

cars of supplies in and out, stores, etc., all below the ground.

"Heinie had been driven so far away now, that only a stray long distance shell now and then came into the city, just a reminder that Jerry still had the range of the city on their old artillery score board.

"Well, when it came our turn to go up we were sent to a point some 10 or 15 kilometers away and known as Death Valley. This was sure our worst front. Men that won honors at the Chemin des Dames and the Toul front, only went through a Sunday School picnic at Beardsley Park compared to this.

"Now just a word about those shells Jerry used to send over. What I mean there were beaucoup of them at times, and oh yes, of course, we ourselves threw over a few, too. Shells can almost be compared to persons in some ways, for they each have their different characteristics. Some men walk up and swat you, some make a lot of noise about it and some don't, while others make a lot of noise and don't swat you. Now an Austrian '88' sneaks up behind a fellow without saying a word, then whizz bang! It's away down in the seat of your breeches before it says a word and when you get up off your stomach if there isn't a first aid man working on you, why it missed you. Go ahead and try to make the next dug-out.

"Now what they call a G. I. can, one of those old big babies, comes across, whish whash, whash whish, as if it was a hogshead of molasses going over, why they seem to go so slow and to fairly hang in the air, as you lie there on your back, in a little place you have dug in the bank, and when those babies let go, oh boy, the air is full of stove lids, monkey wrenches and everything up to an upright piano. A gas shell? Oh, they don't make much noise, just a little 'putt,' like opening a bottle of (well, whatever you ordered), but those blamed things hang around and hang around. Oh, they are mean cusses, and you know those shells with the timers on 'em, remember the one with that alarm clock dingus on the bow and a lot of little numbers all scattered around loose like, that are supposed to get so many certain numbered Yanks. A lot of fellows were lucky and must have drawn blanks, for every once in a while a 'dud' comes over, throws up a lot of dirt, but does nothing only scare a man half to death.

"Sometimes you are between Jerry and our own artillery and each side is putting over a pretty good barrage and so many shells go singing over, high in the air. Sure they sing about and rather enjoy it, and it seems you could almost see them as they pass the moon and there are so many of them up

there, it seems some of them must 'head on,' for surely there are no M. P.'s up there.

"Pardon me, I am getting away from my text. Shells seem as gentle as can be, as they lie along side the road with only a wooden or cork plug to keep their noses clean—the leather-necks 'treat them rough' so it almost scares you, but when they pull those plugs out and put in those timers, they act as nervous as can be and jump at the least excitement. Why just the sight of a gunner pulling a lanyard they will jump terrible distances, and just as you think they have taken it as a joke they will burst into an awful wrath and fly all over the nearest body of men and they don't show any partiality about it either. Generals and K. P.'s all look the same to them.

"Now if any variety of these shells has happened to get you, the nearest first aid man will fix you up, and the litter bearers will carry you back, but if you are able 'beat it' yourself for the nearest dressing station. And the chances are you have been wallowing around in the mud for the last 10 days and all the while your beard has been growing and you look a dead ringer for Billy Watson or Lew Welsh. Here they will fix you up, put a tag on you, and as soon as the shelling lets up the litter-bearers will carry you down to the road where an ambulance is waiting, or if you can walk, you surely must do so, for here is where every man must show the most stuff he has in him.

"Well, cut that old float loose, there, Goodnow, all are ready. Away she goes down the road, two litter patients and six or eight sitting; every once in a while Heinie drops one over on the road and you may get another wound on the way in, for they love a Red Cross flag like a bull loves a red flag. Well you hang on for dear life, for the car is going over shell holes galore, with once in a while the legs or neck of a dead horse or mule thrown in. Then when you have made the ambulance company dressing station you can get your wound redressed if it needs it, leave your pack, rifle, and all equipment, except the toilet articles you need at the hospital and all? the money you have,

"They give you a cigarette or cup of cocoa, and record you in their books, put you in another ambulance, for the car that fetched you has already gone back for another load, and this has been the work your boys have done for the last 10 months, litter bearing to the ambulances, driving ambulance to the dressing stations and dressing wounds at the station.

"Off we go to the field hospital, which usually is really a sifting station. That is, gassed men are sent to one hospital, sick and wounded to others. Gassed men are bathed there, their hair cut short, other clothes are given you, and slightly wounded or sick, that can be returned to duty in a few days, are held here.

