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CHRISTMAS LETTER

Aux Armées, December 21, 1917.

Dear — :

Certainly the receipt of a letter, telling of a gathering of « Old Field Service Men » on Christmas Eve at " 21 " brings back visions of the past; visions of banquets before a section went to the front, visions of a time when every man in the service was known by his name at headquarters, and — well just visions and dreams.

And now it is Christmas once again, probably the last that will ever see a gathering of men who can truly still call themselves American Ambulance Men.

Conditions were so pleasant, free and easy-going in those days of old that the change, although I realize that it is for the best and a broader and larger service, still somehow makes me feel sad. I regret, not so much that I could not personally attend this gathering on Christmas Eve, but more on account of the fact that it heralds the passing of what we have held very dear. It

leaves a feeling of goneness, a feeling that the old service, the service that was rendered purely for the love of it and France, has passed. Not that the service now is not just as good, just as great, nor that there are not still hundreds in its ranks who do not love and work for it just as we used to do, but that somehow or other we have lost something that was very dear to us.

And those of us who came first, particularly those who came before our own country entered the war, will always look back with more than a sentimental feeling to the good old days. We'll love and cherish the memories of our work, of our friends, of the hardships and, yes, the very grouching and crabbing of which every section had its share. We will hug to ourselves little instances of French appreciation of our services; not those proclaimed by the newspapers nor the decorations and citations — they were fine of course — but there are others more intimate, more personal and infinitely dearer, as for example a time when the night was particularly dark and the road particularly bad, the shells landing a little too close for comfort and ease of mind. You arrive at your poste, which is crowded with wounded, to be met by that ever-smiling and brave French priest, with the words: "Well, I knew you boys would come anyhow." And your heart beat a little faster with pride and you went more cheerfully off on your next weary trip with your load of broken and dying men. Those were the little things that really counted, those were the things that made you feel that your service was worth while, that the American Field Service had not lived in vain, that it did its work and well.

However, forgive me for my little slide into the realm of dreams. It just could not be helped and I am a bit ashamed of being quite so sentimental and somewhat surprised too.

And now, may I express the hope and wish that those of us of the old regime that are still left in the Service, will work and work hard, that they may instill into the hearts and minds of those of our newer and younger brothers the same spirit of hard work and ever readiness to "Roll", no matter what the time, conditions or the place, so that at the END the mother service may live again in the glory of the United States Army Ambulance Service.

Wishing you individually, and all who have been or still are

in the service a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Next Year we will all spend Christmas at home.

Sincerely,

"An Old Man of the Service."

FRENCH A MONEY-BELT ESSAY

The French language, so we are told by profs back home who've never heard it, descended from Caesars or Ciceros written by a wop George Ade. It's still descending, according to the section's litterati, who can get the advance dope on grub without drawing a picture of a cheval. By'n by, when German is as dead as ravitaillement Camembert, it will have descended so low that only the very terrifically browish will kid themselves into thinking they can speak it.

There are many sorts of French, but only three kinds that an ordinary fellow ever hears. The first in point of time is the sort spoken by Vanity Fair (so we are told, absolutely), R. Chambers' people and floppers from finishing school who have been finished. This is easy French to learn. Any unelevated cerebrum oblongata can acquire it in a few easy lessons by memorizing some Diedjer Kysser (pronounced Dédé yâ cés èr) ads and some simple recherche phrases *très chic, oh, la, la*, gleaned from any "Snappy Storjes" or "Parisienne", and then give the dear thing a regular barrage at the next frat dance at home. This kind of French is always interesting to try, on Frenchmen. If they don't think you're trying to kid them and poke you in the jaw with an eleven sabot, they generally manage to scrape up an "Oh, yes" and the big laugh just to show that they know a good American joke when they hear one.

