

Letters Home: Army Infantry

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 in the Army Infantry – foot soldiers. Groundpounders.

JAMES DONALD LEAPHART – 44th Infantry

James Leaphart was inducted into the Army in September 1917 and served stateside with the 44th Infantry. A few days after his induction, Leaphart penned a letter - signed by himself and seventeen other area recruits - thanking Sheridan for its support. We don't know for sure if Leaphart wrote the letter himself (he attended Missouri State University) or copied it from a standard thank you letter suggested by the Army, but its sentiments are nevertheless sincere.



NOTE: We have photographs of James Donald Leaphart, Earl Gordon Haywood, Jesse Albert Surrena, Earl Willard Long and Henry William Price. If you have photographs of the other soldiers mentioned in this letter and would like to share them with us, please send a note to trailend@wyo.gov.

To the people of Sheridan and Sheridan County:

The members of the second contingent of the national army who left Sheridan Sunday, September 23rd, desire to thank the people of Sheridan and Sheridan County for the many useful tokens of friendship presented to us on our departure from home and to express our sincere appreciation of the farewell entertainments given us as a mark of your confidence in us to do the things our country calls upon us to perform.

Whatever the future holds in store for us, we hope never to forfeit the faith you have reposed in us.

We are hardly soldiers yet, but you have known us from childhood and you may expect us all to do our duty in war even better than we did our work in peace.

When the last foe of our country has been vanquished, we will return and deliver to you the escutcheon as clear of stains as when placed in our keeping.

Throughout that time, we will cherish with deepest appreciation your kindly acts, your genuine friendship and the honors you have bestowed upon us. Signed:

- **James Donald Leaphart** (Clearmont, farmer; age 22, born in Missouri; unmarried; 2nd Lieutenant, 44th Infantry; stateside service)
- **Carlyle Henry Prichard** (Carneyville, teamster; age 22, born in Iowa; unmarried; Private, 168th Infantry; killed in action in France; buried at Arlington National Cemetery)
- **Earl Gordon Haywood** (Sheridan, locomotive machinist; age 23, born in Cambria WY; unmarried; Private First Class, 26th Engineers; fought at Meuse-Argonne)
- **Joseph Virgil McMahan** (Sheridan, locomotive fireman; age 26, born in Missouri; married; Sergeant, 346th Field Artillery)
- **Jesse Albert Surrena** (Carroll, farmer; age 24, born in Banner WY; married; Private, 163rd Infantry; died of bronchitis at Aix le Baines, France)
- **John Thomas Miller** (Dietz, teamster; age 29, born in Austria; single; Wagoner, 115th Engineers; fought at St Mihiel)
- **Henry William Price** (Sheridan, locomotive fireman; age 22, born in Iowa; unmarried; Private First Class, 364th Infantry; fought at St Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne and Ypres; gassed)
- **Robert Giles Hall** (Ucross, farmhand; age 22, born in Nebraska; unmarried)
- **Roy Henry Eaton** (Verona, farmer; age 24, born in Missouri; unmarried; Private, 168th Infantry; killed in action at Badonvillier, France; buried at Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery in Romagne, France; first Sheridan County soldier to be killed in action in the war)
- **Vincenzo Parmere** (Carneyville, mine driver; age 27, born in Italy; unmarried; Private, 163rd Infantry; served overseas)
- **Lee Thomas Lewis** (Clearmont, telegraph operator; age 22, born in Missouri; unmarried)
- **Frederick Valentine Portz** (Sheridan, bank teller; age 28, born in Cheyenne WY; unmarried; Sergeant, Quartermaster Corps; stateside service)
- **Joe Kawulok** (Ranchester, miner; age 24, born in Austria; unmarried)
- **James Pearl Weber** (Sheridan, locomotive engineer; age 28, born in Nebraska; unmarried; Wagoner, 31st Engineers; served overseas)

- **Earl Willard Long** (Passaic, cook; age 25, born in Sheridan WY; unmarried; Sergeant 1st Class, Quartermaster Corps; stateside service as an instructor at the School for Bakers & Cooks)
- **Barney McLain** (Sheridan, horsebreaker; age 22, born in Texas; unmarried; Private 1st Class, Auxiliary Remount Detachment; stateside service)
- **Frank Harold Weirick** (Sheridan, chiropractor; age 28, born in South Dakota; unmarried)
- **Bert Gross** (Sheridan, storekeeper; age 23, born in Lithuania; unmarried)

FRANK BOYD O'CONNELL – 5th Nebraska Infantry/134th Infantry

Frank O'Connell was born in Malcolm, Nebraska, in 1892. He registered for the draft in Gillette, Wyoming, putting down his employer as Willis O'Connell, Rancher. Willis was Frank's brother, who owned a ranch near Arvada. It is to Willis that Frank wrote the letter excerpted below. When it came time to enlist, Frank went back to Nebraska and joined the Fifth Nebraska Infantry, which became the 134th Infantry after it was mustered into federal service. After the war was over, he joined the Nebraska National Guard; by the end of his thirty years' service, he had attained the rank of Colonel. He also spent two years as an advisor for the Chinese Nationalist Army under Chiang Kai-shek. When he wasn't on Guard duty, O'Connell served as secretary of the Nebraska Game & Park Commission; he also served a term as president of the International Game & Fish Commissioners and - not surprisingly - the Nebraska Writers Guild.

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

I don't suppose a recruit ever came down the pike who was as rare as the one who answers the roll call with the above "yours truly." When I say "rare," I refer to the lingo of the restaurant - in other words, I was decidedly raw! I had never marched in my life, and I couldn't tell the captain from the cook. Someone had told me that a soldier should not have much baggage, therefore I reported for duty with only one trunk, a typewriter, a handbag, and two suitcases. Needless to say, an officer soon informed me that I still had just a little too much to carry on my back from here to Berlin, via Hades - or New Mexico, as the unsophistical recruits call it.

I had reported at the armory early in the morning, and with a half dozen other rookies was put in charge of a corporal who was instructed to take us back to camp. The officers took no chances; they had looked the six of us over and decided that it would not do to let us go without someone to herd us.

It was thought best to start us to soldiering at once. So we took the middle of the street afoot and headed for the camp. I did not know what the people whom we passed thought of us, but I am amply convinced that their sympathy was with the drill master whose fate it would be to make us over into soldiers. Or perhaps they thought we were prisoners of war, for the corporal was the only man in uniform, and before we had gone many blocks, all of us appeared rather long-faced and disconcerted. None of us had marched very much. ...

