April 6, 1917
War was declared.

June 7
I was registered for conscription.

March 10, 1918
Got tired of waiting and wrote to my local board at Covington, Virginia and asked them to advance my name to the top of the list.

March 18,
Transferred to Richmond, Va., where I was examined and put in class I.

May 22
Received my call to report at Covington, Va., tomorrow. It was then 6:00 P. M. The last train left at 9:30. Only three and half hours to get checked out, pack and to say a few goodbyes. Looks like no more waiting around.

May 23
Reported this morning and was sent to Charlottesville for a course in truck driving and mechanics. My short stay here is a busy one—consisting of an hour instruction in the University of Virginia. The rest of the morning worked in the shop. Military drill in the afternoons.

July 19
Learned that this hurry up gang of graduates are to start on the way tomorrow.

July 20
Took train for Camp Mills, New York. During the ten days here, we were being outfitted and equipped for overseas service. I was assigned to Company I, 323 Infantry of the 81st (Wildcat) Division.
We rolled our packs and marched in a hard rain to the train. This is a busy day. Train dropped us in Long Island City where we were put aboard the steamer Hempstead which brought us to pier 61. New York City: The only thing about New York that I really saw today was the Brooklyn Bridge as our boat passed under it. Well, the sky scrapers were in sight, maybe we’ll have more time when and if we come back.

We were loaded aboard the Melita, which we were told had been a German ship taken over by the British. As we got clear, we found ourselves to be on one of a group or convoy of twenty three ships. A submarine chaser and a destroyer acted as our escorts.

The bill of fare is rather different for a Virginia boy. The outstanding items consisting of rabbit, codfish and potatoes boiled with their coats left on. Sleeping is another thing. My bed is a hammock slung in the messhall. Must be a good sailor. Up by Newfoundland and have not been sea sick. Sailors tell us that we passed within five miles of where the Titanic sunk. No icebergs in sight.

A big day in a country boy’s life. We passed thru a school of whales. Sharks followed the ships. We enjoyed watching the porpoise and seeing flying fish jump out of the water.

In sight of "over there". We disembarked at Liverpool, England just about noon after having been held up by such a heavy fog that the convoy had had to stop. We marched to a rest camp named Knotty Ash. This place is about four and one half miles from the wharf when we got off the boat.
Aug. 13  A half mile hike to a station Vim. Here boarded my first English train. Cars were divided into compartments that would hold eight men. Maybe they know better than we but trains and traffic are all to the left instead of right.

This is a beautiful country with nice macadam roads and some large well kept estates or country homes. We detrained at Romney and marched one mile to a rest camp named Woody where we are spending the night.

Aug. 14  Up and hiked eight miles to South Hampton this morning.

Had dinner at Camp Cunm, three miles out of the city.

Loaded on board the La Margeretta, an old French side wheeler. Across the channel tonight. What a sight this will be!

Aug. 15  On awakening, found our boat tied up at the wharf at La Havre, France. Had fallen asleep on the English side and crossed in full sight of the channel and never saw it.

Unloaded and hiked about 5 miles to a British rest camp in the suburbs of this city. Very hot today and to make it worse water is off. I lay down in the door of the tent to be first to get water. During the night, an airship alarm was sounded and about a dozen hobnails were all over me before I could get up. I thought that I was a casualty already and just my first night in France. Out in the trenches about an hour, then back to tent with "all clear" signal.

Aug. 16  No dilly dallying around when you do get started in this war.

Got filled up with water and moving from here tomorrow.

Aug. 17  Loaded up on our first French troop train. The cars were labeled 8 chevaux on 40 hommes. Some of the boys say this means eight horses or forty men. The
The cars were new and clean--didn't look like horses had been in them. We went parallel to the Seine River and passed through the city of Rouen. I saw a statue of Joan of Arc and remembered that mother's people had come from Normandy.
Right on thru Paris and going on South East.

Aug. 18.
Arrived at Tamary (near Tonnerre) after a day and a night on the train. Had dinner today in a field and took a bath in a stream. Hiked seven miles to Rugney where we are now billeted in a loft over a house.

