

You get some hay from the hay-loft where all the Frogs in France have been sleeping since the race was first invented and that is so full of cooties that if you go to sleep with your bed on one side of the room, you will wake up with it on the other. The cows and pigs and chickens sleep in one half of the barn and the soldiers sleep in the other and if the menagerie dont keep you awake all night some rookie will go out and get drunk and do it for them. Well that is the kind of a place I was put into along with about fourteen more. My friend Axt and I had a private room to ourselves where we could catch cooties and have a little cootie circus once in a while. We were only in this town two days when the Major come to the conclusion that the streets had to much cow ---- on them, consequently we had to get out brooms and shovels and play street cleaner all one evening. I was lucky and got a job as foreman of a section gang. We got our supplies while we were staying in that town and the cooks promptly made pie for us and that was the last pie I have seen. In fact I would'nt know wether a pie was a pie or wether it was a pancake if I saw one. The night after the episode of the pie, we got paid, our first pay in France. Pay night passed lovely. The next day we drilled all day and by night we were all pretty well dried out in the region of our thorax. Well Bray and Dick Healy, the topkicker, and myself promptly went down to get acquainted with the proprieter of the beverage dispensary. We got acquainted all O.K. and I learned my first French in the shape of asking for Vin Blanc and Vin Rouge. We finished up a couple bottles of wine and then came to the conclusion that wine was altogether to cheap a drink for gentlemen. Then we started ordering champagne. The champagne was only costing us two bucks a quart so we started hitting them up pretty strong. It was while we were drinking our sixth or seventh bottle that some wise guy came in and wanted to put Dick out of the saloon. He did'nt do it and Dick told him to meet him at the town pump when the saloon closed. The saloon closed at about eight thirty and by that time we had finished up boocoo more bottles of champagne and a cognac or two and were feeling fit and fine, so the three of us go out looking for the bird that wanted to put Dick out of the saloon. We got to the town square and took our hats and coats off and laid them on the steps of the church and challanged the whole two companies that were billeted in the town to come out and fight. There were only about five hundred men in town but they were all cowards, they would'nt come out and fight so we started for our billets. I remember getting about half way there and then the boys told me next morning what had happened. This is the way they told it to me. I went cold in the middle of the street and two of them carried me to the billet. I came to long enough to know that I wanted to go to the latrine and started off. The latrine was a straddle trench about a foot wide and pretty dangerous to be monkeying around in the dark, even when you havent been drinking champagne. I got there alright and heaved my insides up and promptly laid down alongside of that beautifully scented trench and went to sleep. The boys put me to bed near the wall and I woke up next morning out in the middle of the floor. And Oh. Baby, how dry I was. I tried to drink the town water system dry but it did'nt work. That day the bunch was going on a long hike. Well the topper, the company clerk, and the assistant company clerk were all feeling on the blink so we all got busy and had so much work to do that we couldnt go on that hike, but as soon as the company was gone, you ought to have seen us work those beds. Well that put the jody on French wine as far as I was concerned. All I have to do now if I want to heave is to try to take a drink of French wine. We passed the fourth of July in that town and it sure was a safe and sane fourth. We stayed there just a week and during that time we got rid of our barrack bags and all surplus baggage. The morning that we started out of there we had everything that we owned in the world on our backs and believe me it was some load. We hiked the fifteen miles back to the railroad and I lost about fifteen pounds in sweat doing it. I never felt it so hot before in all my life. At the station they gave us three days rations of corned bill and hardtack with a little more submarine turkey, and packed us in box car, just the same as they pack sardines in a can. We thought we were in for another three day ride worse than the one we had going to Percy le Gran, but as luck would have it the orders had been wrong and we reached our destination at about 9 oclock that night. From two in the afternoon until nine at night was all I wanted of riding in box cars.

