

Jan 31 1919

Dear father & mother -

Well mother, the great wheels & machinery of the universe are speeding ruthlessly forward, turning out the days of this new year with the comparative efficiency of a war factory working over time. January gone and the shortest month of the year before us.

Before I have time to realize it - March will be here; then my next realization will be spring gone & summer here.

There will be a shortening of the days? It must be so, for I hardly find time for three meals any more.

Now that the war is over, they ought to cut down on the time & working force of this great plant and not continue to turn out days at such a rate of speed as the last few months have shown them capable of doing.

If it keeps on like this, I am going to be quite a young man yet, at 60 years. Will it continue to go so fast when I return home? - no doubt it will for if ever time would go slow it would be now. And I can hardly realize the speed of it, under the circumstances.

We are rehearsing on a show that will be put on the stage, I presume, before you get this letter. I am an actor in a court scene. I don't suppose that appeals to you as being of a soul inspiring nature or suggestive of a comedy - either. But - alas - it is both. Besides that we have about four other acts that I am sure will go over in good style, then if we are lucky and don't have to come home too soon, maybe we will get a chance at the next furlow and have a couple weeks rest or sight seeing whichever we choose to make it.

Mother a few days ago I rec your letter of Dec 30 and today, the one of the 18th comes bobbing up - with Uncle Alvins & Aunt Dora's part in it. Am so glad you sent those along. Will try and send them some cards of Vianden at least.

In your letter of Dec 30 - you mention looking over the page of 1918 - and how blotched & blurred it looked. If yours looks like that, what do you suppose mine looks like.

Well it would not bear close inspecting I am afraid. I cannot even say I've tried as hard as I might have, but I must also remark - that for a few months during that year I thot - whats the use. For it is a bit discouraging when you cannot count an hour ahead. When you don't know when you lay down at nite if you are going to get up of your own accord next morning or be blown to pieces out of your home as I saw 8 Ossies have happen to them. Parts of them was up in the trees where majority of their clothes & equipment was. Just an incident of Jerries nite bombing by planes and happened not far from me - in the same patch of woods. When I get home I will try and describe - if possible - the sensations you experience during an air raid.

But since Nov 11 - I have taken heart and have tried much harder to straighten up a bit and look into the future with more hope than I have done before. There seems to be some use now. At present we are liable to no more risks than the average citizen over here. Our health is looked after more than if I were a civilian.

And if it is possible for us to be mustered out in the next few months, it will not then be too late to work for the education along the special branch I wish for so much.

I have spells when I feel despondent, for it seems we never will be mustered out or even be sent home. It actually seems so far in the future you feel foolish to sit & think of what you will do when you get home.

But yet, you sit & think, just the same. And I have decided to spend some little time when I arrive there, in getting acquainted with my people - who I have not visited with for so long. So much has happened, and if you are not changed one particle, I may be so different that you would not seem the same person to me - not speaking of you personally - but of my friends & acquaintances more.

But it seems so useless - us over here. Every one is dissatisfied & grouchy. Discipline is enforced more & even made stricter. And the noble few who possess the authority, abuse it in so many cases & in so many ways - that it is very very hard to have the required respect for them. They are popular here, but wait, when the people at home learn from the enlisted men the things that are bound to come to the surface - some one is going to be decidedly unpopular. We say nothing now. I am still a sworn soldier and will remain as such until I receive a discharge from service - but that does not signify that I have no brains & cannot remember.

If any one man is responsible for getting us home & mustered out soon - he will be considered by us - as one of the greatest men of today. Patience - god - we need it most every hour of the day.

For Guy and I to be at home together once more - mother - that touches a tender spot in me - I cannot express the feeling it produces there, but if it ever can be realized, it will be one of the memorable happy hours of my life with out doubt.

Mother, you have done so well writing, during month of Dec. I feel ashamed, they have been such a source of enjoyment and looked forward to with such pleasure. Keep it up if possible, for if ever we needed encouragement it is now. Your loving son.

Paul Hendrickson. Hdq. co 129 Inf. A.E.F.