



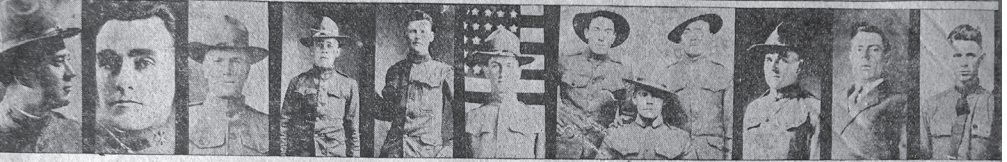
LETTERS HOME
1918-1919

JOHN EDEN MARTIN & ROBERT WALTER MARTIN



R. Eden Martin
Editor

HERE'S WHY MOULTRIE COUNTY IS CONFIDENT GERMANY



Lieut. Joe Eden Lieut. Harry Moran Sergt. Murry Shaw Edward Batson W. C. Lawler George Hollingsworth Elmer Maxson Andrew Larkin Lewis Maxson Fred Fisher Jack Pruett Ben Reed



John H. Batson Oral Dolan Elmer Ferguson Capt. C. M. Wil-Edgar Finley Elmer Dawson Lindsey Pruett Frank W. Swisher Fred Bischer Lieut. Edn Mar-Joseph L. Davis Lieut. W. P. L. Vidson



Sergt. Fred Tank-Sergt. Bert Gregg-Sergt. Claude Sergt. Edward James Effer Guy Grigsby Clyde Saire Robert Henniker Walter Yates Homer Wallace Corp. Homer Cwn. Abn. Adams Corp.



Sergt. Russell Moore Harry Hinnebock Harry Holtha Noah Johnson William McDonald Louis Mayhew Marian W. Sanders Homer Wallace



Bo C. Dolan Roland Denton Harry Hollenback Lt. Y. Harold Sgt. W. Martin Fred Boyce

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JOHN EDEN MARTIN & ROBERT WALTER MARTIN

For my family

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JOHN EDEN MARTIN & ROBERT WALTER MARTIN

Compiled and Edited by

R. Eden Martin

Chicago

2012

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Bob Martin's World War Helmet, 1918

INTRODUCTION

If ever there was an unnecessary war, the World War from 1914-1918 was it. The “Great War,” as many called it, was the product of greed, fear, and stupidity, spiced with personal animosity and large doses of ego.

During the run-up to the War, Kaiser Wilhelm – in promoting Germany’s interests in commercial expansion and development of naval capacity to protect that expansion – managed to frighten the leaders of France, England and Russia. That fear nudged these countries away from normal more-or-less friendly relations with Germany into treaties of mutual protection. The alliances thus created, instead of deterring war, helped to bring it on.

The Austro-Hungarian empire, Germany’s polyglot ally, lit the fuse. Irritated with her neighbor, Serbia, because of the latter’s share of the territorial spoils when Turkey was ejected from Europe, and troubled by her own dissident minority groups, including her Serbian population, Austria in the summer of 1913 was itching to attack Serbia. This menace to Serbia aroused Russia, partly out of sympathy with fellow Orthodox Slavs, and partly out of Russia’s own ambitions in the Balkans.

In late June 1914, a Slav nationalist in Bosnia – not Serbia – assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian throne. While groups within Serbia may have encouraged or even helped the assassin, there was no evidence that the country of Serbia had anything to do with the murder. Nevertheless, Austria seized the opportunity to make demands on Serbia that it believed Serbia could not satisfy. Austria made its demands knowing it had a “blank check” of support from Germany.

The Austrians were thus shocked when Serbia – against all expectations – accepted their demands, excepting only those which would have amounted to giving up her independence as a country. But

the Austrians wanted war. So – confident that they had the support of Germany (and perhaps anxious to act before they lost it) – the Austrians gave orders to mobilize their army.

Austria's mobilization was the ignition. Other countries then felt compelled to mobilize in response. A few leaders in France, England and even Germany tried to prevent the mounting catastrophe. But when Austria declared war against Serbia on July 28, the pre-war plans and mobilization schedules trumped all efforts at restraint. The monarchs of Austria, Germany and Russia were unwilling or unable to override their military. As a result, they slid into a massive conflagration that ended in the devastation of their own countries and the destruction of their monarchies – and which led to the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in Russia and, only a little later, by the Nazis in Germany.

As the mobilization schedules clanked into gear and the war declarations were delivered, the Germans – implementing a plan developed by Count Schlieffen, Chief of the German General Staff from 1891 to 1906, for attacking France through Belgium – sent an ultimatum to the Belgians demanding free access for her troops. The German invasion began on August 4, 1918.

The Schlieffen plan called for holding the Rhine against a French attack which the Germans presumed would come east through central France, while the weight of the German strength would sweep like a right hook through Belgium and Northern France, south past Paris. However, Moltke, Schlieffen's successor, did not stick with the plan. Instead, he allowed his right hook to veer inward before reaching Paris, thus exposing his forces to a French counter-attack. This came at the Battle of the Marne in early September 1914. The German attack stalled. Then both sides – Germans and French – sought to overlap and flank each other to the west, resulting in a “race to the sea,” which ended with the opposing lines running roughly on a diagonal from the northwest to southeast. These lines were then strengthened by the construction of trenches, thus setting the basic positions of the opposing forces in France which prevailed, subject to ebbs and flows, over the next four years. The details, as well as developments on the eastern front, in Turkey, and on the high seas, may be found in many books. Two of my favorites are Liddell

Hart's *The Real War, 1914-1918* (London, 1930), and John Keegan's, *The First World War* (New York, 1999).

The United States stayed out of the war for the first two and a half years. Indeed President Wilson was re-elected in 1916 in part on the ground that "he kept us out of war." But American public opinion gradually swung in favor of intervention on the side of the English and French – partly because of the German conduct in Belgium, partly because of the sinking of the passenger liner *Lusitania* in 1915, and largely because of the German resumption in the spring of 1917 of submarine attacks in the North Atlantic on all ships heading toward Britain. The Germans took this step knowing that it would almost certainly bring the United States into the war, but believing that cutting off (or down) the American flow of munitions and supplies to the Allies was more important – and that it would take several months at least for American military support to make any difference.

Germany made it easier for Wilson to decide for war by sending a colossally stupid telegram to Mexico in mid-January 1917 offering an alliance and holding out the possibility that Mexico might get back Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. British intelligence decoded the telegram, which was soon made public. Nevertheless, it took Wilson several weeks to reach the decision to go to war. He reached it only after concluding that armed neutrality – arming merchant ships and providing conveyances – would be ineffective, and that the autocracy in Germany would have to be defeated in order to make the post-war world "safe for democracy." The President obtained the necessary resolution from Congress on April 6, 1917. See John M. Cooper, *Woodrow Wilson* (New York 2009), 362-403.

When the United States entered the War in 1917, two brothers from the small, central Illinois town of Sullivan – Eden Martin, a National Guard lieutenant, and his younger brother Bob – were caught up in it.

John Eden Martin ("J.E." or "Eden") and Robert Walter ("Bob") Martin were sons of I.J. and Rose Eden Martin, of Sullivan, Illinois. (The editor of these letters is the nephew of Eden and son of Bob.) Their father, I.J. Martin, had grown near Sullivan, and made a living first as a newspaper editor and printer and later as a preparer of abstracts of title. The Martin and Eden families had lived in and around Sullivan for many

decades, so there were many Martin and Eden relatives.

I.J. and Rose Eden had five children who survived to adulthood. (Rose died November 7, 1907 – a decade before American entry into the War.) Beginning with the oldest, the children were:

Olive, born April 29, 1887, studied English literature and related subjects at the University of Illinois, but did not receive a degree. She spent her life as a teacher – first in the Sullivan High School, and later in the LaSalle-Peru schools. She never married.

John Eden, born April 19, 1889, graduated from Sullivan High School in the spring of 1908. After high school, Eden worked in the offices of the Sullivan *Progress* weekly newspaper. In 1913 he began law studies at the University of Illinois, but was able to continue these studies for only about a year. He married his cousin, Eathel. In 1913, as a member of the Illinois National Guard, he was called into service with the rest of his company.

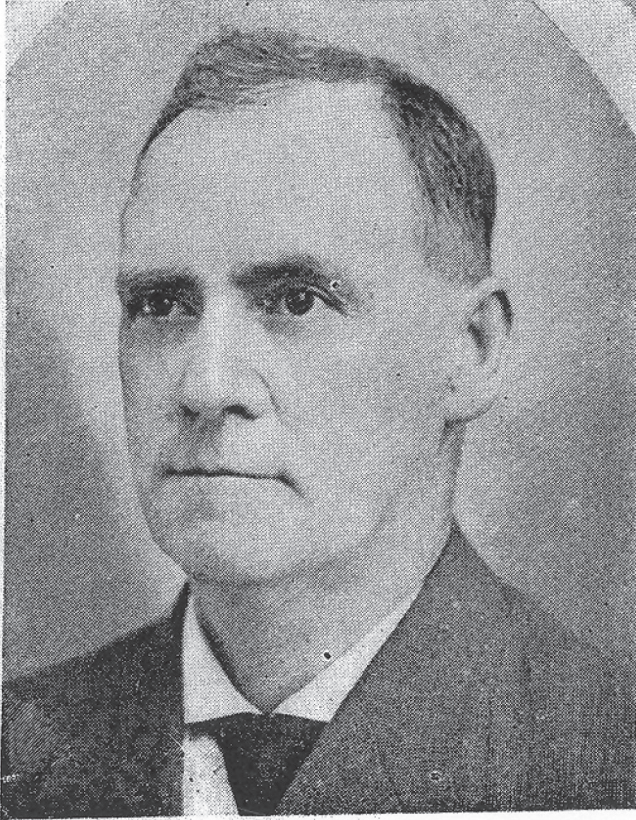
Joel Neely, born January 13, 1891, graduated from Sullivan High School in 1909. He married Leone Shockey in 1911. Joel Neely was known as “Neely” and “Bill.” Like his older brother Eden, he also briefly studied law at the University of Illinois in 1912-1913, but by 1914 he was back in Sullivan working at the *Progress*. When the United States entered the War in 1917, Neely was running the newspaper and was exempted because of his marriage and young child.

Robert Walter, born February 16, 1895, graduated from Sullivan High School in 1913. He learned the printing business working at the *Progress*. He briefly attended the University of Illinois in the fall of 1913, but soon dropped out. From early 1916 until late 1917 Bob studied law at Kent Law School in Chicago and worked part-time at various printing jobs. When he saw American involvement in the War coming, he dropped out of law school and returned to Sullivan, where he worked for a few months with his brother Bill at the newspaper office until he was called into military service.

Mabel, born January 8, 1899, after graduating from Sullivan High School in 1916 was a student at Illinois State Normal, from which she graduated in June 1922 – the only one to earn a college degree. She taught briefly, then married Bill George and raised a family.



Ivory J. Martin in 1910



I.J. Martin
Manager of Moultrie County Abstract Co.,
Sullivan, ILL.

About the time of the War.



John Eden Martin



Joel Neely Martin



Robert W. Martin, 1913

Eden was shipped to France in the spring of 1918, and Bob followed in the fall. The following map showing the position of the armies in 1918 is from John Keegan's excellent one-volume history, *The First World War*, John Keegan (New York 1999).





By 1918 when the Martin brothers arrived in France, the Germans had launched a major assault against the French and English armies. With the collapse of the Russian armies on the eastern front, the Germans were able to redeploy their forces westward – to make one great, and perhaps last, effort to win the war before millions of American soldiers would arrive, giving the Allies numerical superiority.

The German attack was begun on March 21, 1918, inflicting the first defeat on the English army since trench warfare had begun in 1914. Then, for reasons hard now to understand, the Germans shifted their strategy from that of a single, massive thrust to that of a three-pronged attack in which none of the prongs was strong enough to achieve a breakthrough.

In early April the British launched a counterattack, relying heavily on Australian forces. The Germans responded with their own push against the British in Flanders near Ypres. But the German tanks were checked by British tanks. During the three weeks following the German attack on March 21, the German army lost over 300,000 men – or one-fifth of their strength. The April offensive in Flanders cost them another 120,000.

In late May, the Germans made another attempt – pressing to within 56 miles of Paris, near Chateau-Thierry. The Americans were now in action, and counter-attacked at Belleau Wood. The Germans called a halt on June 3, having lost another 100,000 men.

In mid-July, German General Ludendorff, still hoping to take Paris, committed the forces he had left against the French. At first, the attack appeared successful and German soldiers were able to cross the Marne. But within a few days the French countered with an assault of their own at Villers-Cotterets, and the Germans were forced back across the Marne.

By late July the Americans had four million men either in action or in training. By the end of August General John Pershing had deployed the First American Army south of Verdun; and in mid-September he launched the first all-American offensive of the war, inflicting a severe defeat on the Germans.

By early fall, if the handwriting was not on the wall, it was at least in the mind of General Ludendorff. The Germans fell back to their

final line of resistance, the so-called Hindenburg Line, which followed the line of the original Western Front. In late September, the combined British, French and American armies began a major push forward all along the line. Ludendorff concluded that he had no alternative but to seek an Armistice. Both his armies and civilian morale were disintegrating.

Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated on November 9, 1918. The Armistice followed two days later – on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month – November 11, 1918.

* * *

During 1918 Eden and Bob wrote letters home from training camps in the United States and later from France. Eden entered the service first and was in France several months before Bob. He served in the front lines, unlike Bob, who was in the Engineers behind the lines. Also, unlike Bob, Eden was married. Perhaps for these reasons (or maybe because he enjoyed writing more), most of the letters which appear below were written by Eden.

Their surviving letters are in one of two forms.

First, some of the actual letters themselves – those written to their father I.J. or to their sisters (Olive and Mabel) – survive in their original condition. These were saved by I.J. and then by Olive and Mabel, and ultimately found their way from my father and Mabel to me. (It is of course possible that other letters – which I do not know about – are saved in family archives maintained by other Martin descendants.)

Second, other letters written by the two soldiers were passed on to their brother Bill, who during 1918 and 1919 was the editor and publisher of the Sullivan *Progress Weekly* newspaper. Bill published excerpts from these letters in the newspaper, probably because he thought they would be of interest to readers, many of whom had sons or relatives of their own in the Army, and perhaps also because he had pages to fill. Eden and Bob no doubt knew that some of their letters would be published; so it is not surprising that some of the letters were embroidered with patriotic themes likely to appeal to local readers – and perhaps future voters.

Portions of the surviving actual letters written by Bob to his

father and sisters were previously published in the *Martin Family History* (Chicago, 1990). However, the letters excerpted in the pages of the *Progress* were not available to me until 2011. Hard copies of the *Progress* from 1918 apparently have not survived; issues from that year exist only on microfilm which were quite difficult to obtain or read. A single complete bound volume of the *Progress* issues from 1919 did survive, but was filed away in the surviving Sullivan newspaper archive. The pages were fragile, so that each turn of a page caused further disintegration.

In 2011 – with the support of Robert Best of the *Moultrie County News Progress* – I was able to gain access to these hard copies and to have both the microfilms and the hard copies digitized and put on external drives in searchable form. I then arranged to have these made available in Sullivan and on the internet. Thus, today anyone in the world with access to the internet can search and read these early newspapers.

To sum up, the letters or excerpts from “Eden” or “J.E.” Martin and his brother “Bob” which appear below come from two sources: family files (originals), and the pages of the *Progress* (as excerpted by brother Neely). Where an original letter is quoted, it is identified as such, and the date given is the date the letter was written or mailed. Where the excerpt is taken from an issue of the *Progress*, it is identified as such and the date of the newspaper is given. Where I had *both* the unedited original and the published version, I have reproduced the former.

The order in which the letters appears is as close to chronological as I could get it. In a few cases, where the newspaper did not give the date a letter was written, I have had to guess where it fit in the chronological order.

In their letters Eden and Bob occasionally refer to two other soldiers serving with the American Expeditionary Force in France, “Edgar” and “Arnold.” Edgar – Edgar Ivory Martin – was their first cousin, the son of I.J.’s brother Joel Kester Martin and his wife Belle Eden (sister of Rose Eden). Arnold – William Arnold Harpster – was the son of I.J.’s sister Nancy Emmeline and her husband William Ellis Harpster.

I

1918

Progress, June 13, 1918

In a letter received from Lieutenant J.E. Martin by his wife a few days ago, the story was told of the trip of the 130th regiment across the Atlantic. There was practically no seasickness in the membership of Company C, members of the crew on the transport saying that the troops on the trip were remarkable in this respect.

Lieutenant Martin told of feeling a bit seasick on the third day at sea, but just as the sickness came on him, another officer came up to him, and remarked about not having yet seen a seasick soldier on the voyage. Lieutenant Martin says he made up his mind that he wouldn't be the first man sick, and that in a short time he was feeling fine again. . . .

The boys could not help but feel safe even in the danger-zone, according to Lieutenant Martin, for the convoy was so strong that it looked as though a submarine could not possibly get within range without being spotted.

Of course the letters did not give any hint as to where the boys were landed or to what location they are now in behind the lines.

* * *

Progress, Thursday, May 23, 1918

Saturday morning 17 more class one men will entrain at 11:45 over the Illinois Central for Camp Shelby, Hattiesburg, Miss. Plans are being made to give this contingent also a royal send-off. The list for Saturday's contingent will be selected from the following men: ... [List includes Robert W. Martin, Sullivan.]

One of the publishers of *The Progress*, R.W. Martin, will go to Camp Shelby, Hattiesburg, Miss., with the Moultrie county draft contingent Saturday of this week.



Sullivan's inductees, May 1918



Robert Walter Martin at the time of induction into the Army in 1918.

Progress, Thursday, May 30, 1918

On Saturday 17 men entrained over the Illinois Central for Camp Shelby, Hattiesburg, Miss. They went from here to Mattoon where Saturday afternoon they boarded a special train which carried them through to their destination. Leaving as they did on the day set aside as red cross day for Sullivan, they were escorted by a more than usually large crowd to the station. Robert W. Martin, one of the publishers of *The Progress*, was selected as captain for the contingent on the trip to the south.

Camp Shelby is a national army camp and the boys of this contingent will likely spend all of their training period there.



From the *Sullivan Progress*

* * *

Company C has arrived safely in France, was the word which brought relief to Sullivan and Moultrie County people Wednesday morning. Many who had relatives and friends in the company had been expecting Monday to hear of the arrival of the company in France, and as each day came and went they became more anxious.

Word of the arrival of the boys came in a card from Lieutenant John E. Martin to his wife in Sullivan saying that they have just arrived in France. "I am feeling fine and will write to you just as soon as possible." Lieutenant Martin and Lieutenant Loren Batson are in Company L, composed largely of ___ young men, the two Sullivan lieutenants having been transferred to Company L shortly after Company C arrived in Texas.



From the *Sullivan Progress*

* * *

Progress, June 6, 1918

The *Progress* has received a letter from Robert W. Martin who went in the May 25 contingent of drafted men to Camp Shelby, Hattiesburg, Miss. He said that all of the Moultrie county boys were together at the time his letter was written, but did not know whether they would remain together after they completed their time in detention camp.

They had been drilled in some of the squad movements, and were glad that the drill work had not been very heavy at first, for the Moultrie county boys found the climate so hot that it was almost unbearable along about midday. At night it becomes cooler and makes it fine for sleeping.

As they neared camp on the way down they passed through miles of timber and saw no human beings with the exception of negroes. When they reached Hattiesburg, they had to march out to camp, getting there about 10 o'clock in the evening and were all ready for the mess that was served for they had had nothing to eat since noon.

The trip down was tiresome, because contrary to expectations they were not supplied with sleepers and had to get what sleep was possible while riding in chair cars. But the entire contingent remained in excellent spirits all the way down and are rapidly getting used to the ways of the soldier.

* * *

Letter dated May 29, 1918 – Bob Martin to his father, I.J. Martin

Haven't written much for I haven't had much time or anything to write about. They call us up to the head of the company street about every ten or fifteen minutes, just for the fun of it, I guess.

So far I don't think much of the army. The feed is getting a little better, but still I don't like it. Haven't had any sugar or salt since I got here and positively can't drink the coffee. But I didn't expect to like it so I'm not disappointed.

Got along fine in all the drilling we've had. All the boys seem to

be in pretty good spirits, but I think none of them like it. We took our physical examinations this morning and were vaccinated and had a shot in the back. Everyone passed I guess and most of them have sore arms by now and sun burned also. It gets awful hot in the daytime but you need a blanket at night, and they say it isn't hot yet. Well, I'll have to close as it's about mess time.

