

Letters Home: Coast Artillery Corps & Field Artillery

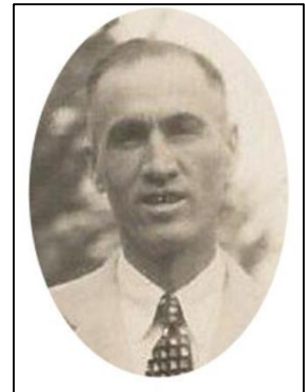
Edited by Trail End State Historic Site Superintendent Cynde Georgen

Between 1917 and 1919, *The Sheridan Post* and *The Sheridan Enterprise* donated considerable space to printing letters home from local soldiers and sailors serving both overseas and stateside. As part of the 2017-2018 *Wake Up America* exhibit, Trail End reprinted dozens of these letters, releasing them weekly via social media. For the most part, we have not changed the spelling of overseas locations, preferring instead to use the sometimes-creative spelling printed in the original articles.

These letters are from men who served with the Coast Artillery Corps (CAC) and various units of the Field Artillery. While the CAC was responsible for coastal, harbor, and anti-aircraft defense of the United States and its possessions, the Field Artillery specialized in short range and long range target engagement on the battlefields of Europe.

HERBERT STANLEY BARRETT – Coast Artillery Corps

Though born in Missouri, Herbert Barrett spent the bulk of his formative years in Sheridan (the Barretts farmed on Soldier Creek). He graduated from Sheridan High School. Barrett was inducted into the army on September 3, 1918, and completed his training at Camp Lewis, Washington. He was assigned to the Coast Artillery Corps and was honorably discharged in December 1918. After the war, Barrett returned to Sheridan briefly, but soon became interested in missionary work. He was associated with the South Africa General Mission out of Brooklyn, New York, for many years. He was married in South Africa in 1929 and worked in the region until 1962, when he died in an accident. He is buried at Mbuluzi Mission in Mbabane, Swaziland. This undated letter, published in *The Sheridan Enterprise* on October 1, 1918, gives a detailed description of life in the training camps.



Dear Friends at Home: Some life this army life. I suppose I would be the only exception out of a thousand were I to say I took any special delight in the first few days in camp. Everything is done in an entirely different manner from what one is accustomed. Most of the boys get sick more or less, due to the change in climate and food, and mostly due to the mental strain of not knowing what is coming next. Ordinarily it takes between two or three weeks, before one gets acclimated. I personally am feeling a little better each day. Have been vaccinated four times, or "shot" as they term it here, without any evil effects as yet. It makes quite a few of the boys sick.

I expect one or two more before I am through with them. Then I suppose I will be immune from everything but bullets.

Our physical needs are more than well provided for. The food is of the very best, including a large variety and plenty of each. A soldier here never need leave the table hungry. It baffles my imagination every time I think of feeding a camp of 60,000 men, and foodstuffs are by no means cheap here. Huge trucks are on the job all the time as well as hundreds of four mule teams.

We are fed three heavy meals a day, meat or its equivalent, such as eggs, at every meal. The menu always contains fruit or pudding of one kind or another. These, as well as the heavier foods, are set on in bowls and, as soon as empty, are immediately refilled by the kitchen police, or "K.P.s" as they are called. It was my pleasure to serve as one of these for two days. Waiting table is a small part of the job; scrubbing floors and tables occupy the bulk of your time which in my case was from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., with about two hours off for eating and rest. But of course, I, being a farmer, long hours don't seem long.

Our clothing was issued to us shortly after our arrival. It would take a page almost to enumerate the articles. Among them was a Red Cross sweater which I am sure we will all appreciate later in the season. At present it is quite warm here and very dry, no rain for over two months. Since there is no grass whatever, the dust raised by the tramping of the men, both in the drill field and around the barracks, fills everything full of it. This is of course unavoidable, and is counteracted by frequent baths.

The drill is quite strenuous; every now and then a fellow topples over and is carried off. The hours of drill have been increased from time to time until now, our officers tell us, we are put through the training in three weeks which formerly took three months. This seems like an exaggeration, but I have no doubt but what it seems quite reasonable to a lot of fellows after they have experienced a day or two of it.