The second kind of French is the sort the profs speak in these compulsory freshman courses in college. This brand is used with deadly seriousness — not at all like easy flopper French — and until the speaker comes to France he thinks its like the language. Sometimes the more conscientious takers of such courses run amuck, plunging deeper, ever deeper in their ruin, until they can tell in exams without consulting their cuffs just what gender, number, voice, cylinder displacement and H. P. the word "ava's" is, and ultimately they get a teacher's job.

Occasionally some of them regret their long road to true learning, and as an aid to weaker vessels on the way they publish a short-cut phrase book by the use of which any unsuspecting American can get arrested for asking the time of day. Fortunately the low-brows foolish enough, to buy 'em generally have sense enough not to use 'em. Nothing, however, is more genuinely pathetic than to listen to a serious minded young man who has just received his Ph. Q. for brilliant studies in Provençal poetry (studied in U. S. A.) trying to ascertain the price of a scuttle of suds in Bordeaux.

The third kind of French is the unofficial language of the American Field Service away from home, naturally bearing no resemblance to anything ever written, seen or heard. For the enlightenment of the ignorant alone be it said that this language rests on four great phrases: *comme ça*, *où est la route*, *combien* and *no comprez* — without which one might as well be dead, but, with which and a little calisthenics one can say anything. The more ambitious after a time attempt to progress beyond the mastery of these words, but as a rule their efforts are either wasted or lead to needless war. For example our worthy mechanic by the use of *comme ça* and some Swedish exercises alone was able to direct perfectly the reparation of a complicated truck, but another genius who was cherchezing milk and demanded of a cop "Où est la vache ici?" got all he deserved for his brains. A special word must be said for the best of 'em all, the ever reliable "no comprez". Have you persistently broken the eleven thousand rules of the army? *No comprez?* Are you caught wandering aimlessly about in some hidden battéry or secret boyau where even officers are forbidden to go? *No comprez.* Do you unblushingly sail by yards and yards of "Interdite formellement's" and "Defense absolue de passer's"? *No comprez.* There is no greater joy in life than to watch a fat and irate gendarme who has been giving you *hades* for a straight half hour when you gently murmur "No comprez" and roll blandly on your way.

One dying gasp. Sometimes in the photographic supplements which rarely reach the Section, are pictures of a beautiful lady giving a rough Naval Reservist a lesson in Army French. We would hate to discourage a work which photographs so well, but, we have reason to believe that if any beautiful lady ever heard Army

French she would not understand it — and if she did we have even greater reason to believe that she would not be a lady.

The End.

K. D. H., S. S. U. 31.

SECTION NOTES

S. S. U. 27 — *Or A Voice from the Grave*

"John for heavens' sake write some Section Notes and send 'em into the "Bulletin". "Why the... should I write 'em, for the love of Mike hasn't anybody else in the camp had a public school education? Get Chick to do it; that letter he sent to his "Marraine" was the cleverest thing I've seen for a long time", etc. ad infinitum.

Aforementioned line of heifer dust explains why the Section Notes of S. S. U. 27 have been so prominently lacking in the past few issues of the "Bulletin". It is a picture of the editor presenting itself to my imagination which prompts me to dash this off, "off hand like". I seem to hear that still small voice, and see the hairs of that estimable gentleman, the editor, turning grey with worry over this young but undoubtedly superior Section.

On October 31st we said good-by to our reclaimed French barn yard, our three year old more or less well used Frats and arrived in Paris on Hallowe' en eve. After an enlarged coup de main we emerged triumphantly from Rue Raynouard. This was on the morning of November 2nd and when I say morning I mean it. Four A. M. by one regular watch and anywhere from 12:00 to 6:00 by our wrist watches. Did I say triumphantly? Well not quite. There was dirty work at the cross roads and Abbott plus Ah Oui turned up missing. What happened? Ask Ah Oui. Ah Oui is a dog (I believe) fearfully and wonderfully made, soul mate and confidant of Abbott. The strain of not being able to communicate these well placed confidences to anyone else has finally produced a form of mental disorder in the poor animal and when last seen he was headed for the German lines. Doubtless he will find many of his own kind when he reaches there.

