

Gr. Mouthaion. France
Dec 5-1918.

My Dear Brother and ~~Miss~~ Niece:-

Just got your letters a while ago and while the boys are going down for mess I thought I'd answer. Your letter was dated Nov. 1. So you see it took a bit over a month to reach me.

I have not seen Co. C for over a month so can't tell Jan to write, and Sergt. Peterson has been or was at Officers' Training School the last I heard from him. So you see I can't see him.

But Nell wanted me to tell about the country over here and I can do that.

The most noticeable thing to us is the number of villages one sees. Farm houses by themselves are very scarce; very seldom one sees one. About every two or three miles is a village. I ^{have} counted about twenty from the top of one hill and I was not a very high one either.

France for the most part is hilly, altho the valleys are rather wide and long. In these

Valleys one always finds the farming done; while the hayland and forests are usually on the hills. I have seen a great number of ^{tho} gardens made on land that I thot was steep enuf for the gardeners to fall off of it. It is necessary tho; on account of the population. The French never waste anything during the harvest either; ~~and~~ all of this is done by hand ^{there} ~~the~~ ^{pr} everything is cleaned up. The plots of ground are too small to have machinery, hence all

of the hand labor.

The soil, for most part is sandy and quite a bit of it is rocky but good crops are raised on it. Because of this sandy, rocky soil, one strikes ~~hard~~ water down about five or six feet because the hardpan holds it from sinking further.

France has many forests, and all trees have to be marked before they can be cut. The marking is done by government men. As far as that is concerned no trees can be cut without permission of the government, whether in a forest or not. The largest of these

forests that I have seen are:
Argonne Forest and Forest d'Haye.

The former was where the big
American drive started Sept. 26th
of which I told you all of
in a former letter. The latter
named forest is West of Nancy,
it being about seven or eight
miles one way and four five
miles the other; while the
Forest d'Argonne is twenty
or thirty miles long, at least, and
I don't know how wide. In
the mountainous part of the
country, as in the Vosges mount-
tains there are some large

timber tracts, but all are on the mountains, the valleys, as usual being under cultivation. The garden and farm products being nearly the same as at home, except that they do not raise any corn but do cultivate lots of sugar beets. Grapes, in the southern part of this country is their largest crop, it is too cold for them in the north.

Steam power over here is used but little, comparatively, except for locomotives and lighting plants in the larger towns and cities. Water power is used for the rivers and large streams

are usually swift. However they are seldom very deep. I have seen the Meuse, Moselle and Aire rivers and none of them are large; they would be called creeks in the U.S.

Now for the transportation. The railroads are standard gauge but the engines are small. Their heaviest ones being about the passenger type on the Wabash, and not nearly so fast. The "box" cars should be called cracker-box-cars are about half as large as our small cars. The coal cars hold about six or eight tons of coal. The passenger cars are practically as long as ours but lack some

of being so wide. They are built
in compartments, ^{there} being from from
four to eight ~~set~~ compartments
to a coach. These compartments
do not join, but the passengers
get in on the sides, along foot
board runs the full length on
the outside of the coach. The tickets
are collected at the end of the
trip. Most passenger coaches have
air brakes; freight cars do not.
All are hand couplings with
a chain and big link that
hooks on a hook on the
other car. The road beds are
all of rock and are very
solid. Wrecks are not common

There are three classes
of highway in France, first,
second and third or Nationale
They are all macadam and
for most part very smooth.
The roads near the fronts
are pitted quite a bit by shell
fire and heavy traffic. The
third class roads are wide
enuf for two vehicles to pass
and are for most part, merely
short cuts. the second class
roads are the most numerous
wide enuf for three large
trucks to pass easily and

these roads connect the towns
The first class or Routes Nationales
are the main high ways and
connect the larger towns, they
are from forty to sixty feet
wide.

Practically all roads
have rows of trees planted
on both sides of them - cotton
woods mostly. Sharp corners
are exceptional altho one often
finds hairpin turns and
sharp curves; the roads wind
in and out the valleys or

along the ^{bottom} ~~side~~ of a hill, thus
saving the valley land for
agriculture.

There's lots more I could
tell you, in fact, I could write
till this time tomorrow of
many little things we see but
I can't think of them now,
besides, I want to mail this
off so it will go out.

Love for all
Charley.

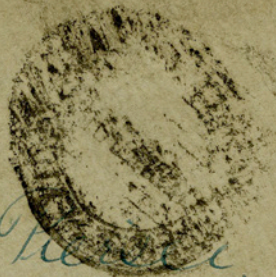
Corp. Charley Purice
Co D. 110th D. A. I.

A. E. P. France

CENSORED - BY

L. W. SHADBURNE
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Soldier's Mail.



Mr. Aaron C. [unclear],
Kirksville,
Missouri
U. S. A.



Gen. Del.

W.W.I. 128.77