

The Mount Airy News.

VOL. XLI

MOUNT AIRY, NORTH CAROLINA, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1918.

NO. 22

LETTERS OF INTEREST FROM OUR SOLDIERS

Letter from Lieut. Vance Haynes to his sister, Miss Ethel Haynes, of Mt. Airy, N. C.

France, Nov. 13, 1918.

Dear Ethel:

I have just completed one of the most interesting trips of my whole experience over here. I left Paris last week by rail and boat to England thence to London and flew back to Paris across the English channel. While flying over the channel I wore a life preserver in case my motor should stop and I should be forced to light in the water. It was a very clear day and before I started across I climbed very high to enable me to get started in the right direction. Coming over there were many ships and steamers under me. They looked like toys—at one place I could see England, France and Belgium at the same time. Had to light for two days on account of rain. By the way just as I was landing in France they had heard the good news of peace, so they were celebrating, shooting guns, cannons, rockets, etc., and raising such a commotion I thought they were shooting at me thinking I was a Boche, but soon they stopped till I had time to land.

Arrived here just outside of Paris yesterday. Went into Paris last night and you bet they were celebrating peace. The girls were kissing every American they came across. The streets were crowded with people singing, dancing, drinking—sure some wild night.

It is a great feeling to know that our mission has been accomplished that we can return feeling that we've done our bit.

The wings enclosed were my first "Brevet." They have flown all over France and over the lines. I can fly every ship that is used at the front, in fact have flown most every type. Perhaps some day will do the "loop the loop", "Emmerman turn" etc. for you all. The good luck card is from a girlie friend in Paris.

Very glad to receive your letters.

Letter from Sephas Lewis to his sister Mrs. W. F. Lambert, of Brim.

France, Nov. 3rd, 1918.

Dear sister:

I will answer your letter just received date Sept. 29. Well I will never forget the date as that is the day the big drive began. If you could have seen me that day you would have addressed your letter to St. Peter or somewhere else, for you would never thought of me getting it. But I have told you in a letter previously written of the 29th inst, and also the 8th of Oct. Well the 9th found us lined up ready to go over the top at the break of dawn, so off we go and the Boche begins with his whistlers, as we call his light artillery and machine guns. Well things looked blue but we could look behind and see thousands of boys coming forward and you know you have got something behind you and the Boche knows it too, for he begins to get busy. Some fight to the last, some come with hands up calling Kamerad, others retreat. Well in the evening of the 9th we were near our objective when we came near a town. Some of the buildings were on fire. There came an order down to my Lieut. to send a patrol in this town so he called me to take the first platoon and go through the town. Well I thought I was getting enough of this town work as I was a country lad. I was quite content to stay out of these towns. But I could only salute and, yes sir, and go. I got my men well scattered before we got there for I kindly suspicioned something. Well I think the Boche knew what was

heretofore we haven't had concerning what we write.

Well it is a most beautiful morning, is pretty cold but the air feels so fresh and good, the trees and grass are as white with frost as if it had snowed. The wind hardly ever blows here so you know what frosts we have these still long nights. Seems like the nights are longer here than they are over in the States.

Well pap, I'll try and tell you something of my trip for this first time. I only stayed in Camp Merritt two days and nights, then we boarded a train and went to Hoboken, N. J. Had to march about a mile to the docks where the Monster Transport was lying waiting for her load of men. There was no cheering, nor no crying, everything quiet as we passed along, finally we came to the gang planks. Well I'd heard all kinds of tales about what the boys would do when they got there, for I'd heard that was the hardest thing a soldier had to contend with was to walk up that gang plank. I confess I was a little bit nervous, but I believe it was from joy, for I know I was real proud to go aboard that vessel, and every other man seemed to be in the same spirit. Our Ft. Morgan bunch was the first to load on, went on board Sept. 24 about 11:30 A. M. Well they continued to come on board until she was loaded. Don't know for sure how many we had on our vessel but about 3,500. I was in line going to supper—I heard a whistle blast and felt the ship quivering from the vibration of her engines—we were off! I never felt prouder in my life. I hurriedly ate my supper and went up on the top deck and a prettier sight I never witnessed in my life. We had cleared the docks and were steaming out down the river. Could see hundreds of ships of all sizes and, in the meantime it had been cloudy, but just then the sun came out and we stood there watching for new things, and the clouds or fog seemed to rise like removing a veil from something and there were the tall skyscrapers of New York glistening in the sun-light. It sure was a beautiful thing to witness. After about 30 minutes ride we passed the Statue of Liberty, something I had longed to see. There was a faint cheer, a shout and then everything was silent for we heard the whistle for "everybody on deck". Of course most of us were already there, but we had to be as quiet as possible, for it was a drill, something we all hated, but was for our own benefit. It was teaching us how to get on deck and to the life boats in case we were struck and had to abandon the ship. As soon as we were dismissed I beat from decks down and went to bed. I never slept better in my life than I did that night. Well I could write a big book of the happenings coming over but haven't stationery enough, ha! Anyway I got sick, what I mean S-I-C-K, two days out. It lasted me for about 24 hours. I had a severe headache, the grippe, and I think the Spanish flu, from the way I felt, for I sure felt bum most of the way over. I went into the hospital once and asked for something for my cold. They run something up my nose and down my throat, gave me a good spraying with something—anyway I didn't go back anymore, but we all got a spray in the nose and mouth every day to prevent the flu.