We are in quarantine yet, and I have nothing thrilling to relate, save perhaps of my trip out here, which I enjoyed immensely. We were fed like princes on the diner all the way through, a day and a half and two nights. We also had our sleeper straight through to Camp Lewis. Before we reached the camp, our train was made up of nearly all soldiers, twelve coaches in all.

Each day the watch which you presented me as a farewell gift becomes more precious. I shall write more later.

LEE L. BUTTERFIELD – 318th Field Artillery

During World War One, colleges and universities across the country were transformed into training grounds for members of the Student Army Training Corps. The Utah Agricultural College in Logan was one such school. In June 1918, twenty-three men from Sheridan were drafted into the army and sent by rail to Fort Logan, where they received training in a wide set of skills before being assigned to their units. Lee L. Butterfield, a twenty-nine year old self-employed auto mechanic, was one of these men. In his first letter to *The Sheridan Daily Enterprise* in August 1918, he gives a rundown of where most of these men ended up. As for Butterfield himself, he was assigned to the ordnance department of the 318th Field Artillery; he served overseas.



NOTE: an asterisk (*) by the name means we do not have a photo of the person. If you know of one, please contact us at trailend@wyo.gov.

Editor of The Sheridan Enterprise: I will drop you a few lines to let you know what has become of that famous bunch of 23 that left there on the 13th of June.

We are all well but [Roy] Graves, and he is still at the college and from the report that was out, will be discharged as soon as the proper blanks are received.

There are at the college some few who were not assigned at the time of our departure. Those are [Floyd] Range, [Count] Clark, and Smyth in the auto and chauffeur department; [Henry] Becker in the machinists; [Harry] Coats in the concrete work.*

The boys who were assigned to the heavy artillery truck department were Welch, Mascher* and [Lloyd] McCoubrey. They go to Camp Taylor, Kentucky. The above boys made good work in the school and are in the repair work.*

The truck drivers who were assigned to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, are Radcliffe and Hume.* They are in the light field artillery.*

[William] Keith was sent to Leavenworth, Kansas, but not to jail, as he is in the signal service as a wireless operator.

[Clarence] Reynolds goes to New Mexico as a Carpenter. [Sam] Chachas is assigned to the air service as carpenter at Omaha. Lynch is kept at the college as sergeant. [W. E.] Murphy is company clerk. [George] Urmson is held as instructor in auto mechanics for the next term of 60 days. [Roy] Adsit goes to the quartermaster corps as horseshoer and is sent to Fort Bliss, Texas.*

Hoffman is sent to Washington, D.C. in the cement department ... I suppose Edward Saberhagen* was transferred some time ago to the mechanical engineers and was sent to Salt Lake.*

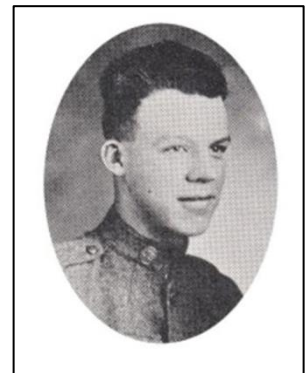
As for the ordnance department, there were two in that - [Austin] Johnson and yours truly. We go to Georgia where the watermelons grow.

Sheridan can feel proud of her bunch of 23, as they will sure make music that won't sound good to the Kaiser's ears, and if he happens to meet one of them, it would not be healthy for him.

Take the entire bunch that was out at the Agricultural College at Fort Logan, Utah. They were all fine fellows and gentlemen from the ground up. It was almost a 100 per cent Wyoming camp. The only two that were not Wyoming men were the two lieutenants. Our captain was a Laramie man - Captain John Frazee - and a finer captain or commander never walked. I guess that there wasn't much that the men wouldn't have gone through for him.

MAURICE LYNN CONE – 27th Field Artillery

The war experience was different for everyone. While some men went “over the top” in France, others were selected to stay in America and work at one or more of the various training camps scattered across the country. Maurice “Mol” Cone was one of those whose military experience was all stateside. Only seventeen years old when he enlisted, Private Cone was stationed as a radio operator with Headquarters Company of the 27th Field Artillery based at Camp McClellan, Alabama. There he was pretty much exempt from the most rigorous aspects of army life ... until one day in December 1918 - an experience which he described in a letter printed in *The Sheridan Daily Enterprise* in January 1919. After his discharge in February of that year, Cone attended the University of Illinois before returning to Sheridan to work as a lawyer (he served as the Sheridan County Attorney in 1930). He died in 1942.



