause which it believed to be just. Never again shall it be given to our eyes to see such sublime courage, such absolute forgetfulness of self, such nobility of character as our lads made manifest in the hour of our country's need. They were just plain, ordinary lads, with all the faults and failings which humanity is heir to, and yet in the hour when they faced the summons of death they were stripped of all these and stood forth in all the wondrous radiance which must have illumined the face of the Saviour on the cross. Men are wont oftentimes to conceal the innermost secrets of the heart from prying eyes, they seek to cover their inner nobler self with an exterior in no wise indicative of their real character, but in the moment of crisis they reveal wells of tenderness and depths of nobility which even their most intimate friends knew nothing of. So with these lads whom we loved. In the moment of their triumph they were lifted bodily out of the depths of
materialism and their eyes were made luminous with a golden ideal. Stripped of the exterior husk of restraint and convention, we saw for the first time in their true character the men whom we thought we had hitherto known. The glory of their deeds, the sublimity of their sacrifice needs no retelling. May God in His pity have mercy on them, may God in His love grant them life's true and perfect peace.

"In spite of the tears which somehow come, it is in our hearts to envy the dead, for they have died at the pinnacle of life. For them no danger of slipping back into the rut of the commonplace. Their moment of trial was brief, and we who knew them so well delight to speak of the valor and the courage with which they met it. But what of us—we who have returned to the old ways and the old avocations of ordinary life? How are we to meet the time of our trial, which is not momentary, but of life's duration? The courage which possesses a man's heart and soul when face to face with death is indeed heroic, and yet the exaltation which comes with nervous tension and the glamor of battle itself is a stimulus to nobility of effort. The courage, however, which impels a man, without the incentive and stimulus of excitement, to meet the ordinary and recurring crises of everyday life in a spirit of perseverance is greater still. And this, my dear comrades, is the courage demanded of us. This is the test by which we are to measure our worthiness to be called blood brothers of the dead. For although victory has come, it has been purchased at a great sacrifice, and only sacrifice shall maintain it. The ideals for which the war was waged
have been proclaimed as truth. Men have cleansed and purified, nay, sanctified them, in the crimson tide of their own blood. But now—now shall they continue to exist, shall they be perpetuated and made still more complete in the passage of the years that are to come? That, my dear comrades, is for us to say. Today America is threatened by just as severe a crisis as the carnage of blood in which our fellows died. There are elements within which threaten to rend the very fiber of its being, to crush its ideals, and frustrate its destiny. And as our comrades died for the truth and establishment of an ideal, so we must live for its preservation. It is a great fight to which we are summoned, and there is need for ardent and whole-hearted zeal. We can take up the burden of our task in no more perfect way than by seeking to acquire the spirit which actuated our comrades as they entered the valley of the shadow. Theirs was a spirit of idealism pure and simple, a spirit that lifted them out of the ordinary plane of life and granted them a vision of the divine. Conscious of the destiny which lay ever before them, they did not shrink from the task, but with lips sweet with prayer and faces uplifted to the sky, from whence cometh all courage and all hope, they entered upon a conflict from which there was no return.

"Theirs, too, a wondrous spirit of sacrifice. Sacrifice of self, of heart, of soul and mind. And yet for them heroism such as this was not extraordinary, but just the plain and evident duty of everyday life. Has that sacrifice no message for us? Does the memory of it bring no desire for emulation? If not, then the flag
which they have kept unsullied at the price of blood shall degenerate into the symbol of a people false to its creed, a traitor to its dead.

"Idealism, sacrifice and the spirit of prayer and absolute purity of self—these were the characteristics of those who are gone. Question it if you will, but I say to you it is not given all men to see the souls and hearts of men stripped bare and laid naked to the sight of God, as I have seen them in the time of carnage that is past; and I say to you, without hesitation and without reserve, that if we who remain strive for and attain to the self-same purity, the self-same honesty and the self-same nobility of soul, we shall indeed be treading in the path which Jesus trod, we shall be worthy comrades of our heroic dead.

"Ah! my dear comrades, the dead speak to us this morning. They give us a message which we must heed. 'We are the dead. To you from falling hands the torch we throw; be yours to hold it high.' It is for us to remember that 'the short years pass; that we are walking in a path from which there is no return.' And above all to ever hold in mind the words of Jesus:

"'I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live, and every one who liveth and believeth in Me shall not taste death for ever.'"

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