

# LETTERS FROM SOLDIERS

## Written to the Home Folks From This Side and the Other Side of the Water

### From Donald Naef.

This letter was received by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Naef, Whiting, from their son, Donald, who has just arrived overseas. Another son, Ned Naef, is now on his way over.

Dear Mother, Dad and All:

Arrived all O. K. and feel fine. At present we are stationed in a rest camp and will probably be here a few days before going to our permanent training camp further in.

The trip was uneventful and most of the fellows got a little enjoyment out of it. The band would play twice a day and every night they showed movies. We were on a dandy ship and a speedy one. We hiked up from the dock and whenever we rested the French women along the way sold us fruits and nuts. You can bet they tasted good, too.

All the boys here smoke. I saw one about 8 years old puffing away at a cigarette, just like an old timer at the game. Every kid we met asked for a cigarette.

From what we have seen of France it is a pretty place and everyone is out after the Kaiser's scamp.

Some of the kids come into camp and we have lots of fun trying to talk to them. One of them saw a little mouse on the fellow in my tent and he said "Cholly Chaplin," so I guess the whole world knows him.

All the French can say "Hello" anyway, for everyone we passed said "Hello" and threw us kisses.

I wish you could see our camp. The field is full of small tents (two men in each) and it looks fine only I hope it stays that way before we move on because the tents have no fronts on them.

Some of the fellows have had their heads shaved, and when the first couple tries to eat me off goes my wool, but I promise to stay away until it grows out again.

Our colonel just gave us a nice talk and anybody who is half a man will do the right thing now, if he never did before, because he talked to us in a good straightforward way.

I haven't met anyone from Whiting here yet, but the other day some of our fellows went over to the big U. S. barracks and someone asked them about me, but they forgot his name. He told them he was from Whiting, but I can't even guess his name. I would surely like to meet Lieut. Etkon and some of the other club fellows.

We have lots of fun trying to talk to the people here, and when I come home I'll teach you all how to talk French. You know we used to hear so much about the French girls, but I fail to see that they have anything on the U. S. make. They are going to send some fellows from this battery to school. I hope I am one of the lucky ones. I haven't seen Fat and Daeg for a week. I saw Shugie last night while he was on duty in town as an "M. P."

I may be in France but not anywhere near the fighting, so don't worry a bit, for I am healthy, happy, and going strong. I couldn't ask for anything more.

Love to mother and all.

DONALD NAEF.  
Private Donald L. Naef.  
Batt. B, 10th Arty., C. A. C.,  
American E. F., France.  
O. & T. C. No. 4, A. P. O. 723.

### From Dan Prochaska.

The following is a letter from Daniel J. Prochaska, a well known Whiting boy who is doing his bit overseas:

France, Aug. 6.

"We are tenting tonight" near an old camp ground once occupied by Napoleon, and quite a long way from the Hoosier state.

How are you all back in the U. S.?

**THIS AGED WOMAN**

Was Made Strong by a Simple Remedy.

The following letter from Mrs. Wells adds another link to the great chain of evidence which proves that there is nothing equal to Vinol to create strength for feeble, weak, rundown nervous conditions.

Malone, N. Y.—"I am 54 years of age and get into a fragile, weak and nervous condition so I could not sleep. Vinol has not only built up my strength, but it has given me a good appetite and I sleep all right now."—Mrs. S. B. Wells.

We strongly recommend it. Norris Pharmacy, Joseph W. Weik, Hammond; Schueker's Pharmacy, and druggists everywhere—Adv.

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S. A. Any more of the fellows leaving for the army?

Everything here is fine and dandy. I am comfortably and well located in our new quarters, some one hundred and fifty miles from the camp. I wrote my first letter from (Detroit).

I had one of the best trips of my life, driving a motorcycle from our first camp to the present one. There were three of us who drove machines. The roads here are like one long boulevard. We didn't strike a rough stretch all the way—going over the long winding roads, through the little towns, over small streams and wooded spots. I surely saw a great deal of the beauty of France.

I had an opportunity to visit one of these old French homes with its wicker furniture while on this trip. I had a puncture just about dark and near a small town. We were getting our pup tents ready to pitch for the night when one man in the crowd began to talk and gesture to us. The crowd gathering around us began to talk and motion, too. We at first thought they were trying to keep us from sleeping there, but I finally got his "drift." He was offering us a place to sleep and some eats. We naturally accepted his offer. His home was right at the spot where we had the puncture so we covered the machine and went in.