After we reached camp, we were consigned to quarters. ... We spent the first of the day in doing what our mothers had been trying to get us to do for twenty years - namely, sweeping, dusting, scrubbing and cleaning up in general. Then, after the work was done, we were issued our equipment.

After pestering the quartermaster with requests for feather beds, sheets, neckties, rubber boots and pajamas - all of which we did not get - we settled down for the night. It was our first night as soldiers. Long into the hours I lay awake listening to the snoring of my bunkies and wondering if we would be drilled on that particular art. I fervently hoped that we would for our nasal music was most unharmonious. You can't beat the snoring and grunting and sighing of a hundred rookies who have been used to sleeping in feather beds with pillows stacked all around them!

The next morning, after a hearty breakfast, the officers put on their spurs, took their ropes and began rounding us up for drill. I have punched cattle on the plains in the west and brought in outlaw steers, but I have never worked harder than those officers did that morning. After tying ribbons to our right arms, putting straw on our left feet and a bee in our ears, they finally succeeded in getting us all in step for a period of three seconds. I always supposed that an army officer had a soft job, but I have changed my mind. I have no ambition to become a drill master.

Day after day for a whole long week they have been working with us. It sometimes seems to me that they would make better headway if they temporarily changed their commands to "gee" and "haw" and to "get up" and "whoa." But we rookies are learning - slowly but sure, but we are learning to be soldiers nevertheless.

I thought before I enlisted that I might be signing up for a term of prison and for several weeks I went about with a face as long as some of the hikes they gave us. But my countenance has changed. There isn't a finer bunch of boys in any camp than there is in ours, and the life is not hard at all. We have to work and study, you can bet your life, but there is fun and play, too, and above all, it is making better men of us.

There is no room for the dandy or the sissy in our camp. Fond mama may have run herself to death waiting on her dear son, but here Johnny is quickly taught to wait on himself and perform

his duties. He will come home with a new conception of manhood as well as with a more helping hand to do the work of the world. Here I have found a new kind of manhood - a sort of collective manhood that I never found before. Perhaps the environment will make me a part of it; at least I hope so.

We're a great bunch of rookies, to be sure - every new man of us - and we don't know just what is ahead of us, but that is what makes the life interesting. We're ready to do what they tell us, and we're looking forward to the day when we will have a chance to show the Boches and their autocracy just what we think of it. And we hope that it won't be many months until our Annies at home will be able to address us "Dear Sammy" without doing an injustice to the name.

JOSEPH DANIEL SULLIVAN – Infantry Officers Training School

A native of Nebraska, Joseph Sullivan was employed as business manager of *The Sheridan Post* when he registered for the draft in June 1917. Upon being inducted into the army in July 1918, he attended Infantry Officers Training School at the Presidio in San Francisco. He was later transferred to Fort Riley, Kansas (where he went down with a case of Spanish Influenza), and finally Camp Green, near Chicago, Illinois. The war was almost over by the time he finished with Officers Training School, but Sullivan didn't mind. As he told his friends at *The Post*, "I'm ready to go home any time!" He was honorably discharged in December 1918. Sullivan's undated letter from the Presidio was published in *The Sheridan Post* on October 23, 1918.



The day's work begins at 5:30 a.m. with reveille, and from then till 9:15 p.m., everyone is kept pretty busy. An especial effort is being made to teach the student the essential of trench warfare and for that purpose the French government has detailed two French army officers to each of the sixteen reserve officers training camps. The two assigned to the Presidio came directly from the trenches and are thoroughly capable of doing that subject full justice.

Under their supervision, trenches have been built by the students, copied exactly after the trenches used in the war zone. They are occupied at intervals by the students and at such time, actual conditions as they are in France are simulated as nearly as possible.

Bayonet fighting and bomb throwing also come in for special attention, as most of the modern infantry men's fighting is done with these weapons. The fighting in the trenches is too close to admit of the use of the rifle, and the allied soldiers now in France are coming to regard that instrument as merely something to which to attach a bayonet.

A good deal of time is also devoted to practice hikes. They serve as excellent means of hardening the soldier, as well as teaching him how to make the most efficient use of his only means of transportation - his feet.

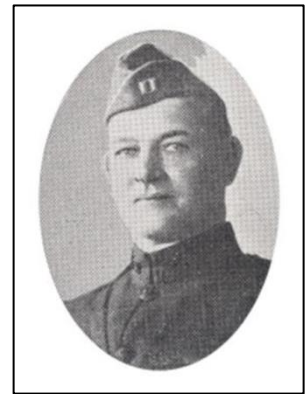
Military sanitation and personal hygiene are important topics. The conditions under which the soldier lives while at the front are such as to make necessary to most rigid rules of sanitation as a preventive of disease.

Map reading, military law signaling, infantry drill, guard duties and kindred subjects are also taken up and gone into thoroughly.

The benefits to be derived from the wonderful course of training and the experiences met in a camp where so large a body of men are being schooled are of inestimable value to any man, whether he makes soldering a profession or not.

EDWIN LESLIE NICHOLAS – 18th Infantry/151st Infantry

According to father-in-law Fred Brenner, former Sheridan resident Edwin Leslie “Nick” Nicholas “has been soldiering practically ever since he got into the khaki ranks in the Spanish-American War in 1898.” Previously stationed as a Sergeant Major with the 18th Infantry at Sheridan’s Fort Mackenzie, Nicholas served with the 151st Infantry during World War One. Following a brief time on the Mexican Border, the Kentucky native went overseas to France in the fall of 1918. At the ripe old age of forty, Nicholas - now a Captain - was considerably older than most of the soldier around him. His letters, published in *The Sheridan Daily Enterprise*, are full of the kind of details most soldiers left out of their letters home. After the war, Nicholas moved to Indiana where he served as Assistant Adjutant General for the Indiana National Guard. He died in 1939 and is buried in the Sheridan Municipal Cemetery.



As it has been so long since you have heard from me, I can imagine that you have been scanning the lists of casualties expecting to see my name somewhere in it. A little bit too early for that, for it seems that we are destined for some training before we can look for a move to the front.

Our little stay at [Camp] Mills proved very enjoyable for everyone, for we were practically in the heart of civilization, and after our long stay in Mississippi it was like a trip to heaven Our regiment is now largely composed of men from the southern states who have not seen very much of this glorious country of ours, and New York was a revelation to most of them. There were many who thought that after they had crossed from New Jersey City to Long Island they

had reached France. As the men were given quite a bit of liberty, it was possible for them to see quite a bit of the sights, and I imagine some of them will have some wonderful tales to tell when they get back on the farm. But those tales will seem insignificant, compared to what they have seen since leaving the United States, for we have seen a wee bit of England and as much of France.