I had a little touch of real army life today. Our regiment went out on the range about ten miles and I had to hike out with a full pack on my back and set up a station. It was the first time I ever slung or carried a pack and, believe me, the darned thing got rather heavy before I got back. I had to take three blankets, one suit of underwear, one poncho, two pairs of socks, one mess kit, provisions for one day, one canteen and a roll of toilet articles, with a First Aid kit thrown in. This I carried on my back, and in my hands I carried two big spools of wire. Then a lieutenant, thinking I did not have enough to carry and he had too much (which was about one-quarter as

heavy as my equipment), handed me his portfolio full of drawing boards, blank message forms, etc., til when I got there, I was either carrying, dragging, pushing or pulling about 130 pounds.

After we had set up our station and cooked dinner, we got orders to join the major's staff about a mile and a half to the rear. Thinking we would return soon, the lieutenant told us to leave our station up. But when we got back to the staff [headquarters], the major told him to send all the radio men in except two who were to go back and tear down the station and carry it in. Well, you can guess who was one of the two, so consequently Little Mol trailed back the mile and a half and carried in the set, and got back to camp just in time to be called out and made to play football for an hour. So perhaps you will believe me when I say I am tired tonight.

HENRY ADAMS JACOBS – 4th Coast Artillery Corps

The only son of a Hungarian tailor and his Russian-born wife, Henry Jacobs enlisted in the service in Sheridan in July 1918. As a proficient violinist, Jacobs found himself attached to the 4th Coast Artillery Corps Band, stationed at Fortress Monroe, Virginia. All his service was performed stateside. After the war, Jacobs returned to Wyoming and entered the family business. He and his father operated a tailoring business in Casper for many years. Jacobs died in Casper in 1983. The following letter, written in September 1918, was published in *The Sheridan Daily Enterprise* on October 11, 1918.

NOTE: We do not have a photograph of Henry Jacobs in our files. If you know of one and you'd like to share it with us, please contact us at trailend@wyo.gov.

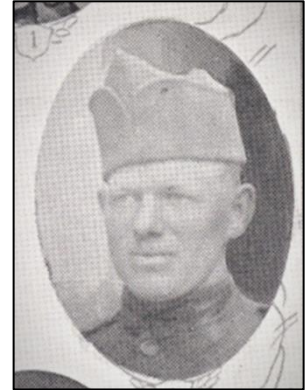
Dear Father and Mother - I just returned from New York and experienced a wonderful time there. I saw the Statue of Liberty, the Woolworth Building, Brooklyn Bridge, also Wall Street and Broadway. ... New York can't be beat for patriotism; a soldier or a sailor is treated with the greatest courtesy and always invited to go someplace.

Friday night I went to a dance given for the benefit of the Jewish boys who had enlisted in the Jewish battalion to fight in Palestine. Believe me, they were sure a fine looking bunch of boys. They wear the English uniform and have the Zionist emblem on their collars. A Canadian sergeant who was doing recruiting duty to get men for the Jewish battalion gave an address to the people, and he said that there was not a more loyal and patriotic people than the Jews. This Canadian sergeant has fought in the Spanish-American war and enlisted in the Canadian army when war broke out. He has had four years of fighting, was wounded, and got a medical discharge from the army. But he was not satisfied, so he re-enlisted, and the English government put him on recruiting duty.

As I was walking down one of the streets of New York, I noticed a crowd assembled and went up to see what the excitement was. I saw a man in civilian clothes, but who had service stripes on his breast and wore a medal for bravery. This man had been wounded in an aerial battle and given a medical discharge, but he was now selling War Saving Stamps to do what he could for his country. This young fellow was also a Jew, and remember this: that if anyone asks you what the Jews are doing for their country, just show them this letter.

CLYDE HENRY THOMAS – 116th Field Artillery

One of thirteen children born to Sylvanus Cicero Thomas and his wife Rella Mae (Hand), Clyde Thomas spent most of his early life in Marshalltown, Iowa. When America entered the European war in 1917, the twenty-one year old Thomas was working as a teamster for the Security Bridge Company in Three Forks, Montana. After his work there was done, he drifted down to Sheridan, where he enlisted in the “new” national army on October 2, 1917. He was a member of Sheridan’s third required quota of men. Following training camp, Thomas was assigned to the 116th Field Artillery, where he worked with the Signal Corps. This letter, dated December 10, 1917, was published in *The Sheridan Enterprise* on January 9, 1918. It provides one young man’s initial images of a strange land called “France.”