Sincerely,
Bob

Address: Pv't Robert Martin
 Co. No. 6
 Detention Camp
 Camp Shelby, Miss.

* * *

Letter dated June 7, 1918 – Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

Have been sort of late in writing to you but I don't have much time to write. They keep us going about all the time and when we do have a few minutes off, there are always lots of things, such as bathing, washing clothes, shaving, etc. to be done.

It was sunny today. We got the worst workout since we've been down here and I think it was about the hottest day. After drilling all morning and a good part of the afternoon we closed with a half mile jaunt back to the company, which [was] followed immediately by about a half hour of the most strenuous exercises I ever took. At the end I was so weak I could hardly raise my arms above my head and all the other humans in the company were in the same condition.

Skipped mess this evening and went over to the canteen and got myself something to eat, consisting of a small pie, a ham sandwich, some ice cream and a bottle of pop. The bunch are a disgusted lot and in one case I know of they are going to spoil the makings of a perfectly good soldier. How a man can go thru this and have any great love of country left in him I can't understand. In lots of cases I'm afraid it would turn

real honest patriotism into anarchism.

Guess I've prognosticated (if that is correct) on the service about as much as is good for one letter, but you can tell the wide world, and I'll tell anyone who asks me, that I think less of the service every day, and my thoughts on the subject at first was a minus mark. If you were treated like men instead of slaves it wouldn't be quite so bad.

Expect I'd better close before this runs into politics. Write as soon as you can and explain to everyone that it would be lots of writing for me to answer all letters immediately, and tell them to write.

* * *

Letter dated June 12, 1918 – Bob Martin to brother Neely (Bill) Martin

If I remember right, you still owe me a letter, but so does everyone else, and as I have the afternoon off, I write to you. Just got last week's paper yesterday and the Chicago papers today. Don't know why I didn't get the *Progress* sooner for Baker got one from Hagerman a couple of days earlier.

Just got my third and last inoculation or "shot in the back" as it is popularly or unpopularly known, and as it often puts the recipient on his back, we are ordered to remain in quarters for twenty-four hours. Several of us were revaccinated as the first one didn't take. One or another of the three shots in nearly every case has made the soldier sick, and many have been taken to the hospital, and according to rumor a few have not returned, but all the Moultrie boys have come thru' alright except in a case or two where they were exposed to the heat too much, when it was necessary to help them back to their quarters.

We are scattered all over the company now, and in only a few cases are more than one of us in the same tent. Herman C. Wood and myself, because we are about the same height, go into the same tent near the head of the company street, so we don't have to "double" [march double time] every time we are called out. Some of the short ones tho are still at the lower end, and should be a good half mile by the time we leave here.

There are lots of rumors about what is to become of us when we do leave detention. We don't even know when we'll leave. The Sergeant says owing to the measles no telling how long we'll remain and the 1st Lieut. says we'll probably all be cleared out by the first of the week. We were all allowed to signify our preference as to the branch of service. I took a long chance and chose the one I knew least about, the coast artillery. Did think I'd like the field artillery, but there is a regiment of them next to us and as anyone but a chaplain would say, they catch hell. Don't know if our choice has much to do with it, but if it does, I might get out of this bake oven.

Some of the fellows saw that piece in the paper last week where the writer, whoever he was, said it never got hotter than 90 in Hattiesburg, and you should have heard the howl. It has already been warmer here than I ever saw it in Illinois, and they say the hot weather doesn't commence until July. The report was that they would move us all to Ky. but I guess there is nothing to it. Now we hear they are going to move the artillery because the heat kills so many horses. If they do, some of us will probably go along for that is where most of us will land.

The grub is getting a little better and the work a little harder. We were over this morning, before you were out of bed, watching some trained soldiers drill and take exercises. Don't see how I'll ever get that much "pep" into this old carcass of mine.

I hear there have been some happenings around Sullivan. Baker told me about it before the paper arrived. I'm sort of a confidant of his. He's getting along alright so far, and if he happens onto a noncombatant job, he'll be alright, but otherwise he might get in bad or as the officers say, S.O.L. (Translate it yourself – personally – if not delete it). Officers don't claim to be repeated in parlor conversations.

The authorities down here evidently look upon the whole crowd of us as slackers for every one from the corporal to the high moguls give us a talk on the necessity of this war, German atrocities etc., every chance they get. During a rest period the other day a corporal of not the highest intellect gave us a fine line and explained everything in detail. They surely know more about military drill than the erstwhile civilian, but as the oft told story comes down the line from the high officers and

is finally related by the corporals, it is exploded. It takes a smart and talented man to bring out the fine points.

Well, I guess I'll have to close as I've written quite a bunch for me. You might try writing once in a while yourself and be sure and send the paper. Expect you are having quite a time if things are as rushed as they were.

P.S. By the way, I'm buying cigarettes now. Baker cashed a check for \$5. Three of it is left. Think he is still holding the check tho. If you see fit to send any cigarettes, Lucky Strike are the best.

* * *

Letter dated June 17, 1918 – Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

It's been several days since I last wrote, but was waiting until the detention period was over. Our three weeks was up yesterday and I guess the whole company was moved this morning. Consequently the Moultrie boys were scattered all over the division.

You can imagine my surprise when I found out yesterday that I had been assigned to the 113 Engineers. It was not a very happy surprise either for I had heard that the Engineers did most of their fighting with a pick and shovel. Since coming over this morning this branch of the service has taken on more agreeable aspects. The first piece of good fortune was in being assigned to the Headquarters Co. All the members of the company say it's the best company in the division and I'm inclined to think they are talking facts. Think they got me over here because of my printing experience, but don't see how that would be very beneficial unless it developed into something.

None of the other boys from Moultrie got into this regiment altho I knew a few that came. However, none of them came to this company. Frank Baker and one or two others went to the 137 Machine Gun Battalion. I don't know where the others are.

Everyone was glad to get out of detention for they certainly worked us hard there and the non coms. they had over us were almost unbearable at times. We haven't had anything to do here yet and

everyone says there isn't much to do, but expect us green ones will be drilled quite a bit for we have a gun and therefore have to learn the manual of arms. The mess also is a good deal better over here and all the fellows are fine so far. Most of them are from the old Indiana and West Virginia Guard.

Three shots in the back for typhoid didn't affect me much, but most of the fellows suffered a good deal from them. Didn't think I was so tough. Have been vaccinated twice and neither one of them took. If bullets have no more effect, I'll be immune.

Everyone I've talked to since coming over here seems to think we won't be here long, but none know where we'll go. Some say north and some east. They may know nothing about it, but they may be good guesses.

The only thing I'm worried about now is how to remain in this company. Some of the fellows will be transferred to other companies, I feel sure, but I'm satisfied here, although it would have been about the last place in my mind if I had been picking, for I knew nothing about it.

Tell all the folks my address for I don't know when I'll get to write again. Haven't used much of that sugar yet for I couldn't drink the so-called coffee even with it. Maybe we'll get better coffee here. Have Neely be sure and send me a paper and tell him I'm not broke yet, but neither am I affluent.

* * *

Progress, June 27, 1918:

The Moultrie county boys who were recently inducted into the army and sent to Hattiesburg, Miss. have completed their period of detention at Camp Shelby and have been assigned to various units there. Bob Martin, one of the publishers of *The Progress* who is there in camp writes that he has been assigned to the headquarters Co. 113th Engineers. He is the only Moultrie soldier transferred to this company. . . .

His letter in part follows:

“After being here a few days, I wouldn’t trade with a private in any organization in the whole U.S. army. First I think the engineers is the best regiment and second, the headquarters company is the best company in the regiment. What our duties are is still a mystery for they are still drilling us separately. We are equipped about the same as infantry and drilled about the same, but only in case of emergency, as I understand it, do we take the place of infantry.

“The officers and men are all fine fellows and each one has a certain line of work at which he is especially efficient. A private in the engineers is supposed to be able to take quite a large bunch of dough-boys (Infantry) and boss the making of most anything with whatever material happens to be at hand. Sounds interesting for me, doesn’t it? Think maybe I was assigned here with the idea of teaching me lithography, but I don’t know much what that is.

“We drill two or three hours a day and that is quite a bit better than the working out we got in detention.

“The mess here is 500 per cent better than what we got in detention.

“By the way, the Colonel gave us a little very interesting information last evening at retreat. He said the regiment had received its warning to be ready to move with France as its destination I guess, and although he didn’t say for certain when it would be, he made it very clear that it wouldn’t be very long. The regiment will be under quarantine for 10 days or more before they leave and let this be a warning to you that I don’t want to start across broke and as preparedness is the by-word of a nation, it might be well to follow that idea. There won’t be any need to generally publish the fact that I’m figuring on going over for there is no one else from Moultrie county in the regiment.

“Let me (or may I not) impress it upon your mind that when I was in Detention, it would be hard to find anything that I disliked more than army life, but since coming over here, I’m just as satisfied as can be, only for the heat. Strange to say I’m getting the fever to go across and they can’t make it any too soon for me. If I knew a fellow like me and he’d tell me that, I’d hardly believe it, but it’s the honest fact in this case.

“Well, I can’t spend all of this holiday afternoon writing. Think I’ll look around and see if I can find any of the home boys, as I know what regiment most of them belong to.

“Write as soon as you can, and tell anyone else to also.

Robert W. Martin
Hq. Co. 113th Engineers
Camp Shelby, Miss.

* * *

Progress, July 18, 1918

Several letters have been received from Lieutenant John Eden Martin, Co. L., 130th Infantry, since the one published in the *Progress* last week, three received by his wife and one each by his father and sister. In a letter to his wife, dated June 12 he says that their drills and hikes and other military activities are about the same as they were in the United States.

“I am getting used to what at first seemed so peculiar in the customs, buildings etc. and am settling down into routine army life. I as yet know nothing of the war and have no idea of when, where, or how I am to play my part in it. Right now I am not with anyone from home. Lieutenant Batson is temporarily away and so far as I know there is no one here from Sullivan. But there are plenty from nearby country and we sit and talk at times of Cairo, Peoria, and even places in neighboring States as though they were all in the same back yard. At this distance petty boundaries and a hundred miles or so seem very insignificant.

“I was talking to a British officer the other day who said that after the U.S. began granting leaves of absence, arrangements would be made for American soldiers to visit England. But it is rather early to figure on leaves of absence, and I do not imagine they will be plentiful soon; and they will be much in demand. I would much rather visit a little woman and baby back in the states.”

On Monday July 15, Mrs. Martin received two other letters, one of them begun the 19th of June and finished on the 20th and the other

written June 24, but both of them are postmarked the 28th, which shows that outgoing mails are not frequent. In the letter of the 19th, he says,

“I have written several letters but I doubt if they have all reached you. I wrote one day before yesterday and left it on the table with some other mail and my orderly is not sure whether he mailed the one to you or not. As I write I have the picture of you and the baby on the table before me. It seems quite home like.

“I have a very comfortable room with fairly well-to-do people, and they are very nice to me. One of the women can talk a little English and her daughter teaches English in a near-by town. I have not seen her. She was home Sunday but I am seldom there except at night.

“In another letter I told you about the older lady and the picture of you and the baby. Well, the next morning I found some of the finest strawberries fresh picked and nicely arranged on some large leaves spread on the stand table. I accused my orderly of putting them there, but he plead ignorant. Yesterday the same thing occurred, and my orderly said he was there when the old lady came in with them and said they were for ‘the officer.’ As I went away, I bowed to the old lady and said, ‘merci beau coup’ (if that is the way to spell it).”

In the second part of this letter written June 20, he tells of the difficulty he has in finding time to write often, a paragraph at a time between interruptions. He writes a fine paragraph about the pleasure he anticipated of being home with his wife and baby and the blessing of the right kind of a peace when it comes, and adds:

“The more I think of such things, the more I want to fight. As I have said, my return ticket reads via Berlin, and the sooner we get there the sooner we’ll get home. Of course, it may be a long struggle but through it all I am going to keep that picture before me, the easy chair, my wife and baby, and the newspaper filled with the news of peaceful and quiet life.”

On June 24 he says,

“I wrote you a letter several days ago which as yet I have had no opportunity to mail. I will try to get another written although they will be mailed at the same time. Since writing, we have moved again and one day’s march was the hardest I have ever figured in, but my company

came through in fine shape and they sure have staying qualities.

“This place is as beautiful as any I have seen. I am staying with some wealthy and apparently well educated people. Lieutenant Batson is with me again and it seems a little like old times. There is a little girl here, ten or twelve years old, and I tried to cultivate her acquaintance. She was backward until I showed her the picture. Then she was delighted. She kept saying ‘pickaninnie.’ I never knew that was a French word, but I find it commonly used for baby.

“I haven’t heard any more from you but am expecting a bunch of letters at any time and am so confident that they will come soon that I am waiting for them with some degree of patience. I read every paper I get hold of, which is not many. I read in a London paper today of the Italian victory over the Austrians and I notice that the English papers are strong in their praise of our army. I share the hope that sometime we may join with millions of hard fighting allies and go through the lines of Germans as though they were so much sawdust. I want America to become thoroughly aroused and then we can end the war in a blaze of glory. In that sense I want ‘peace at any price,’ not in the sense the phrase was first used.

“I am not expecting to come home in the near future. If I remain here a year I shall not be grievously disappointed for I expect nothing else but that will not be too great a price to pay for all that we expect of life in the future. It is getting late and I must close for this time as I am expecting a hard day’s work tomorrow. Don’t worry about me, for I am coming along fine.”

In a letter to his sister, Lieutenant Martin says,

“I wish you could see this beautiful country – in peace time of course – drink some of this splendid milk (perhaps you thought I was going to say something else), eat some of these delicious strawberries (I say that with a shrug of my shoulder and a French wave of my hands, expressive of joy) and enjoy life as I am sure one could have in peace time with plenty of money to live on. In many ways it is simply wonderful. The fields are beautifully green – hills, woods, chateaus, cathedrals, everything is beautiful; and they say that just such country as this is being fought over in many places.

“The weather is too chilly, the days very long. It gets dark at 10 o'clock. This has been a great trip. I didn't get to see England ... Those of our company who did say it is more beautiful still.”

* * *

Letter dated June 25, 1918 – Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

Possibly I've owed you a letter a longer time than I should, but I write a letter about every day and sometimes can't keep track of who I wrote to. Last evening I wrote to Mabel. She had written to me, but it was delayed and so was pretty late getting here. About one letter a day is the limit for the work covers most of the day, except a couple of hours at noon; and it is so hot here and the flies are so bad, a person has to hunt a hole. It seems to be one of the strange features of fate that when you come up with papers or anything of the sort, the drops of perspiration rolling down your face and arms feels just about the same as flies.

We have been issued the new overseas rifles copied after the Enfield and are getting some piece of new and up-to-date equipment every day. This evening it was a new rain coat. The guns had been dipped in grease and it was some job getting them clean. We already knew squads east and west, and are now learning the manual of arms. It's not easy by any means and I for one have several blisters on my hands.

It's a known fact that our regiment and possibly most or all of the 38th Division are going over in the near future. The Colonel (who is a fine fellow) told us that much at retreat and added that he didn't think we would be on the way over before the last of July. That is sort of indefinite and I don't have much idea when we'll leave here. I don't think there will be any chance of a training school although there is one here. It would be awfully hard work anyway owing to the heat and I don't know whether I'd want to tackle it or not. This is hard enough here. We are being trained with sighting apparatus now and expect to go to the range before long. Have also had occasion to try the gas mask, and don't know which is the worst, the gas or the mask.

I'm perfectly satisfied with the Engineers if they can use me. It's not altogether a pick and shovel brigade for they are well trained, and if you remember the newspaper report will probably see some fighting. It would be sort of disappointing to learn all this and go clear to Europe tho' and then not get to do any actual fighting. I'm not the least bit worried for there are comparatively small casualties and I've got as much chance as the next one if my training is as good, and I don't intend to slight that any. As the Colonel says there will be lives lost here the next week or two by those who don't pay attention to what they are told and shown. Don't worry any about me for I feel capable of taking care of O' Bob under any ordinary circumstances.

It's getting so dark I'll have to close for this time. Most of the tents have lights, but we haven't yet. By the way, Uncle Joe was going to deposit the balance of my income in the bank and let me know of it. Will you see if he has, and let me know. If he hasn't, a slight intimation wouldn't be exactly out of order.

Write as soon as you can and I'll do likewise.

* * *

Letter dated July 3, 1918 – Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

Got your last letter this morning and have some time now to answer it. Everything is about the same in this army, only we drill less and work more. It doesn't keep us very busy tho, and I'm just wondering if it's going on this way indefinitely.

The rumors still persist in making the rounds. This morning it was that we had been sentenced to 16 more weeks of this camp. Yesterday we were going to leave the last of the month. About the only thing I know for certain is that they don't pay very often and stocks would take a big slump if my financial rating were generally known. It can now be estimated at 50 cents and only 3 stamps. Would like to have a little money when we start across, if we do, but don't expect there'll be any warning of when that will be. The government acts as conservator over most of the pay after we get into foreign service, and

if a fellow was broke when he started over, he'd be broke until he got back home. Even if there is nothing definite about moving, the woolen clothes keep coming in, and this morning the regiment got 3500 pairs of wrapped leggings, two pair for each man. I understand no one but officers are allowed to wear them in this country.

This afternoon the company goes to the infirmary for a foot examination, and it may develop into a general examination for overseas service before it is through. One of the artillery regiments left a day or so ago, presumably for Houston, Texas, but one never can tell. The artillery section of the officers' training camp has been moved to Camp Taylor.

It's just about as warm as ever in the daytime, but the last two nights, I've woke up at about 3:00 a.m. about froze, and we have two pretty good blankets. Don't mind the hot weather much for we don't work hard enough to hurt a child, but that may not last forever. Haven't even got a horse yet and am not feeling sorry, for besides the work that goes with them, they are not the most pleasant critters to be around at times.

The *Progress* has been coming pretty regular and it's a great help, but there is seldom any war news leaks in here and where it does, it's a week old. We heard about a little trouble with Mexico but haven't any idea how serious it is. Neely doesn't write very often, but I suppose he is quite a busy man, if business is keeping up. The paper has been looking prosperous and I presume job work will be fair. He should be sure and make some arrangements to fill Arnold's place if he goes to school.

I hear from Mabel pretty regular. She sent me a copy of the sketch and news you spoke of. She also expressed a desire to get back home.

I don't mind it here, only of evenings when there is nothing to do but wait for taps. It gets pretty lonesome then.

Guess I'll have to close. Don't worry any about me for things have turned out pretty lucky, and luck is about all there is to trust to in the army.

* * *

Progress, August 1, 1918

Mrs. J. Eden Martin received two letters from her husband, Lieutenant Martin this morning. The first was written July 3 and the other July 5, and both were mailed July 6. Therefore they were twenty-five days on the way over. In the first letter he says,

“I am having the time of my life. I have had plenty of work as I had in camp back in the U.S. but for the past week it has been like a vacation from physical labor, and I am developing my mind which as you probably know is in more need of development. However, my hours of work and study are short and the surroundings are fine. After I have given my mind as much stress and strain as I consider safe, I can sit in my room and gaze at the tide coming up into my front yard and write to you as I am doing now. Can your finest fancy beat that?

“When I finish that pleasing occupation, I have the choice of going into a British officers club room, listen to a piano, victrola, or read, or sip French wine or English ale. Or I could walk along the beach with my blue over-sea cap resting jauntily over my left ear, a swagger stick under my arm – really you don’t know what sort of a man I could be here. Or I could sit down to an afternoon tea, eating shrimp and toast – wait just a minute, dear, while I adjust my monocle!

“If I were to keep on with this nonsense you might believe that I had been drinking ale or wine, so I would better change the tone. Anyway, the wines here are sour and the ale weaker than American beer. (Lieut. Martin does not say how he knows this.)

“The English and French officers say that ‘water was made to run under bridges.’ The wells are deep and old and contain all sorts of trash and rubbish. Pure water is hard to get, but I take chances with it rather than drink the other stuff. I can hardly drink their tea, and the coffee tastes like embalming fluid smells. In the French villages I can always get good milk, and eggs are plentiful. And other food is first-class and doesn’t cost too much.