Our trip across the Atlantic consumed just two weeks and was rather uneventful, except for sight of a few icebergs and a couple of whales. However, it was exciting enough for some of those who were in constant dread of "subs," as we had to wear life-preservers throughout almost the entire voyage, and the last three or four nights we were not permitted to remove any of our clothing excepting shoes, for we were in the real danger zone then. After the first day we had boat drill every day, so as to be prepared for any eventuality, and everyone, I believe, heaved a sigh of relief when we docked.

Then when we crossed the English Channel there was another night of suspense, also more sickness than there was on the trip across, for the boat we were on tossed around like a feather. However, it is my good fortune to report that I did not miss a meal anywhere, and I feel that I am a pretty good sailor, especially as this was my ninth sea voyage and that I have not made any contribution to the fishes.

We had a railroad trip of about eight hours in England, and got to see some of the country, which is pretty and reminds one of a vast park, for the grounds are so well kept. We were all struck with the quaint, railroad equipment, which seems like toys compared with our own. However, one cannot help being impressed with the remarkable cleanliness of their railroad yards and trackage, not a bit of refuse being in evidence anywhere. There are three classes of coaches - first, second and third. The officers rode in the first-class compartments, but we thought them far from first-class. One thing that can be said in favor of their railroad service is that their trains keep to schedule time. Not so much can be said in favor of the French railroad service, and I imagine that the men will always remember their experience on French trains as they made a 24-hour journey in box-cars, with 40 men to the car, which is just a trifle more than half as large as our ordinary freight car. But there was no complaint from the men, for they realize that in playing the war game, many discomforts must be encountered.

We saw a number of Hun prisoners working along the line, and they seemed a contented lot, and you can't blame them for feeling that way, for I expect that they are getting more humane treatment as prisoners than they did as soldiers in their own army.

From what I have seen of this country, it is certainly beautiful, and the people received us with open arms. While we were not near the war zone, one can readily see the effects of war even here, for it seems as if everyone is in mourning. Foodstuffs are very high, and the people can

purchase only a certain amount. Officers and men are in billets, which means that we are living with the people. I was in a billet just one night. The lieutenant-colonel and I were quartered with a family, each having a room of his own. But not being able to speak the language, we were not quite at ease. The next day a number of officers elected to move into a partly furnished chateau, where we can have our own mess and feel more at home. It is a most beautiful place and belonged to a banker who absconded and is now said to be in prison. The place is for sale for 50,000 francs, which would be a bit less than \$6,000, and if the place were located in the States, it would be worth not less than \$25,000.

Grapes seem to be the principal thing raised in this vicinity. Consequently, there is lots of wine which can be had for from a franc (about 20 cents) a bottle up. Champagne is to be had for 12 francs a quart. One thing that seems to astonish the natives is our love for water for drinking or bathing. With them, wine takes the place of water for drinking purposes, and as for bathing, a French captain told us that about the only time the people bathe is when they get sick. We might be able to adapt ourselves to their custom of drinking wine instead of water, but you can imagine what chance there is for an American to pass up bathing. A bath tub is a curiosity, but we will manage somehow to keep and stay clean.

It does look as if we have things coming our way, but we must not let up on the fight until we have the Hun on his knees and begging for mercy. I shall now close, for it is getting late and the sandman is hanging around, so I will say "Bon Nuit."

FRANK M. CALVIN – 164th Infantry

When he registered for the draft in June 1917, thirty-one year old Frank Calvin was working for himself as a farmer in Ulm, Wyoming (north of Clearmont). He was inducted into the Army in October 1917 and sent overseas to serve "Somewhere in France." Although he left the service as a Supply Sergeant for the 164th Infantry, Frank M. Calvin spent most of his time in France serving as a mail orderly for his company (3rd Co., Provisional Battalion). This gave him a unique insight on how mail - or the lack thereof - could affect a soldier's morale. Addressed to the People of Sheridan, the following letter was sent from France on July 27, 1918. It was published in *The Sheridan Daily Enterprise* on August 20th.

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

Letters from home! Well, we fighters in France don't get one-tenth enough of them. As one general told some reporters, "Tell the folks back home to write more letters to our boys in France. A homesick, despondent soldier might as well be in the hospital."

I tell you, nothing keeps the Yanks in good spirits like letters from back home. If every boy could get two or three letters from back there a week, things would go along a thousand times better. In fact, the army discipline question would be half solved.

The mothers, wives and sisters of the U. S. do very well as a rule, but sometimes they are rather neglectful of their correspondence.

Most of the single men went away and left a sweetheart behind them. These girls should write to the boys over here, as it is of so much encouragement, the letters they receive from the girls they left behind. These girls think that because they do not receive letter for letter, that the boys are very careless and unthoughtful. A soldier is in the trenches for days at a time and when he comes off shift, he throws himself on the ground in some muddy dugout and sleeps - if the noise permits - although a person gets so used to the noise that he sleeps through it all. The folks back there should take this into consideration and remember what an immense amount of pleasure a boy gets from his letters from home.

A letter means to a boy over here just as much as a drink of water does to a man who is dying of thirst in the desert. This is the honest to God's truth about what a letter means to the boys.

Of course, you folks are busy over there, then if you happen to think of it, "we are damned busy" over here. I know lots of people say at night over there, "Oh, I'm so tired, I'll write tomorrow." But if they could see the boys using their canteens for writing desks, trying to scribble home a few lines, when the next minute they may be blown plumb to _____. If folks could only picture the difficulties that we go through to write home, they would write much more to the boys than they do. Some of the boys manage to scribble a few lines nearly every day back to those they care for.

After he finished "roasting" the Sheridan populace, Calvin wrote another letter, one that offered a bit more information about himself and his position:

I owe an apology to the people of Sheridan and Sheridan County for sending that "roast" back there. I most certainly did not mean just the people of that vicinity. I am a mail orderly for our company and so am in a position to get the different opinions of the fellows. So what I set back there was not my opinions of everything, but of the bunch.

At times I am darn short of mail; at other times I am simply swamped, but have never failed to answer a single letter that I have received. In fact, I am way ahead of the bunch when it comes

to writing letters. I always have figured that if I kept ahead that when the time came that I would not be able to write, people could not land on me so hard for failing to write them.