Dear Friend - Well, we are in France and feeling fine, but I was sure sick the first two days. We had a fine voyage, but the third and fourth days we encountered bad weather. The sea was sure rough, the waves coming over the head end of the ship. I can't tell you the name of the ship or the name of the town, but we are safe in France. We didn't meet any submarines; I think we are very lucky.

It is not very cold over here. The grass is still green. This sure is a funny country. We sure had some fun trying to read the signs they have. Some of the people can talk a little English, but most of them talk French. Some of the French wear wooden shoes. It sure looks funny.

Well, bye bye for this time. Will be back some day.

On October 3, 1918 - one year and a day after entering the service - Corporal Clyde Thomas was killed in action near Charpentry, France. In February 1919, his company commander, Captain George C. Cox, sent the following letter to Thomas' parents from his new headquarters in Montabaur, Germany:

My Dear Mr. and Mrs. Thomas: I had hoped to write you long before this in regard to Clyde, but owing to the many duties and continual movement and preparation for the operations of the divisions, I have been unable to write before now.

Corporal Thomas had been my motorcycle driver ever since along in July, and naturally, I got to know him quite well. Therefore, with your permission, I will call him Clyde.

Do I know him? Intimately? Yes. We have driven all over France together and through many intense artillery bombardments which neither of us ever expected to get through, but, by the Grace of God, we did until the Argonne battle. Therefore, I know him well. He was a man always ready to go wherever duty called him.

Many times we were ordered thru many places which seemed almost hell, to carry out and gain the necessary end.

In the Soissons attack of the First Division, he was constantly with me in the supervision and operation of the Signal Corps' telephone and wireless telegraph work of the First Brigade.

We worked between Mortfountain, Courves and Candun through intense fire. We were pressing the "Boche" toward Soissons.

Later, we were in the St. Mihiel operations - and then moved up just west of Verdun and into position at Charpentry on the first of October. Between the 1st and the 10th, we had a very hard attack. On the morning of the 3rd, several of us had just completed some telephone work and were standing together when the Germans sent over several high explosive shells into our group.

Clyde was instantly killed by a piece of one shell through his neck. When we picked him up, he was still smiling, though dead. He had done his work well.

Clyde was buried just about 200 yards east of Charpentry, on the south side of the main road. All of his personal things I have had with me since and am sending a small package of the things he had with him.

You have my heartfelt sympathy in this great loss, but the picture that has been with me ever since - a victorious smile that showed his attitude. He was glad to make the great sacrifice, as in the spirit with all the other brave fellows who have fallen beside and around us for the ONE CAUSE.

RUSSELL GLENN CONE – 149th Field Artillery

Born in Ottumwa, Iowa, in 1896, Russell Cone was a student at the University of Illinois when he enlisted in the U.S. Army in May 1917. Quickly promoted to the rank of sergeant, Cone served with the Headquarters Company of the 149th Field Artillery. While with that unit he witnessed one of the biggest battles of the war, along the banks of the Marne River. He describes the battle in detail in a letter sent from “Somewhere in France” on 24 July 1918. Following the war, Cone returned to Sheridan and got married before heading back to Urbana, Illinois, and his successful pursuit of a degree in civil engineering. Prior to his death in 1961, he worked on a variety of bridge projects across the country, from New Jersey to California.



Undated letter from “Somewhere in France;” printed in *The Sheridan Enterprise*, 9 July 1918

The work the shipyards in N. V. is doing is magnificent. When you see the amount of work there is on a big liner and the material in her, it hardly seems possible that the steel worker can get them out so fast. Truly, it takes both blood and steel to build and man them. Can you imagine the courage it takes to pilot a big boat with thousands of men aboard across the ocean when you know you might be sent to the bottom any minute? But now we have got the upper hand of the subs. The valiant British navy has bottled up their bases at Zeebrugge. Ostend and their destroyers are hot on the trail of any periscope that comes up. Then also, huge airships patrol the coasts and hydroplanes are making inroads on its “women drowners.” ...