The smell of the eastern floor was rather unpleasant at first, but we soon did not mind it. It was a little on the rolling type, but was packed like a rock. The room contained a rough table with two benches along side, a couple of stools near the big fire place, a great large clock decorated wonderfully, a big cabinet bed, and several chairs and a table. A cupboard board with wine and dishes on the shelves and two large pieces of meat hung from the rafters. Our light was furnished by one weak candle.

With the aid of pictures and a raft of deaf and dumb signs and motions, I finally learned that our French host was a hunter, just back from the front on a furlough. We regretted keenly our inability to speak his language. When I hit the hay which it really was, for our bed was a big hay loft, I just burrowed down and never heard a sound until the next morning in time for breakfast. I then fixed the tire and we went on to camp.

All along the road the French men and boys tipped their hats to us as we passed them. This is their sign of respect for an American soldier.

The one sad sight is the mourning the people are wearing, and but for that one would never think so great a sorrow rested on these poor French people.

France is working hard for victory and I am proud to know that the Stars and Stripes are flying by her side. I am surely a happy Hoosier to have been one of the lucky ones sent over here to help her and I never had a suit of clothes in all my life that I loved and valued half as much as the suit Uncle Sam gave me for nothing.

I have just received two letters so far in France and I have read each one of these over about fifty times. I am very anxious for some news and hope all my friends will remember me. I shall look forward to your letters so don't disappoint me. Give my regards to all Whiting friends and best wishes to you.

Sincerely,  
DANIEL J. PROCHASKA,  
Med. Det., 51st Eng., A. E. F., via New York.

It is pretty good. I did not want to take it with me. You can give it to George, maybe he would accept it.

Sending all my love to Mary, George, and children, and dear old mother for God and my sake please don't worry for I am safe. I must close.

FRANK J. ALLEN.

**IMPRESSIONS OF MY VISIT TO CAMP SHERMAN**

Through the kindness of the Times I will try to give its readers a few of my impressions while visiting my brother in camp. Sherman, knowing the white that relatives and friends of the boys in that camp would be interested to read of what they are doing, how they are treated and what are the actual conditions under which they soldier.

Arriving at Columbus, 31 miles from camp you cannot but know that the boys are somewhere around for there is every accommodation that the soldier would want provided for him, from coffee and rolls at the Red Cross stations, free information bureaus, the Khaki Club at 5th and High streets, where reading, lounging, baths, billiards, etc. are free; community houses and so forth.

I took the short line to Chillicothe and got there at 2:30 a. m.

The impressions gotten in this town would take a little more space than I would be allowed to use so I will say that it is strictly a military town.

There were about 20,000 instructors, in autos, some without the streets. Hundreds of taxis and busses are doing a splendid business taking passengers to camps, which is about four miles away, for only 25c a person.

The drivers will let you off at the right place as the whole camp is sectional and lettered so you don't have difficulty to find your part. If you know the regiment, company and section numbers.

The camp itself is large, in fact, it would take a good walker 8 hours to go around it.

The main streets are black with automobiles, each one containing friends and relatives of the boys. The camp itself is full of life. One company drills here, next company has the gas mask drill, the other has bayonet drill and so on, everyone doing their share, officers and privates alike, regardless of sun and heat, with but one idea to get there, and to know all.

Noon time you can see the family picnic, where some uniformed hero presides. One particular farmer who was about 85 years old, so to judge, brought four chickens and fruit and bread, to share it with his boys and friends; under trees, in canteen porches everywhere you see a mother loving her boy, or some wife or sweetheart putting her arms around her hero and holding him like she would never let go.

There are plenty of canteens where everything in line of drinks, candies and fruits, also jewelry and clothing can be had. The prices which the boys pay for same are as we pay here.

Movies, and sometimes vaudeville are some of the pastimes of the boys.

There is also an immense building which is the Community House where uniformed men enjoy club privileges and there is dancing and music for him, also a pretty partner provided in case he has none. Every church is represented by a building of its own.

The Y. M. C. A. have several places and they sure help the boys a lot.

In camp there is perfect order, for the M. P. are there to see to it.

Everyone is courteous and obliging and they go out of their way to direct you or get your party. Each company has a special man on visiting days to help you find your boy or friend.

To say that cleanliness reigns supreme is only right, and it would make the cleanest house wife envious to see the quarters, mess halls, tables and kitchens; they scrub them three times a day, from one end to another, and not a scrap of paper is to be found in camp or street or for that matter, in the whole camp.

The food is plain and wholesome, the kind that makes your blood red and the muscles hard, and the boys eat it with more gusto than your fancy restaurant meals.