“I haven’t been getting any mail lately but I have been away from my company, and may find some when I return. From what I have heard from home I conclude that Sullivan and Moultrie county

people are awake to the war in fine shape, and I suppose it is the same all over the country – at least I hope so. The best way I know to get the best support for us over here, is for the entire nation to lay aside selfish interest and display that fine spirit which we understand prevails in Sullivan and Moultrie county.

“If every county in America could send one man over here to observe conditions and the intensive methods employed and then have him return home to preach the doctrine of self-sacrifice and united effort, it would accomplish wonders.

“Over here there is no fence corner uncultivated – no vacant lot idle. No weeds are allowed to grow to seed and nothing wasted. The habit of thrift is inculcated into all of us day by day, just from coming into contact with the French people.

“This is the 3rd of July and I would like to be in Sullivan for the celebration tomorrow. I don’t know whether we are to celebrate here. I hear the day is to be celebrated in England. I mess with the British officers, and the commandant told me we were to have something special.”

In the letter July 5th, he says,

“I will soon return to my company so I would better take every opportunity of writing now for I will be very busy there. At least I always have been heretofore. Judging from the newspapers and from what I saw here, England and France both celebrated the fourth in fine style. American, English and French flags were displayed in profusion. I saw a parade of boy scouts, each boy carrying a small American flag. A large banner of red, white and blue colors stretched across the street and from what French I was able to read, I translated, ‘In honor of the defenders of our country.’ On the other side was, ‘Confident of Victory.’ We had a special dinner at the mess and the officers drank a toast (light wine) to the king and to the president of the United States, with a great deal of fine ceremony. (Here follows some fun in describing the ceremony and social customs of the afternoon teas and the eight o’clock dinners at the British officers mess. Lieut. Martin says that the British officers say they cannot understand ‘the American officer’s way of roughing it in the army,’ but he says there are some things about their

eight o'clock dinners that he cannot understand, although he has learned what spoon or fork goes with this dish and that. He expresses a longing 'to get back to the American atmosphere of his own organization.')

"There are some funny mistakes made in addressing letters to the soldiers. Men would write to their friends and tell them to address to the 'same company and same regiment.' The other day Lieutenant Batson got a letter (from a girl friend) addressed, 'Loren C. Batson, 1st, Lieut., Same Company and Same Regiment.' The letter had gone all over western Europe trying to find 'Same Company and Same Regiment.' Some leave off the Company and Regiment because they are not on the return card on the envelope. Probably it would be a good idea to have the correct address for overseas troops published in *The Progress* to correct any mistaken ideas that may exist. It would be too bad for the boys in Company C to miss getting their letters through incorrect addresses. The correct form of address follows:

Name of Soldier
Rank (if you know it)
.... Co., Regiment
American Expeditionary Force, via New York

* * *

Progress, July 25, 1918

Bob Martin who is in the 113th Engineers at Camp Shelby writes, "I do not believe I will get home until the war is over, as my regiment has been in training ten weeks and they have transferred all who are not physically fit to home guard or labor regiments, and apparently every thing is 'about set.' We do not get much news about the war here except what is published especially for soldiers to read (Americans kill or capture stuff). It is near the time that our Colonel said we might leave, and I hope he was right for the picture of France that Eden gives in his letters is much better than camp life in Mississippi."

* * *

Progress, August 29, 1918

Lieutenant J.E. Martin of the 130th infantry, in a letter received this week, says that he has had his first experiences in the front line trenches.

Progress, September 5, 1918

Lieutenant J.E. Martin writes his wife as follows in a letter received the first of the week.

“When I wrote you a few days ago I had received four letters from you and two from my father, which brought up my average for the month pretty well. I told you then that I didn’t imagine that I would get a chance to write you again for a few days and I was right. I have been rather busy but today I can get a letter started, probably finish it tomorrow, and I hope then I will be able to get it mailed. I had to stop right in the middle of the sentence, and it is now the ‘tomorrow’ of which I spoke.

“What stopped me was the frequent visitation of German shells in my vicinity. We had orders to move back and I thought probably if the shelling continued my departure might be more difficult, so Abel and I moved out while moving was good. To talk of shelling probably sounds mighty dangerous but it wasn’t so bad. A shell drops a block away and you think nothing of it, for when you consider it there is so much territory in which it might fall that you stand a very good chance of not being there. Also certain areas are probably shelled at certain times and I make it a point not to be there.

“Anyhow, we moved back where all the shelling you hear is the distant report and the stories the boys tell of their experiences. I was up in the line a few days and it was interesting – nothing like what a person would imagine and nothing at all like the impression one gets from the stories we are told. I guess one reason is we are told of the worst moments and nothing is said of the quiet moments when perhaps all you hear is the song of the larks and all you see is the sun-light sparkling on the dew in the wheat fields and meadows and such commonplace

incidents of ordinary country life. At such times you can't imagine there is a war and you are in the midst of it. Then after a while a big gun sounds in the distance and you hear the shell whirring overhead and presently hear the sound of its explosion in the distance. Then gradually the war wakes up again.

"I was in a gas attack also but I won't say much about it except that it wasn't so bad. Fact is they thought there would probably be another attack and I staid several hours longer than I should in order to experience it but there was none. My headquarters were only a few hundred yards from the enemy but he didn't bother me much. One afternoon I went up and took a look at him but it was a disappointment — nothing so fierce as I had expected. I am telling this so you won't believe I am in every exciting scrap that the newspapers describe or that trench life is that and nothing else.

"A friend of mine has started back to America and said if he came to Sullivan or near there he would look you and the folks up. I don't suppose he will be anywhere near there, but he said anyhow he would write you a note telling you how he left us here. I should have been pleased to have gotten on such a detail because it would have afforded an opportunity to see you and Marcia Rose as well as the rest of the folks, but I would hate to have a feeling that I got it because I couldn't stand the 'gaff' over here. I suppose such details will leave every few months and after we have been through the trenches a few more times, the chance will still remain and be better still, perhaps, of visiting the States on some special duty or other. There are not very many officers, I suppose, who have more real reasons for welcoming such an assignment if it should present itself.

"I read in the *Progress* what some one had to say about the war, and while I don't doubt but what they were telling the truth about certain spots and certain times, still it isn't all like that, I'm sure, because I have never seen it. I know for a fact that there are such cases but they are exceptional and I wouldn't want you to think I was so occupied all of the time. At best it's no parlor trick existence and is full of hardship, but such things all sound worse when described than they really are. Just compare such a story with any in civil life and you'll see

what I mean. You can see something happen and be mildly interested perhaps and then read all the details later and let them be emphasized and colored up a lot, and it seems much worse.

“I don’t know whether I told you or not but I got a bunch of letters and one contained those pictures taken at Ella’s. They were just fine, and I haven’t gotten anything recently which I appreciated like I did them. They are just the right size too, and I could carry a hundred like them in the one bill fold. Of a necessity I must burn letters – that’s orders, for if I don’t, no telling who might get hold of them and no telling what bad they might make of what they learned.

“Well, I find I must close if I expect to get this mailed today. Take good care of yourself and the baby, and don’t worry about me. Just look forward to the victorious close of the war and those ‘lived happily ever after days,’ and when the time comes for my return to my wife and baby, none in the army will be happier than I.

With Love,
John Eden Martin.”

Editor’s [of the *Progress*, Joel Neely Martin’s] Note:

Lieutenant Martin is an artist in the matter of producing the impression he wishes made; in his effort to allay the fears and anxiety of his wife he almost makes you believe the war expedition is a sort of pleasant outing.

After taking a turn in the front line trenches and settling down to rest a convenient distance back of the line, he and those with him were driven out by enemy shells just as he began writing his letter. But the next day he sees nothing alarming or unusual in the incident.

Lieutenant Martin is a student and instructor in gas attacks and gas defense, so it is not remarkable that he remained in the trenches overtime after one attack to witness the effects of a second assault. In a former letter, he said that he had had his first service in the first trenches and that nothing had happened. Therefore, this gas attack was a later experience.

There is no use of disguising the fact that our boys are in

the battle and that we should strengthen ourselves to bear whatever sacrifices we are called up to meet. The wounding of Lt. Batson in the same company with Lieut. Martin and in the same regiment with Company C. shows the seriousness of the situation.

The Illinois guards constitute the 33rd division and are in the third army corps. Newspaper accounts of the battle indicate that portions of the third corps are fighting with the British.

* * *

Letter dated August 7, 1918 – Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

Just got your letter this morning, and as this is sort of an off afternoon, had an opportunity to answer it immediately. Things have been pretty busy around here lately, and it's a known fact that the entire division is preparing to move – where is the question. A good part of my time is spent working in the kitchen, which isn't a very pleasant occupation as I've probably told you before. Spent the day Monday in Hattiesburg, supposed to be working on a souvenir book the regiment is printing, but didn't do much. Guess I'll go in again in a day or two for they want to finish it up in a hurry.

Olive had told me you were expecting to run for county Judge so it wasn't much of a surprise to get your card. No matter how confident you feel about the outcome, my advice is to make a thorough campaign as far as that is possible. Your idea about becoming a lawyer is alright for when I get through, as I expect to, I'll need a good partner to make the firm a go.

The *Progress* deal [selling the newspaper to Ed Brandenburger] looks extremely good to me. I'll leave my interest of that in you and Neely. Do as you think best with it and it's alright with me.

I really don't believe we'll be here past the 12th or 15th, so if you or Neely are going to get me any money you'd better hurry. I'm not quite broke yet, but don't know when we'll have another payday. If Neely can't raise it and I suppose he's a little short, try to borrow some. It doesn't make a great deal of difference how much, if you borrow it,

but would like to have \$25 or \$30 at least – may be gone for a long, long time, you know. It might be a good idea to telegraph it.

I'll do as you say about writing cards when we leave here, but about all you'll know, is what direction we'll go, for our destinations will be a mystery.

Haven't had a chance to have any pictures taken. There is a photographer here in the regiment who has been promising me for a long time, but never had time. If I go into town, will do it, if they don't cost too much.

Guess I might as well close for there is nothing more to say that I know of.

* * *

Progress, September 12, 1918

In another letter received this week from Lieutenant John E. Martin, he says in part:

“As you probably know, I have been in the forward area for several weeks during which time I have been in the front line three or four times. For the most part, as I have said before, it has been not nearly so bad as description had led me to believe. About the only phase of the enemy that I have seen has been his artillery fire and this has not often been dangerous. I did have one interesting experience with it at one time.

“Another lieutenant and I had been out to an outpost position and while coming back we got into haphazard bombardment by the enemy. We moved with some haste to a flank hoping to get out of it, but as luck would have it the shells followed us. I expect we threw ourselves into a dozen shell holes for protection from the shells which burst sometimes close enough to throw dirt upon us. It made me very nervous once when we heard a shell coming and couldn't find a shell hole. But luckily it didn't burst. A fellow soon gets so he can tell by the sound of them whether they are coming close enough to be dangerous. When they do come close, they have a wicked sound. It is very much like when

a cattleman swings a black snake whip – only more so. One hears the swish and whistle of the thing coming down, getting louder all the time, and then comes the explosion as when the whip is cracked.

“I didn’t know the ground at all, having never been over it, and the lieutenant with me also admitted that he was lost. We walked back and forth while he was undecided and for about an hour the shells were dropping at intervals. Finally I told him that I didn’t know where we were going, but for my part I was going somewhere, so I took a compass bearing, located the enemy (I knew anyhow by their lights) and started in the opposite direction.

“The lieutenant says that I walked pretty fast, but you know I always was a fast walker. I wasn’t walking fast for the pleasure there was in it though – for my health. I had bruised my shoulder and scratched myself up a bit by my falls into the shell holes and had slightly wrenched my back so walking wasn’t pleasant. We went through a destroyed village, crossed some old German trenches into an erstwhile no man’s land, and finally reached what had formerly been the allied line. We were halted by our own troops several times and got directions from them, and after a round-about tour of two or three miles came up to the rear of where we wanted to go.

“The next morning I was as sore as I ever was following a football game in high school. My glasses were broken – also my fountain pen and pencil. Otherwise I was O.K.

“Of course I was not in the worst position that I may expect during the war, but such things do not happen often and we feel that we can take care of ourselves.

“The worst thing about such an experience is the feeling that you can’t fight back – off miles and miles away someone is straffing you. You can’t see him – hear him – nor do you have the slightest idea where he is. The one consolation is that he doesn’t know where you are either and if he hits you it is an accident. You try to guess where he is going to hit next and then make it a point not to be there. Don’t think from what I have said that it is one-sided. Prisoners have said that we don’t know what artillery fire is, and I believe it for they get theirs with a vengeance.

“Well, I didn’t start out to write a treatise on the war.

“If it were wise I could write you of many experiences over here, but many of them would not meet with the approval of the censor, and might do us serious harm were they to reach the enemy agents, so I’ll save them until ‘apres le guerre.’

(Here follows some matters of a personal nature and Lieutenant Martin closes his letter as follows.) “When the time comes that I meet the boche face to face, how much more zealously will I grapple with him when I know that he is all that stands between me and that home of which I dream in far off Illinois.”

* * *

Progress, September 19, 1918.

A number of letters from Lieut. John E. Martin to his wife have been received which contain much of interest but which are too long and too confidential for publication in full.

In one letter he cautions her against “imagining all sorts of hazardous undertaking and situations” and says “again I wish to assure you of my safety and well being. My health is almost perfect. As to my moral welfare, one of my closest friends is a jolly little chaplain. We have some hot arguments sometimes – always friendly. Yesterday I let him believe I was a hardshell Baptist and I argued for their doctrine so well that he finally gave up and almost came around to my position. Then I told him I was more of a Christian Scientist and we started all over again. We have warm discussions of many other subjects which have no bearing on the work we have in hand over here. It appears comical when you come to think of it.

“We know only what is happening around us for we don’t often see papers and so we know little of the general situation. Our hopes are high – always have been. It doesn’t cost anything to anticipate being back home again before many more months are passed. I get out my little collection of photographs each night and look it over. It is almost like a visit with you all.

“I understand that the newspapers in America are enthusiastic

over the war outlook. We shall try to keep them that way. The more cause we give the people at home for rejoicing, the more likely our early return home will be.

“I didn’t imagine that Carl [Martin, brother of wife Eathel?] was over here yet. I imagine he will get plenty of training before going into the fight. Perhaps we will be able to end the war before that time comes. Anyway, don’t worry for while war is hazardous, it is not nearly so bad as what one sometimes leads you to believe. We are all taking our chances but our chances are good. They will be better if by continuous effort and backing at home we are able to bring it to a close in the coming year. If we put millions of men in the fight we will yet bring millions out at the end, and the more we put in, the sooner the end will come. Every man who enters the army should come over here. It will make a better man of him. We want to end the war with a decisive victory and every man should want his share in it.”

In another letter also written from the front lines, Lieutenant Martin says:

“I am not undergoing any great hardships. Of course I am not sleeping in feather beds and we don’t have ice-cream socials, but in the life of a soldier it is far from bad. We want to whip the Bosche – do a good job of it even if it takes a year or two to do it. We would like to be home now, but how much more we shall appreciate the reunion at home when we know that by our sacrifice we have an end of all wars for all time and can feel that coming generations will never have the trials of the present time. If we can accomplish that, [] can we say is too much to have paid for it. A cheerful way of considering it is the way I heard John Murphy put it when he said: ‘It will be a nice trip – coming back.’

“Some queer things have happened since I have been in France and I suppose there would be little harm in mentioning some of them. At one time we were quartered in some barracks that were built for training Napoleon’s soldiers. At another I was in the building from which William the Conqueror started on his expedition to England nearly eight hundred years ago. We camped one night in a wood where Caesar and his Roman legions were camped nearly two thousand years ago and here in digging a trench some of our boys dug out a

kettle containing a lot of Roman coins. That sounds like a fairy story, doesn't it, but I saw it myself. They started selling the pieces for a franc each, but the price soon jumped to a thousand francs (nearly \$200). I examined some of the coins closely for that did not cost anything. They have a roughly stamped Roman head and they have Roman (or Latin) inscriptions around the edge. They are very heavy. The kettle fell to pieces when the pick struck it.

* * *

Letter dated August 16, 1918 – Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

I don't exactly know, but expect I owe you a letter as usual and have just a few minutes now. Am at the "Y" waiting for a boxing match to take place. Just wrote to Eden, but I may get there almost as soon as the letter.

About everything is packed, but somehow I don't have the confidence in our leaving that I had a week ago. Guess it's just how I happen to be feeling and then we've expected to leave for so long that everyone feels like it "ain't" possible. When we do go it may be just to some other home camp. I sort of have a sneaky feeling that this division isn't up to snuff. You understand that the N.C. usually are harder to discipline than drafted men, who can usually be scared into most anything. Nobody has told me this but I've merely suspected it. Possibly that is the reason for mixing in so many conscripts.

They've been working us unusually hard for the past week or so and O'Bob very nearly got down once or twice, but so did lots of others. Soldiering is certainly more strenuous than kitchen police. It sure looks better for the Allies on the western front than it has for a long time. If they could once get the German on the run and keep him going for awhile, maybe his father, mother, brother and sister would get discouraged.

There is as usual nothing much to write of. It may be quite awhile before we leave so I wanted to let you know. Tho't maybe "you all" thought "I all" had gone.

Write as soon as you can.

* * *

Letter dated August 21, 1918 – Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

I imagine the scarcity of mail addressed to me is the result of my sending out notice a couple of weeks ago that we wouldn't be here more than a few days. Practically everyone in the company felt the same about the prospects as I did, so I have the satisfaction of knowing that I was not the only one fooled. The hurried packing of all horse equipment and nearly everything else is what gave us that impression, but now everything has settled down to the new situation and departure seems about as far distant as ever. Of course we could get away a lot quicker in case of orders to move, but I for one doubt if we ever go. On the other hand we may go tomorrow, so there you are.

There is nothing of importance to write about, only I've been having things rather easy this week. Finished drilling with the recruits last week and am now a full fledged private. My next promotion will probably be to kitchen police and I'm expecting that any day. It's not so bad now since most of the dishes are packed and they are serving cafeteria style. We're on field rations now. In some ways we have better feed than before, but its usually beef and potatoes three times a day.

Well, I've written enough to let you know I'm here and owing to my past record, I refuse to make any more predictions about leaving. We're here for good until we leave, and since they've kept us all summer it wouldn't be bad to remain through the winter.

Write as soon as possible and tell Neely too.

Progress, October 3, 1918

In letters received from Lieutenant J.E. Martin during the past few days, he says:

"I am now back of the line after spending almost a month in the front trenches. We have been shooting across at the Germans and have twisted our necks getting our hands out of the way of 'whiz-bangs' and other too familiar missiles, but it is surprising how

little danger there is in war day after day. Of course, sometimes it gets hot enough, but even then as you hear the racket and see the bombardment, it is surprising how little effect comparatively there is in it all.

“I have personally known of one of the enemy’s big shells coming through the top of a building and getting into bed with a soldier without hurting him the least. Of course, that is exceptional, but other things only less remarkable happen frequently. I am not trying to lull you into the belief that war is not dangerous nor that it would not seem much out of place in Moultrie county, for instance, nor am I trying to imply that we have been idle and simply dodging enemy shells. We try to make the enemy know more of the dangers of war than we do and I think we succeed.

“There are many amusing things that happen along with those more serious. Most of them are connected with the recital of some stunt after it has happened for of course they are usually serious enough while they are happening. Batson always make things ridiculous in telling about himself. Assistant Secretary Frederick [sic] D. Roosevelt spoke to us a while ago and said, ‘America is behind you – there are millions willing to trade places with you.’ In repeating it, Batson put it this way: ‘The U.S. is behind you, three thousand miles behind you.’ He said also, ‘Anybody can make a pretty good trade with me if he will only come over here and see me about it.’ At another time, he asked me if it would not be a good idea to get in touch with the editor of the *Progress* and make a deal with him to have it said if we were shot in the back, that it was done by some faithless brute in our own ranks.’ He is all the time joking about his advantage in having long legs when rapid movement is necessary. One time he said, ‘I did not see anyone actually running although I did pass some going pretty fast.’ They tell about one of our lieutenants outrunning a team of mules that was running away, when the shells were dropping around.”

In alluding to the assignment of his brother Robert W. Martin to the 113th Engineers, he [J.E. Martin] says:

“He is in an excellent branch of the service with the best of opportunity, and while he does a very necessary work and will often

be at the front where the big shows are pulled off, he will not likely be in the worst dangers confronting a soldier – that of going forward and taking enemy machine-gun posts. Yet his branch of the service includes plenty of opportunity for a brave, competent soldier without all the dangers and hardships of the infantry. I was glad to hear he had gotten into it, although I guess he had little to say about it one way or the other.

