

## A Group of Interesting Letters From Our Soldier Boys.

Mr. S. B. Mays Writes His Sister, Miss Madge Mays.

At the Front,  
September 29, 1918

My Dear Sister:

I find it a hard job to write to any of you as I am not sure what kind of letters you like to receive. All of the letters I have seen copied in American newspapers are the kind in which the fellows tell what a great picnic they are on and all that "pie dope." Although I am sure of not wanting any of my letters published I believe that is the kind of letter all of you want to get from over here. I find it hard to express just what I want to say when writing about my life over here and after reading one of my own letters over I find it all too doleful and I'm sure that I'm not any worse off than the writer of any other letter.

I do not believe there is a single American soldier in France who does not want with all his heart to stay over here until Germany is thoroughly whipped but still every one of those soldiers is looking forward to the time to come when he can go back to those States which they have all learned to love so well. In that respect the feeling is unanimous. So if some of my letters seem a little home-sick do not think that I have gotten my fill before my time.

I could go to some length and tell you some horrible things that I have seen with my own eyes. I have seen men who were so badly shot up that their own friends could not recognize them, men whose faces were lacerated with bayonet cuts and any number of such incidents but I do not believe that you care to hear of such things. I, myself, have been spared from such things but I have had shells fall so close to me that the high explosives used would throw stones, clods of dirt, sticks and all manner of debris around me. On one occasion I had a rather large piece to hit me squarely upon the head, but is happened to be my lucky day and was only a clod of dirt instead of a rock or piece of the shell and I only got a headache and a rather large lump on my head instead of a wound stripe. One gets so used to it all that the bursting of shell begins to seem and sound natural and as strange as it may sound, it is real interesting. Of course business always picks up when the shells begin to fall into your very midst but as long as they are a couple of hundred yards away it is great sport to watch them hit. I have about gotten so that they do not give me the shaky feeling that they did at first and I would not feel natural if I could not hear a few going over to let the Dutch know that Uncle Sam is still on the job and not asleep at the switch.

Who could help being proud that he is one of this greatest-of-all-times army? I wish that I could tell you what a great thing it is. I am lately of the opinion that to view it in its greatest light one must look at it from behind the lines instead of from the front line trenches and I have had the opportunity to see a little of it from both places. I am not wanting to take any of the justly due credit from the Dough boys for they have met the great Prussian Guards and demonstrated to the world that they are better and braver fighters. But I am wandering and will go back to the other theme.

When I go out tomorrow I will see United States railroads built by American soldiers with American material with an American engine and box cars, see all kinds of automobiles from America from twelve cylinder closed cars to worn out Fords and every kind of truck that you can imagine. Today we had steak that was raised in the West, killed in Chicago and shipped from New York along with everything else that we ate. Then there are any number of other such things that I could mention. I sometimes wonder if there is any material in the world that does not come from the U. S. A. About the only thing that you haven't is a war raging in your front yard and you do not want that. It sometimes seems funny to me that the firing line does not extend all around the world as it seems unreasonable to think of a place where there is peace. It seems that all this is a part of the world's arrangement and will go on forever.

As for my personal experiences, I have been into places that were occupied by the German army for four years and have seen old men, women and children that had been prisoners of war since the start. They are now being led back to their homes and dear ones by the hand of your UNCLE SAM. I have slept in the open in what was one of France's beautiful valleys, later held by the Germans, still later known as No Man's Land but now being protected by the greatest of all armies. I have fed my stock on forage that was raised

by the French civilian population and stored up for the use of the German army. For meal at least I have eaten some cabbage that was raised by the Boche (this, however, is the only horse feed or cabbage that I have had which did not come from the States), besides a number of other such experiences but I am ready to stop my little pilgrimages into captured territory as soon as the war is over and come back to the U. S. A.

I hope that my letter has not been boring although I'll have to admit that it is rather wabbly and shaky as well as rather scatter-brained and disconnected. You see I have "kinder" followed my own musing tonight. It is easy to lie awake at night and with probably nothing over you except a rain-coat, watch the stars and the shells play together while you are planning a letter you will write home on the morrow. Oh, you can then think of a great many thrilling and interesting things to say and make a fine letter out of the amusing little things that will mix so well with the little newsy items that are also passing through vacant space at the same time, but on the next day after you have ridden through the rain for several hours and dodged a few shells that seem hell-bent, you find that by the time you get to camp and start your letter you have forgotten most of it and can't express the other.