Aug. 9 to Sept. 13
Sixteen of us had quarters in this loft for this time. We have had extensive bayonet exercises or drills. I have put all my energy into this for I don't think that I would like cold steel slipping thru my ribs. Plenty of training on rifle range and we were drilled in extended order. Grapes are ripe in the vineyards.

Sept. 14
First call for trenches after six months training for the job. We don't know where we are going but we are on our way. Nine miles today on foot and we are now in the town of ______.

Sept. 15
Continued our hike until we reached a railroad town today. I don't know where I am now except out here in a stubble field without tents and it has started to rain cats and dogs.
Rolled our packs in mud and rain and got on troop train soaking wet. Bad luck here, the horses have been on this train first and that not long before. We scraped out the fresh manure as best we could. (1942 note.) Our blankets smelled that way when we turned them in months later.) These cars do hold forty men--twenty men on each side with their backs to the walls and their feet meeting in the middle of the car.
How will we sleep tonight?

Sept. 17 At Bruyeres this afternoon. After being on the troop train since early yesterday morning. Never off. Bread and corned beef were thrown in the cars in sacks while the cars were moving. We passed thru Chambon and Epinal. A Boche plane flew over as were were detraining here and machine gunned the cars. One boy was killed and several injured. Went from Bruyeres to Venazelle.

Sept. 18 and 19 This place is in the Vosges mountains near Alsace, Lorraine. We are quartered in a stable lighted with electricity.

Sept. 20 Hiked 6 miles to Bompans. Another arial raid but nobody hurt this time. Caught up on sleep and eating and got cleaned up a little.

Sept. 22 Started hiking at 5:00 P. M. Full pack and three days' rations. We were given canteens full of red wine. Arrived at Eteval about break of day. Twenty five miles this time. No smoking for at times we would have been in view of the enemy. We were so worn out that we just fell down and went to sleep without rolling our packs.

Sept. 23 In late afternoon we left Eteval for Mayenmoutier. This just a short distance where we stayed in a dye factory until after dark. French had an agreement with Germany not to shell this town.

Sept. 24 At 3:00 A. M. into third line trenches, where we received the 324 Infantry which had relieved the Buffalo Division. I caught guard duty first thing. The heaviest rainfall that I ever saw and I could not leave post. The French held first
and second line trenches so our only danger was from shell fire and gas.

Sept. 25 and 26

A squad of us were sent back to head quarters for coffee as it had not yet come up. We stayed at the kitchen until about 10 P. M. Everybody was sleepy so we went into an old shed, stretched out on some lousy straw and went to sleep. I could hear the shells exploding but could not get awake. Finally, a shell knocked the plaster down in my face and I did awaken. The boys were all gone. I ran to the kitchen, all gone from there. I ran up the road and from the flash of shells saw a dugout across the road. I went into it like a scared rabbit and how good I felt when I hit the bottom of the dugout. This was my first experience under high explosive shell fire and I do not like it.

Sept. 27

Today we took over a section of the front line trenches from the French. We left our packs in a pile near the dugout and found out later that the French had cut off most of our Red Cross bags as they went out. This means that our shaving implements are gone. Where I took over from a Frenchman, he gave me range of seventy five yards to German trench and put my hand on a pile of Mills hand grenades. He appeared to be very glad to see me. Maybe he had had enough of this war.

Sept. 28

There was nothing comfortable about our quarters here. The trenches are from five to eight feet in depth. An offset permits one to stand and to look over the top. From the battle line trenches another trench leads back by a zig zag route to an underground chamber sometimes twenty-five to thirty feet underground.
The beds are made of matted or crossed telephone wire, black fine poles were fastened in top and bottom and side poles between held the wire. The Boches had built these dugouts some four years before so everything in them is shivery and water drops from the top and oozes as mud from the bottom. No lights nor heat is provided nor permitted. Goodnight.

Sept. 30

This is what is termed a quiet section. Very little going on. No attempt has been made by either side to break through the others' lines. It is more a job of watching and waiting in readiness to stop such an attempt. Lieutenant Ayers is in charge of our platoon and this dugout. Inventors genius found a way to provide a meager light, one of the boys got hold of some grease and with a bottle and a string soaking in the grease provides a meager light.