I read in 8 where I had lost both of my arms. Sure must be a big mistake somewhere, for they both are still attached to my body. I sure would like to know where such stories originate anyway. So many of the different fellows are reading accounts of their death and loss of limbs all of the time. Peculiar that those kinds of stories are always bobbing up about some fellow when there is not a bit of truth in the dope at all. If anything serious happens to a person, the government will let the people know about. So if rumors start, all a person back there has to do is to hold their horses and deny it.

Weather is fine here now, but a short while ago a person cooked to death. Take we fellows who were used to a high dry climate, this country about cooks our goose. Say, I sure long for those pine-covered mountains, sage-covered hills and flats. A person misses the clear sparkling air that Wyoming is noted for; in fact, at times he feels a good deal like a full-grown grey wolf that has been trapped, put in a cage where he can look out through the bars at the hills that he used to roam. I don't know whether you folks who read this have ever felt this way, but this is my feeling in a crowded country or city nearly all the time. This may sound as though I was devilish homesick. But you all have another guess coming, for I don't want to come back until we get the last Krauthead's scalp that is on top of a live Hun's head. Sounds tough, but it is the only thing to do to get rid of this Prussian idea that they were made to rule the earth. They sure did take in too much territory when they tried to clean up on the entire world.

HARRY WEISBORD – 146th Infantry/361st Infantry

Immigrating to the United States in 1910, Harry Weisbord was born in Zavadovka, Ukraine. While his parents and two brothers settled in Philadelphia, Harry and his older brother Pevy came to Sheridan and opened the Fair & Square clothing store on Main Street. After Harry went off to war, Pevy was joined in the business by younger brothers Abe and Joe. At the age of twenty-two, Harry Weisbord was inducted into the army in April 1918. He first served with the 146th Infantry, but was later transferred to the 361st Infantry. While in France, he fought at the battles of Saint-Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne - the latter being where he was killed by enemy fire in October 1918. Written on September 15, 1918, the following letter from Private Weisbord wasn't published in *The Sheridan Daily Enterprise* until November 6, 1918 - over a week after he had been killed, but at least a week before townsfolk were alerted to his death.



My Dear Brother Perry: I am well and hope you are the same. I am now in a different place. It is pretty far from the line, but I can hear the cannon. The Americans are doing big fighting and gaining towns every day. We are using the latest methods and are giving them big surprises. They don't know where to run, and if we will keep up till Christmas, we will sure see Berlin. I mean we will march in with Old Glory.

We are in reserve now, and we will not go to the fight for a very long time because they have about ten divisions ahead of our company. So do not worry about me. I am seeing airplanes just like birds flying in the air, and they are all Americans. So if a German plane comes, he has a very small chance to go back. We are not working as hard any more as we used to. We are resting most of the time, so that when the time comes to fight, we will have lots of jazz.

I guess I do not have to tell you about the war, because you have plenty of newspapers in Sheridan. I am feeling fine all around. But what worries me is the store and our parents in Philadelphia. I wish the war would come to an end, and I might be with you again. I am getting all your letters, so keep on writing all you can, because sometimes some get lost and then I want the next one. Also write me about your trip back east and if you bought plenty of fall goods and how do you get along with the store?

Say, Perry, do not forget to write me about that young lady from the B. & R., and how everybody is at home. Every day is just like a year to me. I am thinking much about Sheridan and of all the good times I have had there. But it cannot be helped that I am so far away, and I am not the only one.

FRANK WORLEY COLSON – 59th Infantry/148th Field Artillery

The son of a Virginia-born farmer, Frank Colson was born in Sheridan in 1895. Before the war, he worked as a motorman on the Sheridan Railway Company's trolley cars. He was drafted into the Army in November 1917. Colson was a gunner for the 59th Infantry; he later transferred to the 148th Field Artillery. He once said that he had "handled nearly every kind of gun there is," but spent much of his time with an automatic machine gun squad. After the war, Colson returned to Sheridan and his job on the streetcars. He later moved to Charleston, South Carolina, and Chicago, Illinois; he worked the streetcars in both locales. This undated letter, published in *The Sheridan Daily Enterprise* on August 13, 1918, is one of several lengthy, articulate letters that Colson sent home from the front.



There was an air raid over our billets last night. Imagine yourself sleeping soundly in your tent when all at once you hear the air raid warning given. You jump out of bed and rush out and hear the hum of dozens of airplane motors. At once you realize that it is the sound of the enemy's planes, for they have an exhaust to their motors that is very thrilling in sound and unlike any other airplane motor except one other which I have heard only the last couple of days and which I shall speak about later in my letter. Well, you instantly realize that death is riding in the winds above you, but still it is so inspiring that you do not feel afraid. All at once a half dozen powerful searchlights flare out, shooting backward and forward across the clear night sky, then an anti-aircraft battery opens up, first at one point and then another until it is one continual thunder of guns. Then down comes our first bomb. Well, talk about noise; it is simply deafening and ear-splitting. You feel a powerful rush of air about you - that is, if it falls quite a distance away, say three-quarters or half a mile - the earth shakes as if being rocked by an earthquake. After this continues half an hour or so, along comes another relay of raiders who relieve the first squadron. Perhaps this continues for a couple of hours or more before "Jerry" finally decides his night's work at that point is done.

By the way, I am writing this on a log out in the timber, away from camp, and I can look out towards the trench and see the German shrapnel bursting a mile high around a couple of our planes. Shrapnel is a timed explosive which is judged to explode at a certain distance. It is fired at a plane and is timed so it will explode at a point nearest the enemy. When it first breaks, it looks like a huge football and it finally turns white (the smoke). But it hangs for a long period over where it bursts. Sometimes you can see the Allies throwing a complete barrage of shrapnel around a daylight raider until you think, well, he is simply doomed, but finally you can see him tearing away at full speed high above the clouds.

That other motor I told you I would mention later is the celebrated American Liberty motor which up until the last few days I never heard before, but the last couple of days the air has simply been full of them. So high in the air that you can't see them with the naked eye, they make a musical but death-defying sound and they are enough to make any old German's knees quake. It sure makes me feel good to hear an airplane that sounds like it is more than the equal of "Jerrys."

Airplanes here are more common than Ford cars at home. I can tell now when I hear a plane go over just what country it represents.