October 1, 1918.

My letter was rather suddenly stopped the other night at eleven-thirty by an order that sent me out with the company in short order. I laid the letter down as I knew I could not get a chance to finish it on the trip and will now pick it up again.

We left about one o'clock at night and got back about midnight last night without stopping for more than an hour's time. Incidentally I visited the worst shot to pieces town that I have had the opportunity of seeing. It was so badly torn down that there were not more than two or three walls standing in the place.

I was in rather a good piece of luck the other day and got a good hot bath, something that is rather a novelty. It was my first since a swim in a rather well know river that is a little too famous to mention the name of, about six weeks or more ago. There is very little doubt that I will be in dire need of another one long before I can get it.

I think, or rather am sure that Arthur Tompkins is near where I am now but I haven't been able to run across him as yet. I would like to see him but to look for any one is out of the question. It is just luck when you get to see a friend.

We were quartered in a little place the other day when the Germans got its range and threw about thirty shells into it in short order. In some miraculous way none of our men were killed although I do not see how all of them escaped. A few men in some other outfits that were also there, got killed. That is the most awful kind of death. To be quite a few miles behind the lines and apparently safe, not looking for anything to happen and too far away to fight back when Fritz opens up on you with one of his long range guns.

We haven't as yet been able to see any of the papers about the election. I am in hopes that it won't be long now before we can get some papers telling all the dope.

I hope to be able to go to some of the places in France that one would like to visit before the winter is over although it seems a long time off.

I do not seem to be in a very good writing mood and am rather sleepy-headed so will close for this time. I write my letters to all three of you and will send my love to all of you together. Write to me often, as I have all of you constantly in my mind and am looking forward to the time when I can see all of you again.

Your brother,

Sam.

Mrs. Sam Agner Receives Letter From Her Son in France

October 21, 1918

My Dear Mother:

How are you all feeling today? I hope you are well. I am feeling fine today. It has been raining today over here but it is fair now. I suppose you all are having some pretty weather in which to pick cotton.

The letter you wrote on the 4th of September I received and was so glad to hear from you all. I'm so glad you all are getting a good price for cotton. Well, how is Grandpa getting along? Also Brother Ed and his family. Tell them all "Howdy" for me. I hope it won't be long before I can see you all again.

Well, Mother, I am still going somewhere through France. If I keep on going I will get to see it all.

Mother, had you ever thought

about where I was on the 21st of October last year?

I will close for this time. You must write and tell me all the news. With many good wishes and lots of love.

Your loving son,

John E. Agner.

Co. L. 321 Inf. A. P. O. no. 791.

Frank Reese Writes His Father Mr. J. W. Reese.

At the Front,  
October 20, 1918

Dear Papa:

I will now try and answer your letter I received some time ago. I hope this letter will find you and all well and getting along fine. I have been sick but am getting along O. K.

You asked me to write you a good interesting letter so I will do my best. After leaving our camp in South Carolina we got to the port of embarkation and went on board ship. Then my greatest experience of life began. We were on board 17 days and when we had been out about 8 days I became sea-sick and of course I had to help feed the fish. I got to work in the ship's bake shop as you know that you can't keep a cook out of the kitchen and a cook that has good sense won't go hungry. Well, I didn't anyway.

We arrived in port, an English port at that, about four o'clock in the afternoon of the 17th day of our voyage. We went to rest camp and spent the night, leaving there the next day. We went by rail to another English rest camp. Now, Papa, when I say by rail, I mean that we travelled over a sure enough railroad, but entirely a different kind to the ones you find in America. When you get into the coach you are locked in and there is no aisle. You have to stay in the compartment you are in. There is just room for eight men to sit up in a compartment and there are about five compartments to a car. We travelled all day crowded that way to the other rest camp. There we unloaded and stayed about five or six days more.

England is a very pretty country but I will take America for mine. I saw one of the oldest cathedrals in the country there. Its foundation was laid in the 11th century and it was completed in the 14th. Some of the finest roads and most beautiful scenery in the world will be found there. While I was there I was out walking one day and met a mighty nice old gentleman. I was taken into his home and had tea with him. His name is Mr. Henry Tanner. It was there that I got my dog. It is a registered English Retriever. He was just a pup but is now a big dog and my best friend. I named him Sammie because that is what we are called. Major Marchant named him but I think every boy in my company wanted to name him "English Kid."

