

LETTER FROM SHERMAN GREEN.

January 13, 1918

Dear Al:-

You may be wondering whether Chan and I are still ~~living~~ on the map. Well, we are very much alive but not kicking for we have very little to kick about. Our drills take up a good share of the day from the time old Sol appears over the hill till he sneaks away over another hill. We have become very familiar with our Hotchkiss machine gun, especially since yesterday we had a regular exam on the nomenclature and functions of the numerous intricate parts. It has either snowed or rained almost continually for several ~~months~~ weeks and it has rendered effective field drills impossible. When the outdoor conditions are the worst we hold indoor drills by platoons on the nomenclature of the guns. Several days a week we have target practice. Up to a week ago we had to march four miles to an old French range where the French instructors overlooked our work. Now, however, they have constructed a range up on the hill where we shoot for accuracy. We shoot a clip and to be good, all the twenty bullets should pierce the target within a prescribed three inch circle. It requires a firm hand and a steady ~~hand~~ eye. Other days we practice on the pistol range. Our automatic Colt revolvers shoot seven shots in a clip and we are just beginning to get accurate. Other days we go through the drill formations which are very interesting. We have just got to range finding now and it is quite evident that this is no branch of the service for a bonehead. My college calculus may help me yet.

We have gas mask drills about once a week. They consist in practice in getting the mask on quickly, testing for gas, removing gas, etc., and also in changing from the more elaborate English mask



to the regulation French mask. Then we wear the English one for about an hour just to get used to it. We all enter into these drills earnestly for it may prove to our advantage later.

This sort of mixture of the English and French methods is the bane of our life, for our officers and non-coms go off to training schools of various sorts and it is funny to see them trying to agree on some formation. The French regiment which used to come over and direct our formations has gone up to take another crack at the Huns and as soon as they went all of their little helpfull hints were discarded and our officers doped out formations of their own. As often as some officer returns from some school our formations change accordingly. And now we learn that we are going to give up the Hotchkiss and learn the workings of the Vickers Maxim, so it doesn't look as if we would get into action for some time to come. However, that is the least of our worries.

We are very comfortably billeted, well fed, and worked hard enough to keep in good health. We are so near actual fighting that we can get very little conception of the tide of the war. What we know of it is what we pick up from the French soldiers, or what the Paris edition of the New York Herald chooses to make clear. The only disconcerting thing is that never is mention made of Allied reverses. German divisions are killed so fast that they must breed in a hot bed or the war would have long ago been over. The only real news we get is when the Hartford Courant finds its way over here, and we fight for the paper though the news is a month old stale. Also the Dartmouth which I receive quite regularly is pored over pretty thoroughly. I wish you would send me the Bema regularly and see that I get the Jack O'Lantern too. I have received the Pur-an-tan Jack O and Bill Scoville drew the Football Bema which I have been perusing today. Please tell Bill Bemis and Dusty



Rhodes that McElwaine, Bill Scoville, and I consider their respective magazines up to par if not better. Also I got a letter from Dusty recently which I intend to answer in the near future.

How is your military training progressing? I see pictures in the Bema of quite intensive training. What kind of rifles do you use? Does your instruction cover machine gun work? I hope it does, for it certainly is interesting. Quite a change from the old "Squads right" on the Niantic parade ground, I can tell you. I think I will drop a line to Capt. Keene shortly and give him an idea of our instructions as he told me to. By the way how are you advancing on the Dartmouth competition? Stick to it, and tell Bob Stecher and these other bums to drop me a line.

The battalion interpreter is holding classes in French and Chan and I are among the score in the advanced class. The division headquarters are back of the scheme and are going to furnish text books. They have broken up the agents squad and now I am acting as first leader of Corporal Baridon's squad. However they have not broken up our billet and we are still having the time of our young lives.

Well, be good Al, old kid, and don't get the wandering spirit until they call for you.

Your brother,

Sherm.