A word about what the boys are doing there; they are learning the art of being soldiers. I mean Yankee soldiers. They are taught everything they ought to know from the school of the soldier, bayonet drill, rifle shooting, gas mask drill (in a real gas house) to throwing hand grenades.

They learn all that makes the real Yankee soldier the inspiring spirit of his allied brothers.

The morale and spirit of the boys in camp (not just when they are off duty) but after 12 to 14 hours of hiking or rifle range practice, or gas house practice, and with at least 75 pounds of weight on them all the while. I say their spirits and determination is just splendid and the way for us to realize that no matter how much is asked of us for their sake we go there and watch what they are doing for us, who enjoy life and have everything we desire and money can buy.

If we would give a thousand times more than we do we could not repay their sacrifices.

I spoke to at least fifty different officers and boys and gather that their only wish is to pass the pre-overseas examination so as to go over and not be left behind.

The man who has that misfortune considers himself the most unlucky being there.

They say: "If we are soldiers, we want to know all and go over where we can repay the Hun the just debt only with the largest interest he ever got."

In conclusion, I will say: If Kaiser Bill with his band of butchers and pirates, could only have seen these boys on a Sunday, the day of rest, headed by their officers, dressed in jumpers and overall, black with dust, soaked in perspiration, after ten hours of hiking, target shooting and gas mask drill, marching down the street, heads up,

determination on their faces, battle light in their eyes, singing, all glad to have gotten one step nearer their goal of meeting face to face the usurper of humanity and their rights, I say, if they could only see them, they would realize that it may be fun to bull some nations, but when they start something with Uncle Sam, they have started something which the above named will finish for them in a complete victory for the right of nations, humanitarianism and world democracy.

Respectfully,  
JAMES H. BROWN.

### From F. J. Allen.

Somewhere in France, June 28, 1918.

Dear Father, Brothers and Sisters:

I am writing to all of you at once, for paper is scarce out here and also have to go easy on the ink.

At least we are stationed at a fine camping ground with a river running right by our camp and here and there the boys went almost wild when we hit this place, after having been in a rest camp with no water, except for drinking and cooking.

We left our rest camp and rode for 24 hours on a freight train, that is, the privates all rode in freight cars, 40 in a car. It was some crowd, but we were well paid for hitting a fine place like this.

After we got off the train we had a four or five mile walk ahead of us with about a fifty pound pack.

This place is just like a park; nice shade trees and a river about 200 feet wide. I swam across it the first day and have been in again this morning. It was very deep.

Believe me, we had a lot of clothes to wash and it took me two days to do it, as we had no washing water for some weeks, before we hit this place. I hope we stay here till we hit the fighting line, as I know, we could not find a better place.

You must excuse the poor writing, as I am writing this on my knee and have only a few sheets of writing paper under this.

I did not like the first town we hit but this place is very nice and wish that some of you could see it.

I saw quite a few German prisoners, they look like they are well taken care of.

Some of our boys are fishing now and some are in a boat, taking it easy.

I don't think that I will ever learn to talk French. You see our boys are always together and the people are not mixing with us, although they are our friends and all that.

All our cooking is done out doors and our dining room is a nice shady field; we have fine drinking water from a spring.

I also saw some Algerian soldiers here. I saw women brakemen on the trains, and almost all the work is done by women, there are very few men doing any kind of farm work.

We are allowed to drink wine, of course; there is a limit to all this, but we have plenty of privileges and I wish the fellows would not overdo them.

You folks excuse me if you do not get a letter very often, for it takes quite a while before a fellow can get paper sometimes, but I wish all of you would write as often as you can, even more so, as the mail does not come as often now. Why not change off, one of you write, then the other one and so on?

I wish I had a bathing suit now, but I manage to get a swim every day somehow.

Some of the fellows are having their hair clipped and their heads shaved.

Well, I guess I will have to quit writing as I have no more paper and don't know when I'll get some more. You see there is no such a thing as a Y. M. C. A. around here.

With best wishes, and hoping you are all in the same as I am.

Your loving son and brother,  
BILL.  
From Wm. Klemm, Bat. C, 70th C. A. C. A. E. F., in France, to his father, F. J. Klemm, 226 Indiana Blvd., Whiting.

### From F. J. Allen.

**From J. S. Brusel.**

France, August 6, 1918.

Dear Folks:

After a safe arrival in England and visiting a few rest camps we found ourselves across the channel. We had a half-day train ride across England to an interesting little town in southern England. Country was very beautiful and very ancient. People were very interesting and sure patriotic.