6. We detrained at Belfort and thought that we were going to be billeted in the city but we got fooled. We hiked through a drizzling rain until about three o'clock in the morning and were in a small town just outside of Belfort called Danjautan. They could not find our billets for us so the biggest part of the company just took off their packs and used them for pillows and went to sleep on the cobbles. We woke up in the morning feeling pretty stiff and got our billets. About noon we had to move to other billets. That town was pretty nice and they sure had good beer there. We had night hikes while we were in that town and saw our first airplane battle. The Dutchies used to come over there every morning and try to shell the town but the anti-aircraft guns kept them up to high. There was one piece of shell fell right near our billet and bored a hole in the ground that was so deep that you couldnt touch bottom. While I was at that place My friend Axt and I got a riley hair cut and if you ever saw two funny looking animals, we were it. We slept together and it looked just like two new moons sticking out of the top of the blankets. We stayed in that town about ten days. When we were ready to leave they threw a can of corned willie and a dozen hard tack at each man and said "Heres your meals for two days". Believe me my heart sank right there. I started on that hike with one awful heavy heart and an awful heavy pack. I was carrying my pack which weighed about fifty pounds, two ammunition carriers loaded to the muzzle with ammunition and they weighed about twenty pounds apiece and then last but not least I was carrying a twenty two pound automatic rifle. We had to walk about nine miles that night and take it from me, by the time we got to where we were going (I dont know the name of the place) I thought that the rifle was a sixteen inch seige gun and that those ammunition carriers were full of sixteen inch shells. When we got to this town where we were to stop we were put into barns and I sure went to sleep in a hurry. I woke up next day at about noon and Axt and I got out one can of corned Bill and a dozen hard tack and made our dinner. We laid around all afternoon and along towards evening we got hungry again so we got out the other can of Bill and the rest of the tack and had another meal which ended up our rations, and we still had twenty four hours to go. That night we hiked twelve miles and landed in another jerk town that I never found the name of. We did the same thing that day as we did the day before only we did not eat. We started out that night with empty bellies and had another twelve miler in front of us. Well by the time we had covered half of it I began to know that I did not eat. I wanted to drop out but had a rep to hold up and I held it. I have never dropped out of a hike no matter how bad off I was since I have been in the Army, and that is something that most fellows cant say. We pulled into St. Ulrich right near the Alsacian boarder that night and we were at the end of the long hike, but I was almost dead when we got there. I got a bunk in that town and hit the hay cussed quick. The next morning they handed us a feed that was fit for a king and believe me I never thought I would eat so much. I backed up three times and could have eaten more but there was no more to eat so I had to quit until noon. St. Ulrich was only a short distance from the front and we had to stay pretty well under cover while we were there to keep from getting bombed. All the way from the coast to St. Ulrich they had been drilling us in the art of getting our gas masks on quick, and when we landed there we got some more of it. By the time we pulled out of there I was able to get mine on, with glasses and all on my face, in five seconds and take it from me thats some speed. We hung around that town about five days and then one afternoon (it was the 27th of July) just exactly one month from the day we landed in France, we were ordered to roll our packs and get ready to move up to the front that night. Believe me there was some kind of hustling then. We got all set and at ten o'clock that night, when everything was nice and dark and it was raining by the bucketful, we started on the last stretch for the trenches.

7. We got up to the front at about one in the morning and a sloppier and muddier road I never hope to travel. The whole country had been plowed with shells and there was mud up to your ankles. Our front line was right at the edge of a big forest and we had to travel through the woods to get to the dugouts. Our platoon was the first to go on the line and we stayed on the line

all the time we were there. There was a French outfit holding the front and we had to relieve them. We had a French guide to take us up and how he found the way is more than I know for I could hardly see the man in front of me. He got us up there alright and we posted our sentries. I happened to be in charge of a squad and didn't have to go on post. Well this Frog that was our guide told the boys that they were on the second line of defense and not to fire at anything. They didn't fire at anything all night, but if we could have found that Frog at about ten o'clock next morning we would have put holes through seventeen different parts of his body. When it got light in the morning we went out to see what the first line of defense looked like and walked right out onto No Mans Land looking for it. If we had kept on going we would have run into the Germans first line for we were guarding ours. We were certainly one sore bunch. Now I will tell you about my first night in a dugout. After we had posted our men, the other corporal and myself went down to see if we could snatch a wink of sleep. We tossed a Frog two cent piece to see which one would get first crack at the bunk and I lost. The other fellow got into bed, and that didn't take him long for you go to bed with your shoes on, using your helmet for a pillow and with your gas mask in the alert position and sleep at attention all night. You don't take a thing off from the time you get in the trenches until you get out. Well after the other fellow had gone to the hay I put out the candle and settled down to wait for my chance to sleep, but I didn't stay settled very long. The first thing I heard was a squeak in the corner. Next I heard something go running across the floor. Then there was about a million squeaks and about an army of things running across that floor and over the roof which was made of corrugated iron, and I sat up and took notice. Then there was a prize fight started in the middle of the floor, a vaudeville show opened up over in the corner with a chorus of about a million voices and up on the roof a game of tag and a footrace started. I sure didn't know what to make of it and kept quiet and listened. Well the entertainment kept up as long as I was quiet and it started to get on my nerves so I got up and went over to the door. As soon as I moved the fight and the show stopped and as I opened the door, which was only a blanket hung across the opening, something bumped into my foot and went scurrying out into the trench and right after it came an army of the biggest rats that I ever saw. Those sons-a-guns were as big as a half grown cat. I went back and sat down again thinking it was all over, but I had no more than got quiet when they all came back and started all over again. I got sore then and pulled out my bayonet and made a crack at where the noise was but didn't hit anything. Then I got up and went over to the door again and sat down alongside of it. As soon as I got quiet the first one came in. I left him go on and waited for the next. As soon as I saw him come through the door I came down with the sharp side of the bayonet across his back and darn near cut him in half. That was the start. I sat there for about an hour and got five of them. Pretty nifty way of getting rats aint it? Then it was time for me to pile in so I woke the other fellow up and hit the chicken wire. After that the rats didn't bother me any more.