The sixth night out we got rammed by another ship. Well of course naturally most every one thought we were struck by a torpedo. So the alarm was given "everybody on deck quick." Well we had been having these drills every A. M. about day-break so I thought it was a drill call. You see I was sleeping so sound that I did not feel the shock at all.

We were supposed to sleep with our clothes on, also life jacket, belt with canteen full of water, but I had my shoes off (they were hurting my feet) life jacket and belt, so by the time I got these on I was the last one I think out of our apartment, except the man punching us along half asleep. I looked at my wrist watch, it was about three o'clock in the morning with no lights.

Finally I got on the top deck and everybody was lined up waiting for orders. Of course there wasn't much of a line for they were packed in there like sardines, but when the cold wind hit me full in the face I felt some better, so I began to ask what was the trouble and grumbling about getting us up there so soon for drill, but I didn't ask many questions for over behind some big boxes lay some blankets that some of the boys had been sleeping on up on the deck, so me and another big fellow lay down on these blankets and went to sleep. I made out pretty well for a few minutes until some officer made us get up. Well he had been gone but a minute when we laid down again for I was sick and I guess had a fever. I remember everything well but I didn't care for anything so I "flopped" again and stayed there until the sun came up then we were allowed to go back and eat breakfast. After eating I began to ask questions, they told me we had been rammed and several fellows were killed and several jumped overboard. Well of course I couldn't hardly believe it, but later found out it was true.

It was a bad looking hole it knocked in, but luckily it was mostly above the water line, so they made it into port O. K. without any further accident.

We landed the 5th of Oct. at Brest, France. It is in the extreme north-western part of France. I was feeling fine by this time. The city sure did look pretty from the ship where we landed. We marched about three miles to the camp. We all were about wore out when we got there for we were not used to marching after being at sea 8 days. The women and children were out to see us, little boys and girls would run up and want to shake hands with us. I was fatigued almost so I handed one little boy my rifle, he took it and marched right along behind me for some ways, he sure looked proud too. The gun was almost as big as he was. Finally I took it and thanked him. He smiled, saluted and left me. The children in France are exceedingly bright but most of the poor little fellows look dirty and ragged.

We stayed at Brest two days then went to Angers. That is a pretty good town of about 80,000 population. We were divided there and sent to different organizations. I was sent here in a trench mortar outfit, as replacements. Most of the boys who came here have been assigned to batteries. We are now at Vitrey. It is a small place but in a pretty country. We are in the eastern part of France, it is about 70 miles to the front, or where it was when we came here. It isn't but about 75 or 100 miles to Switzerland from here, so you see I am quite a distance from home.

I haven't seen Paris, we went south of Paris, came through Tours, came through Rheims also. I have been here since Oct. 19th and like this place O. K. We had a dandy feed this morning. French fried potatoes, sweet corn, hot biscuits, jam and butter. We are going to have beef steak for dinner.

Well pa, there is lots of things I could tell you that might interest you that I've done since I came here, but have not the space, don't think I can get all this in an envelope now. Anyway the war is over. I've never had to go to the front and know your prayers also mama's have been answered, for I know you never wanted me to have to go to the front, if it could be possible for me not to. But we must take our hats off to the brave boys who have been in the trenches for over a year. We must also sympathize with the fathers and mothers who have had their sons killed in battle, for you know they loved them as good as you love your son, but I would have given my life, and will yet if necessary for my country. But of course

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I am thankful and happy the war is over and I can soon return home to tell the story of my adventure to you face to face. So don't worry about me, for I am feeling fine now and there is nothing to hinder me from soon being at home if I can just keep my health.

Must close, give my love to all the family. Here's hoping you will have a Merry Xmas and happy New Year.

SCRIP OF FRENCH NOW WORTHLESS.

Money Issued by Cities Occupied by Germans Useless.

Paris, Dec. 7.—France faces a stupendous financial problem.

How can the nation redeem the hundreds of millions of worthless paper scrip in the repatriated regions?

Towns evacuated by the Huns are penniless. They gave all their money to pay the fines levied by the Germans. During the Hun occupation rich and poor alike used specially issued scrip as a medium of exchange.

Now they have been liberated, and their paper money isn't worth the paper it is printed on.

The liberation of Lille, the largest French city wrested from the Huns focused attention on the financial problem.

The people of Lille alone have 350,000,000 francs of the worthless scrip. That is nearly \$70,000,000.