Our first night in France was our first sight of action. At another British rest camp for the night one German plane either ventured too far or else lost his route, but he furnished much excitement. During this time we lived on British rations, the famous "3"—tea, cheese and mutton. After a 48 hours' trip in a French side-door Pullman (box car) we are settled in southwestern France in one of the world's most famous wine valleys. We are billeted about one of the most ancient and interesting towns—ruins dated in B. C. churches and rooms dug out of solid rocks. Farming is still done in the old Roman style, wooden shoes galore; women do their washing in three or four pools about the town.

We are having a week of rest. The staff will be put in different schools for a month and then rejoin the regiment. Things sure look bright and here's to the best. Have had a sickness at all. With my best to all. Your son,  
JAKE.  
Address: J. S. Brusel, 226 Indiana Blvd., Whiting.

### From F. J. Allen.

My first impression of war-torn France made me realize what great sacrifices these most wonderful people are offering to the cause of freedom—for all peoples. I could see the honest gladness in their faces when they saw we boys march through their narrow streets—right past their very doors—of their stricken homes, in which they had their loved ones have lived. These people, Mother, are wonderfully kind and true. No doubt you and many of our home people of the States think that this is no more than is due the United States boys. So it is, but when one realizes that troops of red, white and blue are passing through the different districts of France by the— it then presses on your mind that "How are you" and "Hello" would wear off of these people's faces, much like a novelty—but that is not so, indeed.

Beautiful France is very picturesque—much more than I had expected—the fields are green completely, while dotted with white, are plants of wheat, yellow and ripe and ready to be cut—to be thrashed into flour for the troops fighting for the cause, and for the famished women and children who are at present doing manual labor in the factories and on the farms of France.

As we passed through the streets—little French children—boys and girls, both—would call us saying—"tobacco for fadder"—we could see the honest appeal in their faces—and give them cigarettes—with the result of pathetic smiles on their faces and a gentle "Thank you sir!" These children walk around in wooden shoes, even the little tots of a few years have them—and the older folks also wear them—cumbersome looking things, very much like the shoe of Holland—probably the custom followed and picked up from the Dutch.

Our first problem of inconvenience is the language, second, the money—but we will gradually become acquainted with these trifling inconveniences, large though they are.

French peasantry peddle their wares at the entrance of our camp grounds—these wares consist of plums, figs, nuts, a pressed compound of figs, nuts and brandy—supposedly called candy, canned goods, salmon, onions, prunes and a variety of many other things. These things are readily bought up by we boys, who enjoy talking to these people very much.

Dear ones, it is already dark—I have written the last page or two in the dark. It seems so funny that your son should be so far away from you all, who are so dear to me, when only a few months ago I was enjoying home life so close to you, now thousands of miles away in a foreign land ready to do my bit—whatever it may be.

It seems I could write on forever—concerning the thoughts which have passed through my mind—of the things I will not be able to reveal to you—only when I come back to you. I will write a long letter tomorrow—if time permits. Good night to you, Mother, dear and all my rest, good night, American people, whom I know are or will soon be making sacrifices, good night to the chivalrous people of France.

Your most loving son,  
DONALD F. DAEGLING,  
Donald F. Daegling, Battery A, 70th Artillery, C. A. C. A. E. F.

### From F. J. Allen.

**From C. W. Gorge.**

Somewhere in France, July 5, 1918.

Dear Father and Mother and All:

I haven't received any letter from you folks since the last time I wrote, but I have some good news to tell you and I can't keep it. John and I finally met. Last night I was writing to Nevada and Aunt Eve and one of the boys told me that a couple of our boys saw John. I hunted them up and found out it was so. It was lucky that they did run into him. Someone yelled for them to get under cover and they went into the woods and some fellow asked them what outfit they were from. When they told him he said he had a brother in that battery and told them for me to come over. I got permission from our commander to go over today, and over I went. He was as tickled to see me as I was him. He hasn't changed a bit as I could see and I had about a two-hour talk with him. I took some tobacco over with me and he had as much as I did. He hasn't been hurt yet and is still in Co. K. I expect to see him again pretty soon. He is going to try to transfer into my regiment and from all appearances he will make it. I hope he does as we can be near each other all the time then. I call that a miracle, don't you? They say the third charm in a charm and I believe it is. I tried twice before to see him and failed and this time I got by.

Well, folks, I sent 57 francs home by the Y. M. C. A. man on the 3rd. That equals \$10 in our money and use it for whatever you see fit. I will send some more home whenever I get a chance. How is everything at home? I am O. K. now and never felt better in my life. John went through England. He was in — and quite a few other places. I wasn't so lucky. So you see, dad, there is one of your boys that saw England. Maybe I will before I come home.