It was with much regret that we parted from ten members of the Section in Paris. Owing to the scarcity of men our Lieutenant was forced to split the bunch. We compliment No. 9 on the

acquisition of Camouflage de Courcèy, Confiture Ramsdell, Ardent Al Langfeld, Daré Devil Duvell and the rest. We miss them.

I trust that no one will be bored if I put in a word or two about our cooks. Any one, I am sure can appreciate the prime importance of standing in good with all members of the cuisine. Hence, encore heifer dust.

S. S. U. 27 is the proud possessor of one LeRoy Emanuelson, M.B. M.B. ? You mean to say you don't know what an M. B. is? Well don't feel bad, neither did we until we met Mr. Emanuelson. He claims it stands for Master Baker and no one dares dispute it, especially after sampling some of his concoctions. Believe me dear reader, if you want to get a whiff of the old homestead come around when we are having apple pie or cake. In the words of the Croix-de-Guerre Clark twins, he is a moose. Fortunately his ability is not confined to the pastry end of the game and with the able assistance of the Greek God Granata and Kid Cook we manage to get A No. I meals.

Hell is popping mother, six, one thousand eight hundred and forty calibre shells have just landed a few yards away. The shrapnel is falling like hail and the gas is so thick that I can hardly see to write. Excuse me a few minutes while I carry a few blesses over Hell's Half Mile to the hospital. Have you one of these birds in your section? Where do they get that stuff? How do you get that way? There is really a lot of gas being loosed right near me now but it's only the common garden variety of B. S. that every true American is acquainted with and accustomed to. The most exciting thing that takes place in this neck of the woods is a game of chess in the barracks. Some one was reckless enough to invest in a chess set and the resultant feverish excitement that accompanies each game is rapidly undermining the constitution of certain section members.

As I bring this work of art to a speedy close I refrain from signing my maiden name. The reason is excellent. If my dear fellow defenders of democracy ever discover who wrote this they might start something and the odds are such that I fear for my physical well being.

Irrespectively yours,

M. I. GOODNESS, S. S. U. 27.

CITATIONS

8^e DIVISION
ÉTAT-MAJOR

Au Q. G., le 22 décembre 1917.

Ordre général N° 78

Le Général ALDEBERT, commandant la 8^e Division d'infanterie, cite à l'ordre de la Division la :

Section Sanitaire Américaine N° 14

« Sous le commandement du Lieutenant américain Allan H. MUHR et du Lieutenant BAUDOUY Émile, la Section Sanitaire Américaine 14 a rendu les plus précieux services à la 8^e Division d'infanterie et a fait preuve de beaucoup de sang-froid et de dévouement en assurant l'évacuation des blessés avec le maximum de rapidité et de confort, malgré des routes presque impraticables et fréquemment soumises au bombardement de l'ennemi, pendant les mois de septembre, octobre et novembre 1917. »

Le Général ALDEBERT,

Commandant la 8^e Division d'infanterie.

97^e DIVISION D'INFANTERIE
ÉTAT-MAJOR
1^{er} Bureau

Q. G., le 24 décembre 1917.

Ordre général N° 251

Le Général LEJAILLE, commandant la 97^e Division d'infanterie, cite à l'Ordre de la Division :

La S. S. U. XVII attachée à la 97^e D. I.

pour le motif suivant :

« Sous le commandement du Sous-Lieutenant d'HALLOYS et du Lieutenant américain NEFTEL, les jeunes volontaires américains de la S. S. U. XVII ont fait preuve, dans des circonstances dangereuses, parfois critiques et, notamment au cours des combats de

juin, juillet, août 1917, d'un courage calme et réfléchi et du sentiment le plus élevé du devoir. Sans souci du danger, ils se sont prodigués pour aller chercher, secourir et ramener les blessés sous le feu ennemi et ont rendu à la 97^e D. I. et à la cause française des services dont on ne saurait exagérer la valeur. »

Signé : LEJAILLE.