8. After we had finished exploring next morning and had had something to eat we all piled in for the big sleeps. I slept for an hour or so and then went out and sat under the trees. I got acquainted with our French interpreter and was having a pretty decent chat with him when he saw a rat, and grabbed my gun. He got the rat and after that for all the time I was up there I had a swell time taking pot shots at rats. I stayed with our fellows about four days and then was put over with a bunch of Frogs. There were about forty of them and I was the only American there. I was supposed to be a runner from their post to ours to carry the alarm in case they were attacked. I didn't have a darn thing to do as the bunch brought me my meals and I was having a beautiful time. I slept twelve out of every twenty four hours and was just living the life of Riley. I had shooting contests with the French and I must say that they are pretty darn good shots. That was the place where I got hurt with the grenade. I was cleaning my rifle and was sitting in a little shed that was used to keep grenades and old shells in. I had the gun on a table and right opposite the muzzle was a box with about forty or fifty offensive grenades in it and they are the worst kind for they are the

heaviest. I had the gun all cleaned and put my ammunition back into it and when I shoved the bolt home the cussed thing went off and the bullet went through this box of grenades. It only hit one of them and that baby went off with a bang and broke into about three or four pieces and every darn one of them hit me in the leg. I went out of there, and I sure was lucky to get out, with my fingers in my ears for I was darn near deaf. I had had my overcoat and pack laying right at the door of the shack and the pack had been blown one way and the overcoat had about six holes in it and had been blown about twenty five feet in the other direction. Then I noticed that my foot was hurting me and took off my shoe and found a swell big black and blue spot on my instep and a small hole in my foot right in back of the big toe, when a splinter had gone in. It happens that the splinter is still in there. I went to the doctor with it but as they could'nt see anything and the toe did'nt bother me they just painted it with iodine and let it go. I hiked out of the trenches that night and we went to a little town called Mertzzen right near St. Ulrich. I had a good billet there and the only thing I had to kick about was the drills, but they did'nt keep up long. We had been in town about three days when the Fritzie found out that we were there and gave us a little surprise party in the evening about seven oclock. They started to bombard the town and then the fun began. The civilians came running out of their houses and pointing up the street and we thought the whole doggone Germany army was coming so we got our helmets and rifles and got ready to have a quiet little scrap. But they didn't come. The French soldiers came piling out of the saloon and the Americans right after them. The Frogs were scared to death and beat it for the tall timber, but the Americans said that they might as well get shot drinking Vin Blanc as doing anything else and went right back. One old Dutchman got down behind a stone post about three foot high and was expecting that to keep six inch shells from getting him. The shelling lasted about three quarters of an hour and by that time it was beginning to get on my nerves. That was the second time I had been under fire. The first was on the front when a couple of Boche planes played revielle for us with aerial bombs. No one got hurt on either occasion. A few nights after that we were moved back up to the front.

