COLLECTION: Gordon (Lewis Coleman) Papers

ACCESSION NUMBER: 35m

DONOR: Mrs. Alfred F. (Mary Bell) Taylor

DATE OF GIFT: January 1972

SIZE: 38 pieces

INCLUSIVE DATES: April 23, 1918-Dec. 26, 1918

BIOGRAPHICAL AND SUBJECT SUMMARY:

Captain Gordon was born in Salem, Virginia in 1887 and was graduated from Washington and Lee University in 1908. Gordon became a career officer in the United States Army and served as Captain with the 4th U.S. Engineers, American Expeditionary Force, during WWI. He was stationed in France & Germany during 1918, and the collection consists of his descriptions of the daily life of a soldier.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION AND ARRANGEMENT:

The collection is composed entirely of correspondence and is arranged chronologically.

RESTRICTIONS: none

LOCATION: vault-3rd floor- minor collections file cabinet

COLLECTION REGISTER AVAILABLE: Calendar
April 23, 1918

Lewis C. Gordon, Camp Merritt, N.J. to Mrs. E. C. Gordon, St. Louis.

Describes Camp Merritt, the embarkation camp, and the trip there; envelope.

A.L.S.

May 23, 1918

Lewis C. Gordon, France to Mrs. E. C. Gordon.

Describes travel to France; discusses life in French peasant homes and devotion of French to Catholicism; tells of difficulties in receiving mail and money.

A.L.S.

July 3, 1918

Lewis C. Gordon to Fern [Mrs. Lewis C. Gordon.]

Remembers when they were both in Lexington; declares his love for her and hopes for marriage; states his feeling that he will come out of the war alive; mentions that the regiment is short of horses; explains deletion of regimental designations due to censorship regulations.

A.L.S.

July 8-9, 1918

Lewis C. Gordon to Mrs. E. C. Gordon.

Tells of letters he has received; mentions Lt. McLelland and Lt. Massie (both VMI, 1916) and 26 VMI men with Marines at front; describes billet; describes moves army makes and places passed through; mentions Major Tucker (regimental chief medical officer, graduate of Johns Hopkins) and Lt. Belden (also Johns Hopkins grad), also mentions Capt. Lohmeyer (VMI, 1916).

T.L.c.

July 26, 1918

Lewis C. Gordon to Rev. E. C. Gordon.

Tells of camp in deserted village; mentions Capt. Lohmeyer (VMI, 1916) as being wounded and gassed; describes his humiliation and regret that he hasn't seen any real action;
August 20, 1918

Lewis C. Gordon, France to Mrs. E. C. Gordon.

Describes camp and trip there by train; Gordon bossed whole job as presiding officer; tells of him injuring himself and refusing to go to hospital; meditates on chances for a captaincy for himself; tells of shock of seeing normal human life (i.e. civilians, women and children) again; emphasizes his readiness to go to the line again whenever he is called.

A.L.S.

September 16, 1918


Asks family to refrain from publishing any letters that he writes to them; tells of his individual accountability for anything getting into print; mentions fact others yet away with it but he could be punished severely; describes forbidden enclosures in private correspondence.

A.L.S.

September 29, 1918

Lewis C. Gordon to Rev. E.C. Gordon.

Tells of big battle that took place on his birthday (September 26th); mentions his promotion to captain and charge of his company; describes hardships of war; indicates American superiority and effectiveness in pushing Germans back.

A.L.S.

October 24, 1918


Describes new camp site; tells of his meeting with his brother, Capt. Frank N. Gordon; describes deprivations of French due to German occupancy; describes his duties as head of billeting party; gives
December 11, 1918

Lewis C. Gordon, Bell, Province of Rhine, Kingdom of Prussia, Germany to Rev. E. C. Gordon.

Tells of advancement of army toward Rhine; mentions his desire to see more of Europe; describes his room and surroundings in Bell; describes the army's status as occupying troops under the terms of the armistice; mentions fact that the rules are strict and being enforced; mentions Major General Howze, Commanding General of the 3rd Division; pages missing.

A.L.

December 26, 1918

Lewis C. Gordon, Düngenheim, Germany, Rhennish Province, Kingdom of Prussia to Mrs. E. C. Gordon.

Describes strangeness of being an officer of a victorious army in the land of the enemy on Christmas Day; describes war as an enriching experience for him; feels his presence in German house during Christmas must be annoying and obnoxious; describes home and people where he is billeted and what Christmas was like in that situation; describes army of occupation's conduct as being dignified, sober and courteous; mentions his brother's division is near; states Prussianism is not dead yet and is difficult to eradicate; sees ample material for another German army; predicts Germany will begin move for expansion again.

A.L.S.