We are amused at the hard campaigns of the armies training in the camp with two powerful three-inch field pieces. In some sectors we have a 75 every three yards, and we use them for sniping and machine gun work. You should feel the rush of air behind a 220 howitzer, and it does not phase a 50-foot virgin earth dugout. There you use a 12-inch with special delayed fuse and when they explode the hole it makes it look like an excavation for a 100-foot turntable.

I was a close listener in on a projector gas attack one night. A gas projector is about the size of a Linde oxygen tank and has a range of about 1,000 meters. They set a thousand of them up in the front line about 100 yards apart and some night when a gentle wind is blowing towards the enemy they are all set off at once. They work by compressed air so there is no noise. They explode when they light with a dull thud and scatter the liquid from which the gas evolves all over. Mustard gas is a favorite. It burns the eyes, mouth or any place on the body that is moist and is very active on the mucous membrane, so you see it is dangerous to monkey around a gas attack. The warning is an ordinary Klaxon, and at night we hear them honking way over into Germany. When I get home and hear a car drive up and honk, I will grab for my gas mask.

From "Somewhere in France," 24 July 1918; printed in *The Sheridan Enterprise*, 30 August 1918

The past two weeks have made the experiences of a year in France look a little bedimmed. You see, I was lucky enough - or unlucky enough - to be in the path and right in the fiercest of the last big German offensive that fell so flat and has resulted in such a victory for us. Believe me, it was some rough house. We were with one of the best French divisions, and where they stood the Boche did not gain an inch. They said that the preliminary bombardment was one of the most promiscuous and terrific they ever saw. I was in a dugout about 3,000 meters back of the first line, and it was close enough. Of course, you've read how they do it, bombarding all the rear positions heavily and drenching everything with gas and then massing on our infantry.

Well, the attack started at 12:01 a.m., July 15th, 1918, with the most gorgeous display of hell that could ever be put on, but we knew about it just an hour ahead, and the way we hit them was something terrible. Two of their divisions were so badly hit that they could not attack, and the good old 149th made marmalade out of the prize divisions of the Prussian Guard. At 3 a.m. they came over, and several mass attacks with tanks failed to dislodge us. I never saw so many dead, mangled and torn Germans and men in all my life, but our losses were so small as to be negligible compared to the violence of the attack. There was a patrol of 50 German planes over our lines dropping bombs and machine gunning. Our planes accounted for ten of them in one morning, and one of our infantry shot one down with an automatic rifle, and another got one with a grenade. Then in the afternoon they made five more attacks with tanks, but they never got through our barrage.

Of course, I can't describe the battle on paper because it is too long, and I haven't time, but the picture of it is burned into my memory, and I'll tell you later. I think that Victory will be ours within a year. The prisoners we captured were so glad to get out of this war, they were half starved. I talked with one from the First Regiment Prussian Guard, and he said he had had only a little piece of bread before they sent him into battle. Some of the prisoners were only 15 and cried when they were led in. Their feet were in bad condition because of bad shoes and their uniforms all worn. They had only a suit of heavy knit underwear under their clothes. Poor devils, they had been told there were only a few Americans here, and when we told them two million, their eyes opened in amazement. I picked up lots of junk, but discarded it in a move, except a German gas mask, which I sent to Harold, though I longed for a baggage car to send more trophies home. Where we are now, the Germans are retreating so fast there is not time to stop for souvenirs. But say, it's sure one big adventure, and the last weeks have sure made moments in my young life.

HAYDEN EARL HITSON – 13th Field Artillery

One of four Hitson brothers who served during the war, Hayden Hitson was a wagoner with the 13th Field Artillery. He fought in three of the largest battles in which the United States Army was engaged: the offensives at Aisne-Marne, St Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne. About the only major battleground he avoided was Champagne-Marne, where two of his brothers - Landy and Shandy - fought with the 148th Field Artillery (the fourth Hitson, Fred, was an engineer with the naval submarine service). The Hitsons were from Clearmont - a tiny community today, but one which contributed over eighty young men to the war effort between 1917 and 1919. Like the Hitsons, most were farmers. Others worked for the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad. In this letter, dated August 4, 1918 and printed in *The Sheridan Post*, Hitson writes about what it was like on the battlefield. Unlike most letters home from the war zone, his provides a graphic description of war.