I doubt very much if this ever gets by the censor, but I know they sometimes allow it to pass out, but until I hear from you again and learn as to whether it did or not, I won't try to write any more about some of the other exciting but interesting incidents that have and are happening daily. I will have a record of them all when I return home so as I can give you all some

interesting details of life in “No Man’s Land,” where the air and earth are covered with shells, bombs and grenades bursting, cracking continually worse than any trick storm that you could even imagine. For it sometimes feels like hell itself is let loose.

Of course, one reads accounts in the papers of it, and one tries to imagine how it feels to actually be under shell fire, but no one could ever do it without going through the actual experience itself. I haven’t had such an awful lot of that stuff so far, for a soldier anyway, but I have seen enough to make a few of those brave old home guard hot-air peddlers take cover!

Every night, especially about 1 a.m., the exchange of artillery opens up. One of our big guns first speaks, then another. Then a little later a German gun answers back. First a red flare flashes high and wide, then an instant later the report of the gun, then a second or two later you can hear it explode at its objective point. Then it’s just like a couple of all-night tomcats fighting. Back and forth all night it continues.

AUBREY BOGGS CRAWFORD – Army Infantry

Born in California, Missouri, in 1894, Aubrey Crawford was your typical World War One Army recruit. He was white. He was unmarried. He worked in a low-paying job. He was of medium height and medium build, and had no distinguishing marks about his person. Inducted in June 1918, Crawford was a lowly infantry private when he went overseas - just another soldier destined to go “over the top” of a trench “Somewhere in France.” Fortunately for us, the future newspaper editor wrote two letters about his experiences overseas; experiences which gained him both scars and medals - including the Purple Heart. The following excerpts from his letters were published in *The Sheridan Post*, the newspaper for which Crawford served as advertising manager shortly before he was called into service.



5 September, 1918, Co. A, 160th Infantry, Somewhere in France

Dear old friends: Well, here I am in France. I should have written to you before this, but the difficulty has been to find time, for I have been on the go pretty much ever since I left the good old town of Sheridan.

This part of the world is entirely different from what I had pictured in my mind. It is a great country, but the customs and habits of the people seem to be behind the times. For instance, the people wear wooden shoes and oxen are still used for teaming purposes. My notion is that the United States was ahead of this country before Columbus ever discovered it.

To give you an idea of just how rapidly Uncle Sam is handling his fighting men: We were at Camp Lewis seventeen days, Camp Kearney six days, Camp Mills four days, and then embarked for overseas. So it only took about six weeks from the day I departed from Sheridan to land me in England.

We have difficulty in getting any real news. We are at present quartered in a stone barn about a mile from a small town. We go about a quarter of a mile to our meals. We are close enough to the front to hear the big guns anyway. We are all keen to get over where the real excitement is.

You may rest assured that I am literally obeying your instructions to "Keep Old Glory Off the Ground," and I will continue to do so even when I go over the top.

These Yankee boys are all right. We are all on the bit and rarin' to go and if they will only turn us loose it will not take long to wind this war thing up and come home.

I have written about all the censor will let through and must close. I shall expect all of you to write to me as well as all the rest of my old friends in Sheridan.

15 October 1918, AEF Base Hospital, Somewhere in France

Dear Old Friend - I am writing just a few lines to tell you why you have not heard from me in the past few weeks. First, I have been busy moving from one place to another. It seemed impossible to write to anyone.

After roaming over Europe and wading through France, I finally reached the front and had the actual adventures I had longed for before I left Sheridan.

On Friday morning, September 27th, at 5:55 o'clock, I went over the top for the first time, and my experience is beyond my power to tell in words. I leave to your imagination this situation until I get home and can sit down and try to picture to you what seemed then to me to be a brief dash through the essence of ten thousand hells.

On Friday night, the 27th of September, the Huns sent over a shrapnel which struck in my vicinity and has put me out of the game, I fear for all time. Splinters caught me in the right arm. At present I am in the hospital and have been ever since the occurrence.

I am told that an order has been made whereby all the hopeless and difficult cases of injury will be returned to the United States for scientific treatment, looking toward rehabilitation of the wounded insofar as the skill of experts can make it possible. In this the hopes of many are centered. Since my name is on the list I expect to be on the high seas, homeward bound in the near future.

As I understand it, we are to be placed in some eastern hospital and treated until we are able to get around somewhat after the fashion we did before injury. Aside from my pain and misery, I am receiving the best of treatment and am fairly cheerful.

On my arrival in America I will wire you my address and I want you to write me as often as your time will permit.

ROBERT PETRIE – London Scottish Brigade

From the start of the war, several English- and Scottish-born Sheridan residents had relatives serving in the British Expeditionary Force. Chief among them was Alexander Petrie, partner in the Bentley & Petrie men's clothing store, whose brother Robert was with the famous London Scottish Brigade. A Perthshire house painter by trade, Private Petrie was a bomber when he distinguished himself at the 1917 Battle of Cambrai to such an extent that he was awarded Britain's Military Medal. He was later promoted to the rank of lieutenant and attached to a light trench mortar battery. In his letters to Alexander, Robert Petrie not only describes incidents from the war, but discusses life on the British home front, his impressions of America's war preparations, and much, much more.

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

From "Somewhere in Flanders," October 15, 1917 (published November 16, 1917)

We are settling down to another winter campaign. I was hoping that it would be all finished before another winter. The weather all through has not been kind to us. At the start of each push, the rain started and hindered operations. However, on the western front, everything is secured and what we have won, Fritz will never be able to retake. Perhaps his successes in Russia may make them hold out longer, but I don't think what he gains on that side will be of any great service to him, and the Russians will wake up one of these days. I don't for one moment expect that Russia will tolerate German rule, and when this is all over, I hope no country will tolerate militarism. If so, the sooner we have another flood, the better.

It is a difficult job keeping the trenches free of water and sometimes have to wear gum boots with the kilt floating in the water. ... There are a good many of your officers knocking about the trenches now, taking notes. I heard Fritz intends giving the Sammies a hot reception, so we shall be all watching you when you arrive. I have no doubt the first American will be anxious to make a show and, if you can stand the shell fire, you have nothing to fear from the man.

The artillery fire in this war is frightful, but one gets used to it, and it is surprising how few casualties there are after a "strafe." This kind of warfare involves far more hard work than actual fighting. We are always digging and improving the trenches which are seven feet deep, two wide at bottom and five feet wide at top, so you can see there is some labor.

From "Somewhere in France," December 8, 1917 (Published January 9, 1918)

We attacked the Hindenburg line and went further than our objective, which our lot nearly always do. We held on to what we gained for ten days, the Boches bringing thousands of fresh troops up to try and drive us out. However, we managed to consolidate and left the place when fresh troops came up.