P. A. Le Chef d'Etat-Major,

Signé : ILLISIBLE.

In addition to the thirteen former members of the Transport Branch of the American Field Service to receive commissions, whose names were given in a recent number of the « Bulletin », nineteen other members have been commissioned as Second Lieutenants, in the Quartermaster's Corps :

Brown, John H.	Ordway, Donald.
Craig, James W.	Ordway, Richmond.
Curtice, Norman B.	Robinson, Frank O.
Curtiss, Charles G.	Scott, John P.
Edwards, George I. Jr.	Travis, Joseph W.
Farley, Charles J.	Wakem, Francis J.
Hahn, James P.	Warner, Goodwin.
Hinrichs, Dunbar M.	Wiggins, John G.
Means, Thomas.	Wilcox, Roy C.
Morrison, Julian K.	

George B. Struby has also received a commission as Second Lieutenant, his name being omitted from former list through oversight.

Theatrical Notes

FOLLIES DE LA GUERRE

Presented by S. S. U. 14 on Xmas Eve.

PROGRAM

Act. 1

Tumbling Toad Toad Strong.

Act. 2

	Cliff Wolfe.
Knocker Bros	Oshen Bennett.
Honens.	W. Humphreys.

Act. 3

C'est la guerre...

By America's Worst Dramatist

W. K. Varney

(cast) .

Wife	Buddy Williams.
Husband	Oswald Brewster.
Baby	Fred Hildebrandt.
Lover	Malc. Law.

Act. 4

Major Headache and His Up-and-Attem Boys

Major Headache	Don Fox.
Privates	Bennett, Martin.
	Warner, Law.

Intermission

Second half

Honey Boy Dockstader' Minstrels

Helava Quartette	F. Skeele, R. Curtis.
	E. Hughes, V. Martin.
Doraldina	W. K. Varney.
Winsome Cousins	S. and M. Law.
Van aud Schenck	S. Chamberlain.
	E. Smith.
Eva Tanguay	W. K. Varney.
African Carpentier	Toad Strong.
Nora Bayes	M. Mac Dowell.
Roy Atwell	M. Mac Dowell.
Mental Marvel	M. Mae Dowell.
Him and It	M. Mac Dowell.

Costumes worn by Doraldine, Miss Law, Miss Tanguay, by Dudgeon and C°.

Programs by Maritz, Humphreys and C°.
Wardrobe Misstress, Mmes Dudgeon.

We chose Christmas Eve for the celebration because of the other outside festivities that would come on Christmas night. The dining hall had lost much of the unlovely bareness of the white-washed walls and workaday cupboard. Greens, a big American flag, the Section *drapeau*, a gay paperstar, and for a crowning glory, an S. S. U. 17 in pine needles, the apex of John Toll's creative genius. And in the corner a tree, evergreen, all dressed up like a *débutante*, all complete except for the strings of pink pop corn which used to raise such havoc with your infant stomach in those former days.

For particulars of the eatables, consult any reputable cookbook. And the way in which the production of the kitchen was balanced by the effective demand of the ultimate consumers would have satisfied the soul of a Seligman.

The guests of honor were: Commandant de Pellarot, Médecin principal, Mignon; médecin-chef, Lacoste; Sous-Lieutenant Blanche; Captain Bigelow and Lieutenant Roberts.

After the physical the social. Beside the packages which had come from home, there was a present for each member of the Section, ranging from the depths of the sublime to the heights of the ridiculous. The Lieutenants, French and American, were not forgotten; we were glad to have the opportunity of expressing our appreciation for what they had done for the Section and for us.

Then the Commandant arose and read « Ordre general N° 251 ». The celebration lasted until late in the evening.

