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"Dearest Folk"

Paul S. Johnson

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 ARMY AND NAVY
 YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION


"WITH THE COLORS"

Nov. 14

1917

Dearest Folks:—

It is a month ago today that we steamed out by the Goddess of Liberty. Without very much effort I could expect a letter from you most any time now. I hope that you have had one from me before this. I am at the "U. S. Army P.O. 709." Whether putting that on my letter or not would help I do not know but it would not hurt any.

Sunday night, Nov. 11, by special invitation I messed with the Sargeant in one of the camps near here. I had a regular feed; beef steak, washed potatoes, fried onions, white bread and jam. When I left he gave me a loaf of white bread and a can of jam. Here at our regular mess we do not get white bread. The white bread and jam

went so good that I made a whole meal off of it on Tuesday night. Before we retired the Madame called us in and gave us each a piece of "Tarte." A "tarte" is first cousin to a piece of apple pie with the top crust left off. The diameter of the whole is greater than that of our average pie. The wedge which I got was about one fourth of the whole. I sure was fed up and all on the most of palatable of stuff.

On Monday I dined at both noon and night at some of the nearby camps. At night I ate with the officers. We had plates and sat down to our meals. We again had jam and also cheese. Enjoyed visiting with their highnesses at short range.

On Tuesday, Nov. 13, I saw an interesting thing. A French officer, a Commandant, was decorated with the badge of The Legion of Honor. This is the highest honor which is given a soldier. There was a French band, a company of French and a company of American soldiers present.


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First, a couple of French officers inspected the whole outfit. Then, bringing the culprit forth before those assembled, they pinned the badge on him and the band played the national anthem. All the higher officers shook hands with him and kissed him. Then, the troops maneuvered a bit and marched away in the following order; band, Yank soldiers, French soldiers. It all made a very pretty and impressive ceremony.

In the afternoon I saw one of the boys who was wounded in the action of the Germans against the American troops on the night of Nov. 3. He was shot through the arm. His wound is being treated with the Dakin system of desinfectant. In my letter written on the boat I told of a young doctor who described that

system. His story of the fight was very interesting. To see him brought the real thing very close to us.

Today, I picked up three French soldiers. When I stopped at my destination I missed some fancy soap that I had abroad. So as Pat said, "I surrounded them", lined them up in a row, and went through them a la a hold of man. In this way I recovered 12 bars of fancy toilet soap. I carry scores of Yanks. Time and again I have from a dozen to fifteen aboard but this is the first time any one ever tried to steal from me.

The sun has shone almost continuously for the last four days. The roads dry up very quickly and motoring has been fine. You can see further up the valleys and across the hills and the beauty of France impresses itself upon me more than ever.

With love - Paul.