Financial experts estimate that the total of municipal paper money, issued during the emergency of Hun occupation in all the towns of the repatriated regions, aggregates more than half of a billion francs.

In the case of Lille scrip of every denomination was issued. Paper bills of as low as 10 centimes (two cents) were issued. The Huns took away all the real money.

Huns Carried Off Government Notes.

This situation has existed four years.

The municipal authorities printed the special currency as a necessary medium of exchange. The Germans recognize it until just before they finally evacuated the city. Then they threw all the scrip back on the inhabitants and took away every Bank of France note (government currency) in Lille.

"Most of the storekeepers and the other inhabitants have all their wealth in this scrip", said M. Leon Godert, municipal councillor of Lille, in a summary of the situation to French authorities.

"A native of Lille cannot even take a train because the railway will refuse his paper money."

"Storekeepers who have used up their stock of merchandise cannot renew them."

"Industrial concerns that have sold their products and have been paid in local money can no longer buy fresh supplies of raw material."

"No Paris merchant can dream of shipping merchandise to the liberated regions. He knows that the only thing he can be paid in are worthless paper bills."

"The matter is being investigated by 15 missions sent to Lille. But no solution has been reached."

"It is imperative that French money with buying power be sent to the liberated regions. They need it badly."

Hundreds of thousands of francs must be provided and apportioned somehow.

"The municipal scrip must be placed aside for the present. Later a way must be found to redeem it. Otherwise the people of Lille and other invaded cities will have to bear the entire burden of the fines levied upon them by the Germans."

Temporary relief from financial stress has been given Lille after the method of relief given refugees returning to France from German bondage through Evian, a town on the Swiss border.

At Evian every person holding local town scrip is given 200 francs a month to live on. A peasant with a few francs in municipal scrip gets the same relief, for the present, as a one-time rich man holding hundreds of thousands of francs of the emergency currency.

The Hun Being Fed out of His Own Spoon.

Amsterdam.—The British authorities in charge of the occupation in the German zone assigned to the British Army have ordered all German men to raise their hats to British officers, according to an official announcement in Berlin.

They must do similarly when the British national anthem is sung, the announcement adds.

PRESIDENT VISITS THE FRENCH CAPITAL

People Greet Mr. Wilson as Representative of Ideas now Drawing upon Europe—luncheon Tendered by President Poincare.

Paris, Dec. 14.—This is a greater night in Paris than armistice night. The city is ablaze with illuminations; the boulevards are thronged with crowds, dancing and singing and throwing confetti. The Place de La Concorde has been turned into a great dancing pavilion where American soldiers are favorite partners. America is the dominating word here tonight.

President and Mrs. Wilson made their entry into Paris this morning greeted by wellnigh half the population not only of the city but of the surrounding districts. They were attended by President Poincare, Premier Clemenceau and others among the most eminent figures of France. Flowers were dropped around their carriage; airplanes winged overhead; guns sounded. But observers were impressed with something more than the magnitude and beauty of the reception by some quality of warmth that made it different from the visits to Paris recently made by the sovereigns of the allied nations.

The imagination and interest of France has been stirred by the President of the United States as no other leader beyond the borders. All classes and parties in this country have united to pay honor to the United States through its President. They greet him as the representative of ideals now dawning upon Europe.

"In the eyes of the immense crowds welcoming him," says the semi-official Temps, "President Wilson represents to a invincible force—the material force which permitted the war to be won and also the force which will sanctify peace."

Thirty-six thousand soldiers, the flower of the French army, lined the avenues from Dauphine gate to the Murat mansion, which during their stay in Paris will be the home of the President and his wife. Alpine chausseurs and Souaves fresh from the battlefields of Champagne and Colonial troops from whose uniforms the mud of the Somme had only a few days ago been removed, occupied the post of honor. They gently but firmly kept order amongst the enormous crowds which ever pressed forward in eagerness to have a closer look at the guests of France.

President Poincare's luncheon at Elysee palace at 1 o'clock was attended by 200 guests. The presidential party arrived at 12:45, passed through the lines of the 11th Alpine chausseurs who acted as a guard of honor in the court.

The President of France and Mme. Poincare met their guests and President Poincare giving his arm to Mrs. Wilson and President Wilson to Mme. Poincare they proceeded to the drawing room where the guests were assembled. Then in accordance with the French custom, Mr. Poincare presented the men and Mme. Poincare presented the ladies to President and Mrs. Wilson.

The tables, set in the form of a horseshoe, were decorated with red and white roses and large bunches of parma violets. The two Presidents were seated side by side with Mme. Poincare on President Wilson's right and Mrs. Wilson on President Poincare's left. M. Loubet, a former President of France, was to the left of Mrs. Wilson.

On the table in front of the President was a mirror on which rested a ship of blue and white violets with two little American flags as the mast-heads. The other table decorations included two airplanes, also made of violets.

The guests included the Presidents of the senate and chamber, Premier Clemenceau and his ministers, former premiers and former foreign ministers and the marshals of France.