9. Again it was raining to beat the deck and darker than a pocket. This time we went into the reserve line but the cussed things proved to be more dangerous than the front. When you are on the front the German artillery is always hitting in back of you trying to find the big guns. When you are in the reserve the shells are falling right around you because the doggone dumb Dutch dont shoot far enough back to get the artillery. That time we only stayed in for five days and then came another bear of a hike. We started about nine at night and were supposed to get to our destination at about one in the morning. Our lieutenant was trying to do us a favor and said he would take us by way of a short cut and get there sooner. He may have started on the right road but he lost his bearings sometime during the night for we never got to those barraks until seven thirty next morning. Then without any breakfast, we hit the hay. I slept until about three in the afternoon and then went out and stowed a darn good meal under my belt and went back to bed again. Next morning we all got up in time for breakfast and as it was Sunday we did'nt have to do a darn thing but sit around and swap stories and talk about what we were going to do when we got home. Some of those boys aint going to get home for they are under the sod somewhere in the Argonne Forest, poor fellows. Next morning we started to drill and I never wanted to see German airplanes more than I did for the next week. As long as an enemy plane was around we did'nt have to drill and we almost prayed for them to come over. About the fifth night we were in there a German plane flew over at about ten in the evening and was trying to find those billets. His missed us and started dropping bombs about a quarter of a mile away. Then the anti aircraft gunners got busy and sent up a few star shells and got a line on him and as he was flying pretty low they certainly gave him H--L. He beat it without doing any damage. I was with the company there for a week and it was on the next Sunday about three oclock in the afternoon, while I was in the middle of a big game of pinochle that I got my orders to roll my pack and proceed to Fontaine to work in the Quartermasters office. I got out about four and went in to regimental headquarters and from there I was

supposed to hike about nine miles to Fontaine. I started to hike alright but when I had walked about half a mile I sat down on the edge of the road and waited for an auto to come along. I was lucky and only had to wait about five minutes when a Red Cross flivver came down the road. I asked the driver for a lift and as he was the same as all the rest of the fellows he was glad to have a passenger. He was going to the same place I was and landed me right in front of the G.M. office in about half an hour. I worked there for five days and believe me I sure would have liked to have been transferred there for good. While I was there I saw my second German plane get walloped. He was scooting around about six thousand feet up trying to get a shot at the observation balloon there when he was hit. He started to volplane down but when he was about five thousand feet up his machine caught fire and he walked out on the end of it and jumped off. When his machine hit it was all smashed to bits. When he hit you could'nt tell wether he was a German or an African. There wasn't a whole bone left in his body and he was unrecognizable. They just rolled him up in a poncho and carted him off in a wheelbarrow. That was all the excitement I had at that place at that time. When I was ready to go back I found out that the company had moved and was in the town of Reitweiler. I got a truck that was going in there and rode in that way. The company was out when I got there so I made myself at home and prepared for a stay. While I was there I got the second bath that I had after I got in France. I would'nt have got it then only there was a canal run through the town and we were allowed to go swimming. I was with the company there for three days and it was on Sunday that we had orders to roll packs and get ready to move to the front again that night. About three in the afternoon the skipper came up the line with a paper in his hand, gave it to Healy and Healy started to swear. Then he came over and told me that I was transferred to General Headquarters. I could'nt believe him at first but when he showed me the order I saw it was all up with me and the Dutch. That night at seven oclock two other fellows and myself started to hike back for Fontaine. We were to meet twenty two more fellows there and proceed on our journey. That night we had to hike all the way and it was about eleven oclock before we got there. We slept there all night and had breakfast in the morning and then went and met the bunch. Then the fun started. We were supposed to catch a train in the morning and missed it. Then we had to sit around the station all day and catch the evening train out. The train took us into Belfort in pretty good time and we were to stay there all night and catch the two oclock train out next day. The M.P.s told us that we were not allowed out of the barracks but they never did us a bigger favor in their lives. There was a swell saloon in the camp and it stayed open as long as you wanted to stay there, and no M.P. to watch you and no officer to bother you. We stayed there until about ten oclock and then went over and went to bed. We got up about nine the next morning and went over to the saloon and had a big breakfast of eggs, bread and butter and coffee, for the price of two francs (\$.40) a piece. After that we sat around and absorbed some more good beer until it was time to get dinner. After dinner we absorbed more beer until it was time to get the train. From Belfort we went right on through to Vesouls and had a stop off there. That was another swell town and I was beginning to enjoy the trip. When we left Vesouls I was lucky and got into the same compartment of the train with the niftiest little French jane that you ever saw. Believe me Pop, SHE WAS NIFTY. She could talk American pretty well and I enjoyed the next three or four hours of that trip better than anything I had struck in France up to that time. After she got off the train I turned over and went to sleep for about an hour until we got to Chaumont, where General Headquarters is situated. We had to stay there all the next day and in the afternoon I got my first sight of General John J. I saw a big auto coming out of the yard with the front of it covered with stars and everybody standing at a salute so I thought that I had better salute to. I did and was never prouder to salute than I was that time for Pershing was in that car, and take it from me he sure is some swell looking fellow. That night we pulled out of there on the American express bound for Tours and get there about two oclock the next afternoon. After we were checked out of the station we got something to eat and jumped on an auto truck and were taken out to Camp Rochembeau where the C.R.O. men were sleeping. We pitched our pup