"All the rest go on to some base hospital near the railroad and from there are forwarded to all the great hospitals in France, aboard those real American hospital trains, that have engines on them with an honest to goodness whistle and a slightly hump-backed sneaky look about it, as though it was going to get somewhere once it got started. All aboard, two in a berth, sleep head to feet, and in the day time fold up the bunk into a nice comfortable seat.

"Heads up, by Golly, there is an American Red Cross nurse coming through, and you catch yourself staring at her in a half worshipping way, for you hain't been seeing many women folks for months. Then the fellow that feeds us comes around and those poor cusses all along the sides that are litter patients, they try to switch around into half comfortable propped up positions, so that they can manage, then someone hollers something about a duck and we who have been fetched up in the country and not having spent any time in a hospital, we gaped out the window looking for ducks, but we soon "ketched on" that it wasn't birds they meant.

"After a while you reach your destination. Perhaps it is Paris, maybe it's Limoges, or even Bordeaux. All out, and once inside Base "oughty-ought," you get a bath and they rig you out in pajamas, all colors, styles, and sizes, some fellows looked like prisoners, some like the wrestlers. Bill Adams used to bring on down at the Y. M. C. A. But girls, when they put you in one of those sure to goodness B-E-D-S, with sheets, pillows, 'en everything,' and this is the first time you have had your clothes off in a month, and you snuggle down out of sight, you mutter something to the nurse about burning up your clothes for the war must be over.

"But as you lie there day after day, your mind goes back and the tears come to your eyes for those lads that you had bunked and buddied with and you knew were better than you, but they were bumped off, and must lie forever in a grave far from their loved ones. And, then as you improve, Heinie signs the armistice and you know you are a lucky fellow to have come out of the war alive, and you feel and know that with all its hardships you are a bigger, better, more tender-hearted man for having come over here.

"Just a moment! Are there any cornfeds in the house? If there is, please stand up, thank you. Say remember when you and I were on the farm and the rooster used to crow in the morning, then down the road or over across the lot, half a dozen other roosters would keep answering his challenge, well it sure got a laugh out of us when the rooster in the next yard to the hospital heard the French engine whistling around the freight yard, and mistaking them for other roosters, kept crowing all the morning

"Once you get so you can get around, you begin to long to get back to the old bunch again and you whisper something in some 'Loot's' ear about fixing it up so you can get back to your outfit, and he tells you, 'Sure, Buddy, I can fix it up so that you will go straight back,' and you fall for it, and away you go to the classification camp, where you get fitted up with all equipment. They sure have some system here. Why about six lines go in all at once, walk right along down the line, just hold out your arms and the first fellow you pass throws a shelter half at you, the next a blouse, another a shirt and so it goes, tent pins, pole, leggins, belt, cap, etc., all come flying out of the air and as you pass the last lad, he drops in an extra pair of hobnails, then you put your John Hancock on a slip of paper and out the back door you go. Some fellows only had half their things, when a whistle blew and all the clerks quit for dinner, like in a shop at home. All you can do is to stand and wait a half hour or more, curse under your breath about the blue button S. O. S. birds, for back here all the fellows attached to camps of this kind must wear a blue button on their caps.

"Next chow call blows and you fall in line, four abreast, two or three thousand all go through the same mess hall and usually you are fed inside of a hour, then fall in line and wash mess kits. Maybe there's 50 ahead of you, and then if you happen to have been lucky and have a few francs that you haven't spent for 'vin blink' or lost in a crap game, why you can get in line at the Y. M. C. A. or commissary. As soon as we are all set, they start us for our companies—(only they don't)—for you wind up at one of those so called 'rest camps' and here you get held up, two, three and maybe four weeks. No passes, no mail, and you don't know a soul out of the five or six thousand that are here.

Once in a while someone comes around and fills you up about going home as a casual and you fall for it and figure that next Friday you will go out to one of those Comfort Club meetings. Then you pack up and go back to your company. Oh,

ain't it a grand and glorious feeling! You read your mail, look over your old barracks bag that has just been returned after having been stored all summer—you find one of those red-cross sweaters, and some postal cards of Liffol that the censor wouldn't let us send. (But he is getting to be a pretty good fellow of late).