“Frank Swisher was just in to see me and we talked for a few minutes. He is a fine looking fellow. Before we started to France, he was transferred to the military police, but he wants back into the infantry, and has asked to be put back with Company C. I was down visiting the boys in that company today. They seemed happy and in good health. I was there but a short time when I was suddenly called away. I didn’t have time to see if any of them were injured while at the front, and they did not tell me of any injuries. I talked to Bert Gregg, Bob Fleming and Bill McDonald and other Sullivan boys. Sergeant White and Sergeant Adamson both of Company C are in an officers training camp. Gregory and Moss have commissions and are serving in another regiment. I haven’t met Lieut. Harold Ray for some time.

“I get *The Progress* quite regularly, and it is surely an interesting paper and looks prosperous. I wish I could help to keep it interesting, but you know I would be held accountable should any improper military information be published from my letters. I have to be too careful to be quite interesting.

“I am not in a position to judge of the duration of the war, but I do not expect it to end before about this time next year. I think we may have further success this fall – possibly some reverses as well – but with the strength we should have next spring, we should be able to force a military decision.

“You remember when I first came I described my impressions of France, and I am afraid they were not very complimentary for that was about the poorest part of the country. Later I told you about the rural district in another part of France, and I was a bit more enthusiastic although I could not say much for the villages in the matter of beauty or sanitation, but I have never told you of my brief visit to Paris. I was there only a short time and did not get to see much of the city, but the

little I saw was a revelation. Everything is beautiful and modern, and the people seem to be of a different race of beings. All appear gay in spite of the war, with a sparkle in every action or movement. You see the soldiers of every allied nation all apparently gay and happy. If the people were judged by the conventions of some American communities, the whole city would get into jail.

“At first one is shocked into an expression of surprise by the freedom and unleashed conduct of the people as a whole, but after you become better acquainted with their ways and customs, your attitude changes into a sort of delighted interest, much the same as you feel in watching the play of a bunch of happy children. You find that the French code of manners is different from our own and that their conduct does not mean what it would with us. Actions which under our code of manners would seem debasing simply denote a happy sort of fellowship with the French, but it is apt to deceive a stranger. I think they regulate their conduct on a basis of duty, fair-play and best policy rather than of hard and fast rules. The French girl does not feel that ‘if I smile at the soldier old Mrs. so and so will make it the talk of the town,’ for as a matter of fact Mrs. so and so would probably laugh and say, ‘They do fall for those Yanks.’ The result is that everyone is happy or appears to be so.

“If her home is torn down, the French woman returns, when she can do so, and digs around in the ruins and smiles when she finds that the Boche have left a small testament here or an unbroken vase there. If her son is a prisoner in Germany, she smiles as she prepares a little package of dainties to send him even though she more than half knows that some German will get it, and when you speak of the days to come ‘apres le guerre,’ her eyes sparkle as she says ‘then Jacques will be home again.’ But mention the Boche and her face changes to a perfect picture of hate. Tell her that a German shell exploded among a lot of prisoners on their way to the rear, and she will grit her teeth and say, ‘it doesn’t matter.’ I think I am getting some knowledge of French character (human character?) as well as a somewhat broad view of the war, but of the latter it would be unwise to write.

“Assistant Secretary of the Navy Roosevelt was with us one

afternoon and talked to the men. His speech was very interesting. He said there might be a 'proposal from the enemy' for a peace by negotiation to let Germany back up easily rather than to force the issue to a military decision. He said he would like to have the testimony of every soldier before congress on this question as he was sure our evidence would make such a 'peace offensive' ineffective. I made it a point to feel out the men without their knowing it, and I found them practically unanimous for a final victory. Their expressions were so positive and forceful that I was surprised. I think you know my own thought in entering the war was that we are fighting for peace. No matter how the war might terminate, there would probably not be another one while I remain of military age. But that is not the kind of peace we want. We are not so narrowly selfish. We want to know that our sons and grandsons and their children and grandchildren will never be called upon to bear such trying sacrifices. It is that thought that makes me unwilling to sanction anything like a 'draw' that would mean a worse war sometime in the future. I am as anxious as anyone to get back home, and I understand the cost to me in personal sacrifice, discomfort and disappointment of a long stay in France; but I do not lose sight of the goal which stands above all else – the security and happiness through all the days of the future which can be given only by permanent peace.

* * *

Letter dated September 4, 1918 – from Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

Things have certainly been buzzing around the last few days, and I only have time now to write a little. Besides there is nothing of importance I could tell you. We've been busy getting rid of excess baggage, and I may send a little stuff home, tho' I haven't much. Just got a big comfort kit from Miss Lehman Sunday, but will have to get rid of it, they say. Some of the articles I can keep tho'. And I may send my watch home.

It's hot as thunder here and lots of work to be done, but we won't have to put up with it much longer. I'll keep you posted as much as the regulations will permit. When we do leave we might incidentally come thru' Illinois.

Don't ever worry any about me for I guess I can stand anything the majority can. If you write to me here, it will be forwarded, but I'll send you a new address as soon as possible. I'll write Neely a card tomorrow I think. Please be sure and tell him.

Tell any of my friends you may see good-bye for me, and don't worry, for I'm feeling fit and everything is o.k.

* * *

That was apparently the last letter Bob Martin wrote from Camp Shelby before being shipped out.

On September 6, he sent his father I.J. a card from Birmingham, Alabama, containing only the date and place.

On Saturday, September 7, he sent his sister Olive a card saying, "Dear Sis, We are in So. Carolina and have been moving since Thursday evening. Everything is o.k. but its getting cool for my southern constitution."

The next day he sent another card (postmarked September 9) saying: "Arrived in Washington at 10:00 a.m. Sunday (today)... Civilization is a welcome sight."

The next card, undated, arrived in Sullivan October 2, 1918, and stated simply, in preprinted type, "the ship on which I sailed has arrived safely overseas."



Bob Martin's postcards home, September and early October 1918.

* * *

Progress, October 10, 1918

Lieutenant John E. Martin wrote to his father recently some letters, extracts from which are published below. The *Progress* is taking the liberty of reprinting some personal things included in the letter, which would have been left out in all likelihood had Lieutenant Martin known that these letters would be published.

First letter.

"I haven't received any letters from home for several days. I think a mail came in yesterday but I am now stationed at headquarters and my mail was probably sent to my old address. My new assignment is in the line of work in which I have had almost continual training and experience since last December. It does not require my presence in the line so much as a company assignment would do. My inspection work is less disagreeable in extremely bad weather and possibly lessens my exposure to shell fire. The duties involved inspections, investigations and reports rather than the innumerable details and everyday worries of company commanders.

“I am billeted in a room with a large window case which I use as a desk. The windows are opened wide and soldiers are passing back and forth continually. I overhear a lot of amusing things in their conversation. One just remarked, ‘I’ve got a button to sew on and I must find a piece of wire.’ It is interesting to watch their faces. They are a fine lot of men and their expressions are much varied, but on close observation I find one look that is common to all of them. It is an expression of grim determination – a reflection of the spirit of this American army, I guess.

“I am feeling very optimistic about the war although I do not allow myself to become hysterical for if I did, slight reverses that may come would be too disappointing.

Second letter.

“If I am not mistaken I wrote you a letter only a few days ago but I guess you will not object to another even though it be filled with repetitions and things of little consequence. I am feeling fine and well pleased with the work I am doing and about which I think I told you. It carries with it a certain elation when you feel that you are combating one of the enemy’s most insidious modes of attack and that you are getting the best of the struggle. One likes to feel that an act or a word of instruction is at the same time saving the lives of comrades and undermining the attack of the enemy. I can feel that stronger because in the past nine months I have had in training thousands of men and have seen the same men go uninjured through dangers that in similar situations with other men have produced casualties.

“Although it does not have the thrills one feels in commanding men in battle, the work of training and the inspections and advice in the trenches accomplished a service to feel some pride in. At first I objected to the work because for the time being it took me away from the command of a company, but now in considering it and the possibility of rendering good service I am pretty well satisfied. My predecessor has returned to the States to train a new division (in gas defense) and will come with it, when trained, to France. I would rather like an

assignment of that kind later on as it would give me a chance to see Eathel and the baby, but I am not expecting such good luck.

“The last letter I received from home was dated July 30. I have been moving about some and my letters have not found me yet. When in Canada or in Texas if I missed getting a letter one day I would feel sure of getting one the next, but over here it is different, and it is a sincere disappointment if a mail comes in and I do not get several letters. Over here I guess we are all reverting back to feelings of childhood. You would think so if you saw the way we all cherish a bunch of small photos from home, which would seem strange in other situations.

“Yesterday I heard a lieutenant lamenting the loss of his baggage. He had lost his best uniform and two or three hundred dollars worth of equipment. But he talked more about a picture of his wife that had been put in the baggage instead of putting in his pocket as he said he had always done before. It would take him a month to get another one. It perhaps seems foolish but I keep a picture of Eathel and the baby in my bill folder and another in my baggage so that I will not be likely to lose both of them.

“I have done a pretty good days work since writing the foregoing and am now in good form to finish my letter. It isn't like it might be if I were to come in not half so tired with not half so much accomplished but feeling blue and discouraged. I have sometimes experienced that sort of feeling both in and out of the army.

“What has become of Mr. Lowe? I have written him one letter and have often wondered if he ever received it. I often think of him because he has been a sort of ideal with me. I held him as a model character in civil life but my memory of him has helped me much more in the army than elsewhere. The lasting impression one gets of Mr. Lowe is his will power, his determination and his splendid fighting qualities generally. I have often thought that if Mr. Lowe were younger he would have made a splendid soldier in this war for liberty for he has all the requisite qualities. I did not start out to write an eulogy of him but I believe I could do so if it were necessary.

“How is grandfather getting along [John Neely Martin] and what is he thinking of the war by this time? Send me Bob's address

again as I have lost it. Tell the girls (his sisters) that I like to get letters from them. Take care of yourself and spend your spare time writing to me. You know I have been away from home a year – several months oversea – and naturally my desire to hear from home increases with my increasing length of absence.”

* * *

Progress, October 17, 1918.

[The letters excerpted below are from an issue of the *Progress* which was badly creased, so some of the words are not clear. The editor has made his best guess.]

Lieutenant J.E. Martin writes in a letter dated September 10:

“It has been raining and very chilly for the past few days and a Frenchman told me that we should expect more of this kind than fair weather from now on until spring. It doesn’t seem possible that summer has gone, but it is September, which even in Illinois it is getting into autumn. This would be a real nice war if we could move it into Texas for the winter and back over here for the summer. I don’t mean that I would like to see the war in the United States, but was thinking only of the climate. I have spent two winters in Texas, and I am going to miss the warm climate this year.

“I have a letter from Bob. He seems to like soldering but has no desire for a permanent job as K.P. [“Kitchen Police,” for future younger readers.] He seemed to believe he might be coming over soon. If we don’t finish our job with the Kaiser before next year, he may get to take part. I try not to be too confident, but I believe we will give the Kaiser the thought of how Yanks can fight, so that he can digest it through the winter. It will not be a comforting thought next spring when he faces more than three million others. If he is still blind, I guess we can then open his eyes.”

In a letter a few days later he says:

“Send the *Progress* to my new address at headquarters. When it goes to my old address it doesn’t get by Batson. I know how it is. He

opens it with the best of intentions, but it never gets to me. It would be a good idea to mail Batson a copy too. He is now the only Sullivan boy in that company. He's in command of the company and has a good load of responsibility upon his shoulders. I regretted to leave him and the company, but since I was ordered into this line of special duty, I find it very much to my liking. It is a service that I understand better than any other and one that I am better fitted for.

"I have thought much about the war and have studied the life of a soldier on all the sides I am able to view it. A boy comes from peaceable, well ordered and civilized surroundings, and after a few months training is thrown into the worst war in history, of which before he had not been able to form the slightest conception. As he gradually works his way through training to the front line, he tries to alter, modify and add to his scheme of life to find a place for the new things which his new life is bringing into it.

"First, he sees the fields, more beautiful and peaceful in appearance than those at home. He hears the guns – similar to what he has heard on the range in training. He next sees destroyed villages – quiet and deserted except for an occasional soldier wandering around the ruins, or a sentry. The whole scene suggests a city destroyed by a cyclone.

"So as his war experience accumulates, he fits them as best he can into his experience of the past, civilized, law abiding, when he lived within the realm of reason rather than in the cruel spell of force.

"In this he maintains some degree of success until the final day when he is ordered forward facing a landscape in the process of being torn by high explosives, breathing an atmosphere of gas and smoke and stumbling and feeling his way through and among myriads of small, singing, stinging, vindictive particles of steel with a roar and rattle such as his imagination never before could have depicted. He is shocked almost as much as though he had never been through those months of training – almost as though he had just yesterday laid down the implements of civilized life, to pick up those of war.

"He finds that through it all he has been seriously trying to find a niche in his idea of civilization into which he might fit a murderous war; when in fact he should have consigned his idea of well ordered,

civilized life into the background along with his plough and other implements of peace. Instead of trying to put the war into a picture where it did not belong, he would better have spent his time and thought putting himself into the war where his patriotism, love of country and love of the right and all that is good and admirable in his character told him he did belong.”

The letter below from Lieutenant J.E. Martin was written September 19. He writes:

“We have not played any very important part in the movement which the Americans have stirred up along the front. I have not been in any hand to hand [fighting] with the Germans, nor engaged in any ‘push.’ I would like to be in at least one – the one that shall eventually carry Old Glory into Berlin.

“I haven’t been receiving any newspapers for a week, but this morning I got one three days [...] and I sure devoured it. You of course, have read all about it and more. It was filled with news. [...] St. Mihiel victory for the Americans. It also mentioned the Austrian [...] for peace. It was amusing in one respect – a cry for peace – an American victory and an account of an aerial raid on Paris – some conglomeration!

“I guess Austria may learn the truth about ‘starting something you can’t stop.’ They shall not get peace until it is certain throughout the future ages their people will be able to value peace at its full worth.

“I don’t know whether it has been officially announced that the Sutton boy who enrolled in Company C was injured just recently. A piece of shell struck him just above the eye. I was near but did not get a chance to investigate. Gregg told me that he was there. He said it was a small wound, but he did not know how serious it might prove. The boy has been a splendid soldier, always on the job. He was well liked by all the men in his company. I had just passed him and was a little way down the line. The same morning I was at the place where Company C was located and I inquired once since, but have heard nothing officially from him. I must close. I have just heard that if I get this letter in the mail I will have to within an hour.”

* * *

Editor Neely Martin's note:

Lieut. J.E. Martin in a recent letter said that the soldiers were unanimous in wanting a military victory and were against allowing Germans to back out easy. Lieut. Martin doesn't like war and he wants the kind of peace that will make war impossible hereafter. This can be had by enforcing the Divine decree that 'they who take up the sword shall perish by the sword.' In other words, that the military rulers of Germany who started the war shall be overthrown by the war.

In the summer of 1917, on the day that it was announced that the National Guard would be sent to France to join the American forces under command of General Pershing, Lieut. Martin wrote the following lines:

Hang, hang, hang the German Kaiser!
Cheer, boys, cheer! We're going in!
We will go by way of France
And we'll make the Kaiser dance,
For we're going to hoist our colors in Berlin.

* * *

Progress, October 24, 1918

Robert W. Martin was in the 113th Engineers in the 38th division, and this organization landed some three weeks since. A letter from him was postmarked October 4, perhaps the day he landed.

* * *

Progress, October 31, 1918

A letter received today from Lt. J.E. Martin to his father reads:

France, 9th Oct. 1918.

"I just wrote you a letter the other day and one to Eathel and Bob last night, and while there is plenty of history making news as you have already been informed by the newspapers, still it is not wise that I

discuss it too freely even though the censor might be lenient enough to pass anything that I might see fit to write. I try to be careful at any rate.

“I would like to tell you all about the position and part I have played in the Allied victories but after all there would be nothing especially to be gained by telling it now. Let us hope that ere long the war shall be won and there shall then be no reason for secrecy and precaution in this respect. Suffice it to say that I have not been in the worst and fiercest part of the scrap but have a good taste of it at that. You know there is a theory of somebody’s that tends to show that all things develop in cycles. There is the ‘Seven Ages of Man,’ as Shakespeare saw it, that tends to back up the idea. Well, what I am getting at is: I feel that my military career is rounding out its cycle, much as the war itself is doing, and I am very ready to return to civil life and home on that basis. I have rarely duplicated anything unless it has been during the months spent in Texas doing ‘squad east and west.’ Everything has been new and I have not been held at any one thing long enough to become bored with its monotony. Now I have been fighting long enough to be satisfied to quit ‘with honor,’ as the Kaiser would express it, and I would like for the cycle schedule to continue for I am afraid that fighting as a continued vocation is likely to make one become restless for a change. That is a delicate and diplomatic way of saying that the constant pounding of cannon, whistling and screaming of shells and thrilling excitement are likely to get on the nerves, and when the Kaiser decides to throw up his hands and cry ‘Komarad,’ I shall be congenial.

“Seriously, though, I don’t want to leave the impression that I am an advocate of a premature peace or that I am ready to fall a willing dupe to the Kaiser’s latest “Peace campaign.” What I mean is, that should it appear that Germany is soundly whipped and will never again get the idea that war is a benefit or that she is all powerful and other nations a bunch of inferior, cowardly weaklings, then I am ready for peace, and the pursuits of civil life. About the terms to be exacted of Germany I do not form an opinion nor do I try to figure out what I think the Allies should do in such a momentous problem. I am willing to leave that entirely to Marshal Foch and President Wilson. The burden rests upon their shoulders, and they are well capable of its solution; I am not.

“The only thing that I as a citizen of this world of ours and if I may mention it, a member of our army, hope for and in my own mind, demand, is that when this war is ended, we shall have a real peace. I have spent many an hour figuring my own peace terms out, my reasons for being in the war. I am not in it for glory, money or renown. If I were, it would have been a poor investment. I am not in it because any one has coerced me, because I had many avenues of escape, but whenever I have studied the matter over, be it in idleness and ease or in danger, or in the night alone amidst the actual terror that sometimes assails one when he hears the marching, threatening, whine of an enemy plane overhead and at short intervals feels the earth rock and tremble with the violence of terrific explosions, each one coming nearer than the last; in fact, my deductions always revert to the same conclusions: personally, I’m fighting for peace. That’s all; permanent peace.

“I can’t get excited over European politics. Russia doesn’t interest me, personally, for I shall never reside there, I hope. I simply want to know when I take off my uniform and grease the workings of my pistol, in hard oil, that the act is final; that neither I nor any other American will ever be called again to war; to stand, lie down, and live in the mud of trenches; to burrow like moles into the bowels of the earth; and shiver and scratch. Compare in imagination the life, suffering and hardships of a soldier at war, year after year; add the uncertainty and longing consequent to that prolonged separation from home and home folks, and the privations, worries and labors of those folks at home; I say, compare all that with the comforts of a home in peace, and you will realize the arguments that govern my deductions. I am simply fighting for peace – permanent, free and secure. I don’t pretend to have the brains nor the political education to decide for myself how this peace is best to be attained. I just know what I want, and I have perfect confidence that it is coming soon. I leave it to the two greatest men of the age to decide the means – one the student, the statesman and diplomat; the other, the soldier without a peer.

“Not changing the subject at all, but it is no wonder to me that Fritz is crying ‘Komarad.’ I have listened to our guns hammering away at him until it is a distinct shock if there comes a moment of silence. I go

down to our lines and everybody appears cheerful and happy. Of course shells drop over quite frequently, but they do little damage as a rule.

“I ran into our company from home but I didn’t have the opportunity to stop and talk with the boys. They all hailed me as we passed, and the Captain with me wanted to know right away, what outfit that was. I explained the situation. They all seemed [...] O.K. Gregg was a platoon leader the last time I talked to him. White is at an officers training camp. Batson is commanding my other company. I have not seen him for a few days but he was getting along fine the last time I talked to him. Edgar Light is at a training camp. I suppose I know more news of the boys from home but now I don’t think of it.