I had better leave England or I won't get into the war at all in France. We left England and went aboard ship for France. We crossed the channel and landed in France the next morning. We went to another rest camp and stayed over night, leaving there by rail to a training camp. The trains in France are just the same as the trains in England. We travelled three days on this trip and then we went into some barracks said to have been built in the time of Napoleon, the Conqueror. We trained there for actual war for two months then we were shipped out to the front.

This is where I can't tell you everything I have seen but I will do my best. Before leaving for the front we were put in fighting form. We did not have any great amount of luggage. We had to go into dog tents and live in the woods. We could not have lights at night so we just had to wait and see what our duties were.

We could hear the guns from the front very plainly now. This is where I was under shell fire the first time. Of course I did not have to go but I wanted to see all of the excitement and I did see and hear the greatest thing in my life—a real battle. There were more guns fired in this battle I believe than there were in the whole Civil war. It seemed as if the world were on fire. The knees of the men will get shaky under that kind of shell fire but it doesn't bother you long for that is all in the game over here. After the battle we visited what was at one time No Man's Land.

From that day on I have been at the front. I have been under shell fire five times. At one time shell were bursting all around me but we served dinner right on as if we were at Camp Sevier and not a gun within 100 miles of us.

Say, Papa, it just takes grit and the American spirit to fight in this war and plenty of it. So you see these Untrained American Farmers (as Fritz calls us) are just giving the boches hell and a plenty of it. The boys of '61 and '65 don't know anything about war.

Well, you can see how the allies are fighting when you know how they are talking peace. They are betting 50 to 1 that we will be in the States by the 4th of July. I hope so anyway.

## SPORTING GOODS

The season is now upon us when sporting goods appeal to our people. At this time of the year, after the harvest is practically over, men who are sportively inclined give some time to recreation, and very properly so. We want them to know that we can supply every wish. If we haven't got what you want we will get it on short notice.

In guns we have a large assortment of Parker 1w-16 and 20 gauge, L. C. Smith and Ithica guns. Come in to see them.

We also have a large stock of Leggins, Hunting Coats and Gun Cases. We have a complete stock of Bicycles, Bicycle Tires, Automobile Tires and Tubes, Hand Horns and Electric Horns, Weed chains and Red-O-Skid chains.

Make your wishes known to us. We can supply them with dependable goods at reasonable prices.

## Stewart & Kernaghan

I am now living in a German dugout that Fritz occupied for four years but we have them now.

Oh, yes. I have a fox for a pet now. I will have a menagerie when I get home, I guess.

Well, Papa, I will have to quit for this time. Hoping to be home before long. Give my best regards to all my old friends, Nick and Pete. Tell Mr. Townsend to look for me back soon. Get Joe and George to write to me. Kiss Mama, Sister and May for me. Tell Dr. Cothran that I can sure nurse the sick, lame and lazy when I get back.

Say, tell me what cotton is bringing. Write soon and send me the Edgefield papers every week. Give Uncle Jack my love and best regards.

Look for a German helmet for I am going to send one home with this letter. As ever,

Your son,

Cook Frank B. Reese,

Co. G. 105 Ammunition Train.  
American Expeditionary Force.

Letter From Tee Bailey to the Editor of The Advertiser.

Camp Hill, Va., November 16.

Dear Mr. Mims:

I will take great pleasure in writing you just a few lines to let you know I haven't forgotten you. This leaves me feeling fine. I am having a good time here but could enjoy it better in old Edgefield.

I certainly hope we boys can soon

be at home as the war is over. I am anxious to get home. We thought last Monday that we would go across. We stayed on the ship all day ready to go but at last got orders to get off. I think there were some proud hearts among those boys, too. I did not mind going across to fight but I don't want to go now if I can get out of it honorably.

Well, we are under quarantine yet, as we have been for a long time but I guess it is for our good. Earl Hammond received one of your papers this week. We certainly were glad to get it and it made us feel so good. I am sorry to know that one of my true friends has left the world

(Continued on page Six.)

## Fertilizers for Grain

Farmers can practically double their yield of grain by a liberal application of the right kind of fertilizers.

We are now prepared to fill orders for all kinds of fertilizers. Let us know your wants and we can supply them.

Haul your fertilizers while the roads are good.

## W W. Adams & Company