"And Lieut. Sprague has been made a captain and the fellows are coming back every day from the hospitals already included Hannon, O'Connell, Wyrzten, Widinghoff, Marsten, Foley, Adams, Davis, Ferris and Dickens. Yes, and there are some of our old trench fever boys back with us again, Good. Hello, Worley, Lambert, Willis, Schaeffer, Elliano, Watkins, Murphy and Vassel, and if there isn't Louis Hough. Well, I swan, it looks like old times, even have wooden barracks, just like we did at Liffol last winter. All the boys had received their checks and Pop Brendle, Harry Edes, Hub Beers, Ralph Carleton and Sergt. Lieberum are away on permission, look for heavy casualties in the French papers especially among the mademoiselles, for that combination will sure knock 'em dead.

"What do you know, we were not in the army of Occupation. Since we left 'em at Verdun, we were shifted over to the right and fell into it soft, had a dandy big dugout, large enough for the entire company, even electric lights and running water. Some luck. But it was too good to last, for soon after the armistice was signed we started on a ten day hike, and I'll be switzed if we didn't wind up away down here near Langres, in the little town of Sarrey, where every little home makes the dandiest hand made knives and scissors one could wish to see.

"On reaching here there was a check of one hundred dollars waiting for us, that the Sons of Veterans had sent and two days later a check from the Comfort club. Hey, Bill Larson, will you go down to that little store and see if you can buy a clothes basket? We have no lights in the barracks, so buy candles with the money you have sent us, also matches, cigarettes, scrubbing brushes, a meat cutter for the kitchen, extra cans of milk. Each man in our company we have given five francs as a little Xmas present, and have also sent a Xmas present of 25 francs each to our two orphans.

"We have only two ambulances now, Banks and McElroy on one and Pinney and Mills on tother. Also our trucks have been turned in, so Ned Hough, Rip Morgan, Joe Wynkoop and Pomeroy all have to carry a pack for a change. Saturday we had a football game, lost out 6 to 0 to the 104th Ambulance company. Our line-up was Marsten, Merrill, Whitlinger, Wilcox,

Claire, McDonald, Waite, Wilk, Stewart, Worley, Bergeron and C. Morgan.

"Xmas boxes have not started to come in as yet, but here's hoping.

"All the boys have had blue Y. D.s sewed on the left sleeve of their blouses, also their two service stripes on the same sleeve, while quite a few have a wound stripe on the opposite sleeve, gassed counts as a wound.

"We hear quite a bit about that reception we are to have, but don't fuss much for us, just stand clear of the pantry door, that's all.

"Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year to all the world from the men of the 102nd Ambulance company.

"DICK BARLOW,

Secretary and Treasurer,

"Foreign Chapter,

"Bridgeport Comfort Club."

November 29th, 1918.

The Bridgeport Comfort Club,

Dear Mothers:—

Thank you for the most welcome gift received this date by us boys over here, I can assure you it has been appreciated by all. During the fifteen months in France, us boys have gone through it and have made good, the 102nd has gone over the top with the good old Y. D., 26th New England Division; but at the same time the Bridgeport Comfort Club has done the same, and in the eyes of the 102nd Ambulance Company, the Comfort Club has more than gone over for the 102nd Ambulance Company, the purely made in Bridgeport Organization.

Our ten months at the front has not been peaches and cream, as the boys would say, but we knew that a certain organization, away across the big pond, made up of the Mothers. Wives, Sisters and Sweethearts of the 102nd Ambulance Company boys, were back of us 'tous jours' and we knew that we had to make good with such wonderful support in the good old U. S. A. Thank you again. I remain, one of the boys of the 102nd Ambulance Company,

Sergeant JAMES W. MORRELL.

P. S.—Enclosed find one of the commendations received by this organizations, while in France, for our service.

Headquarters, 26th Division
Office of Division Surgeon.

16th Nov., 1918.

FROM: Division Surgeon, 26th Division

TO: Officers and Men of the Ambulance Section, 101st
Sanitary Train. (Thru C. O., 101st Sanitary Train.)

SUBJECT: Commendation

1. At the close of active operations, the writer feels under an agreeable obligation to express to you in the most sincere language he is capable of using, which is absolutely inadequate to the occasion, his congratulations on the superb service you have rendered.