Dear Sister - I am taking in the excitement now and have been for several days and weeks. There has hardly been an hour that the shells have not been bursting around us but so far our battery has been lucky although some other batteries have lost heavily.

At first it made the cold chills run over a fellow but now a shell has got to burst close to attract much attention. Two horses were killed right close to one of our guns and we have had others slightly wounded, and several of the boys have had pieces of shell glance off their steel helmets; a hot piece of shell came through my shelter tent yesterday while I was reading.

They keep a fellow from getting lonesome, but while they are sending them over to us they are getting thousands in return. For all the shells and gas they send they get a double portion in return. We have got them going and for a while we couldn't catch up with them close enough to get a shot. On every attack we have given them a warm reception and dead Germans are even now laying around unburied.

You asked if I had seen the boys [Landy and Shandy]. Yes, I was right close to them for a week and could go and see them whenever I was off duty. The 148th got a big feed ready and sent [Shandy] over after me. We went back together and certainly had big eats. Afterwards we spent the evening telling each other what we had done and what we were going to do. After that I went home with [Shandy]. His outfit was about three or four miles from hours but we got in a truck and had quite a visit. Landy's outfit was only half a mile from us, but both are gone now. They loaded their guns on the train but where they went I do not know although they thought

they were going to Italy, but that was all guess work. I do not suppose I will see them again but at any rate all three of us had a good visit and all seemed glad to see one another.

The bunch that left Sheridan with them were all there except those that had been killed or wounded. Slim McGovern was badly wounded a few days ago. His left leg was broken by a piece of shell that struck him above the knee. A fellow cannot tell what minute he is going to get it.

It is four o'clock in the afternoon and the Huns have begun to send them pretty thick but they receive them back a damn sight quicker. This is a great life if a fellow don't weaken and I have not seen very many Yanks weaken yet.

I will never forget the first time we went into action. We got camped about two o'clock in the morning and it was raining and dark - gee, but it was dark in that thick brush and a light was not permitted on the front. I got my horses put away, then went to a little hillside and kicked out a level spot, laid my blanket down and took a real sleep. I was off by myself so I could not be bothered. Next morning I was sitting up in bed smoking and viewing things and the first thing I saw was a dead German. His hands were sticking straight up in the air and about a shovel full of dirt had been thrown on his stomach. His toes were also sticking out. That was as near as they got him buried.

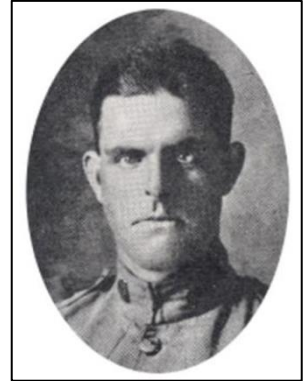
Well, I guess this is enough for this time, so will close.

The above was written during the most intense days of the Aisne-Marne Offensive. Two weeks later, shortly before being thrown into the thick of things at St Mihiel, Hitson added a postscript to his letter:

As I have not mailed my letter yet will add a little to it. We were on the move most of the night. Do not know where we are going but will have to admit that it is a relief to get back where the shells and gas do not bother and I will sure sleep after I get to bed. We were relieved from the sector where we were stationed but suppose we will hit it again in some new place where it is just as warm and where the fighting is just as good. A fellow sure seems lost away from the shells and battlefields after being so long among them. ... About one or two nights sleep and I will be ready to fly at 'em again for a month or two longer.

MELVIN ERASTUS MOONEY – Coast Artillery Corps

While most of Sheridan's young men joined the army (or were drafted into it), not every doughboy from here served in France. Private First Class Melvin Mooney, for example, was stationed in the Philippines for the duration of his service (March 1918 through July 1919). Mooney served with both the Coast Artillery Corps and the Quartermaster Corps on Corregidor Island near Manila. By the time of his last letter, he was working as a motorman on the Fort Mills electric rail system on Corregidor. Born in Nebraska in 1890, Mooney was living in Clearmont and working as a "liveryman" when he registered for the draft in June 1917. He had previously worked as a locomotive fireman - a job he returned to after the war. The following are excerpts from letters written by Mooney from Honolulu, Manila and Corregidor.



Honolulu, Hawaii - April 1918

We landed safe in Honolulu at 11 o'clock today. We were eight days and nights on the water, and it will take us about twenty-two days more to reach the Philippines. Believe me, there was a bunch of sick boys the first three days out. The sea was rough, and everyone was sick. We had it pretty tough this far, for we were so crowded, but about half of them were landed here and the rest of us will have more room the rest of the way.

