

THE MARBLE HILL PRESS.

Terms—\$1.50 a Year

Historical Society

THIRTY-EIGHTH YEAR.

Circulation, 1,200

Vol. 38.

Marble Hill, Missouri, Thursday, December 12, 1918.

No. 33

Extracts From Some of Paul B. Witmers Letters To His Parents

CAMP DE SOUGE, FRANCE.
August 12, 1918.

The war news sure looks good just now, and I hope they keep it up, and they will, the Americans have the necessary pep to do it.

I was talking to a wounded boy a few days ago, and he said the Americans started all of the latest fighting, that the Germans had the English afraid of them, but the Americans gave them their own medicine.

The Marines found some of their officers being with a warning of what would happen to them if captured. Later in the day they captured four hundred Germans, and shot all but one, sent him back to tell what he saw, that is the only way they will respect you.

They tie women to machine guns, and I saw one little Belgian boy who had had his toes cut off.

August 24, 1918.

Nothing new in camp, only from reports things look pretty good.

I am down for billeting, have to help find quarters for my company. Is going to be a hard trial on my French, but that is a good way to learn.

Yes Dad, the girls are good looking over here, but I will take one from the good old U. S. A. for mine, and that is not going to be so very long, if they will only turn us all loose for we are at least one hundred years ahead of England and France.

Our auto trucks carry as much as their freight cars, and furthermore, the Germans are afraid of the Americans, and the French have taken heart, and you can see in the papers what will happen.

We have quite a lot of sand here, but not the dust like we had at Funston.

It is hot in the day time, and cool at night. We like France, and the French people, they cannot do enough for us, but I do not want to miss the ship when she goes back, and think that will be before Christmas, some say from the front will be sooner.

About as near as I can tell you about my work is I take an instrument and go out in the desert, and stand in the hot sun for about four hours, and look happy.

August 28, 1918.

We are still in camp, working hard, my work is much more interesting than the post office work, always something new to learn.

We are getting good eats now, almost as good as Funston, only we eat outside, and the flies are worse, seems like the people are for pets.

Only screens I have seen, are in the kitchen, they do not know the word sanitation means, they watch every move we make, and learn quickly.

And this country will be more like America than France when we are here. Every where we go we change things to our way of living.

I have been talking to some of the wounded boys from the front, they say the war can not last very long. The Hun is on the run, we are going to keep him that way.

By the time you get this letter, we will be something going on here, for the Americans are winning the war the right way.

We are having a band concert, we have some good bands, and a show at the Y. M. C. A. last night, but was two crowded to

September 11, 1918.
I have been here two months, sometimes it seems like a few days, other times only a few days.

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Marble Hill, Missouri

We get papers regularly here, and the Stars and Stripes once a week.

The news looks encouraging, and America is the main cause, and we have given France the fighting spirit, and she can see victory ahead where she could not before.

Then we do things on a larger scale than they do here, or ever dreamed of doing. And we are just beginning.

Dad don't be sure you would like to be over here [working, for it is not like you read about. At night you lay your over coat on some boards, your shirt for a pillow, two blankets to keep you warm, in a climate about like Manitou, Colo., at night, Marble Hill in day time. A few pine trees, and every time you lay down the whistle blows, and it is get up at 5 a. m. feed some plugs, etc., any thing to keep you busy.

But when we get to the front and

into the real thing, our work will be interesting. I am a scout sergeant, work mostly at making maps, I like it fine, feel more like I am doing something, if they will just start us into some real work, and I expect we will be by the time you get this.

We will be home by spring if not sooner, for the Americans have so many soldiers over here, we can lick the Germans with clubs, if they will only turn us loose.

I am expecting something big to happen before long, may be we will be in it.

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE.

September 21, 1918.

We have been in action quite a few days now, I haven't had my clothes off since I left camp, get to wash my face about once a week, and sleep when ever I can, think I have had about 2 hours sleep in the last few days.

At present I am in a town just re-

cently vacated by the Germans, and from the looks of things they intended to stay here, have regular houses, gardens, electric lights and water works.

You can hear the big shells coming by the whistle, and come about 20 minute intervals, you want to fall flat on your stomach in a ditch or hole, and then beat it for a dugout.

But think we have them on the run, don't see how they got so many or how they advanced over the ground they did.

We are looking for a visit from Fritz or some of his shells, this afternoon, but we sure give him about ten to his one.

Don't worry, I will get along O. K.

September 28, 1918.

Well I am somewhere in a dugout writing that was recently occupied by a German. I have it all fixed up pretty nice, with looking glass, silver candle holder, mattress

pillow and stove, and if I could get a bath now and then, would be fixed fine.

From reports and what the boys say we have the Huns on the run, and we will be in Germany before long.

Our commanding officer is Major General Wright.

I saw a fellow jump out of a balloon 3 times in 24 hours, made me think of Glen Phelps. The Germans will mark their planes like the planes of the allies, and you cannot tell if they are friend or foe, the other day I was out at the observation post, where I stay and watch the fighting, and a German plane fired some machine gun bullets at me but missed, so I keep my eyes open since then.

I am well and feeling fine, I have received only one paper, The Press, no others.

SAMUR, FRANCE.

October 6, 1918.

Well, there have been lots of changes for me since I wrote last, but I have been so busy, have not had time to write.

When I left the front, I was 3 days and nights on the road, and the French railroads are rotten, worse than anything we have in the states.

I arrived here Wednesday noon, two days late, and started right in to work, you go from 5 a. m. until 10 p. m., with no rest.

I never imagined one could do so much work in such short time, the work is hard but interesting, we have a real bed to sleep in, and eat out of plates and do not have to make beds or wash dishes, so it is a good deal over than being at the front, where I did not have my clothes off while there, only to change underwear.

About the nearest I come to being hit, was twenty yards, but that was close enough, when the German plane fired on me, I did not wait to see how near he came.

About one-third of our ammunition is no good, and it is made by allied prisoners, they opened one shell that did not go off, and it was filled with sawdust, and had a note in it from an English Tommie that said, "I am doing my bit, you do yours."

Have lots to tell, that I cannot write.

(CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK)

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Notice of Grant of Letters

(Estate of B. S. Snider, deceased)
Notice is hereby given that letters of administration on the estate of B. S. Snider, deceased, were granted to the undersigned W. K. Chandler on the 14th day of November 1918 by the Probate Court of Bollinger county, Missouri.

All persons having claims against the estate of said deceased are required to exhibit them to the administrator and present them to the Probate Court of said county for allowance within six months after the date of the granting of said letters or they may be precluded from any benefit of such estate; and if such claims be not exhibited and presented as aforesaid within one year from the date of granting of said letters they shall be forever barred.

W. K. Chandler, Administrator.
P. O. Address Marble Hill, Mo.
W. C. Cole Judge of said Probate Court.

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