Oct. 1

Rain by day--clear and frosty by night. With blankets under us on the wire matted beds and blankets over us, we are covered with frost when morning comes. By twos and threes we stand guard or outpost. When one sleeps, the other or the other two stand guard. Siuffer shots follow the movement of a helmet occupied or not. An occasional flash lights up the land between the trenches. I drew a buddy last night who was so nervous all the time that I could not sleep my turn for I was afraid of what he might do. Every few minutes, he would jab me with his foot to attract my attention to some imaginary foe or object. He was not cowardly, he was no fraid cat, but just seemed built that way.

Oct. 2

What is bravery? When one of the boys was struck by a suffer's bullet and his gun pitched across the parapet of the trench into the open, a buddy goes over the top and brings it back. I give it up.
My turn on outpost beyond our wire entanglements where trenches lead directly into Boche trenches. For some reasons, the Germans started to throwing over schrapnel shells at this time. When the third shell exploded, I told my buddy, "They are just about a getting the right range for us." Hardly out of my mouth, when the fourth shell exploded over our heads and a large piece of the shell struck me on my extended hand. It broke the skin just below the wrist, and made a solid blood blister down my little finger. An enemy patrol came over during the night but we sent them running back.

Our meals were two a day. First one about 9 O'clock in the morning and the second about 4 P.M. The food is brought up in big garbage cans hung on a pole and carried by two men. Slum is mighty tasty when it has been seventeen hours since we ate. The hot coffee and its delicious odor makes me think of home, mother and her favored Maxwell House. Shaving is such a problem that we often use some of our warm coffee instead of cold water. For safety's sake, we must shave daily for a gas mask must fit snugly to the skin to keep out the gas. It is hard to believe that a man can sleep soundly with shells bursting and continual rat-tat of machine gun fire going on but we can do it when the chance comes to get a few winks. I drag myself back to the farthest point in the dug out, feeling my way along the slimy poles and drop down dead to the world until some one drags me out for another turn.

Tonight, a flare caught Frank Shipe and myself standing in full view with our bodies above the parapet of the trench. We "Fuegos" as we had been taught and our exposure passed without incident. Did I feel foolish standing there rigid waiting for what might come from one careless moment.
Oct. 8 We were relieved this morning at 3 A.M. Time says only fifteen days in the trenches. Hall can surely be no worse and General Sherman nothing of this kind of war. Continuous exposure to high explosive and shrapnel fire; the rat-tat of machine guns; gas and ever watchful snipers. Dug wet, slimy, muddy and lousy. No lights. Wading in mud and water all the time and not lying in it. We have slept some on matted telephone wires which filled rats ran over us. We were relieved by Co. I. 322 Infantry. (They got a gassing before we were in the clear.) We have slept and spent the rest of the day resting in the old dye factory at Megen Montier.

Oct. 9 Marched fifteen kilos last night and arrived here at St. Die. Thought that I would get a real shave. The French barber strapped his two inch wide razor blade on his foot. His chair was straight. He gave me a pan of water to wash off blood and lather, when he got thru. It only cost three cents, but I saw the man and am thru with French tonsorial artists. Never again. A boche plane flew over dropping propaganda sheets and when we ran out to pick them up, they promptly machine gunned us. Overshot us. More good luck.

Oct. 10 Hiked thirteen kilos back to Le Pair. How wonderful it feels to get your shoes off and to feel the clean water and soak on your feet. No bathing yet. Over two weeks without shirt or pants off.

Oct. 10 Quartered in a feed or cutting room of an occupied house. Oxen on one side and kitchen on the other, I found out about the oxen the first night. Had to get during night, standing in door that I thought opened on outside relieving nature when 'Baw-Baw' came from the surprised oxen who did not like it in his face. I was as astonished as the bull was disgusted. During this week we dug sample trenches and practiced taking them. Getting ready for more of it.
Oct. 18 Moved to Roege Eaux, a distance of fifteen kilos.

Oct. 19 Our squad was the last to get under and through a much needed bath, so when we got thru with this luxury and got out, found that our company had departed. Troops were marching in all directions but we finally got straightened out and caught up with our company. Then hiked forty kilos thru mistake in orders. No supplies.*

What a mess!