“I have not been getting *The Progress* for a while, but I guess probably it is going to my old company and is not reaching me. Then, too, there may be a few copies waiting for me in rear of the lines. I got one letter from you since we have been up here at this little job and two from Eathel. I also got a card from Olive and a letter from Bob. The latter was postmarked from New York state. I suppose he is in France by now.

“I shall write soon to the girls and Neely. Tell them to write as often as they can as any writing that I am able to do is done under extreme difficulties at present. I will try and make up for it as soon as I get back of the lines again, where paper and postal facilities are more at hand.

Affectionately,
Eden”

* * *

Progress, November 7, 1918

Under date of October 13, Lieutenant J.E. Martin writes as follows:

“I haven’t much time to write. It is 3 a.m. and I am mighty sleepy. I am to be relieved at 4:00 and have a report to make which has been delayed until the last minute. However, I wanted to write to

let you know I am alright and in good health. One reason I have taken such a sudden notion of writing was a ridiculous report that just came in from Company C that some of the boys had heard from home that I was seriously wounded. I knew that Batson had been falsely reported in Sullivan as wounded, but I hadn't heard that I had been so unfortunate. I hope such a report was not circulated, but I want to go on record as objecting to it. The only wounds I have ever received have been to my dignity, my fountain pen, and my glasses, due to a too hasty plunge into a shell hole to avoid a 'whiz-bang' and that was a long time ago. My recovery was rapid with the exception of the simple fracture sustained by my fountain pen and the compound fracture suffered by my glasses.

"During the past week I have been close enough to shells and machine guns to cause my morale to fall considerably, but in the past few days I have reasserted myself by making tours of inspection of the front lines and even went on a daylight patrol this morning to watch a battle on a neighboring front. Of these I can tell you 'apres le guerre.' Suffice to say that I am not wounded and as for Batson he was O.K. a few days ago. I have not seen him since. There has been some fighting he took part in, but if he had been hurt I should have heard of it.

"I have been very much interested in the Kaiser's latest 'peace offensive' and admire President Wilson's masterly answer to it. The Kaiser wants an armistice to 'stop this awful bloodshed' which is the more awful to him because it happens to be German blood. We demand a withdrawal of his troops from allied territory before an armistice can be discussed. There is the difficulty because I don't suppose he could get his troops and munitions out of France and Belgium by Christmas even if we would loan him our transports and quit shooting at him. That would hardly be an early armistice to meet his needs, therefore to accomplish his professed desire to stop 'awful bloodshed' (this shedding of German blood) his only hope is to surrender his army and munitions within the territory. I wonder if he is willing to do that.

"By the way, I was down among the boys in the home company again today and they are all O.K. There had been but one killed and he came with the draft and is not known in Sullivan. Ferguson (Roy) got a toe shot off and I understand that Fred Jenkins got a few scratches from

a shell explosion, but remained on duty. So far as I could learn none of the other boys from home had any injuries.

“I had an interesting experience today which I believe it would do no harm to relate. I decided to go with a friend of mine, a captain, and visit some advanced posts and also get a view of the enemy positions. We reached the front line without much doing and stopped to look at some trophies which a bunch of the boys had captured. They consisted of some field blankets, weapons, daggers, postcards, etc. From there we went out to a point where we could look down on a pretty little village which the Germans were burning. We were told of some troops that were occupying an advanced post where a splendid view of the country could be obtained, and where we could watch an attack, the noise of which we could hear. The boys didn't know exactly where the post was but one had been there at night and volunteered to try to show us. We were not so far from the enemy but were shielded from view, and you can't imagine what a comfort a few bushes can be in such a case.

“We started out, the boys in the lead, and presently we emerged from the bushes and I looked down directly into the town held by the Boche. I also had that uncomfortable feeling of being on the skyline. I didn't say anything, but I confess I could think of several places I would rather have been.

“All went well, however, and we skirted a wood and finally came out again and started down a ridge with sparse bushes upon it. We were headed for a town apparently and machine guns were popping away from the buildings. Also at no great distance shells were bursting and while the battle line was in a wood we could tell just where it was. The Captain called a halt for we could recognize the town as the one we had just been dodging. The boy said he guessed he didn't exactly know the location or the post we were looking for but asked us to wait while he crawled forward to investigate. But we decided we had a good enough point for observation for we could almost have thrown a stone down into the town – at least it looked that way.

“After we had gotten all the information possible in regard to position, we made a lot better time getting away than we did coming up.

“To make it worse, the woods were full of gas and every little

while we had to wear our masks.

“I can tell you an amusing incident that happened the other day. As a rule the Boche are more than anxious to surrender when at close quarters, and some boys had rounded up a nice bunch of them and started them back when one came rushing out of the bush his cap in one hand and his coat in the other, shouting at the top of his voice, “Hey mit gehen, mit gehen,” or something like that. It was certainly comical. One would have thought that German was about to miss a car bound for a picnic.

“Give my regards to everybody and tell them that I am not averse to receiving letters.

Affectionately,
Eden.”

* * *

Progress, November 21, 1918.

We have had no letter from Lt. Martin or from any of the boys in the 130th since the date of the one published in *The Progress* week before last, which was written October 13. Lt. Martin had also written to his wife and we publish a few paragraphs below:

“I don’t get much time or opportunity to write during these trying times but I realize that you will be the more glad to hear from me that all is well. I have never relaxed in the slightest degree from my desire and determination to see the war fought out to a finish here and now. Better the present hardships and dangers be endured than to have a repetition of this gigantic struggle sometime in the future.

“I could tell you much that would be interesting, but I fear you hear too much as it is and I would much rather deal with the pleasant side of it and the actually humorous touches that attend it. You would hardly connect a thought of humor with the greatest war drive in all history, when thousands of great guns are continually belching forth their venom and hate, when cold rains prevail and almost everything sounds like anything but humor; but we have a lot of it.

“We have two Jews in our outfit who are continuously baiting each other. Neither of them appears to know what fear is, yet each jokingly tries to make it appear that he, himself, and the other are both great cowards. One of them is a Christian Scientist, a great violinist, having studied in Paris and Berlin. He is wonderful with the violin. He is very intelligent and speaks several languages. His name is ‘Sol Cohen.’

“The other is a typical Jew who purposely exaggerates his characteristics until he would pass anywhere on the stage. He too is well educated and speaks French fluently but feigns the grossest ignorance. He is honest but boasts of his art in stealing. He is neither vulgar nor profane but he pretends to be exerting all his will power to control such a trait of character in consideration of Sol’s feelings. He goes for rations and roguishly takes everything in sight. He says the supply officers tell him to keep his hands in his pockets but he answers, “But then how could I talk? I’m a Jew.’ His name is Abe. They keep us amused continually, Sol with his dignity and humor, the other just the contrary. Abe will blurt out something, catch himself, glance at Sol as if very contrite and change the word to something like ‘confused’ which he calls dignified ‘swearing.’ He keeps us laughing about his trips under shell fire and his narrow escapes.

“Another thing that you would not consider humorous and would not be if the men themselves didn’t make it so, is to see a shell burst near a bunch of men who have exposed themselves in open country; missing them of course, but driving them hastily to cover. There would be no comedy in it if they were hit, but if it is a miss as it usually is, the men make a good joke of it. Personally I can hardly see the funny side of it because I have had them come too close and I don’t like them, but I think of one sergeant who was laughingly talking about a wound chevron he said he ought to have for a place on his wrist where a piece of shell had scraped the skin off a few moments before. An inch variation might have cost him his hand, but he appeared to think it about the most ridiculous thing he had ever seen. I know a captain who has had two similar wounds and he laughs about them and has something funny to say whenever they are mentioned.

“The other afternoon I was walking along the trenches, screened of course from the enemy by bushes and timbers, where men were sleeping, shaving or improving their shelter as though nothing unusual was transpiring, although shells were bursting promiscuously about them and machine gun fire could be heard occasionally. I was not thinking of finding anyone I knew particularly well when suddenly nearly every man in the trench began calling out ‘hello lieutenant’ and other friendly expressions of recognition. I saw I had run onto my old company from Sullivan. They had been in all kinds of danger for several days, yet they all seemed marvelously happy and at ease.”

In a letter written earlier to his sister Mabel, he says:

“Le guerre est tres bon après les grande promenades et fatigue sont finis, and as a rule the fighting itself isn’t so bad for there isn’t so much of it. You couldn’t call standing in a trench and looking over and making faces at the Boche fighting. The men who rush their positions do the real fighting. We cannot claim that honor yet and possibly may not. Although we would be disappointed I think we could be consoled. We haven’t such quarrelsome dispositions if the Hun would quit nagging at us.

“I am very fond of those pictures you sent me and would like more from time to time. You see it is like this. When I have done a hard day’s work which I sometimes do, and come into a shed to quarrel with ‘cooties’ and rats throughout a chilly, rainy night, I can light a candle, get out my photographs and visit with home folks for a while and this usually inspires me to write a letter. In this way I cheer myself and for the time forget some phases of the war.

“When looking through your pictures I see no ruined buildings and no trees torn to pieces – no signs of war in fact and forget it for a few moments. But the best of it is that I recall the good times back home, our singing and the thousand other little incidents that are now pleasant memories.

“Last night the officers of our regiment turned things over to the non-coms and we all got together for a smoker in a Y.M.C.A. shack. A ‘pep’ squad out of the band noted for their playing and singing prepared a program and you couldn’t have found its equal in many high class musical

shows. 'The Sunshine of Your Smile,' 'A Baby's Prayer at Twilight,' 'Joan of Arc,' 'The Yanks are Coming,' 'Goodbye Broadway,' and a hundred others were sung and they also read or recited some good selections. There was nothing formal about it. Col. Lang was as jolly as any of the youngsters and we all gathered about him in an admiring bunch. At the close we had a regular rough house program. Any officer who could play a little borrowed an instrument and an orchestra was formed. I could not say the music was good but we had a good time anyway.

"One night an American girl Y.W. C.A. worker visited us and gave several readings that were great. It was a novelty to hear a girl talk 'United States.' I had not before realized what a novelty it would be. As she got into the car to leave she called back that 'with our luck, our faith and our army we can't be beaten.'

"I tell you, Mabel, you should come over and see me 'after the war.' There will be a rush of tourists as soon as it is permitted and it would be a fine trip for you. I have been around enough to show some interesting places. I have seen country too pretty to describe and then the ruins of war which are interesting too. I cannot describe the people of France as I have seen them – brave, determined and light-hearted in adversity and strange to say not vindictive in victory.

"The war and defense against invasion has become a business with them and they haven't wasted any time or neglected any part of it. Spirit such as theirs cannot be broken. When their hardship and sacrifice is suggested, you might expect an expression of sadness, but you get instead a smile as they tell you what is to be 'after the war.' That is the prospect, they never lose sight of it, and it is an attitude I am trying to acquire. No matter how bad the present may seem, think how fine it will be when it is over. One more strain at the collar, a little more perseverance, a few more steps under the load and see what is waiting for you. That is the attitude that makes the French people unconquerable and it is a similar impulse that sweeps the German before the Americans.

"It is not that we like to fight – we fight that we may not have to fight again. There is nothing of particular interest which we wish to visit in Germany. We don't like the smell of saur kraut but our Statue of

Liberty beckons us home and our return ticket reads 'via Berlin.'

“By the way, our boys are singing a song that runs something like this:

Keep your hood down dirty Hun!
Keep your hood down dirty Hun!
You were out last night
In the pale moon light
I saw you! I saw you!
When our boys opened fire
You were mending broken wire.
If you want to see your father
In the fatherland
Keep your hood down dirty Hun.

There are about a thousand more stanzas of it. Each soldier fits up a new one to suit himself.

“Speaking of songs though, soon after we came over I with some other officers started to visit the front and coming back some of us missed the truck and had to walk. It was an awful drag for about 25 miles. No truck appeared to be going our way. While we were showing considerable fatigue we passed some Tommies at work on a road. One of them looked us over and began to sing, ‘When you’re a long long way from home,’ etc. Our major fairly grated his teeth.

“I expect to come home in a few months after Germany is thoroughly vanquished.”

* * *

Progress, November 28, 1918.

(Though not a letter to a family member, the following letter written by Eden Martin deserves a place in this collection.)

Boys of '18 Greet Comrades of '65 VIS

The following greeting from Lt. Martin, characteristic perhaps of the feeling of the boys of '18 toward the veterans of '65 was received by M. Ansbacher Tuesday. Since the letter seems to express unusually well the comrade-like feeling of the soldiers of today with those who fought in the civil war we give it special prominence. It reads:

"Now that we have apparently almost completed a job a little like the one you older men accomplished in the days of civil strife, I expect I can realize a little of the feeling experienced in the ranks in the days of '65. Of course, I have not been at it as long as they, but accept my assurance that we have been good and well at it, nevertheless, and there are none who will not welcome news of victorious peace and a prospect of early return home.

"At present I am in a dug-out near the front but it is what we call 'quiet' which means that you can safely stick your head out, and since I had a little spare time this afternoon, I thought over the prospect of peace.

"As I thought what peace would really mean to me the old song, 'Tenting Tonight,' came into my mind as one most expressive of my own present feelings, and the chorus brought to me thoughts of how those soldiers of earlier days must have felt after their years of war and how that chorus must have been truly expressive of their sentiments as it now is of my own and so many others.

"Following one thought with another, I have thought of various of my friends among the older men of Moultrie county and as I thought of yourself and the many cheery 'good mornings' which you had bade me in the days of peace, I thought I could hardly do better than write you this brief little letter of remembrance.

"I know there is little of news that I could write other than assuring you of my own and most of the boys' safety whom I had the honor of leading away from Sullivan (if not in battle), and in spite of the difficult, heroic and extremely dangerous service which they have rendered to their country, to express my belief that their present well-being and high morale is due in no small part to that whole-souled and ardent interest which has flowed so unselfishly from the hearts of the army friends whom they have left behind and which has surrounded them here in the trenches with a cloak of good cheer and (who knows) perhaps actual protection from the murderous Hun.

"Wars are not good, my friend, and I feel assurance that this is the last great one that shall ever be fought in the world. I could feel a rejoicing unparalleled if at this moment I should hear that our aims were attained; that the last battle of the last war had been fought; that the last bullet was fired and the last boy to give up his life in the struggle had made the glorious sacrifice.

"I would like to know that whoever leads back the boys whom I led away would bring them all as they stand today, covered with glory and with their ranks almost intact.

"Whether this shall be rests with the Kaiser. He is whipped. By all the rules of warfare the war should be over, and additional loss of life among our troops will rest as murders upon his guilty soul; murders for which he shall pay both on earth and in hell.

"Well I must close. Give my regards to Mrs. Ansbacher. I am sorry I can not write more at this time. Hoping to see you in Sullivan before many months.

"I am very respectfully,

"John E. Martin."

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Letter dated October 19, 1918, from Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

Just received two of your letters, one of them containing the letter from Eden. That is the first news I've heard from home or Eden since leaving Camp Mills, but am expecting mail right along.

There isn't much that I can write and really don't expect to write much or often. There is no reason for any uneasiness on your part about me for as the boys say, "I'm all broke out with what it takes to live this life." I wrote to Eden just before leaving the boat, and ought to get an answer from home soon. I imagine he is moved from where we first thought he was, and may not be so far from where I am located. I've inquired about his regiment and division and never been able to hear anything, but it's possible I may get some news of him later.

The paper has never reached me since leaving Camp Shelby but I presume they are sending it and that I'll get them some time. The news will be welcome even if it is old.

Probably you get all the war news before we do, but what we do get is exceedingly favorable. The weather is the most disagreeable part of the war I have experienced so far. Altho it is nice out today, it usually is rainy and the mud is about the same as Illinois mud.

Tell all the folks to write as mail is one of the most welcome things attainable over here. Don't expect to hear from me often for I may not have the opportunity to write.

I understand each one over here will be allowed to receive one package at Christmas. There is nothing I need unless it would be wool socks, etc. and maybe some razor blades. I think there is some red tape about us sending home a permit but don't know for sure what it is. If it's too much bother, I'll just let it go for the army provides for us very well.

Write as often as you get time.

* * *

Letter dated October 27, 1918 – Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

Several of your letters have arrived since I got overseas, the latest dated about the first of the month. They are about the only mail I have received, so you see that what you tell me is about all I hear from the states. I haven't heard from Eden yet – only the letter you enclosed to me, but I have written to him a couple of times and expect to hear before long.

It is a little unusual that all the male members of our family excepting J.N. [Neely], who undoubtedly has excellent grounds for exemption, should be in France, but our grandfather [John Neely Martin] should remember there are a couple of million others, and I for one don't feel that I exactly deserve his feeling. But I guess I'm getting on as well as the majority of the army so I should manifest concern. We're working hard, but of course that is to be expected. We have plenty to eat and good quarters, better really than we had at Camp Shelby.

If your idea of where Eden is located is correct, we're probably not a great distance apart. I don't know if he has any means of locating me, but I believe that is about our only chance of meeting over here. I'm not allowed to tell where I am and possibly he is laboring under the same regulation, so there you are.

We hear lots of wild rumors about the war. I am not exactly from Missouri, but I have some interests there (or did have, the last I heard), and I don't put a lot of faith in rumors. Notwithstanding the "horn blowing" inclinations, I don't have to see the war for I have seen some of the wounded. We passed them on the way down here. They were all in good spirits and advised us to practice running or we'd never get in shooting distance of the "huns."

The Christmas package I spoke of will necessarily have to be "passed" for the coupon only allowed a comparatively small package, and the article would have had to be mailed sometime by November 20th. I misplaced the coupon unless I put it in the other letter, but it doesn't matter much for there is nothing I really need.

Well, I've run out of ideas, my supply being limited, so will close.

II

THE ARMISTICE NOVEMBER 11, 1918

Letter dated November 11, 1918 – from Eden Martin to I.J. Martin

Now that it seems that the war is over, I want to write you just a brief note assuring you that I came through O.K. We started a push on Metz this morning and it seemed like the irony of fate when peace was evidently so near, but our push was interrupted and all I experience as a result of the battle is an overwhelming fatigue due to loss of sleep, nourishment, and long hiking. A day or two of rest will put me on my feet nicely.

I want to write you a long letter on the war and also on the peace, but I cannot do so now for lack of time and mental fag. Perhaps tomorrow I shall get to it. In the meantime I hope that you will pardon my brief note.

I heard from Bob just a few days ago – it was dated Nov. 5 – and I think I sent the letter on to you. I don't think that there is a chance that he has been in any of the hard fighting of the last few days. I am writing him a note also, stating that I pulled through the war in good shape.

Write often and tell the girls to do so also. I shall write soon at greater length.

* * *

Progress, November 14, 1918

Celebrate Peace News.

Word of the signing of the armistice reached Sullivan shortly after 8 o'clock Monday morning [November 11], and immediately the fire whistle, the whistle at the C.I.P.S. plant, and whistles of railway engines joined in a general din of celebration.

Within a few minutes a crowd had gathered on the square, and enough members of the band with their instruments were present to strike up some patriotic tunes. Church and school bells joined in, and a celebration started which did not end until late Monday night.

A shot gun squad appeared on the public square and kept up a bombardment of the sky throughout the morning, and with what little powder that was available here blast after blast was fired with Ed. Swisher's anvil.

Arrangements were made for a parade to start at 2 p.m. from the public square, and when it formed in line it was nearly three quarters of a mile in length. All of the school children were in the line of march, and scores of decorated automobiles.

After the parade there was speaking and music on the court house square. Under proclamation of Mayor Johnson all of the business houses were closed from 2 o'clock to 5 in the afternoon.

One of the largest crowds that has been in Sullivan for years took part in the celebration. And never has such a crowd gathered here without committees on publicity and arrangements having first spread news of the attraction. Everybody from miles around knew a celebration would occur, and no work at hand was urgent enough to keep them from coming.

With all the celebration there was unusual good order. There was none of the roughness which characterized some of the celebrations in large cities. No property was destroyed, and nobody was injured. Extra police were not needed. And there was scarcely any evidence of a turn to liquor to stimulate the celebration.

* * *

Progress, December 5, 1918.