We had a good many casualties, but the Hun must have lost heavily during his counter-attack. He tried the white flag dodge, but we took no notice and he had to leave his trenches and run for it. I did good work as I was in charge of my platoon bombing section [deleted by censor]. He gave us a terrific bombardment and again failed to get us out. The fighting was nearly all done by bombing and thousands of them were thrown by the [deleted by censor]. I am indeed thankful to have again escaped any injury.

The fall of Russia has probably given the Boche more heart, but he has a different problem to solve on the west front. Attacking in mass formation is just what we want.

From "Somewhere in France," Undated (published January 24, 1918)

It will give you great pleasure to know that I have been awarded the Military Medal for my part in the Cambrai battle along with the London Scottish. I can't give you any account, but Mrs. Petrie will send you the London Gazette. ... One does not like to blow their own horn, [but] I am very proud of having won it in such a distinguished regiment where honors are hard to get because of its ranks being made up of the best material of any country. ... When it was read out in orders, there was quite a scene and made me blush.

It is some compensation to poor Nance, who has had a rough time, but has done her part splendidly. She never complains, and your goodness to her from over there has very much pleased but not surprised her. I am glad to have earned your generosity, Alex, and hope to be spared to wear my medal. ... I am looking forward to see my dear little ones. It is now over a year since I saw them, but they are all well and child-like pleased I am out here.

From "Somewhere in France," Undated (published March 15, 1918)

I have just returned from leave to England. .. It was indeed a great joy to be with the wife and little ones again after thirteen months in this land of strife and bloodshed. Naturally they were a

little distressed at my leaving again, but not too much, for the wives and children are getting used to that sort of thing over here.

They are beginning to feel the pinch of the war a good deal at home, and Mrs. Petrie has to go out sometimes for hours to line up for food. ... Food, especially tea, sugar and margarine, is very high and served in small quantities. I think there ought to be a scheme for rationing all commodities, especially to soldiers' families. There is plenty of money being earned by the home mob, and they appear to be discontented because they cannot buy more than they are entitled to. I suppose these things will right themselves eventually, but it seems to me they are slow in taking form, perhaps because of certain interests. ...

From "Somewhere in France," March 3, 1918 (published April 6, 1918)

We have had splendid weather up to the first day of this month. It has lived up to its reputation by coming in like a lion and sincerely hope it soon calms down again. However we can look now forward to the better weather. It is bitterly cold with a little snow.

Yes, Russia is reaping the fruits of her folly, but expect the Boche will find something to do to keep the people in order for some time to come. They will likely soon tire of being ruled by the sword.

You seem to be moving over there with war preparations and we are beginning to hear of your doings over here. Of course it takes a long time to get an army together but when you get full strength, no doubt you will be able to compete with your neighbors the Canadians, and perhaps with the London Scots. In any case, we would not be jealous of them no matter how well they do. They have taken over part of the front but we seldom see each other.

Your taking over the railroads and starting rationing so early is a step in the right direction, not waiting like we did till there was a shortage.

I see by the papers your troops are taking over some town in France to serve as a holiday retreat for American troops, but I should think they would be allowed to leave to England, as most colonial troops go there.

FRANK MOTT DOWNER – 157th Infantry

Frank Downer was born in Colorado and died in California, but in between, he spent some time in Sheridan. From 1910 through 1915, he worked as a "practicing lawyer" with offices in the Kutcher Building. He later moved to Thermopolis. In May 1917, Frank enlisted in the Army. He spent considerable time at Camp Kearny, California (a training camp sometimes misspelled Kearney), before being attached to the 157th Infantry and shipped overseas. He spent much of

his time in Saint-Cergues, near the Swiss border. While serving in France, Sergeant Downer met Arlette Marguerite Laignel, the daughter of a Parisian lawyer. They corresponded for nearly a decade before marrying in 1926 and moving to San Diego. The following, published in *The Sheridan Post* in October 1918, is a brief note Frank sent to an unidentified friend.

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

The fact that I have not written you for a year or more is not because I have not often thought of you. I was a parade ground soldier at Camp Kearney so long that I felt like a slacker and really had nothing to write.

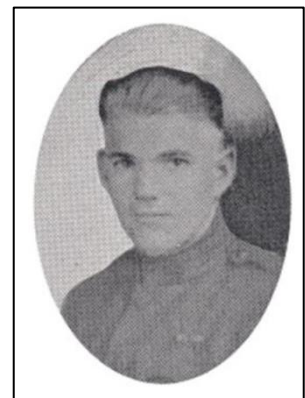
Anyhow I'm here now and having the time of my life. Never felt better and it may be that some of my friends will be glad to know it.

I shall return some day to Sheridan and regale you with wild tales of adventure. I can spin yarns without fear of impeachment but I shall have many things to tell. I'll try to write more later. In the meantime, will you give my very best regards to my friends - especially to Dr. Newell and Ralph Denio - the former I wish to tell that I walked twelve miles carrying a pack like a grand piano and arrived OK. All of which goes to show that you can never know how far a singed man can jump!

Tell Dr. Frackleton I will write him before long, and if you have time and inclination simultaneously write to me as below.

McKINLEY H. SMITH – Army Infantry

Before he joined the Army in October 1917, McKinley Smith worked as a farmer in Big Horn and as a coal miner in the northern Sheridan County community of Dietz. He was born in Robbins, Tennessee, in 1895, and lived on Lower Prairie Dog for a few years. Once in the Army, Smith bounced around from unit to unit; both infantry and engineers enjoyed his company for a time. After the war, Smith returned to work as a miner. After a year or so in the Sheridan mines, he moved to the tiny mining town of Megeath, Wyoming - in the southern part of the state - where he died of tuberculosis in March of 1922. He is buried in Rock Springs. His letters from Europe, written as a member of the Army of Occupation after the armistice was signed, were published in *The Sheridan Daily Enterprise*. The first was written in December 1918.



I have been in France for a year now and have seemingly neglected to write to many who are very dear friends of mine. I also have written to a great many who have not answered my letters, but as the mail service is rushed over here, they might have never reached their destination.

I also wish to correct several reports which have depicted me dead, wounded, gassed, prisoner of war and what not. None of which are true, for I am as well and healthy as I was when I left Sheridan, if not more so. My capacity for demolishing army "chow" has increased considerably.

Though I have been in the zone of action ever since I came to France, I have suffered no injury as yet. I have spent most of my time with the 163rd, 164th infantry and 107th engineers. I am now with the army schools at Langus.