This is sure a beautiful city. I am sending you some views of it and the island. I have seen sights since I left Sheridan that I wouldn't have missed seeing for anything. I wish you could have been with me and seen some of the things I have seen.

Manila, Philippine Islands - May 1918

We are sleeping in bamboo shacks now, which are full of holes, and we will sure get a drenching if it rains. We drill about eight hours a day and it is very hot, but the perspiration sure comes out on a fellow. At that I guess it isn't as warm as firing on the railroad. I don't mind it as bad as I did firing.

We haven't very good water to drink. They have to boil it before using. It is not like Wyoming water. The country don't look very good to me. Of course, you know there is no place like home. No place I have seen on this trip looks as good to me as Wyoming. It isn't as warm here as I expected - it doesn't get over a hundred degrees in the shade.

We had sweet potatoes, green peas, boiled beef, bread, pumpkin pie and water for our Sunday dinner.

There is no farm ground here. I don't believe there are three acres of level land here. Our drill ground is graded down.

Corregidor, Philippine Islands - June 1918

I am feeling fine, but the company is still under quarantine. There is a case of mumps breaking out every few days, and that means ten days for the rest of us. We are getting along fine in our drilling, but it sure does seem foolish to just march back and forth across a small place. It is comical the stunts some of us do when we get mixed up and don't understand the orders. Then the unlucky one gets a bawling out. It isn't all learned in a day. I get pretty tired sometimes, but am getting more used to it.

It isn't any warmer over here, and they say the rainy season begins pretty soon. I hope we get through this drilling before it begins.

I saw one of the big guns we will use today. It sure is a wicked looking thing. There is a lot of machinery to one. They shoot two shots a minute. The cartridges weigh ten hundred and forty pounds. They will be our next lesson in drilling.

Corregidor, Philippine Islands - July 1918

We stand inspection every Saturday morning. We drill five days a week and have Saturday afternoon and Sunday off to do as we like. They only allow us certain hours to wash our clothes as the water is pretty scarce, and we can't use much, so we have a hard time keeping clean. We have to wash when we are bathing, and our clothesline is the ground.

We don't hardly know what a table looks like, but we have pretty good chow (that is what they call the grub) and plenty of it, so we don't go hungry here. It is chow time now and I will have to get in the line or lose out. (Later.) We had roast beef, mashed potatoes, gravy, rice, bread and water for dinner.

Fort Mills, Philippine Islands - September 1918

This is a very nice island; it is rather small, but there is some real nice scenery on it. We have an electric line that runs from the beach to the top of the island. The fare is free; you get off and on as you please. We drill only on the forenoons and in the afternoon we sometimes work a little but not much. We have pretty good chow and all we want of it. The most of our food is shipped from USA. The Philippine Islands are nice, but Wyoming is nicer.

Fort Mills, Philippine Islands - December 1918

We had a big storm, a typhoon, they call it here. It rained and blowed four days and nights. It was sure unpleasant to be out in, but we have to keep the cars running no matter how bad it storms. Sometimes we could not see ten yards ahead of the car. I am first-class motorman now.

I don't know if they raise any melons here or not, and if they do, I don't think they would be very good. Some of the native fruit is pretty good, such as pypia [papaya]. It is something like a musk melon. Mangels [mangoes], they look like a pear, bananas and cocoanuts.

We have had the fever here, but I have been lucky enough not to get it. I guess you know what it is: what you call the "flu." I have been lucky as I haven't been sick since I have been over here, but I may get it yet.

There is malt gin and whiskey over here. It was wide open for a while, but they are trying to close it up now. Certainly we have coffee to drink, and we have all the sugar we want, such as it is; it is brown sugar and sometimes is not very good.

For Sunday dinner we have fried chicken, dressing, potatoes, other kinds of vegetables, ice cream and cake. Through the week we have meat, potatoes, gravy and rice pudding, and most always pie or cake for supper. I have no complaint of the food we get here.

I read in the paper they had started to discharge the soldiers. I suppose the ones here will be the last to be discharged. I will be glad when I get back across the pond. I sure don't enjoy crossing the ocean. A month is a long time to be on the water.