In his letter of Nov. 11, Lt. Martin says:

“Now that the war is over I want to write you just a brief note to let you know that I came through O.K. We started a push toward the city of Metz this morning. It seemed like irony of fate when peace was evidently so near to get orders to start on such a journey. I started at 2:30 a.m. and got my party of runners into position at the stated time. We had a merry little battle in progress when at about eight o’clock the artillery outfit got word that the armistice would go into effect at eleven. Soon after we had orders to cease advancing and to fire only on the defensive. In a short time most of our guns were silent, but the German guns kept going and they poured gas into a neighboring valley. Our batteries had plenty of shells yet and they reopened fire on the Boche guns and kept it up until exactly eleven o’clock when in an instant all was silent. The silence was oppressive and I have not yet gotten used to it. Sgt. Sol Cohen got his violin from somewhere and began playing and the boys sang in chorus, and we had a very pleasant end of the war. A regiment of negroes was at work repairing the road and it was amusing to see the sergeant trying to keep them at work while Cohen was playing southern melodies.

“We returned to headquarters in the afternoon. I had nothing to eat all day and had had little sleep for four nights. I was also very tired from the long hike and I rode back with the driver of an ambulance. It is the only time I ever rode in one but I was in shape to enjoy it though I told him I did not wish to get the habit.”

The following is from an earlier letter written by Lt. Martin while the 130th was holding the front trenches against German counter attacks while the left wing of the American army was advancing toward Sedan:

“If you will compare the date of this letter with the present epoch of history you can judge pretty well where I have been and am doing. I wish that it were possible for me to tell you all the details, humorous, pathetic and tragic of my experiences during the past few weeks, but it would be unwise and likewise impossible – that is

in one volume. Suffice it to say that while we have been in the most spectacular scuffling of the war, we have seen some pretty lively action and throughout the remainder of the time we have been continuously subjected to some of the most grueling and trying conditions possible. I can think of nothing to equal sitting in the open, day after day, and letting the Boche amuse himself by throwing high explosives at you. Machine guns and bayonets are not nice things by any means, but you rush them and either they are done – or you are in short order. A few days intermixed with this sort of fighting and you are relieved and rest up while some one else takes a try at it. Compare this with sitting right in the face of the enemy, repelling counterattacks, raids, etc., breathing gas or wearing a mask continuously; dodging whiz-bangs with no place to go; watching the friend with whom perhaps you have been talking, go up in small bits or seeing the spot where a moment before you were sitting and from which you moved for some unaccountable reason change to a crater large enough for a cellar in your house. Add to these mud, rain, cold and imagine yourself as having slept in the mud and never removed clothes nor gotten them completely dried out since; picture yourself who would have turned sick at the thought of a fly buzzing about your cup of coffee, eating your food under conditions made necessary by this sort of experience and as a final touch of the picture see yourself scratching yourself raw trying to offset this itching of the cooties crawling through your clothes.

“Now after having let your imagination fully portray all that the foregoing was intended to describe, picture these men keeping up their good humor, their bravery and their wonderful morale, through it all; laughing at death; crawling on their own accord to the enemy’s outposts to gain information and to pester him; working like a hive of bees, preparing for defense and laughing, joking and apparently enjoying life in spite of it all. That is the stuff our regiment is made of – they never weaken and there is hardly a man in it with whom I am not proud to be associated.

“I will never forget the picture my first company made when I accidently ran onto them on a tour of inspection. They were standing in shallow trenches, in thick underbrush. Some had constructed little

shelters under ground for protection from splinters and weather. Some were hunting cooties; others shaving; all laughing and joking. The woods about them was torn by shell fire at short intervals and in many places was saturated with poison gas. Dead Boche were strewn about the woods promiscuously for we had not at that time gotten them all buried. It had to be done under cover of the woods or darkness, and of course American casualties were cared for first. However, the boys were all happy and I never got a more cheery good morning on the streets of Sullivan in the fairest weather. Fred Jenkins had a shell throw gravel in his face until he looked like he had the small pox , and today a rifle he was cleaning discharged, nipping an insignificant scratch in his hand. He said he supposed some one would say he did it on purpose, but that if he had, he'd done a better job of it.

“Well I must close. Write often and give my regards to everyone. At present I can't get envelopes. The one I am sending was taken from a German recreation room we captured. I am enclosing a picture of Hindenburg I got at the same place. Doesn't he look like a bull dog?

Affectionately,
Eden.”

* * *

Progress, December 12, 1918.

The *Progress* has had no letter direct from Lt. Martin since the one published last week which had been written November 11 on the evening after the signing of the armistice. His wife received a letter written a few days later which although not written for publication, we take the liberty of publishing. It contains much more about himself, items of personal experience etc., than he would willingly write for publication. It is not a history of the last battle so much as impressions made by the news of peace which came to them on the battle field.

After the news of peace had been received which is recited in detail further on, he went to an observation post to watch the shell fire

and especially to observe gas shells and gas attacks. He was at this post the last hour or two of the battle, but in his letter to his wife he only mentions this part of his experience. It was here that he saw the boy wounded the second time as he was starting to the rear after receiving his first wound. Lt. Martin says the boy 'took shelter near me until the firing ceased.'

In addition to the incident given at the end of this article which Lt. Martin vouches for as true, he says that he had heard of a Colonel on a neighboring front going to look for some of his men who had gone forward to an advanced position during the battle. He saw a large number of men approaching and thought it was a new German attack and called his reserves to arms. On closer observation he found it was one of his own outpost detachments and a German outpost celebrating the armistice, the Germans furnishing the beer.

He says the night of the eleventh witnessed the greatest display of fire works ever seen on earth. Both armies sent up their flares, rockets and fireworks usually used for signals and lighted up the sky for miles on each side of the battle front. "It was a strange thing on the night of the beginning of peace when the artillery was under orders not to fire to see the infantry signaling for artillery barrage in the most frantic manner. But to those of us who had been under the enemy flare on the battle front, it gave an uncomfortable feeling." "Even yet it shocks me to see a lighted car or a lighted house with unshaded windows." They are reminders that "the war is over."

"Did you ever think that the war ended at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, and did you add those three elevens together to get the number of our division?"

"Speaking of the 33rd division, I understand that it has been cited in orders and reports several times and awarded the Croix de guerre for hard fighting. I am also informed that it was the service rendered by our regiment during its 47 consecutive days in the front line that was largely instrumental in bringing our division into the limelight." "I know also that orders are coming in bearing testimony of the bravery and heroism of men in our regiment and it is my opinion that seventy-five percent of our men deserve the Croix de guerre."

He says, “a little Y.M.C.A. man joined one of our battalions and went into the line with them. At great danger to himself he would bring up cookies, candy and tobacco and kept the men well supplied. When the battalion went forward to attack a town held by the enemy, this Y.M.C.A. man took a large pair of breeches and sewed them up to make a sack, filled them full of cigarettes and went along. He gave all the cigarettes to the boys after the town was captured in a fierce action. The Boche shelled our men with high explosives and gas bombs and many were injured. It was impossible to get ambulances to them, and the injured had to be carried on stretchers up a long steep hill and the stretcher bearers could not do all the work. This Y.M.C.A. man took one end of a stretcher and walked back and forth for hours through the shell fire. It was more his manner than his deeds that impressed me. Even now he does not appear to consider it anything out of the ordinary.”

The foregoing are some excerpts taken from different parts of the letters. His personal experiences before the battle really began and the reception of peace news form a connected narrative as follows:

“As I wrote you on the 11th and as you probably knew at an earlier hour than I did, the armistice is on and the Great War is ended.

“During the days that Germany spent deliberating, or rather while her couriers were flying back and forth, there were considerable conjectures as to what her answer would be; but we all expected a surrender. Nevertheless all was steady and calm among us. Nobody got excited about it. I think we were too tired for much excitement for we had been in the front line forty seven days, fighting hard most of the time – not advancing, but holding in the face of artillery, patrolling and raiding enemy positions and resisting enemy raids.

“We had orders to advance to the attack on the morning of the eleventh and you can imagine what an armistice signed and effective before daylight would have meant to us. I had had but little sleep for three nights and I went to bed early on the night of the 10th for I was to start at 2:30 in the morning in command of an advance detachment from regimental headquarters to get our position in advance.

“I hoped to get some sleep but my bunk was in an entry through which it was necessary to pass to get to dugouts occupied by the heads of

two other departments and runners were frequent. Each runner gave a prescribed knock on my door and awaited my permission to enter. After this business relaxed a little I went to sleep but was soon awakened by my telephone and told that the enemy was gassing one of our outposts. I gave them some advice and sent the report to headquarters so that the artillery could silence the German guns. I went to sleep again but was soon called by a Captain a few miles away who wanted me to send him three gas masks at once. The thing was impossible but I knew how he felt about it. It isn't pleasant sitting down in a shell hole somewhere while someone is shooting at you with high explosives and gas shells. I told him that I sent him a hundred masks that day but he replied that he had left them with his wagons and it was a good way to go after them, and that he just simply had to have them. I explained to him that I had none except my own, that I never did carry them for others, and that he would have to send to his wagons and get them. I am telling you all this to let you know how I spent the night trying to sleep.

"I finally gave up trying to sleep and at one o'clock rolled up my bedding and my personal belongings and stored them away, and began getting my outfit in readiness to start towards the enemy. The artillery was already firing at short intervals. The moon and stars were shining bright but a fog hung low over the landscape. My men were quiet and serious but not a bit despondent. I found that a horse had been provided for me and that I had three orderlies to carry messages for it was known that the point where we were going would be under observation and the artillery fire of the enemy unless it were foggy in the morning, and that I might need to send back reports before the other officers got there.

"I declined the use of the horse and walked along with the men. The horse was an entire stranger to me and I did not know how he might behave under shrapnel fire, and besides a memory of another time when I lay on my back and watched a 1300 pound horse in the air and coming over backwards to me may have influenced my decision a little. Anyway I walked.

"I knew a ruined village in which we had artillery and through which we had to pass, and I knew what would probably happen to that village when our barrage fire opened up, so I wanted to get through

there ahead of that time which I knew also. One of the nightmares I have had both waking and sleeping has been the thought of a shell explosion among men for whom I was responsible, and the thing I am most thankful for is that it never happened. We reached the town just ten minutes ahead of the schedule and an artilleryman said we would just have time to get out of it.

“We moved along a road torn by shell holes. I had no map and could not have safely used a light anyway, but knew I was nearing our destination. I told my men to move to the left a hundred paces so that if the Germans shelled the road when the barrage began, they would be safer and I went across a field to inspect the ground. I found the field was a mass of fresh shell holes and I called my men back to the road. I explained to them that the Germans seemed to have used the whole landscape as a target. I then crossed over a hill in search of a little piece of trench which I had been told was near my destination. I failed to find the trench but posted a sentry on the road to get in touch with the Colonel when he came along, and I went across the field to a fringe of bushes higher up the hill to try to find dugouts for my men.

“I crawled along through barbed wire and found an unimproved road and followed it awhile. On my right was a line of trenches and on my left was a cliff a little higher than my head and it was fringed with scattered bushes. I was looking for shelter for my men, and therefore kept a close eye on the cliff when I saw the dim outline of a man’s shoulders and head against the skyline. It was dim but it resembled a Bosche helmet. He was perfectly still and was watching me intently. I felt, however, that it could not be a Bosche although I should have expected a Yank to have challenged me instead of just watching me.

“I said, ‘Hello, what outfit do you belong to.’ He made no reply but just kept still, and I saw three or four others creep up to the edge and silently look at me. I began to think I was in one of two predicaments – either I had run into a German patrol which had got lost and came further than they intended, or I had run onto Americans or French and might be shot before they understood the situation. The peculiar outline of the heads made me a bit nervous, and I asked them again what outfit they belonged to. One of them answered, hesitatingly and seemed to be

afraid of me, and seemed, too, to have trouble speaking English, which didn't make me any more at ease, as I was now a half mile from my little detachment. He said 'Eight hundred and thirteenth from Carolina,' and hesitated over each word. They said nothing more but continued to watch me. I did some quick thinking. I had seen our plan of action and no 813th regiment was to take part in it. I didn't believe there was any such regiment because I thought that number was too high. Their actions and evident curiosity and nervousness, together with their difficulty with English and hesitation over what to say and the peculiar shape of their heads – I simply could not figure it out. I stood there for awhile and nothing more was said. I concluded that if it were a Bosche patrol, they would be more afraid of me than I would be of them and would want to get away before I called my men, which they would naturally suppose I would have at no great distance. If I leisurely walked away, I reasoned, they would not interfere and I even turned to go back. However, I changed my mind and walked by them and a little further on met a man standing in a little cut in the embankment. I asked him where he belonged and he stepped out and made the same answer. I saw that he was a negro, so everything was explained and I almost laughed outright at the joke on myself. I questioned him and found that they had been sent out the night before to repair the road ahead of us as we advanced. They were not then wearing their helmets and that accounted for the peculiar shape of the head outline against the sky line.

"I went back to my detachment and found that the Colonel had arrived and that the orders had been somewhat modified. We moved forward and though it was coming daylight, the fog concealed our movements.

When we made a halt on the road Sgt. Cohen got out his violin and began playing for the boys around him. It was a strange war scene on the morning of a great attack. Mounted orderlies were now hurrying to the front and telephone lines were being run forward. Ambulances were moving back and forth, and military transports came up and halted in a long line back of us along the road. Our guns fired at intervals and a little to our left enemy shells were bursting. But this was not much out of the ordinary.

“It was chilly and some of the boys were dancing to keep warm. At one time I stepped into a dugout near by where there was some fire and overheard one side of a telephone conversation something like this. The artillery Captain was answering the phone, ‘Hello! Yes! At eleven o’clock? Well that’s good isn’t it? Yes, I’ll put it out. I’ll tell them.’ Then he turned to us and quietly said that it was announced ‘almost official’ that the armistice was signed to go into effect at eleven o’clock. It was then seven. No comment was made by any of us for we had heard many reports in the last two months that were ‘almost official.’

“The Captain called up gun teams and said: Say! Listen! You will stop firing. Yes. And say, well, it’s not official, but you may not get orders to open up any more. The dope is eleven. Yes, I’ll call again. Say, don’t say anything to the men until we know for sure. Yes I’ll call you – that’s all.’ So far as excitement is concerned, he might have been ordering groceries.

“He then told us all he had heard. He said that while it was not certain, he believed it was true. Our Colonel called brigade headquarters, but they had heard nothing but said they would get busy and find out. I heard later that Division headquarters had not heard it and had to call higher up for information. It was one time, at least where the natural flow of such information was reversed and went from front to rear.

“We decided to say nothing to the men until we heard definitely and until 8:30 we kept the information to ourselves, while Cohen kept on playing to his strange audience along the roadside. Men, passing, stopped to listen for he is a great violinist and one or two ‘walking wounded’ joined while they rested on their journey to the rear. In the meantime the artillery Captain’s report was confirmed and seemed to be sure, but we still kept our secret because we had received no orders. I stood and watched those boys and studied their tired, worn strained countenances, now and then brightening with smiles as the violin touched some old melody, and I wondered what effect the news was going to have upon them. Our secret was hard to keep.

“I saw standing a little to one side our French interpreter, a priest in civil life with whom I am quite friendly and who has been

instructing me in French, and I went over to him. He had felt certain that Germany would accept the terms, and I thought I would 'kid' him a little. I said, 'Well Terpe, what do you say now? You have decided Germany will fight a while longer haven't you?' He shrugged his shoulders which with a Frenchman, means he is about to speak, and said, 'They will accept.' I said 'What?' as if greatly surprised. 'You still try to hand me that stuff. Why they have only two hours more – You are certainly optimistic.' But he said he knew they would – had already probably and we hadn't heard it. And ended with his emphatic assertion, 'They will accept.' I then told him what I knew but cautioned him to say nothing until the Colonel was ready to make the announcement. I had the pleasure of seeing the little Frenchman's eyes sparkle with joy. He half uttered an exclamation and remembering the men he only indulged in a sort of toe dance before he finally [...] down. We rejoined the men on the road. The colonel had already announced the news and I am telling the truth if I ever told it – their demonstration had not been enough to attract our attention. They were discussing it among themselves in ordinary conversational tones. There was no cheering, no demonstration whatever. Only Cohen threw his gas mask and helmet on the ground to give him more freedom in playing.

"The French soldiers we saw that day were wildly excited. They would shout 'finis le guerre' and dance about and hug each other. I don't mean now that peace had actually come for the big guns were still pounding away. Our infantry received orders about nine o'clock to cease firing except on defensive but the Germans didn't quit. Shells kept coming over and were bursting in large numbers. Other positions near us were being gassed and many places were getting more shells in five minutes than usually fell in an hour. So our batteries opened up again in retaliation and for the last hour or more the firing was general again. I know one sergeant who was wounded at 10:58. One man who was slightly wounded and started to the rear was wounded again and took shelter, saying it was so near eleven, he would take no more chances.

"My watch was correct with Paris time and the instant the minute hand stood straight up, all firing ceased. Not a gun was fired after eleven and as we listened for any sound of conflict, the silence became

oppressive. I could not realize the war was over until I was walking back from an advance post where I had been watching the enemy shell fire, when I met a long line of cookers, mess and supply wagons in charge of an officer I knew. I asked him where he was going and he said, 'I am going to the front line to feed my battalion. I am going to test it out and see if the war is really over.' He would not have dared to travel that road a few minutes before. We moved back to our old dugouts and were relieved the next day. We then moved to a deserted village several miles back. I am now sitting before an open grate fire.

"Before I close I want to relate one or two incidents of the beginning of peace. When word reached the other men of our regiment at the front, they took it about as the men did with me. They withstood the shell fire until eleven o'clock with their usual stoicism. Then as the guns ceased, they crawled out of their trench. They were at one edge of a deserted village and the Boche crawled out of their trench at the other side. Each little body of men had held their positions as outposts in advance of the lines. A German called over and said that it was a good thing the armistice was declared because, 'we were just coming over to get you.' Our fellows called back that, 'you wouldn't have been put to the trouble for we were just coming after you.' The German asked, 'How many of you were coming,' and our man replied, 'three regiments' and the German said 'Ach Mein Gott – und Americans!'

* * *

Eden wrote about the violinist, Sol Cohen, at least twice: once in the letter which appears immediately above, describing the events of the morning of the Armistice, and once earlier, in his letter which appeared in the *Progress* on November 21, 1918. His description adds detail and color to a story that has already been told, in perhaps the best book on the end of the war: *A Stillness Heard Round the World*, Stanley Weintraub (Oxford, 1985). In his book, Weintraub told the story of Sol Cohen playing his violin on Armistice morning (at 184-185):

"With a former Illinois National Guard regiment not far away, Sergeant Sol Cohen had been up since 2:00 a.m. on the eleventh,

awaiting instructions to push off. ... A few weeks before, one of their scouting parties had come upon a cache of abandoned musical instruments in no-man's-land and brought them back. One was a violin, which a company cook promptly fiddled upon so energetically that its bridge split and collapsed. Acquiring the mute discard, Cohen kept the bridge fast by tightening the strings. Now in the fog on the hilltop the precious violin lay with his pack, his gas mask, and his helmet. In the tension as they listened to the boom of artillery and waited for orders to go over the top, Cohen's colonel strode over and asked him to play. 'Ice-cold were my fingers, but I took the beloved instrument from its case The colonel stood above me, a queer smile on his face. Silent groups hovered around; the fog lifted a bit and gradually the grey cottages below us began to ... show themselves, dismal ruined huts with soiled red roofs, [and] shattered sides One piece after another and my fingers grew warmer. I played myself into form and then the restless yanks turned away. I replaced the violin in its case.' ...

"It was 9:00 and the sun was groping through the mist. The jittery troops now increasingly exposed on the hill could not be soothed by a violin and had turned to weighing the chances of peace. 'What do you think, sergeant?' one asked Cohen as he set down his violin case tenderly. 'Oh, I don't know,' he said. I've given up thinking.' And then the colonel returned. 'Now, we don't want any shouting' he began quietly, 'but the Armistice was signed early this morning.

"Little knots of unbelieving Yanks formed. 'Hell, it couldn't be over,' said one. Yes, it was *fini*, said the French interpreter (there was an adjacent French unit). He had known of the signing for two hours, but had kept it to himself. There were no cheers. The Yank, Sol Cohen explained in a letter home, did not give a damn about victory. He 'thought only of central Illinois and the girl back there, and the soda fountain and the billiard hall.'"

* * *

Letter dated November 20, 1918 – from Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

“Somewhere in France”

I’ve just got time to write a short letter. Just finished writing to Eden. I’ve received several letters from him this month, the latest dated Nov. 11. It seems the signing of the armistice interfered with his plans some. I had been expecting it and on the 13th of October bet Virgil Francis that the fighting would be over in a month. Your letters have been arriving pretty regular up until the last week or so, and I also got one from Olive.

