

Chapman University

Chapman University Digital Commons

Wesley F. Diedrich First World War
Correspondence Collection

CAWL Archives: First World War

9-1-1940

1940-09, Wesley to Family

Wesley F. Diedrich

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/wfdiedrich_collection

Recommended Citation

Diedrich, Wesley F., "1940-09, Wesley to Family" (1940). *Wesley F. Diedrich First World War Correspondence Collection*. 72.

https://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/wfdiedrich_collection/72

This Letter is brought to you for free and open access by the CAWL Archives: First World War at Chapman University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Wesley F. Diedrich First World War Correspondence Collection by an authorized administrator of Chapman University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact laughtin@chapman.edu.

1940-09, Wesley to Family

Keywords

U.S.A., U.S. Soldiers, infantry, artillery, France, Western Front, military occupation, comradery, soldier slang, Germans, French, patriotism, government, dispatch riders, motorcycles

Identifier

2014.160.w.r_ Diedrich _worldwarone_1940-09-missing_061

Comments

An exact date is not known for this letter. The year listed is an estimation and may not be accurate.

still extended to veterans of all branches of service to submit their prize pictures—that *doesn't* include posed group pictures—with supporting accounts.

The salt-water ex-gob who represents the Navy in this issue is Benjamin Potter, who did his principal hitch as cook 1st class aboard the U. S. Transport *Matsonia*, whom many of her O.D.-clad passengers will no doubt remember. Comrade Potter belongs to an all-gob Post of the Legion, Old Glory Naval Post of Brooklyn, New York, in which city he lives at 645 Ocean Avenue. Here is his yarn submitting the two pictures which you will see reproduced:

"Enclosed you will find two wartime pictures for our Legion magazine, provided you can use them. One of them is a stern view of the Transport *Matsonia* on which many members of the A. E. F. were passengers, while the other shows the American docks at Bassens, the port established forty-five miles from the mouth of the Gironde River and seven miles above Bordeaux, through which tens of thousands of American troops cleared.

"The picture of the *Matsonia* was taken shortly after the U. S. S. *Henderson*, another transport, had crashed into her stern. The damage was slight, but thus it may be seen in the picture.

"The soldiers in the other picture were about to board the *Matsonia* and the



Matsonia, when I was in charge of the galley, we sailed from St. Nazaire very near the end of 1918. About two days out the sea got mad at us and tossed the *Matsonia* around like a cork. I told my cooks on watch to lash down everything in the galley, but one item they couldn't lash down was a collection of about a hundred pairs of eggs that were frying on the big galley range. They also overlooked about five hundred pounds of sugar which was in containers near the huge coffee urns. The ship listed to starboard about sixty-five degrees and the eggs and sugar went flying down the

adopted by the 144th Field Artillery—known as the 'California Grizzlies'—in which regiment Battery A was commanded by Peter B. Kyne, the writer. The boy had been smuggled aboard the transport under the cover of the big brass drum of the regimental band, and showed up after the ship was three days at sea. Captain Kyne agreed to adopt the lad and I have a clipping from the New York *Evening World* of Saturday, January 4, 1919, showing Captain Kyne and the French lad—the latter in full, though miniature, American uniform. I wonder whatever became of him?

"To get back to my story: I picked up Marcel as he skidded by and he then pointed to something in a French dictionary he was carrying—I don't recall just what. But anyway, it developed he was lost and was looking for Captain Kyne. I found the captain on the main deck with the two Police dogs he was also taking home with him, and I delivered Marcel to his sponsor. But somehow I kept Marcel's French dictionary. If we could find Marcel, I'd like to return his book to him."

COURIERS—those motorcycle deliverers of messages between units—have not been entirely overlooked in these columns, but it has been a number of years since we have heard from any of the ex-speed demons. Now through the good



Henderson for their trip back to the States. Some of the men shown told me that they had had nothing to eat all day before embarking. It seems that the team of mules attached to their chow wagon had been frightened by a passing freight train and had bolted just as the soldiers were lined up to be served their slum. Slum was dumped all over the deck. But being homeward-bound was more welcome than chow, so they didn't gripe much about the lost eats.

"On another of my trips aboard the

The mail—and official messages—must go through! Above, the demon motorcycle riders of the Message Center, Headquarters Troop, 35th Division, at Commercy, France, 1919

deck. Whatever the scuppers failed to stop, the bake shop got.

"But among the things that went flying by the galley was Marcel Dupuys, a ten-year-old French lad who had been

offices of W. S. Clark of 309 North Washington Street, El Dorado, Kansas, who belongs to Captain Edgar Dale Post of the Legion in that city, we meet a gang of men in this particular branch of service. They are pictured in these pages, and following are extracts from a most interesting but too-lengthy (space considered) report that Comrade Clark sent along with the photograph:

"I am sending to you a picture of the personnel of the Message Center, Headquarters Troop, (Continued on page 64)