Smith's next letter, written in January 1919, is a more sarcastic and cynical look at army life.

It seems that along about the time the armistice was signed that everyone stopped writing, perhaps thinking that us fellows are coming home in a few weeks, but such is not going to happen just yet, and it will be more than a year yet before all of the A. E. F. are again safely back in the good old U. S. A. So you see that there is still lots of time to write. I have received about six letters in the last three months. Comparing this with the former months, my correspondence has decreased about 65 percent. It seems that I write about four or five times as many letters as I receive. What is the matter? Have the folks at home forgotten us now that we have won the war and are not needed anymore?

The subject of the weather is worn thread-bare, but there is a little story which you may have heard which exactly illustrates our experiences at the present time. One of our soldiers was plowing along down the main road last week when he saw a short pole sticking out of the mud. Upon investigation he found it was a rifle, and digging down, reached a cavalryman, who remarked shortly but pointedly that the mud was rather annoying and asked that the horse beneath him be extricated, and it was then seen that the horse was standing on a load of hay, cheerfully munching away.

Life in our camp is a constant round of pleasure and luxurious ease. In the morning, one arises about 5:30, slips into wet boots and swims out to reveille, then we merely have to wash for breakfast which is a quarter inch of bacon (burned), oatmeal or mush (cornmeal soaked in water and without sugar), washed down with a fluid falsely called coffee. We have a slight suspicion that it is made of burnt beans and o. d. pills [laxatives]. The fare is sometimes changed by the substitution of thick slabs of a strange compound which reminds me of rubber boots and bitulithic pavement. These are called "flapjacks," because they flap only after being swallowed. The men then prance gaily out to the fatigue call, singing happily and praising their officers in

various words and odd phrases which I dare not mention at the present. After luncheon has been served and the "silver and the linen" put away, another dashing bout with the pick and shovel. I take my pick which keeps the dull care away until 5 p.m., and then we return and "dress" for dinner.

It's a great (?) life and we will never forget it after the war. When we return to bathtubs and Pullman sleepers and clothes that fit, it will be [with] a spirit of regret and fond memories of A. P. O. No. 714 and its invincible troops.

GUY DARREL ADSIT – 160th Infantry/308th Infantry

Twenty-three year old Guy Darrel Adsit enlisted in the army in June 1918. After training at Camp Lewis, Washington, he was assigned to the 160th Infantry; he later joined the 308th Infantry Machine Gun Company and saw action at Meuse-Argonne. Born in Madison, Kansas, in 1895, Adsit came to Wyoming in the early 1900s. His parents farmed on Piney Creek in northern Johnson County. After his marriage in 1917, he and his wife moved to Kirby, Montana, where they ranched until his death in 1929. In his letters from France, Guy Adsit tells a little about everything: the weather, the French people, his health, his cooties, and other aspects of daily life. Nothing comes through so strongly as his obvious longing to be back home with his wife and child. Adsit's letters were published in *The Sheridan Daily Enterprise* on December 7, 1918 and April 17, 1919.



24 October 1918, Somewhere in France

Dear Wife and Baby: I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know I am still alive but I have not been able to write because I was transferred to another outfit and then we went up on the front and while I was there I took sick and was sent to this hospital where I am now. There is no need to worry any because I am getting along all right now and expect to be out and around before long.

How is the weather back in God's country? It is raining here today. I have heard people talk about sunny France, but I haven't seen very much sun since I have been here. I have heard people talk about cooties, but when I came here from the lines I had enough on me to carry me away. They were big enough so when I went to sleep at night I had to chain myself to a tree or they would have carried me away—some cooties, I guess.

I have heard all kinds of rumors about peace but I think if I have good luck and lots of it I will be there in time to put my crop in next spring. How was the crops back there this summer? It has been so long since I wrote I expect you thought all kinds of things had happened to me but I am still on foot. I wish you would write to mother and let her know I am all right for I cannot get any writing paper or envelopes here so you see how it is. After I get back to my company again it will be all right for I have got some in my pack.

I have not had any mail for over a month now and it seems like a mighty long time, but I expect it will be waiting back at the company for me when I get there.

31 October 1918, Somewhere in France

Dear Wife and Baby: I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know I was all right now. I am up and feeling fine. I think I will be ready to go back to my company in a few days now. I sure will be glad when I can go back there for there was quite a lot of the boys from the old 40th that I knew. They sure do take good care of a boy when he comes to a hospital over here. From the looks of things over here I don't think that this big fuss will last much longer. I hope not anyway.

When I came here I got rid of my cooties. They had to keep me company while I was on the lines. They sure are good friends for they stay right with you all of the time. When I lost mine I sure missed them for a while but it was an awful good miss. The only thing that I ever found them good for was to keep your circulation in good condition while you were chasing them.

The weather here today is cloudy and foggy but the last three days has been fine up until this morning. I suppose you have had snow back there by now.

I will try to finish my letter now. I just came back from taking a good hot shower bath we get to take twice a week here. The Red Cross came through this ward the other night and gave us boys a Christmas package and they were sure nice packages.

How is everything back in God's country now? I sure will be glad when I get back there. I would not give one square mile of old Montana for this whole country as far as I have seen yet. Well I guess I had better ring off for this time so this leaves me well. I hope it finds you the same. Write soon.

19 March 1919, Brulon, France

Dear Wife and Baby: It has begun to look like spring over here. The other evening, while I was out walking, I heard a frog croaking. It sounded like he had a cold, but it rains so much that I guess he was water soaked. The grass has been green here ever since I arrived, and the ground

hasn't froze at all. I think from the looks of this place around here it is a very pretty place in the summer. All of the buildings over in this country are made of stone or cement, and some of them look like they were made in the year one. The roofs are made of tile or slate. I haven't seen a shingled roof since I have been over here.

You can look out on the street any time of the day and see some of the French people going along with a pair of big wooden shoes on about the size of a canoe. They look to me like an awful weapon to have around if there happens to be a rough house for about ten minutes, for if a boy got hit on the head with one of them, he would be counted among the missing.

HARRY MANFRED JOHNSON – 12th Infantry/31st Infantry

Born in Fleming, Colorado, and raised in Clearmont, Wyoming, Harry Johnson was employed as a railroad timekeeper when he registered for the draft in June 1917. Inducted into the army in May 1918, Johnson served as a private with both the 12th and 31st infantries. It was while serving with the latter that Johnson found himself passing through Japan on his way to Vladivostok with over 1,400 members of the 31st Infantry, sent to eastern Siberia as part of President Woodrow Wilson's attempt to intervene in Russia's Bolshevik Revolution and thus protect

American and European interests in the area. Written in late September 1918, Johnson's letter was published in *The Sheridan Enterprise* on November 13, 1918. After the war, Johnson returned to Sheridan, where he died in 1965 after working for Sheridan County Electric for many years.