Oct. 20 Some officers wanted to go on but our captain would not take us on until we were fed. Some of us went to a nearby town to hunt something to eat. We found a cafe but they had no bread. Got some bread and then had a meal of fried potatoes, eggs and beer. Cost me three francs for all I could eat.

Oct. 21 Left Fereur Fontaine and hiked five kilos to St. Helene. Here we were drilled and maneuvered in order to get us in shape for an new offensive thrust. A real rest.

Oct. 31 Went 30 kilos to La Chatel where my outfit helped to load the division's transports and equipment on board railroad cars. Worked all day and all night.

Nov. 1 After loading the last car of supplies and material we got in a car to which the horses had again beaten us to it. We were told that we were heading for Italy, but my map points to Verdun. No sleep again tonight.

Nov. 2 Arrived at Sampigrey at 5:00 this morning. After unloading we had a little warmed over bully beef and started hiking again. No water at Sampigrey. Passed thru St. Mihiel crossing the Meuse river on a pontoon bridge. All regular steel bridges had been blown up. Kitchen failed to come up so here we are with nothing to eat, no
water, and no real sleep for the third night. On top of this we
have hiked thirty kilos with full trench equipment. The St. Mihiel
drive had been made over this terrain so the roads and towns were torn
up. Spent a little part of the night in a small town where all the
houses had been torn up. Still no water—forbidden on account of
poison—no food but four of us ate a can of salmon. My buddy and
myself slipped out in the dark, found an old cistern. It was full
of rotten wood and stunk, but I believe this was the best water I
ever drank.

Nov. 3  Kitchen still lost but got a little breakfast from another outfit's
field kitchen and started on our way. While passing thru Sommediene
saw a large coast defense gun mounted on trucks that was then throwing
shells on Metz. After 15 miles found our kitchen. We were so
famished and hungry that guards with bayonets even necessary to
keep us in line while being served. Still no water, and had to
march back three miles to a spring which we had already passed. Six
miles hiking for a canteen and belly full of water. The barracks
here had been built by the Germans.

Nov. 4  Hiked on to within 6 miles of Verdum. We are stationed in St.
Nicolas barracks. We form the third line of the north east defense
of Verdum. We are what is called an automatic squad and were
stationed to cover dead space in case of an attack.
The machine guns were to take care of the rest. Very muddy but we
now have boots. A good fire and good bunks. We are all wondering
why we are being treated so nice.

Nov. 8  Sent out to cut and clear our wire entanglements.

Nov. 9  Bugle blew at 3:00 A. M. Were told to put on clean underwear and
roll light packs. A heavy barrage was being laid down all along the line. We, the 323 Infantry have been held here in reserve all day. We are on an elevation where we can watch the progress of the Argonne Meuse drive. We are out of range of rifle and machine gun fire and our only danger is high explosive and shrapnel fire.

The artillery had cut up the wire entanglements very well. Men are working their way thru openings and clearing up machine gun nests. Several outfits were caught by artillery barrages. We could see "L" company plainly as it was caught in one. It looked like a fourth of them disappeared and soon a steady stream of wounded were moving to the rear. This suspense and inactivity is worse than in action, for our time must come soon.

