

June 9 1918

My dear Cecil -

Well how are you - and all the rest of the folks. Seen mother lately and has she rec any word from me yet?

I wrote to her just a few days after we landed and have wondered if my letter got to her. It was not many days after I saw you until I was on French soil - We were kept very much on the move until we landed over here.

The trip across the water was rather tiresome with nothing in particular to see. Had the experience of some pretty rough sea after we were out a few days. But I kept going most all the time. First day of rough weather tho I did not feel any the best. I never saw even so much as a large fish on the way across. Our convoy did not make very fast time coming over - but we had a very fine trip -nothing exciting at all. And every body seemed to be in best of spirits.

What I've seen of France I like. The most beautiful piece of country you ever saw. Every thing green and seems to grow so good.

Where we have one town - France has three or four of them. While you often see things that are very modern - you see some other things that are more ancient than our country can ever produce. Some of the customs of the people would sure make you laugh if you ever happened to see them. So entirely different from anything we are used to or even thot of.

I have visited one of the old cathedrals. I saw one date something like 16 hundred and something. I dont know if it had any thing to do with how old that massive thing was or not - but it sure looked old enough to have been built then. They are not so beautiful on the out side and some parts of the inside but their alters - crucifixes, statuary & paintings and large banners - and all the other things they use there and the flowers too - are wonderfull. It is so large - so old and such a wonderful piece of work you just stand there in awe and look and keep on looking, for the more you are there the more there is to see. You could spend an hour simply studying one painting I saw. Not saying anything about the numerous other paintings and statuary that is just about as good as the one I noticed in particular. It was fully a life size painting of the Virgin Mary - The setting of the picture was beautiful, but the picture itself - I dont know if it was the blending of the colors or quality of the colors or just alone the ability of the painter to produce the effect - but the painting seemed magnetic. I never saw any thing that equelled it.

I've seen some other things that were just as new to me and interested me most as much as the Old Cathedral.

The weather is another feature of note - always sun shine - Read one nite to 10:30 with out lamp.

But the people sure have one on me when it comes to talk. I take a lesson every day in it - yet it comes awfully slow. I have a few idioms I know - but I am studying the grammar with it. So that way I will be able to understand what I know about it.

It hardly seems real I saw you only a few weeks ago. Seems more like a dream. But I guess it is true just the same.

Well I've seen quite a number of French girls and unless I see something very much different from what I've already seen - I am absolutely in favor of the girls back home. Some fellows may want to stay over here - but not me. It would take this place here over 50 years to even catch up with Danville - going some is it not? Talk about things modern and an up to date business and industrial country - you dont realize what a real country you are living in. If this country is worth fighting as much for as they have done and will do yet - then our country is worth all the effort they can possibly put forth.

Cecil - see if mother has heard from me - if not show her this letter & address.

Write when you can - I dont have an idea I will be able to answer all my letters - but you will have more time & opportunity to write than myself and they will be appreciated to the fullest. You know any thing interests me that comes from home. Hoping you feel as fit as I do I am as ever your best friend -

Cpl. Paul B Hendrickson

Hdq. co. 129 Inf.

A.E.F. via New York.