2. The duties of the Ambulance Section are the backbone of the Divisional Medical Service, and if it had failed, no amount of effort or sacrifice on the part of the Division could have compensated.

3. You have been on the job and delivered the goods under all conditions and in spite of all handicaps. Your work has been a decisive factor in the successes of the Division.

4. There can be, and is, to my mind, no finer organization in the A. E. F. than the Ambulance Section of the 101st Sanitary Train. You are absolutely the Corps d'Elite of the Division, and I feel that there is nothing I can do or say for you individually and collectively that half expresses my deep feelings on the subject.

5. You can have the proud consciousness of having performed to the tip-top of efficiency your important share of the campaign that has led to America's victory, may you succeed as well at home in the pursuits of peace.

(Signed) R. S. PORTER,
Colonel, N. C.,
Division Surgeon

RSP e

In a recent scene of action, this division won back considerable land which has for the past four years been held by the Huns. While we were there, or rather just before we left there to advance, we noticed the church bells ring for the first time since we had been there. Several of our French-speaking troops spoke about it to the French soldiers in that town and we were told that it was the first time that they had rung in four years. There were no civilians in the town, but under the circumstances the French soldiers will ring the bell at the times it is supposed to be rung until the civilians come back to live there. The French are very religious you know, and that is

their custom; to ring the bells whether there is anyone living there or not. There was a Cure (a French Priest) who had lived there nearly all the time to hold services for the soldiers there and after our successful work there, he wrote the following letter, which I will censor myself, to our Commanding General (General Edwards).

Name of town,
September 13, 1918.

"Sir,

Your gallant twenty-sixth American division has just set us free. Since September 1914, the barbarians have held the heights of the Meuse, have foully murdered three hostages from Mouilly, have shelled Rupt, and, on July 23, 1915, forced its inhabitants to scatter to the four corners of France.

I, who remain at my little listening post upon the advice of my Bishop, feel certain, Sir, that I do but speak for the Monseigneur Ginisty, Lord Bishop of Verdun, my parishioners of Rupt, Mouilly, and Genicourt and the people of this vicinity in conveying to you and your associates the heartfelt and unforgettable gratitude of all.

Many of your comrades lie at rest in our truly Christian and French soil. Their ashes shall be cared for as if they were our own. We shall cover their graves with flowers and shall kneel by them as their own families would do. with a prayer to God to reward with eternal glory these heroes fallen on the field of honor, and to bless the twenty-sixth division and generous America.

Be pleased, Sir, to accept the expression of my profound respect.

(Signed) A. LECLERC,
Cure of _____."

TWELFTH LETTER

Marigne, Sarthe, France,
27 Kilos to Le Mans,
March 15, 1919.

Dear Friends:—

Have not written you since the New Year, as we had hoped that before now we would be promenading on the main stem of the old town, renewing acquaintances, looking over the new things of interest, such as the new Stratford Avenue bridge, the bath house at Seaside, the bank buildings, etc., that have been completed since we went away. There has been very little doing of late and we did not intend to write further, but our turn does not seem to come very fast, and most everyone is getting some sort of a permission and it is about these that I want to tell you.

This like my trip to the hospital, is not that it is I but the fact that hundreds of other fellows are having the same experience that may make it of interest.

First let me give you some ancient history, then work along up to the present time. After President and Mrs. Wilson, General Pershing and some others had visited us at Sarrey and Bob Stewart had showed them our billet and explained everything to them except a couple of places where we had camouflaged some dirty clothes, and Mrs. Wilson had made a hit with us by saying that we were some of the boys she had been praying for and we had promised that gentleman with the most radiant smile we had ever seen, that we would sure pay back the visit, we then on Jan. 3rd packed up and moved from Sarrey, (pronounced Sorry, only we wasn't,) down 12 kilometers to the little town of Baine, still in Haute Marne. We stayed there about three weeks. We had a track meet on Jan. 11th, our company winning out by four points over the 103rd. Pop Brendle was as usual our individual star, while Cater and Rice, two of our new men, showed up well in the races. That town was some ten kilometers from the city of Langres, which is a walled city set upon a hill and having a mountain climbing railway to get from its railway station up into the city. Our fellows used to hike to this city quite often.