tents and got a good nights sleep. Next day we turned in our guns and other soldierly equipment and ceased to belong to the army. From that time until the present life has just been one damn thing after another. We have been working night and day ever since we joined this outfit. The work is not hard but monotonous but I think that before long we wont mind it at all for we will be doing it in Camp Merritt, N.J. and I think this thing will come to pass sooner than you can realize. I am getting along fine. Tell Mother that I haven't been married as yet and that I havent seen the WAAC or Frog that I want to.

10. Now Pop this letter is for family information only so dont go and have it published in some newspaper or I might get in Dutch. Hoping that everybody has a very Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year and that I can surprise you by coming in on you when you are least expecting in the very near future, I remain with lots of love to you and all the family.

Your Son and Brother:-

John Loeffler

1st Ind.

1. Forwarded for your approval. Acknowledgement of receipt is requested.

H.J.L.

U. S. S. Hancock
Navy Yard
Norfolk, VA
December 7, 1918

Dear Mother:-

Yours of Dec. 2nd. received the other day and was very glad as usual to hear from you, but I guess you are all wondering what is the matter with me that I have'nt wrote this week or so, but since coming here to the yard all we could get to do was work all day, and by the time night come around you did'nt feel like doing anything else, so I put off writing from one day to the next, and the result is that I have'nt wrote at all till just now. Am well as usual, and hope that this will find you all the same.

Well I dont blame George one bit for traveling around over there all he can, and I would do the same thing if I were in his place, for he is liable to never get the chance again, and the old saying is, make hay while the sun shines, and I guess he is doing it. If John was up in the front line trenches, why I think his experience beats Georges all hollow, and mine too, but I suppose we will all have some stories to tell when we all get home together when ever that will be, and I think they ought to be coming over to this side before long unless they are in some of the detachments that are going to stay over there for some time yet, for they are certainly landing an awfull lot of soldiers down this way, and the transports are coming in here every day loaded down with them.

No I did'nt have the luck to get home for thanksgiving as I surely would have liked to have done, but better luck next time, and by the looks of things I'm doubtfull whether I'll be home for New Years now, for we sail from this place tomorrow morning bound for New Orleans, La. to start taking back the Porto Ricans we brought to the states a few months ago, and there is about four loads of them. It will take us till the twenty-first of this month to reach Porto Rico with the first load, and we will probably lay there two days to coal ship and start back about the twenty-third, so that will give us Christmas at sea this year, and by the time we get back to New Orleans it will be the twenty-ninth and I will be two days overtime then, but will be paid off right away when we get there, so you see I could'nt make Newark by New Years day if I wanted to, so you can be on the lookout for me sometime after, say about the second or third, for I'll have to stop off at Philadelphia to leave my things and suit case there, for "Emma," is looking for me to be home for New Years also and says she is going to have a big surprise for me, but I think when she gets the letter I wrote her today she is going to be a disappointed little girl to find out I wont be able to be there and enjoy her surprise, but I can't do any better if I wanted too. By the way, "Emma's". sister, "Anna", gave birth to a baby boy last sunday morning at one-fifteen, mother and baby doing fine, but, "Howard", is over on the other side right now and she is almost crazy, "Emma", told me. Somebody else is going to be crazy when I get home again.

Yes we are having nice frosty weather down this way also, but I dont want to see no snow at all, for this weather is plenty cool enough for me, and if it gets much colder I think I'll freeze to death in spite of all the heavy clothes I put on, for I can't seem to get warm no matter how I try. I've got some heavy underwear here with me, and ,"Emma," wrote and told me she bought me three suits so I'd have them when I got home, so I dont think I'll want for anything after I get farther north even though it is a bit colder up there.