Nov. 10

We got word about 10 P.M. last night that a platoon had been cut off and we were ordered to their relief. They cut their way thru just as we got there. Slept from 12:00 to 4:00 when we were suddenly awakened. The earth was trembling and we could see long streaks of steady fire overhead. We had been in a woods right under the muzzles of a falling of French 75's. We crawled from under our blankets and had to go but a short distance to our field kitchen which had come up during the night. Every time a gun would fire, I would lose some coffee out of my canteen cup. When I got to a stump there were very little drops of coffee in it. A small feed and on our way. Advanced to where the 322 Inf. had stopped last night. Dead and wounded all the way. One soldier had his shot off, he begged for water. No stopping was permitted. We did however stop at one place a few minutes before deploying. Had hardly left it before Fritz located it with a barrage. Cleaned out machine gun nests and suffered all day. No water all day. As the darkness came ran into a
strong point where the machine gun fire was too strong for us. Our artillery could not locate our first line to give us a barrage but the Germans did catch us in a swamp and shells fell thick and fast. Lucky for us they were using overhead shrapnel and not high explosive shells. The swamp was more good luck, shells just throw up mud and some would not explode at all. Captain saw that we were not going to be covered by a barrage from our artillery so took us back to some dugouts that we had captured. Three of us were picked for scout duty and were to get in touch with the unit on our left since we had lost contact during the advance. When the Sergeant noted that I had an automatic rifle, he told me to stay. Holly, who took my place was killed and Corporal Powers was captured. I stood guard at captain's dugout with my automatic rifle. Alone with only my thoughts. How long can a man listen to the sounds of a battle field and not go crazy? Germans kept up a ceaseless machine gun and artillery fire for they were expecting an attack.

We had left dead and wounded in the swamp when we fell back. Some had been gassed, others were shell shocked. I heard one calling "Mother." Above it all the most unearthly and weird noise of it is that of wounded mules. Kept pinching myself to be sure I am awake. This must be a nightmare, it couldn't be true!

Nov. 11. Ordered out of dugouts at once. Other companies already gone. We are to strike the strong point from the side. Our artillery had located our front and were laying it down. On the road from Verdun to Metz. Had not been used for four years. Into a town which had been captured the day before. There Germans had certainly fortified it well. Reinforced machine gun nests in the streets. Stone walls from stone house on one side of street to stone house on other side. Easier to tear down houses than the walls. We stretched out on this road, rested and slept a few winds before going over top again.
Some of our company were killed as we slept. Spoke to a boy from Manassac, Va., and two minutes later he and nine others were killed by the same shell.

At 10:30 Major Willis came by and said "Boys, keep your heads down, it will all be over in half an hour." The Major had a smile on his face—the first in many days. We thought that he had probably lost his mind, we hardly gave his command a second thought. About fifteen minutes later a motorcycle rider came by, picking his way around the shell holes and obstacles. He said that an armistice had been signed and we would go into effect at eleven o’clock. We didn’t pay much attention to him. Artillery fire was just like drum fire now. The Germans were also throwing over everything that they had. At 11:00 sharp all firing ceased. We were bewildered and could not realize that it was all over. I did not see a smile on a single face. Orders were given to unload our guns. Men began coming out of holes in the ground. Everything quiet as a country church yard. Every now and then someone would say, "There must be something to it."

Our ears had become so accustomed to the bursting of shells and the constant din of firing that the quiet was bewildering. Some German soldiers came over to talk with us. A German came out of a hole somewhere behind our lines. He had a telephone on his back and had been giving their artillery our location. It was hard to restrain ourselves. About 3:00 P. M. our field kitchen came up and we had a mess kit of baked beans and a canteen cup of water. I felt better and walked up the line a little ways. The dead had been covered with blankets, but I pulled down the cover off of several to see if there were any that I knew. Orie’s head was mashed flat. Another had been
directly hit with a high explosive shell, his foot was about seventy five feet away, clear out of sock and shoe. His intestines scattered over the line of shot to his foot. Where the rest of him went, I could not see. Another had just the skin of his face left. The rest of the head gone. Another cut thru with a dud. We took our German prisoners around to take caps of the mines. Carried in the dead and wounded and pitched our tent on the battlefield as the sun was going down. Three of us in this tent.

Nov. 12

The sun was well up before either of us turned over. Our breakfast was "Bully Beef" and hard tacks. We went then sent over the field in a thin line to locate the dead and wounded. Jumped a jack rabbit and chased him half an hour before hoping for a rabbit stew. He got away and we got a bawling out from Major Willis, for we had been running thru broken wire entanglements and over mines and hand grenades. Two days ago we were hardened mechanical group, lousy, hungry, sleepy—not thinking that life was worth living. Nothing mattered except a horror of lying wounded on a battlefield. We gave no thought to the future. We just did what we were told to do—no more—no less—we had long since ceased to think about the reason why for anything and it was just a toss up with me whether I got bumped off or lived through Hell. To go on or stop where I was would have made no difference.