Then on Jan. 21st we started to move again, some overland with full packs and others in some ambulances that had just been returned to us, the latter going clear through to this town near LeMans, while the rest hiked some 45 kilos in two days, slept outdoors all night, Jan. 23rd, away over at Vitrey.

while waiting to entrain, which we did at nine the next A. M. Won three box cars for our company, thirty men to a car. One was a Boche car that had just been turned over to France and was a pip,—heavy well made car, better than the usual French cars, and we have noticed hundreds of them since in the different freight yards and they are all well made.

We detrained at Ecommoy, hiked five kilos more to reach this nifty little burg of Marigne that we are still in and for once we are in luck, for it is no doubt the best town in the divisional area and the cleanest town we have been billeted in. We arrived here Jan. 25th and have hopes of going direct from here to our port of embarkation.

This town has only twelve to fifteen hundred population but during the war has had forty nine men killed and ten missing. They seem very pleased that we are here, and this being the apple section of France, why of course cider is trotted out for all favors, the seven saloons are open at all hours to civilians, but to members of the A. E. F. only from 10:30 to 1 and from 5 to 9, but no beer is or has been for sale and their hard stuff—cognac, eau de vie, pinaud and the rest—have too blamed much "authority" to them.

On arriving here we had ten G. M. C. ambulances and also two pairs of horses were handed over to us. Pomeroy pulled the ribbons over one pair while Ted Gilliland had the other. Two weeks later these horses were passed on to some other company and we were given six more ambulances, as our company must do all evacuation for the divisional area now, instead of each company doing its share. Here our billets are scattered all over the town, Wilcox has his ambulance men in one end of the town, while Foley and his bunch have a farm away out the other way, still others in an ex-cabaret, hall or theatre billet as it is called in the center of the town. So in this latter place we have had a couple of company shows and dances. We have had for our leading features the 102nd Amb. Co. orchestra composed of H. P. Davis, E. Davis, Windinghoff, Kenney, Worley, Avallon, Phillips and usually Diorio, now of the 104th and our double quartet made up of Stewart, Deutsch, Morrell, Avallon, Wall, Wright, Hannon and Swartz.

To have a feed in this small town, as in most small towns, one must go to the Boucherie, buy your meat, then go next door or across the street and have it fried along with some potatoes and bread. To get the bread the French lady must have a bread ticket, and for each customer the Boulangerie has

a small round stick of wood about eighteen inches long whittled off flat for a couple of inches on one end for the customer's name, and for each loaf dupain a notch is cut in the stick, and this is how they keep their books, the same as some Westerners used to knick the stock of their rifles every time they shot a man.

To get a shave be sure and keep your mouth closed for the "coiffeur" doesn't rub the lather in with his hand but with the brush and the way they go at it—well, take the tip, if you don't want your teeth cleaned and also your throat swabbed.

Then once a week the towns have a market day, when all the folks for miles around pile into their two wheeled carts, take along a few things to sell, or if they don't have a cart, they promenade in, as they call it, with a basket full of chickens or rabbits, then set up shop on the village square, most everything on the calendar being for sale.

Aside from the accident that Banks and McElroy had, when some driver left his disabled truck in the road without lights and Silent Mac had to go in with his jaw fractured in two places, the fellows have kept exceptionally well, despite the fact that several civilians have died with the Flu. None of our boys have had it; guess we haven't stopped doing four's east and squads round about long enough to let a germ light. And our new bath house where ten can go in at once has helped us to get rid of friend "coot."

Among the fellows that went from here down to that dance at Tours were Town Mayor Deutsch, Rad, Bob McDonald, Wills, Beers, Banks and Geer, all had a fine time.

Since we have come here most of the clothing issued is of the jinkey variety, that is long breeches and an extra heavy pair of shoes with toe plates on them that are known as the Pershing last and we hope they will be ours, for we believe now more than ever in that slogan "See America First."

On February 19th we had our Divisional review by General Pershing and it sure was a humdinger, regular West Point stuff, and the General impressed us all very deeply by his sitting his snappy little white mount so well, and also in his walk through mud over ditches for over two hours. He personally inspected every officer and man, not losing a minute, tiring out several of his staff, and we could not help but admire the snap and pep for one of his years. Hope he won't ever see this letter for he would surely want to make me a corporal or something. Modest, that's me all over, Mabel.