Yes I'll have a good picture taken of myself when I get paid off and am home and have plenty of time to go get it taken, for that is all I've heard about for the last year, is have your picture taken, and have good ones, for all I've got is a snapshot of you, and I want a good one of you in case anything should happen to you before you got home again, so dont worry I'll have a dozen taken and you can all have a good one in uniform. I would have had them taken before this to stop all this scramble for them, but I have'nt been around a decent photo place for so long I dont know whether I'll be able to pose for a decent picture anymore, but I'll try.

Dont fear of me getting out of the navy so soon, for the longest I'll be out will be from the place I get paid off at to Philadelphia, for I intend to ship over there the day after getting there, or as soon after as I can get down to the navy yard, and get my furlough and then I'm going to have one glorious good time for a change, wife or no wife, but I will think of her just the same and take her out for a good time just to show her I'm a sport. I'm talking this way now, but it will be the same as before, no matter how mad I been at her, as soon as I get home I forget all about it and never say a word, for I could'nt talk harse [harsh] to a woman if I had to. Aw whats the use of talking, a fellow only lives once and he might as well make the best of things while he's here, for better days may be coming, and I dont think I've got the worst woman in this world.

Well this is about all for this time, so will close, wishing you all a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year, for I know it wont be for me as bad as I want to get home, with love to all

YOUR SON

Jess

U. S. S. Hancock
Navy Yard, Norfolk, Va.
December 8, 1918

Hello Dad:-

Your letter of 4, December received yesterday and was more than surprised to hear from you and was afraid I would'nt get the chance to answer it before we sailed today, but this morning the main feed pumps to the boilers broke down and we had to lay up here again for a couple of days, so I dont think we will get out of here much before Tuesday afternoon if we get out then, for I would like to see them stay here for the next eighteen days so I would'nt have to do any overtime, but I think I will have to now. When we leave here we are going straight to New Orleans, La. and start taking back those gooks we brought to the states a month or so ago, but I dont think there will be as many to take back as we brought up, for the biggest part of them have kicked the bucket since they landed in the states, and out of the four loads we had I dont think there will be two good loads for this ship to take back, but then again they might make us take back all that the other ships carried up this way, and I know that will mean about two months to get them all back where they came from, but I wont be here to help in the wind up of the thing, for they are certainly one lousey bunch to pack around. I would much rather see a bunch of Haitiens aboard the ship than a load of those Porto Ricans. I still have the mark in my hand where one of them stuck me with a knife, but that ai'nt saying what I done to him, and I think he'll remember me for a good long while to come.

Well yes I'm glad my time is near up in the Navy, but I'm going to ship over again just as soon as I reach Philadelphia. The only reason I can give for being glad it is near up is the fact that I will be able to get off of this ship, for I think if I had to stay on here as long as I was down with the niggers I would take my chances of running away, for out of all the ships I've ever been on this is the worst one yet. I've been aboard this ship before since first coming in the Navy, but she was a different ship then than she is now. Its not the ship that a fellow has any kick coming about, but its the kind of officers they have on them. I very seldom make any kick, but when I do I make sure I've got good ground to stand on before starting anything.

Yes I've been doing some tall traveling around since coming aboard this ship, but wont do very much more now. Things are getting to look a little like the old navy to me since the war has stopped, but they will have to do a lot more to bring things back to the old standard. If they get all the Naval Reserve's out and all the National Naval Volunteers out along with there officers why I think the navy will be the same as it was before the war, but as long as they are in here why things will be on the bum for all the regulars. I've only got two guns to take care of myself on this tub out of six, but I might just as well have them all for the rest of the gunners mates are all reserves and as soon as anything goes wrong why you can hear them hollering for me, and I'll certainly be glad when I get back with a bunch of regulars to work with that know something and can do my own work and then knock off without having to go and fool around with a bunch of dough heads like this bunch are.

You said something when you said our boys fought all around those dutchmen over there, and I think they are singing a different tune now than they did before Uncle Sam marched his bunch in there. I read a lot about the 113th. infantry and the 29th. division, but at that time I did'nt know that was the bunch John was with. Yes they had a couple of good scraps while the scraping was going on, and certainly showed them what they were made of. I suppose the fellows out of that company that are home are pretty well battered up. Have you heard anything from George or John in regards to when they expect to be home or are they in with the bunch that is to stay over there for a while. I would'nt mind going over there right now myself to look things over, but the height of my ambition would be to get to Berlin, for I imagine you could have one glorious time there right now.