About 3:00 P.M. we hiked away from the battlefield which I hope to never see again. Two kilos to Bonzee. This town was in the first line of trenches from which some of our boys had gone over the top. We are quartered in a stone house that had been used for a machine gun nest. The garden around had been used
for a hunting place, and we found one decapitated American forty under some rubbish who must have been dead two weeks. No dog tag, just another "missing in action." The smell from the decomposing bodies is so nauseating that I am not sleepy. But I had a real sleep last night.

Nov. 13-14
Hunting for dead and any possible wounded. First five we made in fireplace from wire entanglement posts caused a casualty as some shells in the ashes started exploding. One opened up like a chestnut burr and struck a soldier in the leg.

Nov. 15
Hiked ten miles to Sonmedieue. Here we just got new clothing and threw our old torn tattered rags away. A Frenchman came along with a cart load of cheese. I bought all that I could eat and got pretty well filled up once more.

Nov. 18
Hiked twenty five kilos to Regancourt. Got good quarters in an open barn loft. Had to carry our wood about two miles. Started playing football and other games. Threw away what iron rations we had and when the Captain found it out, he threatened us with court martial. We thought the war was over and we would never need them again.

Nov. 22
Hiked 27 miles to Condi En Barroi. Started without water and couldn't get any on the way. We make some fuss about being thirsty now. Tonight in an old stone house that has been used for a barracks. A canteen here where we got jam, cigars and even handkerchiefs.

Nov. 23
Hiked thirty eight kilos to Sandrufit. Here we were in regular French barracks. Another luxury back into our lives for we are able to get plenty of beer here.
Nov. 25

Started hiking in the direction of Bar Le Dux. Turned south and struck the St. Dizier highway. East for a while then South again to Branvilliers, twenty-one kilos. They say we are the first Americans troops here. Some real young French soldiers are here. We are in a large stable.

Nov. 26

Hiked twenty-eight kilos to Osene. Part of this was a fine highway. Our whole regiment is together for the first time since before the Armistice. But they are not all here. Some are under the dirt back there and some are in hospitals. Others no one seems to know when or where they were missing.

Nov. 27

Left Osene by a big path across the mountain. In a heavy rain that stuck up combat wagons and kitchens so we stayed for two hours in mud and rain. We crossed the Marne river again at Jainville and turned west. This is as pretty as country as I have ever seen. It had not been torn up by war. Good roads. Large meadows and fields. We made thirty-four kilos and are quartered here at Don Marten for the night.

Nov. 28

Hiked only 8 kilos to Cerey today. Thanksgiving Day. Two meals as usual yet we thought dinner was especially good. Steak, turnips stewed apples, with cinnamon bark and coffee and bread. We are now in upstairs of a house and barn combined. After dark we were hungry and decided on a feed. Some to get wood, one to get grease from the family kitchen and as I could talk a little French, I went after potatoes. I had never had any experience in cooking so I used too much lard and kept stirring thru my potatoes as I was cooking there at the fireplace. I cannot sleep. I am sick.
Nov. 29
A tough one on me today. Was sick this morning but determined not to fall out. Several times during the eighteen kilos hike to Colomney, I would drop out of line and then run to catch up with the company. I threw away my surplus clothing and equipment. Getting better.

Dec. 1
Hiked 26 kilos to Tircourt. Barracks with no floor so we went to sleep on the ground. Rented some straw from a Frenchman at the rate of ten cents a throw, but to return it in the morning.

Dec. 2
Hiked 28 kilos to Aziuville.

Dec. 3
Hiked 27 kilos to Grancey Sur Ource. Since we left the battlefield we have hiked 292 kilos in 21 days. For the past two or three days, the boys have been leaving their bloody footprints behind them as the soles of some are worn thru and they are walking on the frozen ground. Well, our forefathers did the same with Washington at Valley Forge so we can take it.

Dec. 4
This is a small town of about 2,000 people. They have quartered us out here like there is to be some permanence to our stay. My outfits quarters are the second floor of an old stone house.