Eden and I are not very far separated, and he may get down to see me if we stay here long enough. There have been lots of rumors about leaving, some say for the states very soon, but I don’t put much faith in them. I just want to look the Statue of Liberty in the face once more and then I’m willing to stand to her back in the future.

There is nothing of interest I can write, but I’ll let you know all along that everything is alright with me for I don’t expect to have any bad luck. The folks back home can get a better idea of when we’ll be there than we can.

Tell all the folks to write for their letters are certainly appreciated, even if I don’t write often. Just one copy of the paper has reached me but I presume they will be coming more regular now.

* * *

Unlike Eden, Bob did not write any description – at least none that survives – of the events of the morning the Armistice was announced. However, I remember one time when he told me a little about that day. He said that on the morning of November 11, when the Armistice was announced, he and some of his fellow soldiers were playing cards, and that the announcement “didn’t even break the deal.”

* * *

Progress, December 26, 1918.

We are publishing a letter from Lt. J.E. Martin to his father posted in France Nov. 24 which, however, he had been several days in writing. The letter is as follows:

“I see in the Stars and Stripes, the official newspaper for the A.E.F., that November 24 has been set aside as a day in which every soldier over here can write a letter to his father as a sort of Christmas greeting and that this letter is to be in the nature of a victory letter, telling him ‘how we did it.’ That is ten days off and I will try and comply with the spirit of the suggestion – on that day, too; but I never know what I may be doing that far ahead and whereas I have a little time of my own tonight and a piece of candle, I thought I’d write now, and again the 24th if possible.

(After some paragraphs more or less personal, the letter continues as follows):

“When we landed six months ago we were up on the Somme with the British. We were told by the French at Brest that we had come too late, but after two or three day’s rest in a beautiful little valley we entrained for the North. We didn’t know where we were going but as the Germans were advancing along the Somme Valley, we presumed we were going somewhere to get in their way. We were on the train a little more than two days. We had to go around the coast for German artillery threatened the nearest route through Amiens. Each day we would hear of a new advance by the Germans of 18 or 20 miles. They seemed to be striding for the coast towns. At one city our train entered a long tunnel just as we were raided by a squadron of German planes, so we remained in the tunnel for awhile. Finally we reached our destination, but new orders came and we continued our journey. While things did not look very good to us, we felt that we could do a good job of fighting if we got the chance.

“We got off at a little town (Oisemont) and marched to Dudeloinville the following morning. To show what trusting ginks we were, we left our rations on the platform without a guard and when the supply officer went after them a little later, they were gone – so we

marched all morning without breakfast. We lost our way and marched about twenty miles to go three. That was the first intimation we had of how poorly prepared we were to encounter the enemy.

“For a couple of weeks we stayed there and drilled and took instruction from British veterans, but when Bosch planes began to nose about too familiarly we moved to Ballancourt, I think it was. We had various instructors and while they told us their own mistakes and how to avoid them, they did not encourage our optimism any. They had been fighting in hard battles for three and a half years and when we said, ‘Let’s get at them, and break through somewhere,’ they said that with the number of men that America would be able to send over, ‘we ought to be able to hold them.’ They underestimated us but at the same time, they made us understand that it was no picnic which we were entering.

“After we had been there a month during which time most of our officers were attending various schools, we began visiting the trenches – that is, our officers including non-commissioned officers – in sections held by Australian troops. It was remarkable that almost everyone was crowding forward for a chance to visit the front lines. It was lucky that we were permitted to observe the Australians for they are about the best all-around fighters over here. They are much the same sort of men as the Americans and they and our boys warmed up to each other like brothers. The ‘Yanks’ imitated the ‘Aussies’ who worked overtime explaining and demonstrating how it was done. Some of our division were with the ‘Aussies’ at Hamil on the Fourth of July. The Australians found that our men could and would fight and liked them all the more. I was attending officers school at St. Valery and heard what Australian officers had to say of that Fourth of July stunt.

“Soon after I had an opportunity to go into the lines with the Australians at Hamil and they explained to me all the details of the scrap. Hamil was just a pile of stones. It had been occupied by German machine gunners, and the Australians put over a creeping barrage that just literally swept it off the map.

“A day or so before I was to leave them the Australians got orders that a push on a rather large scale was to be started, and I thought I could get in it, but they explained that Americans could not take part because

of some technicalities in the orders that attached us to them, so I had to retire to the rear.

“Just after that, however, we went down and occupied a reserve position astride the Amiens-Albert road where we watched the English and Australians start the big drive along the Somme which drive really continued until the close of the war. It was there that I stood at an artillery observation post and watched the Infantry advance, accompanied by British tanks. I there had my first sight of an airplane brought down – saw the shells bursting furiously in the valley ahead while the infantry moved relentlessly forward and our own artillery made the ground tremble. I saw a tank start over a hill. A shell burst near it and the tank turned over on its side like an elephant, mortally wounded. That tank was still there when we left and will probably remain a land mark of the battle for many years.

“It was harvest time and the Germans had advanced earlier and occupied thousands of acres of French wheat fields which they had taken care not to trample down, expecting, of course, to reap the grain. Now the British were driving them out and as I stood looking at the battle in front, British soldiers were cutting the wheat in fields about me.

“To give you an interesting story in just a few words: a British officer came over to where I was standing and told me this story in a matter-of-fact way. ‘My men are reaping the corn out yonder. When I came down this morning I brought a bit of lunch and a bottle of ale and tucked them in my bloomin’ gas mask and left them by the roadside. Someone has taken them away. Haven’t you an extra gas mask I could have.’ Imagine if you can, harvesting grain when you have to wear a gas mask.

“After we remained about ten days in reserve, we took the front line, although the British had already pushed forward on our right and were swinging to the left with Albert as a hinge. Our left reached the neighborhood of Albert and we fronted along a railroad embarkment facing Deinencourt. Our line of resistance was on a ridge, a short way back of the railroad. Our outposts were along the railroad, with one beyond it; and our patrols worked far beyond it. No Man’s Land was right at this point but enemy machine guns came up at night or hid in

Deinencourt and in buildings in Albert during the day as well, and from these positions they sniped us.

“If you remember, I wrote you about going to an outpost position at night and getting lost with another lieutenant and dodging whiz-bangs for some time -- suffering a broken fountain pen and recovering with careful nursing. That happened at this position a few nights before we took it over. We had a fairly quiet time of it and I learned to admire British artillery, aviation and supply service, also their tanks and their system of caring for the wounded – in all of these the British have no equal. I have always thought that if I ever got wounded, I wanted it to happen where the British could get to me for they always take the wounded back to the hospitals.

“The drive had quieted a little during this time we were at the front line, and as before we had orders to hold but were not permitted to take part in any drive because of the technicality I mentioned.

“One battalion of our division did distinguish itself there but it was an exceptional circumstance. Marlandcourt was held by the Germans and had to be taken at once to protect other positions held by the British. A wood was strongly fortified, and British troops were not available at this instant to attack it. This battalion went in and at an enormous cost captured the woods and drove the Germans out of Marlandcourt. Our troops were given a lot of credit because the British had believed it almost impregnable against an attack of light infantry.

“On the afternoon that we were to be relieved by the British, the Germans must have heard of it for they shelled our position heavily. They shelled the front line, the support, battalion headquarters and the reserve lines. I don't think they overlooked anything. Battalion headquarters was in a dugout in a stone quarry, and when the adjutant, the intelligence officer and myself got ready to leave, the heavy 'freight cars' were coming over and tearing up the landscape all about. One dropped a little way to the right of our door and we decided to rush out and turn to the left. Just as we went out, one dropped about fifty yards in front of us. When I saw that rich, black mould go high up in the air I felt thankful for my eleven thousand dollars of life insurance. It wounded a captain and his horse and killed a driver near us. His mules

ran off down the valley. This I heard later but if those mules went the same way we did, they did not overtake us.

“We had got word that the British were soon to continue their drive on a wide scale and two evenings later, back in the woods behind the lines a few miles, the commencement of the drive was announced by such a roar of artillery as I had never before heard. The rest of the story of this drive on the Somme I read in the newspapers, for a day or so later we left for the South.

“In moving south from our position in the Somme valley, we went through Amiens and I think ours was the first train that had done so since the advance of the Germans two months before. Our passage was made possible by the British drive then in progress. We continued south to Paris where our train stopped for two hours in the outskirts of the city. We were on one of the hills and could look down upon most of the city. The people in the section around us were very different from those we had seen in the north. The buildings also were very different.

“From Paris we went to Chateau Thierry and followed the line of the recent battle for several miles. All of the towns and villages were in ruins and there were shell holes everywhere. As Americans we were treated almost with reverence by the French in this section. Men would stand with hats raised as we passed. It made us proud of our army and our country.

“We detrained in the early morning and marched from one town to another. We finally reached the village of Tannois (about 15 miles southwest of St. Mihiel in the Verdun sector). It was a small village but the people were fine. They would do anything for our comfort and although they had none too much for themselves, they supplied us with eggs, butter and milk at reasonable prices. It was here that I first saw the French method of sheep herding (shepherding). An old man would come through the village with his dogs and blow a horn. The villages would open their doors and drive out their half dozen sheep. When the flock finally cleared the village, it grown to a large number.

“I was soon after ordered to regimental headquarters as chief gas officer and held that position until the end of the war. I was attached to the headquarters company where I became associated with a fine

bunch of officers. Capt. Thomas of Champaign was in command of the company, and at that time his officers included Lt. Jack Dappart of Taylorville, Lt. Scott of Chicago, Lt. McCullough of Newton, Lt. Cappeis of Chicago, Lt. Snerly and Lt. Harris of Paris. We had nice billets among fine people.

“In our dining room we had a large map showing the battle lines as they were at that time, and each day we made corrections. We knew we were to move toward the front before many days, and we were all guessing where we would go. I spent considerable time studying the map, and I saw how the Meuse winds along from Verdun toward that narrow point of Holland which comes down (or rather up) toward Luxemburg. I saw that it was not such a great distance.

“The thought kept haunting me and I kept studying the map. While I did not know just what kind of a country it was, I saw that if we could put enough pressure along the valley of the Meuse, we might either break through and cut off the entire western front from the Meuse to the sea, or force the Germans to bring their reserves to stop us and thus enable the French and British to drive the Germans back. In either case France and Belgium would be cleared of the invaders. I became convinced that the Meuse was the key to the situation but the rest of our mess said the Verdun front was too strong.

“A few days later when we moved by motor trucks to the vicinity of Verdun I had the satisfaction of saying, ‘I told you so.’ We were among the first Americans there, and our division took over a sector of the front, the 129th regiment going first into the front line. During the next two weeks such a mass of Americans and guns of all caliber came into that area.

“Divisions were tucked away in every little strip of woods, and all the roads were alive with transports. Then I saw our plan of attack, and we were told of its scope. I told the officers of our mess that the war would soon be over. They ridiculed the idea but did not talk me out of it. They said we would give the Germans something to think over through the winter and would finish the job sometime late next spring.

“We had moved close to the front. It was the night that we made that move that Clarence Sutton was hit. I was leading the Headquarters

company at the head of the column and I heard a German plane flying low. The noise of the engine became very loud as it passed directly over us. I was expecting to hear, any moment, a bomb 'swishing' through the air or to hear them open up with machine guns. I had told the men to be ready to fall in the trenches at either side of the road. We had turned to the right into the woods which was our destination when I heard the first bomb. He dropped three or four. I thought the boys had all taken cover such as they find. But they decided the explosions were from shells fired from our own guns fired at the airplanes, and Clarence stopped out around a tree just in time to be hit with a small particle from a bursting bomb. The piece was very small and struck him above the eye. He was taken to the hospital immediately and although I enquired of all sources of information available, I was never able to get any further information concerning him. Bill Campbell told me about Sutton's injury and I learned from men in Company C that Bill was killed by a sniper a short time before the close of the war. He was an observer and was a quiet though brave soldier. He was very eager in his desire to get into Germany, and I was very sorry to hear of his bad luck. So far as I know, Sutton, Campbell and Reed, a Mattoon boy, are the only men of our original company to lose their lives in France. Others have gone to the hospital, some with serious injuries. So as in Sutton's case, whose death I heard of only from home, there possibly may be other deaths that I have not heard of. I know of only ten deaths in Company C altogether and the others are men not known in Sullivan, and who were not with us originally.

"About Sept 28th we followed up a regiment which was attacking, and as they were pretty badly shot up, we went through their lines and established a new defensive position along the Meuse river. The Germans fired at us with artillery from three sides and almost from our rear as well, for they held the other side of the river and we were in a curve. We took a wide front putting almost every man in the front line and held it for nearly three weeks while the battle raged all about us. Then we were relieved but went into line on the right bank where the Germans were being driven back. This position was worse than the other.

"In a week or so we were again relieved and made the worst two

nights march I ever took part in and went right into the line on the left of Metz. In this way we had forty-seven days in the front lines except for the two nights march, and we were attacking the enemy on the eleventh when we were called off. For this record, our Division has several citations and a Croix de Guerre.

“Of course the other regiments of the Division did well and some of them had more attacks than we did, but with each of their attacks we usually sent in one battalion. None of the others know what it is to sit tight under the worst kind of artillery fire for forty-seven days without a rest. Considering it all, our casualties were very few. Not many of the companies lost more heavily than Company C with its ten, or possibly more, killed, and of course a larger number wounded. Going through the long and frightful ordeal, one would have expected half the force to be either killed or injured.”

* * *

Letter dated November 24, 1918 – from Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

As you probably know, this is “Father’s” Day, when all the A.E.F. boys are supposed to write Dad a Christmas letter. No doubt you will be expecting one or two such letters. The censorship is off or partially so, but still I don’t know much of anything to write. Censorship rules never bothered me much, only in writing to Eden.

Our outfit is located in Letrecey, a small town about one hundred and five miles southeast of Paris and about twenty miles southwest of Chaumont. I don’t know exactly how far we were from the front when it took its sudden move, but you can tell by looking at the map. This camp is an aerial depot and was barely started when we arrived here on the 6th of October. Now it is quite a different looking place. A great deal of construction work has been done and our outfit has done its share. Since arriving here I’ve never been more than a mile or so from camp, so don’t know much about the surrounding country. We are just in the edge of the hilly country and the town is almost surrounded by three large hills, which leave only the south side open.

It is a pretty town from a little distance, but I don't like any of them at close range.



Latrency-Ormay-sur-Aube, marked as "A." Thanks to Google Maps.

I've been hearing from Eden right along, his last letter being written on November 11, just after orders to cease firing had been received. He talked like he was very well satisfied with the way things turned out, and I can assure you there was no one felt better about it than I did. I guess maybe we've had it easy compared with what the boys up on the front had, but it wasn't any bed of roses. While I think of it, just tell Leone [Neely's wife], here is one "Engineer" who believes she has better judgment than her hubby in some things at least. The main question for argument now, is when will we be back in the states. Personally I know all about Europe I care to and when we move from here I hope we are homeward bound.

I've never heard anything from Edgar or Arnold, and Eden has never mentioned either of them to me, so I have no idea where they are. Eden has said he intended to look me up, but it may be we'll never see him before we get home.

From reports we get, there is a great deal of influenza in the States. One fellow in our company got two letters in two days, each bringing news of the death of a sister. I guess they have it about under control by now tho.

I've been feeling fairly well all the time excepting for a head cold. We have comfortable barracks and good grub. There isn't much difference in this and Shelby only there has been an overabundance of

work here. They have about stopped that now.

Well, I have to close for now, but will write again soon.

* * *

Progress, January 9, 1919.

Miss Mabel Martin on Monday received a letter from her brother, Lt. Martin, that had been just one month on the way, having been written the fifth and posted the sixth of December. He says,

“I think you owe me a letter and really I should have waited until I get one before presuming upon your good nature by writing to you. But you see it is this way: practically everyone owes me letters and I would have to quit writing if I followed that plan. On such occasions I can always write to Eathel because she is my wife and it is one of her duties to read my letters; but I’ve just written one to her. I sent her \$800 and now I’m almost broke. True, I still have twenty marks good German money not to mention a few pfennigs (that isn’t spelled right!) and when I get to Germany I’ll need them.

“President Wilson will be here in a few days, and if I get a chance to talk to him I shall tell him how I feel about staying here in this mud and slush, and I feel very sure that I could make him see it as I do so you may expect me home soon – that is, if I get to talk to the President about it.

“I had a chance to go to Paris a few days ago. I had two reasons for not going – one was I was broke, and of course the other doesn’t matter. I bought Eathel some little things because I have written her more letters than I have to the rest of you and I feel that I should offer some sort of recompense. They do not make a very large package. That’s one nice thing about it over here. A fellow can carry around all he can afford to buy without weighting himself down.

“Now I have a Bosche rifle and bayonet and two shells that didn’t cost me anything but the trouble of getting them. The rifle and bayonet I got on the Meuse and the shells before Metz. Shells were not

hard to get there because they were flying all about. I carried them around with me until one of the boys volunteered to make a couple of boxes for them. I shall try to send them home. I also have a medal denoting that famous taunt of Verdun, "on ne passé pas", which was such a thorn to the 'Clown' Prince.

"I have been having severe headaches for two or three weeks, and the surgeon finally concluded they resulted from a couple of gassings, one of which I got on the Meuse and the other in an experimental study at school. The gas with which I had got too intimate was what they call 'blue cross' because that is the mark on the German shell containing it. The presumption is that I have gotten arsenic poisoning from it. So far as I could tell, it had no lasting effect, except the headaches. Two fair sized boxes of pills were issued to me, and I am taking them with good effect. Anyway, I am feeling better today and expect to be O.K. in a day or two.

"If I had any idea what they expect to do with this outfit, I would feel better satisfied. We are still just back of the lines we held when the armistice was signed three weeks ago. All sorts of wild rumors are afloat as to our future. One day we hear we are going into Germany, and although none of us cares for the trip we get reconciled to it when some other rumor starts. If we are to remain in France I would like to go to the southern most extremity where they say living conditions are fairly decent. It is far from that here."

* * *

Progress, January 9, 1919.

E.B. Eden has received a letter from his son, Lieut. Joe Eden, written to his wife and forwarded here by her. It is dated December 15 at Verdun. Like most of the boys in that region of France he complains of the rain and the mud and 'having the worst cold' in his life. He says,

"Did I ever tell you of meeting Lieut. Eden Martin? Well I am going to tell you for fear I did not. I was in a town by the name of Troyon, getting some supplies one day, and was walking down the street when who should I meet but Eden. Troyon was headquarters for the 33d division, which is from Illinois. Eden was in town on his way to attend a Gas School. It sure did both of us a lot of good but we had very little time to talk, as he had to get a car and be on his way to school. The company from Sullivan was in camp about eight miles from Troyon but I did not get to look the boys up."

III

1919

Letter dated January 1st, 1919 – Bob Martin to Eden Martin

Letrecey, Haute Marne

Dear Brother,

Guess I'm behind with my correspondence with you, but that is the way I usually am with everyone with whom I correspond. I saw where your division was in the A. of O. but since has been taken out again. Consequently, I haven't much idea where you are by this time.

We tho't for awhile that we'd get home soon, and most of the 38th division has gone, but there seems to be no chance for us soon. It sure would look good to me to look the Statue of Liberty in the face for the last time.

Well, there isn't much I wanted to say, only that I'm still here and as well as could be expected. I haven't heard much from home lately, but outside of news of the death of Neely's baby there has been none of it bad news.

We have pass privileges to Chaumont now and if you should ever happen to be there and haven't time to come on down, let me know.

Write when you get the opportunity and I'll do likewise.

* * *

Progress, January 23, 1919.

Lt. John E. Martin was in the hospital recovering from an attack of the “flu” from December 18 to January 6. No letters had been received from him written later than December 5, until this week when a good bunch of them got through. Prior to December 18 he had had charge of the work of securing “billets” or quarters for the advancing regiment and exposure in the mud and continually chilly rains probably caused his illness. His letters give his opinion of the weather in scathing invective but upon his recovery he grows more cheerful and it is this view that appears in these printed below. In one of the later letters to his wife he says:

“I am still in the hospital at Treves, Germany. The ward I am in is presided over by a Lieutenant of the medical corps and we have two nurses and several orderlies. Most of the officers who were here when I came have been evacuated back to the hospital at Toul and I have a notion that I may be sent there too. My regiment is somewhere in the Duchy of Luxemburg. I have no appetite and do not feel strong, but I was on duty for two months when I felt worse than I do now.