Yes I see the Wilson sailed for France this last week, and he is certainly the man of the hour these days, and I think a great deal of credit is due him for what he's done these last few years. There were two of the torpedo boats that started out with the Geo. Washington last week and left the other day come in here this morning, but they only stayed a few hours or long enough to load up with oil and went right out again. I would like to be in Brest the day that Wilson gets there, for that will be some reception that he going to get, and I'll bet he wont forget it for a long while to come.

Well I guess that I will be right in time to see some initiating when I get home this time, for it has been a few years now since I last saw one, and it will be a sight for sore eyes, for I think I'll be up that way sometime around the third or fourth of January if not before, but the way I figure now I wont get paid off till about the last day of December, and then I'll be in New Orleans, and it will take me three days to make the trip from there to Philadelphia, and I know that I wont be able to leave there the first day I arrive for reasons to numerous to mention.

I heard all about the closing down on making beer, but as long as there is some kicking around when I get home I wont say a word, and I think I'll have to make up for lost time and drink all that I can get ahold of. I'm going to wear civilian clothes on my leave, and then I know that I can go in and get all the drinks I want without having anyone say a word to me about it, for this getting it in a sneaky way dont appeal to me at all.

So Mary [Mom would have been 15; she had a boyfriend named Joe at one time, but other than Dad, that is the only boyfriend that I knew about] is in with some lousey greek eh, well I dont think much of that at all, for they are just about as bad as those lousey Porto Ricans. First thing you know she will be married to him I guess, but that is her own business.

Well this is about all for this time, so will close wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, with love to all

YOUR SON

Jess



**Stridsropet
December 21, 1918**

**Season of Peace
A Christmas Greeting from Japan**

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

(Luke 2: 10, 11)*

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (1 John 3: 8)*

The motive for the arrival of the Son of God was to free humanity from the power and dominion of the devil, and as John says, to destroy the the works of the devil. When that is done, joy will be great in the hearts of man.

Christ cannot be the Saviour, if he cannot be the Conqueror. If you or I are going to help or save someone, then it is necessary for us to vanquish or defeat the one in whose power lies the one we wish to help. The works of the devil must be destroyed, if God's Great Plan of Salvation is to be realized. If joy is to befall humanity, then the cause of sorrow and suffering must be removed or destroyed, and the only one who has that power is the Son of God.

We cannot know which of the works of the devil are in that other world, but we can find enough of them in this one. Here is to be found what can be called moral evil, and the apostle had this evil especially in mind, as well as it being the basis for all other evil. And what we call natural evil is also to be found. Suffering is a natural result of the works of the devil. Parents, for example, suffer for the sake of their children and vice-versa, a wife for the husband's, etc. Then there is wrangling and dissension, which is also a result of the works of the devil. First and foremost is the wrangling and dissension between God and mortals. Mankind and God wandered together in joyful union, but then came Satan and separated them.

Furthermore there is dissension between nations. One nation will divide the other one, crush it, and subjugate it. It is happening now in the name and interests of freedom and civilization, but it is the work of the devil. We also have wrangling and discord between one person and another. Look at the dissension which can be found today within the church of Christ on this earth, not to mention the wrangling and enmity which is prevalent within the family circle, which ought to be a place of refuge. All of it is the work of the devil.

Jesus, the Son of God, cannot merely as a conqueror, but as a Prince of Peace, defeat the devil and bequeath peace to those who are freed. He grants love instead of hate, understanding instead of dissension and pettiness, salvation instead of sorrow and despair.

Someone has said that Christmas is a Season of Joy. The reason is, most people think more about others than themselves during this season.

It was the Love of God, extended towards you and me, personified in The Saviour, which was the incentive for Him to descend here, forgetting about Himself in order to make it possible for you and me to receive His Peace. Peace instead of wrangling and dissension, Peace instead of hate and discord, Peace, which cannot be explained with other words, but which can be experienced.

Christ the Son of God will grant you this Peace, if you do not already have it, during this Christmas Season.

**Sven Wiberg, Brigadier.
Dec. 18, 1918**

***King James Version of same Bible passage in Swedish.**