Dec. 25
We had the Xmas spirit and got ready for the day. Cut an English walnut for our Yule logs. Carefully decorated our billetered mistletoe and holly. Good fires and plenty of sweets. Many boxes from back home. Mine had fruit cake, Hershey almond bars, Wrigley Spearmint chewing gum. The Red Cross, Y. M. C. A. and K. C. also gave us candy. I really enjoyed my Xmas in a foreign country.

Dec. 27
I chased down and caught a red squirrel with the thought that
he would make a good mascot. When we catch some one asleep in our billet we turn the squirrel loose. After he gets them awake, we put him back in the box. We are trying to find some way to bring him with us when we go home if he does not leave us first.

The let down has come and we are feeling the effects of it. No more sleeping in hammocks with life belts on in fear of submarines. No more airship alarms. No more of those long hikes. No more sleeping on the ground. No more wading in muddy trenches in the Vosges, no out post duty at night, watching for enemy patrols. Forgetting the watchful eye for snipers, no hitting the ground to dodge high explosive and schafuel shells. No more diving into shell holes to escape a rain of machine gun fire. Goodbye to sleeping in lousy wet dugouts and carrying in dead and wounded. A terrible nightmare that we are trying to erase from our minds.

Our days are taken up with several hours drill daily. We grumble but we know that it is best for us. Three thousand miles from home in a little town. We must do something to pass the time. Some wrestle, some box, some play football and some try to forget by going to the wine shops and drinking Benedictine and Cognac. In bad weather it is worse to stay in our billet. Some are playing set back, some play solitaire, some are writing letters while others just sit staring into the fire. We belong to the Wildcat Division. Someone will "meow", another will answer him and then they start crawling cross the bunks to get at each other. This starts a free for all cat fight resulting in bruises and loss of some skin. Just anything to break the monotony. Conversations are never about the past. Always about
the future and when we will go back to God's country. This is
the question on every mind.

Feb. 9

Some of us get passes to Grenoble. This is not far from Swiss
and Italian borders.

Feb. 19

These ten days have been good. We took the train at Châtillon
Sur Seine and rode third class in my first French coach. They
are just like English coaches, eight of us to a compartment and I
slept under the seat. We passed thru Dejon, Lonhous, Bourg, Aix
les Bains and Chambery. We saw Lake Boerget at Aix les Bains.
With Grenoble as our base, we took many trips, going to Uriage Les
Bains, a summer resort visited by many Americans in normal times.
Visited old castles that had been built back in the days when
Knighthood was in Flower. To old forts on the tops of lessen
peaks. Saw Mt. Blouc—plenty of snow, went to Le Murc, most
famous for its kid gloves and saw the women making gloves on
sewing machines.

Feb. 22

Came back from Grenoble in a German coach to Grancey. It was
uneventful except that we passed a town where German war prison-
ers were kept in a stockade. We threw them some canned corn
beef.

Marsh and end of April

Dreary monotony—baseball was added to the sports list to pass
the time. Why don't they get us back home so we can sooner for-
get?

April 17

A red letter day. On our way for a furlough in Gay Paree. Hiked
three kilos this morning to Verpilloris where we took a narrow
gauge train to Solipot. Here we got on a standard gauge to
Troyes. We wished to spend the night but the M. P's. chased us
on so we got in here about 11 o'clock P. M. We were taken from the station in trucks to the Red Cross Barracks. These are on the field of Mars and in the shadow of the Eiffel tower. We had a midnight lunch and were assigned a bunk.

April 18

After breakfast checked in at Hotel St. Anne. From then to Hotel Pavillon where I was assigned the best accommodations that I have seen since leaving the dear old U. S. A. Spent the day strolling the street and took a sightseeing trip thru the city on a boat on the Seine.

