

LETTERS FROM SOLDIERS AT HOME AND ABROAD

Tells of Fight at Chateau Thierry.

In the appended letter to his sister, Verno Johnston of Sidney describes his experiences in the battle of Chateau Thierry:

Somewhere in France, July 7.

Dear Fan, Dan and Babies:

I am feeling pretty well again and getting along nicely. I walked three or four steps yesterday and was glad to get back in bed. Sitting up today is a treat to one who has been in bed 30 days. I was wounded a month ago today. I experienced three hemorrhages, to within an hour's time, all of which added greatly to my undoing. My arm is stiff—bullets went thru my left elbow and the bicep muscle underneath the arm is gone. Arm took a right angle position when first hit, and has never been in any other position since, but by massage and breaking the adhesion no doubt will be in good working order again soon.

We had quite a little encounter at Chateau Thierry the first of June. I really do not like to write about it. The circumstances surrounding such an affair are good things to forget. We had a war time for seven days and nights. Rushed up while the boches were advancing; after having checked them all along the line we came to blows and the Germans went back four kilometers. They are back a great deal farther than that now as the boys have been making it miserable for them ever since. We ran into a steel wall of German machine gun bullets and it was hard going but by gallant and quick action we broke thru. Previous to this we repulsed German attacks thrown on us in mass formation, all open warfare and no trenches whatever, fighting taking place night and day. Also took part in Belleau woods drive

road to Paris. Have experienced ten night air raids since I have been in Paris.

Chateau Thierry is quite a historical place. It is a town of about 7,000 on top of a hill. At the foot flow the waters of the Marne. The chateau was built by Charles Martel, grand father of Charlemagne, in 720. The base of the tower can still be seen where Simple Charles was held as a prisoner. In the 14th century the English took this position Chateau Thierry, from the French. In the first half of the 15th century a German army under Charles V whipped Francis I, king of France's army, and took Chateau Thierry. The last half of the 16th century Spaniards entered France as allies to the Catholics and slaughtered the Huguenots here in the wars of religion. Then in the 18th century the greatest and most desperate battle of all wars was fought when England, Russia, Prussia, the German states, Spain, Portugal, Sweden and Austria formed an alliance against Napoleon and Chateau Thierry was taken and Napoleon exiled to Elba. In 1918, about 100 years later, it was taken by the Germans and about a week after they had it, it was retaken by the U. S. marines. So it has been tho (deleted)

I have spent time in the blank) region and at (blank) where so many of Germany's trained troops met defeat in 1911. About 70,000 fought around this hill at that time—wonderful sight.

Letters from Soldiers at Home & Abroad

Urbana Daily Courier

August 17, 1918

We are treated splendidly at the hospital. Knickknacks are brought in to us almost every afternoon by the Red Cross. Supplied with cigarettes all the time, books and magazines are plentiful. I never experienced such a change in my life. We had been experiencing hard service for a long time, and to be rushed back to the hospital where everything was in first class shape was beyond our imagination. Victrolas were going, cigarettes handed out by the nurses and every body seems to light the cigarette

face and hands washed by the nurses. had occasion to take off our old, dirty, bloody clothes and get a good bath. You cannot realize the experience. In the fray I lost every blessed thing I possessed—equipment, clothes, even my wrist watch. The left side of my coat was torn off of me, my shirt was riddled to strips. You can imagine what the battlefield was like to be occupied with all such garments, together with dead, wounded and dying. The artillery operation was ridiculous for a human being to be around, gas shells by the thousands, but in spite of it all the Americans clung to their objective, which was a great loss to the Germans, also a surprise. The German officers told their men they had nothing to fear from the Americans, as they were flery and not on to this war game, but one of the German prisoners that had been brought over from the Rus-

sian front said he had never seen such awful fighting as that. It was hand to hand and charging for machine gun emplacements. The German prisoners were brought back to the American lines in all numbers from one to 75 in a detail. This will give you an idea of what we have been going thru. You no doubt received more information thru the papers.

VERNE.

Lewis Prather is in receipt of the following letters from his nephews, Private Perry L. Werts and Sergeant Neal, both in France:

July 7, 1918.

Dear Uncle and All:

Well, I have not heard from you since I hit this place over here.

These few lines leaves every one over O. K. as far as I know any thing about the rest of the boys.

I have not seen James yet since we left Logan. I don't know whether he ever got to come over here or not, but I suppose he did.

Well, there is not very much a doing at the present time where we are now, but I suppose there will be before long or at least I hope so.

The people over here sure live funny to what they do back in the states. Each house has got a cow barn, a horse barn, chicken house and a sheep and goat barn, all in one. Some smell around it, believe me.

The crops look fine over here, what there are of them. There are not very much raised where we are yet. There are a lot of cherries and grapes raised around here. And the wine, there is enough of that made to flood the United States and it is all they drink here. When they go to work they take a jug of it with them like we do water back there. You never see them take a drink of water.

I sent you a paper that is printed here close to where we are. There is not very much war news in it, but I thought you would like to see one of them.

How is everyone getting along back there by now, all able to eat and drink?

Well there is not much to write about, for you can't say all you want to any more.

Will close, hoping to hear from you soon.

Your truly,

Pvt. Perry L. Werts
Battery B, 124th F. A., American E. F., vit New York.

July, 1918.

Dear Uncle and Family:

Yours of May 25th received several days ago and very glad to hear from you. Not much unusual news to write about except that we have moved again. About 200 mile trip by truck train and to new sector and not near so comfortable as on the east side. Much warmer than up in Lorraine foothills.

France is going to have heavy grain crop and all vegetables and truck farms look fine. Hope the states have bumper crops.

Looks to me like long war. What do you think about it? The marines up north of us have given the Bocho a taste of Sammies' grit though.

Sincerely your,
Edgar.

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