

July 12 1918

My dear Mother & father

Well, just one year ago today I came home on a 3 day leave, which happens to be the last Ive been home. Altho I passed thru Danville and was in sight of home, yet it has been a year now since I was really & truly at home. And that year has been such a long one that army life seems the real, and home either a wonderful dream or something that has been, I hardly know which. I am sure I would enjoy home life again - even tho I am quite used to army life in France. It sure is no joke, being a soldier over here. A fellow gets tried in more ways than one. But I am very, very thankful I am in the kind of infantry work I have been studying so long in Camp. And believe me there is a world of it we know nothing about yet. so you can imagine how busy we are trying to get next to all the real methods used is so short a time. And we are doing remarkably well - considering. We are sure put up against many difficulties - as regards us personally. At times we have to eat most anything and sleep most any way. And again we are quartered in fairly good places and our mess comes better. So it is a mixing of the good and the bad that keeps us employed; first in one way then in another.

The last few days has been very rainy making our work rather dissagreeable.

We are real sporty soldiers at times - wear wrap leggings - and I have a very good moustache now and have carved me a beautiful cane - small stick and the handle is a curved one but of a knarled piece of wood and sure is pretty. I polished it with bacon grease and a brick bat. well you may laugh but it is as fine a piece of work as you will see in a show window.

I haven't moved from where I was when I wrote the last letter of July 4 - about the longest I've been in one place here in the last month or more.

Well some think we will be home by Xmas. I wish I could fool myself into believing that too. For it sure would be nice to spend Xmas at home. But as I said in my other letter, I am afraid the Jerries are too thick headed to learn their lesson by that time.

Strange as it may seem - I have not been out with any of the young ladies of France yet. But the Fact is - I cant see the good time with a woman I cant make understand anything I say to her.

I got a letter from Pearl Smith today. she says her Bro Sid that I met in Alvin is now over here. I sure hope I get to see him. But not much chance.

Jove but I will be glad when I rec the first letter of yours - stating that you have rec. at least one of my letters. It puts you rather in the dark just writing and wondering if you will ever rec. it. makes me think of a little girl writing to Santa Clause. The letter is real enough - but you are very much in doubt if it will ever get there. How are all the Friends at class. Was glad to hear of Sr Lopp & Mary. How are Sr Roughton & Mr. & Mrs Fulton. I sure would like to see Sr. Fulton again.

Pearl said that Aunt Laura was some what worried about not hearing from me. I expect Pearl thinks by this time Ive gone back on her, for my first letter to her was returned to me and I dont know how long it will be before she hears from me.

I dont know but that some of our mail has gone down on some of the return boats. I sure was sorry to learn the Big old Boat that brought us across just went to the bottom.

Have you seen Maude lately. I dont know what you people think of the letters I write back - but I have a hunch some of them sound rather queer. Well I have been over here some time and yet have no money. When we do get paid I ought to have some to send home for I have 25 francs lent out and a couple months pay more than due now. I paid 40 cents for a pair of shoe strings. Are you & father getting along comfortable yet? I wonder how high prices on things are becoming over there. I dont need money here as eats are all we need and you cant buy that for there is none to sell - so I therefore dont need money. Well tell all that ask that I am fit as can be - let my bros. & srs. know how I am for I write to you about all I can write so there is no use repeating it to them and paper is hard to get and just so many envelopes issued. Well - wishing I was where I was a year ago today. I will close - with all my love for pop & mom - I am as ever the baby of the Family -

Cpl. Paul B Hendrickson