

August 14, 1919 - Brussels, Belgium

Dear Folks:-

Since I wrote to you from Clermont we have been thru a great many more new places and experiences. First we went to Metz, to study the battlefields of 1870. A French officer explained the different battles on the ground where they were fought. He also showed us the forts which the Germans built to defend Metz. We had a day off in the city so opportunity was given us to see how the inhabitants like their return to French rule. A great many of them know no other language than German, and the city is more German than French. We spent most of our time wandering from shop to shop, but not buying much. Since there have been very few Americans there prices were quite reasonable. From Metz we went into Germany to Neuwied, on the Rhine, the headquarters of the 1st Div., the only American Division left in Germany. They leave Germany tomorrow at that. The 1st Division has seen all the fighting and is a wonderfully well trained unit. They gave us several demonstrations. One, by artillery, of a creeping barrage and a concentration of heavy guns; an automatic rifle show; a platoon attack, aided by smoke screens; and finally a battalion advance aided by all the arms. We ate one meal with the 5th F. A. at Ehrenbreitstein, a German fortress on the heights of the Rhine overlooking Coblenz. While at Neuwied we saw the 1st Div. show called "A. W. O. L." It was very good, a musical comedy. The officers of the 1st Div. gave us a smoker and cabaret. There I had an interesting talk with two 1st Div. officers, which was interrupted by the outbreak of a fire in a nearby block. We turned out and saw the German fire department in their brilliant uniforms and brass helmets fight the fire with hoses the size of garden hose. They would never have put it out if the American soldiers hadn't helped them. From Neuwied we had the rare privilege of a boat ride down the Rhine to Cologne. Think of traveling down the Rhine on a boat flying the American flag! We missed seeing some of the most famous castles, which are above Neuwied, but we did see a great many old ruins including Drachenfels. We went about 80 kilos altogether. About 3 P. M. we arrived at Cologne and had until 9 o'clock free. During the afternoon I saw the wonderful cathedral and the zoological gardens. Also we found many interesting things in the shops. The city is occupied by the British, so the streets were full of British uniforms and only one or two Americans in all, except our group. So we were rather curiosities to the German people. I had an interesting conversation with a British officer at their Officers' Club. What little German I knew came in very handy during my stay in Germany, especially in ordering meals and buying things. This morning our party went by truck to the battlefield of Waterloo. There Gen. Williams of the British Army and a colonel of his staff explained the tactics of the battle. It was a striking contrast with the way in which modern battles are fought. We have all tomorrow off here in Brussels and I expect to find plenty to do. We are about the only American soldiers in Brussels and the people give us an enthusiastic welcome wherever we go here. I guess they haven't forgotten what America has done for them.

This afternoon we have heard semi-officially that our trip is to be extended. After Belgium we go to Paris, where the train is re-stocked, then we go to Italy to see the battlefields there. There is also an order that no Regular Army Officers over here will be allowed to return to the U. S. What that means no one knows yet, or whether it applies to our class. No doubt you have read the newspaper stories about sending an American division to Turkey. Anyway we'll soon know more about matters and then I'll write you at once and let you know. We are not even sure of going to Italy yet. If we do go we won't be back to Brest until the 7th of Sept. at least.