I thought I'd write a few lines today so I can mail it when we get a chance. It's getting pretty tiresome being on the transport so long. Expect it will be several days yet before we get to our destination. We stopped at a post, Hakadati, Japan, last Sunday, and we were all allowed to go to shore. Couldn't get the transport to the docks, so we took small Jap boats and went to town. Gee! Things here look awful odd and funny. Also the people. They wear very little clothing and wear a kind of robe like the men and walk on stilt-like things for shoes. Don't see hardly how they get along with them, and no one can enter a house unless they take their shoes off and put on a sort of a slipper. The women work just like men and carry their babies on their backs like Indians.

The streets are very narrow and no pavement, and all the traffic goes on the left side. The street cars are much smaller than the ones at home and no sidewalks, and all the building are so small - nearly all are one or two-story frame buildings. We had much fun in getting what we wanted

and making change in Jap money. Many of the soldiers got jagged so they could hardly walk. Beer and whiskey we all could buy, but getting what we wanted to eat was rather a hard job. The girls, especially if they would see a gold ring on your finger, you could hardly get away from them. I sure had a hell of a time and there's so much that I can't write you in a letter. They also are such beggars. The girls, all of the ones I saw in the stores, were after a guy to buy beer, and, believe me, they can sure drink, too. Saw lots of the girls that looked pretty nice and were dressed nice too. I tried my best to get my picture taken in one of those carts with a Jap pulling it. Ha, I'd sure give lots for one, but I couldn't find any one that had a Kodak nor a photographer either on the streets.

I never saw a single wagon. Nothing but carts, and very few of them, and they were drawn by men or a single horse. Seems as though they are centuries behind us people, and their sanitary conditions are very, very poor. I sure thought the Japanese people were much farther advanced than they are, but I expect it is better when you get farther inland. All along the coast where we have been, the land has been very rough.

September 28, 1918 - Will start and write a little more. We are to land this afternoon, so am going to try and get this letter mailed so it can go back on this boat. We stopped at Otarii, Japan, four days, and took on some coal, but they couldn't let us go to town, account of lots of the boys used too much drinks and gave quite a bit of trouble. Am sure glad we are to land so we can get off this boat. About all I've seen since we left San Francisco has been water, until we got to Japan. If you happen to see the Jap foreman at the [railroad] shops, tell him that I was in Hakadati and Otarii, Japan.

ELMER EVERT KOBOLD – 27th Infantry

When twenty-five year old Kirby, Montana, farmer Elmer Kobold enlisted in the army in March 1918, he probably thought he'd be sent to France to fight in the mud and the rain and the heat. Instead, he ended up in the Philippines, where there was little in the way of actual fighting to occupy the time of himself and the rest of the 27th Infantry. In this undated letter from Manila, printed in *The Sheridan Daily Enterprise* in June 1918, Kobold describes his trip to the islands and a little of life in America's most distant colony. (By the way - shortly after he wrote this letter from Manila, Private First Class Kobold and the rest of his comrades got a big surprise when they were sent to a new location; not France, as some speculated, but Siberia, where they became known forever after as "The Wolfhounds.")

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

On the fifth of April we went on board the U S army transport, Sherman, and sailed slowly out into the San Francisco Bay and passed through the Golden Gate, and beautiful California soon faded in the distance. ... Nothing happened of any importance til the third day out when we passed two ships bound for San Francisco. After the third day we saw nothing but salt water until the ninth day out when we woke up in sight of the Hawaiian Islands, and believe me, it was a welcome sight to us. We were on shore 48 hours and during that time I and my partner were over the entire city of Honolulu. The first place we went to was the army and navy YMCA building, which is the best I ever saw. It covers an entire block. It was formerly the Royal Palace, the home of the king and queen, but was afterwards converted into a hotel and finally into the YMCA, for which we are all thankful.

The island that Honolulu is on is about ninety miles around, and there is somewhere near 20,000 U S soldiers stationed on it, so you can see how well protected this island is.

It would take me a week to tell you all I saw at Honolulu, but I'll tell you this much, that they had some of the finest bananas that I ever had the good luck to taste. We just roamed about, eating and sight-seeing until at last our shore-leave was up and we went back on the ship. We backed away from the docks and once more started on our way across the Pacific and the shores of Hawaii soon became dim in the distance.

The next morning when we went on deck we were once more out of sight of land. For fourteen days we never saw land or ship; nothing more happened until ... we came in sight of the city of Agana, the largest city on Guam Island. Now, before, I go further, I will add that we did not go on shore at Guam, for the reason that there are no docks there. We cast anchor about two miles from the shore. There were lots of natives who came over to the ship in their canoes and sold us bananas and cocoanuts. ... The natives of Guam live on rice, fish and cocoanuts. Uncle Sam is trying to teach them how to farm. How far he has succeeded in the task I am unable to say. The natives speak the Spanish language and wear almost enough clothing to hide their nakedness.

On the morning of the sixth of May we woke up in Manilla Bay. ... I will now tell you a few things about Manila. I've been to see the old cathedrals, some of which are four or five hundred years old. The streets are very narrow. Our sidewalks in Sheridan are almost as wide as the streets. Here the sidewalks are wide enough for two persons in some places, and in other places for only one man. ... The streets are crooked, and you can follow one street and go clear around the city. The most of the draying is done with ox carts drawn by caribou or water buffalo, as they are sometimes called. In passing along the street, you will see lots of natives with sticks across their shoulders carrying a large bundle at either end. They go at a fox trot, as this gait takes the jar off their shoulders. If they are carrying anything very large, there will be four of them with two sticks. I have on two occasions seen four natives carrying a piano.

I am assigned to Co. K, 27th Infantry. The 27th is a famous regiment. We were sent here to bring this regiment up to war strength. There is some rumor going around that we are going to France pretty soon, but I don't think anyone will know when we are going until we are gone. However, the way we are drilling, we must be going. It is closer to France from here than it is from America, so we will probably go from here if we go. It is 7,500 miles from here to San Francisco. That puts me about 9,000 from Sheridan. I'm so far away from home that if I was to go any farther, I would be started back!