Well, I must close for this time. Love to all and a big kiss and a hug for all of you.

From your boy,  
WALT.

You'd like to take a punch at the kaiser you say? Then buy a Thrift Stamp.

### From Donald F. Daegling.

The following is a letter received by Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Daegling, of Whiting, from their son, Donald, who has just arrived overseas.

France, in Rest Camp.

Dearest Folks:

Have arrived here all O. K., as the "Safe Arrival" cards have probably already announced to you.

Our trip across the seas was uneventful and uneventful as we all had not expected. The last three or four days of our trip we encountered storms—not so severe though. Several sailors aboard said that it was real calm in comparison to what they really are at times. If so, leave me off the ships and let me plant my feet on God's earth. What a feeling it was to step off the ship on to the ground, would be hardy at all times to abandon the ship in case of accident or attacks.

My first impression of war-torn France made me realize what great sacrifices these most wonderful people are offering to the cause of freedom—for all peoples. I could see the honest gladness in their faces when they saw we boys march through their narrow streets—right past their very doors—of their stricken homes, in which they had their loved ones have lived. These people, Mother, are wonderfully kind and true. No doubt you and many of our home people of the States think that this is no more than is due the United States boys. So it is, but when one realizes that troops of red, white and blue are passing through the different districts of France by the— it then presses on your mind that "How are you" and "Hello" would wear off of these people's faces, much like a novelty—but that is not so, indeed.

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Our trip across the seas was uneventful and uneventful as we all had not expected. The last three or four days of our trip we encountered storms—not so severe though. Several sailors aboard said that it was real calm in comparison to what they really are at times. If so, leave me off the ships and let me plant my feet on God's earth. What a feeling it was to step off the ship on to the ground, would be hardy at all times to abandon the ship in case of accident or attacks.

My first impression of war-torn France made me realize what great sacrifices these most wonderful people are offering to the cause of freedom—for all peoples. I could see the honest gladness in their faces when they saw we boys march through their narrow streets—right past their very doors—of their stricken homes, in which they had their loved ones have lived. These people, Mother, are wonderfully kind and true. No doubt you and many of our home people of the States think that this is no more than is due the United States boys. So it is, but when one realizes that troops of red, white and blue are passing through the different districts of France by the— it then presses on your mind that "How are you" and "Hello" would wear off of these people's faces, much like a novelty—but that is not so, indeed.

Beautiful France is very picturesque—much more than I had expected—the fields are green completely, while dotted with white, are plants of wheat, yellow and ripe and ready to be cut—to be thrashed into flour for the troops fighting for the cause, and for the famished women and children who are at present doing manual labor in the factories and on the farms of France.

As we passed through the streets—little French children—boys and girls, both—would call us saying—"tobacco for fadder"—we could see the honest appeal in their faces—and give them cigarettes—with the result of pathetic smiles on their faces and a gentle "Thank you sir!" These children walk around in wooden shoes, even the little tots of a few years have them—and the older folks also wear them—cumbersome looking things, very much like the shoe of Holland—probably the custom followed and picked up from the Dutch.

Our first problem of inconvenience is the language, second, the money—but we will gradually become acquainted with these trifling inconveniences, large though they are.

French peasantry peddle their wares at the entrance of our camp grounds—these wares consist of plums, figs, nuts, a pressed compound of figs, nuts and brandy—supposedly called candy, canned goods, salmon, onions, prunes and a variety of many other things. These things are readily bought up by we boys, who enjoy talking to these people very much.

Dear ones, it is already dark—I have written the last page or two in the dark. It seems so funny that your son should be so far away from you all, who are so dear to me, when only a few months ago I was enjoying home life so close to you, now thousands of miles away in a foreign land ready to do my bit—whatever it may be.

It seems I could write on forever—concerning the thoughts which have passed through my mind—of the things I will not be able to reveal to you—only when I come back to you. I will write a long letter tomorrow—if time permits. Good night to you, Mother, dear and all my rest, good night, American people, whom I know are or will soon be making sacrifices, good night to the chivalrous people of France.

Your most loving son,  
DONALD F. DAEGLING,  
Donald F. Daegling, Battery A, 70th Artillery, C. A. C. A. E. F.

### From Donald F. Daegling.

The following is a letter received by Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Daegling, of Whiting, from their son, Donald, who has just arrived overseas.

France, in Rest Camp.

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