April 19

On a sight seeing trip thru the city in a truck. First stop--the place of the Bastille, I remembered reading the Tale of Two Cities. Magnificent monument stands on the site of the famous old prison. The old North Tower is marked off on the street. The old prison was destroyed July 14, 1789. Then to Notre Dame Cathedral which were informed is only surpassed by St. Peter's in Rome. Today was Good Friday so we were not permitted to go through it. The Cathedral is built on a boat shaped island in the Seine River. The Palais de Justice was next. This was the palace of Louis IV. The throne room is now used for the Supreme Court. The dome is hand carved and covered to the thickness of an eighth of an inch with pure gold. Passed the church where the Swiss minister and his wife were killed by a shell thrown seventy five miles by a "Big Bertha" gun. This incident almost got Switzerland into the war. Then on to the Hotel de Invalides where the body of Napoleon lies between his famous marshals Durve and Bertrand. His body had brought back from St. Helena because he had expressed the wish to be buried on the banks of the Seine amongst the people whom he loved. There is a saying that the sun never sets on the tomb
of Napoleon. This is due to the peculiar gloss in the windows thru which the sun appears to be shining even on the darkest days. The Invalides was built as a hospital for wounded soldiers by Louis IV.

We saw the airplane in which a French flier had brought down the most German planes. We also the remains of a Boche Zeppelin. There on to the Pantheon where the pictures of great characters in this war had been painted on the walls. On to the place De Concorde right by Eiffel tower. This was the place where thousands were beheaded during the Reign of Terror. The largest obelisk statue in the world is here. It is a solid piece of sandstone brought over from Luxor, Egypt.

April 20

Joined a party to Versailles. Subway thru the city and then on a tram. On arriving at the palace we passed through the gate where the mob from Paris had come to get Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. Into the right wing by statues and paintings thru the Hall of Mirrors where the peace treaty had been signed. The same table had been used by Bismark when he forced the French to sign away Alsace and Lorraine forty years ago. Thru the bed chambers of King Louis and Emperor Napoleon. Saw the coronation chariot.

The fountains were playing which happens only once a week. It is costly and the French are thrifty. We were reviewed in Châtillon Sur Seine by General Pershing and the King and Queen of Belgium. The Queen talked to a soldier near me and she used English in the conversation. We passed at double quick and with bayonets attached. The General told us that we would be going home in two weeks time. We come back in trucks and had some celebration.
May 16

Left Grancey this morning by truck passing thru Mussy Sur Seine and stopping at Chatillon Sur Seine. At Grancey we had spent five idle months. Now aboard a train of good old American box cars. Thru Tonnerre, Tanay, Auxerre, Clomey, Cosme, Bourges, Vierson, and Tours. Between Vierson and Tours, we saw a number of cliff dwellers. Thru Le Mans and got off at ConnerreBelle. Hiked 16 kilos to Bonnetable. This is a nice town and we saw here the third largest chateau in France. "Doc" Shores, the lad who went over the top to recover a rifle, and myself went to a private home and rented a room. We had a feather bed with a feather blanket. At the cafe we had plenty of eggs, steak, french fried potatoes and beer and appear to be comfortably fixed for our stay here.

May 27

From Bonnetable to Conmerse Belle by truck and thru a night of travel in American box cars. On this trip to St. Nazaire, I picked up some more "cooties". Here we spent a week to be inspected, decootilized and get new outfits. The weather is very changeable here on the Bay of Biscay.

June 2

On board the Walter A. Luckenbeck where we stay tonight on account of low tide.

June 3

Off at 10 A. M. The long looked for day and we are losing sight of the shore. It is a strange feeling for we realize that France will always be a part of us.

June 7

Quite a storm. Waves over the deck. About half of the boys are seasick but my stomach has been good to me. My bunk is below the water line where we sleep in three deckers.
June 14

The days of this trip have been so long. We have gone whole days without seeing another ship. We didn’t know where we were to land but I have just recognized the Hotel Chamberlain at Fort Monroe.

June 15

Debarked last night at Newport News and hiked to Camp Stuart. I slipped by the guards and went to Ocean View.

June 17

Came up the James on the old side wheeler MobJack. Landed at City Point and arrived here at Camp Lee by truck.

June 26

This has been one of the saddest days of my life. I received my honorable discharge. I am glad that it shows nothing beyond the fact that I have been just an average private in a great group of American citizens. Our division was made up mostly from the South but there were numbers from other sections. We faced hardships and death together many times. That is when a man’s true character is brought out. We knew just what we could expect of each other. The time has come to say, "Good-bye" and that probably far the last time.