“This cold, wet, muddy country was never intended for me. I might be able to endure it as a civilian (if I had to) but in the Infantry where one never gets a chance to get warm or dry – well I can’t stand it. I might as well remain here now as I feel I would have to be sent back in a week or two.

“If I were sent to Toul I might not see the regiment again – might be transferred to another regiment or sent home as a casualty. I would rather go home of course, but I don’t know how much chance there is of that. I will probably remain in this hospital for a week or so longer.”

(Here Lt. Martin writes about his Christmas spent in the hospital and contrasts it with Christmas a year before spent at Houston, Texas where his wife was visiting. While this is the best part of his letter, we must omit its publication.)

“I lost all my underwear, shirts, handkerchiefs, socks, towels, etc., in a laundry. I also had to leave my roll of equipment worth \$200 when I came to this hospital and I may never see it again. You see I am

just about ready to become a civilian for I am sure of nothing except what I wore to the hospital. “

On January 1st he wrote:

“I am still in the hospital but expect to get out in three or four days and I will probably return to the regiment. I am not taking any medicine at present except a couple of egg-nogs a day. I would just as well go to the regiment as to go and loaf around Toul or some other French city. I may stand just as much chance of getting home with my outfit as I would as a casual back in France. The wounded who are able to travel stand the best show of getting home.

“Yesterday I dressed and with two other lieutenants in our ward, walked out of the hospital and spent the afternoon and evening in the city. It was a little irregular but the nurses and orderlies knew where we were going. Like many other people they don't tell all they know. I had business up town and I took good care of myself. I got a haircut and shave at a German barber shop and went to the Disbursing Quartermaster and put in a voucher for my December pay. I needed the money and although I will have to wait two or three days, I can get it when I leave the hospital. I went to the Y.M.C.A. where I loafed two hours in the club room, and took dinner in the evening. The service was of the best and German waiters in evening suits served us. The meal was a real joy in comparison with the bully beef, gold fish and other fare at the hospital. After supper (or dinner!) we went to a German movie. We could not understand all of it but it was a nice little theater and the music was fine. Later we went back to the Y.M.C.A. where a swell dance was just starting. There were too many of the booted and spurred of G.H.O. there for me to feel comfortable in a mixed uniform and laced trench boots. The two lieutenants with me were similarly dressed for when a soldier is ordered to a hospital he goes just as he is, and does not dress for the occasion. One of my companions had been wounded and was a prisoner in Germany. The only officers insignia he had was a bar on his cap and when he took his cap off, he lost his rank. So we took one look at the shining boots and listened a moment at the rattling spurs, sighed a little on account of our tough luck and walked out into the rainy street. There was nothing to do but return to the hospital.

“It being New Years the cook has made a good resolution for I stopped writing long enough to eat a pretty good dinner. We had bread and butter, mashed potatoes, roast beef with brown gravy, kraut, peach pie and cocoa. it was a pleasant surprise but there was not quite enough of any of it.

“I hear the troops, billeted near here, cheering again. I suppose they have some more good news about going home. I would like to get that kind of news myself. I saw a boy from our division who says the talk is strong that we are to return soon. Of course I know how that sort of rumor flies in the army. I have not heard from Carl and have had no news from any of the boys except Bob.

On January 3 he was still in the hospital at Treves, but was expecting every day to get leave to return to his regiment.

“I don’t think there is any likelihood that I shall be evacuated back to a base hospital in France and anyway I would rather return to duty. I imagine I have a lot of letters at regiment headquarters. I have had no mail since I was sent to the hospital December 18. I go into the city nearly every day where I spend a good part of the afternoon at the Red Cross officers club and get dinner. I spend the morning at the hospital. Today I went to the quartermaster and got my December pay and while waiting there, a young lieutenant of aviation came up and called my name. It was Gordon Kibbe. He told me that he and Ralph Booze were in the same squadron and that Ralph had been wounded and had been sent to a hospital but had visited them a short time ago to secure his baggage and expected to be sent home. He did not tell me much of his experience but said he saw the scrap in which Booze was wounded. He tells me a younger brother of his (Philip) is in the 129th Infantry (which is in the same brigade with the 130th.)

“Lieutenants Booze and Kibbe in October were in service a little to the left of us and doubtless flew over our lines frequently, without knowing we were there.

“Gordon is the third home boy outside of the 33rd division we have located. In October or possibly September Fred Boyce was over to visit our men though I did not get to see him. He was in the 4th division just on our left. After the armistice I ran across Lt. Joe Eden

at Troyon. He was there only temporarily and I was away two weeks to an officers school. I came back feeling so badly that I was unable to look him up again.”

On January 6, Lt. Martin wrote that he had just been discharged from the hospital and was starting out to hunt his regiment which he thought was in or near Luxemburg.

* * *

Letter dated January 16, 1919 – Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

Letrecey, Haute Marne

As I've been getting your letters pretty regularly, two in the last two days, I guess it is about time for me to write. Probably by now you've noticed that the writing mood doesn't strike me very often, but you should feel flattered to know that most of my mail has been addressed to you.

Our outfit is still stationed in the same place we pulled into on the 5th of October and so far as we are concerned there isn't a great deal of difference now from before November 11th. We work about the same only Saturday afternoon and Sunday off regular now. Before we got off about every other Sunday. It rains just the same and there is the same speculation as to when we will move – only now it is back, while before it was up. Needless to say, we're much more anxious to move now than we were then. I have too good an imagination to ever regret the fact that we were never under artillery or machine gun fire. Several combat outfits have come thru' here and I've heard some of the stories they tell. Those stories satisfied me thoroughly.

The army life is getting dull here. It rains about every day, but it hasn't got very cold yet. I'm hoping we will escape a severe winter and believe we will now. For awhile I expected to spend a good part of the winter at home, but now I've quit expecting anything. I guess no one has any idea when we'll start back. Most of our old division has already gone, I guess, but the Engineers seem to be the goat on the work to be done. A great many of them are repairing roads, but I don't believe the work we

are doing is what is keeping us. Not having the slightest idea of what is keeping us, I have no idea when we'll leave. Probably everyone over here is in the same fix – I don't know.

Last week I spent one day and night in Chaumont. There is nothing there except a Y.M.C.A., and a lot of narrow streets and sidewalks, but the change is worth the few francs that it cost. There isn't much you can do with your money over here.

I got a card from Eden written Christmas day. He was in Germany and was just recovering from some slight sickness. At that time he expected me to beat him home, but from what you say he'll probably beat me. Edgar has probably had many experiences. As I have his address now, I'll drop him a card. He may be pretty close around.

As for what I'll do when I get home, I don't know. My mind hasn't been turned much in that direction. I would like to see Neely get to finish his course tho'.

Letters from Olive and Mabel come pretty regular but for me to answer every letter I get would be a mere repetition so I'll try and take turns in writing them. They are all about the same anyway, and if I were receiving them I don't believe they would sound very interesting.

The Christmas box which the girls sent me somehow had a mishap. Several of them arrived in the company intact and the wrappers off of a few others arrived. Of course I was somewhat disappointed but I felt a little doubtful all along about the success of its voyage.

I just got an army balling out from another "buck" [buck private] which consists of quite a little profanity. I took it tho. The reason for it was that I called him from the other end of the barracks to give me a light off his cigarette. He's my bunkie so I'm used to his moods.

Well, I've written quite a "spell" for me so will cease firing for the time being after the customary assurance that I'm O.K.

* * *

Letter dated January 17, 1919 – from Eden Martin to I.J. Martin

Beaufort, Luxemburg

I got your letter dated December 16 yesterday and will try and answer it today. I wrote Eathel yesterday, and as I explained, since I was in the hospital my eyes are not of the best, and I am using them as little as possible until I get glasses which I have ordered from Paris. They should be here before long but until I get them I do very little reading and write cards instead of letters as a rule. Your letter was the first news I had from home of anything that had happened since the middle of November. That is a long time to be without news and I was getting quite lonesome for a letter. While I was in the hospital I consoled myself with the hope that I would get a lot of mail when I got back to the regiment, but my letters had been forwarded so I gave up hope of ever seeing them. To make it worse, three mails came in after I got back and the only letter I received was from Bob, and he couldn't tell me anything I hadn't already heard.

I got your letter and one from Eathel yesterday and she enclosed a picture of herself and the baby. I was sure glad to get them. Today I got a copy of the *Progress* dated December 5 and though I hate to attempt much reading, I didn't overlook a bit of it. In the article about our scrap of Nov. 11th, I guess I had left a wrong impression about the rumors. You know, being on the staff I was used for any sort of emergency in addition to my duties, and in case of an advance I took all the enlisted men of the headquarters including runners or messengers forward and was in charge of these until other officers came up. That is what I meant by my runners.

The 333rd Division is now in Luxemburg along the German border. We were in the Army of Occupation and marched into Germany but were transferred to the Second Army and came back across the border again. We were near St. Mihiel during November but are now several days hard march from there.

I got two copies of the *Independent* and read part of them, but I am saving the magazine until I get my glasses. I am very much interested in the letter from the Commoner, and Bryan has taken the stand that I

had hoped and might have expected that he would take. He does not get excited easily. I am, of course, glad that the men of the home camps are getting back home and only wish I could do the same. I don't expect to however until Peace is more or less established. I was sorry to hear that Thomas Gaddis didn't get promotion after coming so close to it. There have not been the great number of promotions of men in our regiment which might have been expected. I guess we were too busy to think much of promotion and then when we did get a breathing spell, the war was over. Personally, I was not in a position to easily acquire promotion and did not desire it, but I wish that Batson could have been made a Captain for he commanded a company in most of the service and I think he deserves promotion. Of course he may get it yet; at least, I hope so.

I agree with your sentiments on further policies I am sure, and the war has not greatly changed my mind other than by strengthening my former opinions. War with a vengeance is a great thing while war is going on. Peace time war – I have tried them both – is an entirely different proposition to war-time soldiering. As you say, I am not in a position to discuss present policies because I have had no opportunity to post myself on present conditions. Anyway, I am not in a position to discuss politics, especially when it affects the army, and I don't propose to attempt to do so. I am not radical on the subject except that, if you will recall the position I have always taken, you will have a pretty good idea of my present attitude. During the past two years I have only seen a situation arise very much similar to what I had anticipated, and if you will recollect, often spoken of to you. It is what Mr. Bryan is preparing to face with his usual bravery and unselfishness, and is the problem which every American voter is going to have to face.

The *Chicago Tribune* in its attitude toward our border service was only just adopting the plan which it has consistently followed and is now drawing to a climax. As you know, I don't credit the *Tribune* with being the instigator nor the guiding hand of the movement. It is and always has been merely one of many instruments. It wanted war with Mexico, Japan, Germany, or some power, and it got it. We fought the war and now the *Tribune* and its ilk must hasten to reap the benefits at the polls before we get back.

Don't put a wrong construction upon that statement. I don't mean to imply that is a fault of the republican party, unless they have since adopted the movement; I don't mean that I was not for war because you know that I was for waging it to the limit; I don't refer to the army generally as being behind the movement advocated by the *Tribune* for most of the men in the A.E.F. are peace loving young men with sentiments much like my own. The fact is I have watched the campaign for universal military service develop from the bud; I recognized the machine as it gradually began consistently attempting to undermine and destroy opposition without arousing attention; growing, as the months grew into years; adding more and more powerful adherents by one means or another; stopping at nothing to gain its end, and ever going relentlessly on. Now is the time for the *Tribune* and its masters to strike, and as ever Bryan takes up his weapon to defend the rights of the masses before they realize their danger; prepares to defend them from the menace they, themselves, in the fever of excitement, are half inclined to support. The draft is the one way to win wars; it is no good in peace. The life of the soldier in war is broadened; he thinks and appreciates life and peace as he never could in peaceful pastimes, but I have soldiered in peace, as well. I have had strange ladies in the theater draw away as far from me as possible, when I took my seat beside them, just because I had a uniform on. I have walked home with a girl and had her taken from me and heard her upbraided by her father for associating with a soldier. That was in peacetime at San Antonio, Texas, where troops had long been quartered. I have even seen the uniform insulted in various ways in Sullivan before the war and its true significance had become generally understood. I am not arguing against soldiering in peacetime at all, but I think 18 years of age is a poor time to demand that every boy shall be taken from the influence of his home, his school, and business or trade training, to spend his time in a peacetime army camp among temptations to which he is unaccustomed.

As to the soldier and his knowledge and interest in Wilson's 14 points which you cited in the speech of Roosevelt, I dare say the fighting men of the front are familiar with these and have very decided interest in them, for these and Wilson's speeches together with peace

notes, newspapers etc., were dropped daily from aeroplanes at the front line and the men risked their lives by running out of their trenches over the top to get them. Not many at home have showed an interest equaling that. The Bosch got wise to this practice and came over one day dropping sheets of paper. When the boys disclosed their position by running out into the open, the Bosch dropped bombs.

I have run out of paper so I must close. After saying I am not radical I may have said too much in this letter to convince you – more perhaps than I should at this time. Tell everyone to write for I probably will be here for months. I'll write as often as I can.

P.S. – Please don't publish my sentiments on compulsory service, for military reasons.

* * *

Letter dated January 21, 1919 – from Eden Martin to I.J. Martin

I received your letter of December 26 yesterday and will answer it if you will excuse this stationery. It is all I could buy here and we don't seem to be able to get paper from the Y.M.C.A. any more.

The questionnaire you spoke of doesn't have the significance which you placed on it, I don't believe. The one I answered yes is the only course I could have chosen that would not necessitate my keeping myself equipped and ready for call either into service or periods of training, and we understand here that we were expected to choose one of the four to which we should answer "yes." By choosing the class "D" I place myself in the same status as the men over whom I am serving. They are enlisted for the period of the emergency and then are to receive a complete discharge. That is what I desire for myself. To get a discharge before I am sent home with troops, it would be necessary for me to put in a request, showing cause why it was impracticable for me to remain in the service temporarily. That is, in effect, the same as a resignation except that the officer is ordered home for discharge instead of receiving it here. I think that is what you believe class D to mean, but we don't understand it that way and

all officers who do not desire to remain in the Regulars or Officers Reserve Corps chose class "D." One officer in our battalion asked for a discharge and I know several others in other regiments who have done so. I don't propose to do that because I don't want to take chances on coming home and then reading of the regiment seeing further active service. I would feel like a quitter and a slacker in that case.

I don't know what I shall plan to do when I get back but I guess the future will take care of itself – it always has. That is a nice businesslike manner in which to consider it, isn't it? However, I expect that I have plenty of time in which to think it over before I am faced with the problem of civil occupation. When the Armistice was agreed upon, I sort of saw myself getting into civilian clothes before long, but it seems farther away now. When I get straightened out so I can keep out of the hospitals and get back on duty again, I don't look to be sent home for several months – not before July or August at the earliest. Of course, a fellow never can tell. I asked to go on duty and am now in the hospital to have my eyes examined. I asked to go back to the opticians at Treves and they are trying to send me somewhere else that I have never heard of. Perhaps if I ask hard enough to be sent back to the Company they'll send me home, or if I ask to come home I'll be pronounced perfectly fit for duty. I always get something when I ask for something. Everyone is accommodating to me that way and I get what I ask for – not. Last night I explained that I had had my eyes tested for glasses at Treves and the optician had asked that I come back again in ten days, and I didn't want to do so but the surgeon of my battalion wanted me to go and had so ordered. So this morning the Major of this hospital sent word for me to be ready to go in thirty minutes. I hurried down to the office and found that they had made all arrangements for me to go to opticians in some other city. I told him that I was returning to Treves only on the request of the optician there, and partly because my eyes had troubled me more than they ever had before. The Major, who is not an optician, asked what the optician had done and said at Treves, and I told him the tests they had made and the request to see my eyes again, and repeated some of their remarks, and then he said: "Well, what you have told me is only very ordinary. Nothing out of the ordinary at all; nothing at all to

worry about.” I reminded him that for nearly thirty years I had enjoyed good eye-sight and asked if it wasn’t a little out of the ordinary that in a little over two months I should get so I couldn’t read anything without feeling the strain and having the letters blur. It may be nothing for him to worry about if I seriously impair my sight, but it is a little bit to my interest not to. I told him if he couldn’t send me to Treves, I would be glad if he would return me to my outfit where I would apply for leave with permission to go to Treves or somewhere I could get my eyes fixed up at my own expense, so he said I should wait until tomorrow and he would see if he could get some mysterious permission to send me to Treves. He won’t get far sending me anywhere else, I’m afraid. He’s from Chicago – I love Chicagoans.

Eathel told me in her letters about Marcia Rose winning the prize doll at Finley’s. From her pictures I think she is one of the finest babies I have seen and for beauty she takes after her mother, luckily. I am glad for each additional evidence that others consider my opinion of her correct. I like babies of her age especially, and I am sorry that I can’t be there. However, I get a great deal of satisfaction from looking at my assortment of pictures of her and from receiving occasional new pictures to add to the collection.

You said something about Edgar and Arnold fighting on the same front that I was, and I suppose you meant the Argonne during September and October. I knew that most Americans who had been in Europe very long were in that battle, and I often surmised that Edgar and Arnold were probably there, but I have never known what outfits they were in so I couldn’t tell. Do you know the number of their Divisions? I knew that Bob’s was the 38th and figured Carl’s to be the 37th, but I never knew about Edgar and Arnold. Many Divisions have often been close enough that I could have looked them up, such as the 4th, 5th, 6th, 26th, 29th, 89th, and 90th, and probably several others. If they haven’t gone home yet perhaps I could still get a chance to see them. Bob was still at Latrecy, France, January 1, which was the last I have heard from him. I was only about 20 miles from there once and could have gone down but I didn’t know he was there.

You spoke about the possibility of my cutting the big mortgage

in half. If I don't have to spend too much for equipment to replace the things I lost while I was in the hospital, I should have no trouble doing that, I think. We have the \$500 bond and I sent Eathel \$300 the first of December to apply on the debt to Mrs. Anderson. I have 450 francs from December pay and January pay almost due, so I should be able to save \$175 out of the two months, not counting what I have already bought in the way of equipment. If I were to be ordered home the first of February, that would allow me another months pay before discharge and would very nearly settle the debt. March pay should easily settle it and should I remain in the service until mid-summer, which is not unlikely, I should save sufficient to pay the mortgage as well by using the \$500 bond. That would practically clean up my indebtedness with the exception of the mortgage on my interest in the big house, and any interest I may have in *Progress* indebtedness. I am glad to hear that Olive is well again. Tell her I haven't taken anything back I put in the last letter I wrote her except insofar as it applied to Mabel. I got her (Mabel's) letter a few days ago.

I must close. If I don't go to Treves I'll go back to Co. L. tomorrow. If I go to Treves I'll be back with the Company before Saturday. Write.

* * *

Letter dated January 26, 1919 – from Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

It's been quite awhile since I heard from you, but I guess I shouldn't kick because I've not worn any medals for steady correspondence since traversing the briny deep. The papers are arriving pretty regular and the copy of "The Public" which you mailed me came a few days ago. There were some good articles in it and one or two of my friends read them also.

About three inches of snow fell yesterday and last night, but at the rate it's melting today it will soon be gone. It has been pretty cold thru' January but nothing like what we have in Illinois. This is our first snow and will probably be our last. Spring ought to arrive sometime next week.

It will be a welcome visitor for it isn't the greatest pleasure in the world to be working out on the road or some other outside job and having the chilly breezes concentrate themselves upon you. I've been inside now for about a week on "fatigue" as I've been feeling not the best.

The prospects for the return home aren't seen to be very good. At first we expected to be among the first, but from latest reports we are going to have the privilege of staying over here a few months more. We're expecting to move up to a town near Metz and become attached to the 7th division. I understand that is a regular army outfit and will probably be among the last to leave France. Glorious outlook, eh! But that is war. I've decided the worse part of this war is the length of it. They may quit fighting but no war goes on forever.

The last I heard of Eden he was in Treves, in Luxemburg. He said he hadn't heard from home for two months. If you remember I once said he and I would probably disagree on many things when we got home, but I'm beginning to wonder. In all probability he will beat me home. I wrote to Edgar quite awhile ago, but have never heard from him. Owing to his truck driving ability, I would imagine he wouldn't be the first one home either.

I've never heard whether or not Neely received the money I sent him. I "accumulated" more than I really needed and thought I'd just send it to him. If he needs it, he's welcome, but if he doesn't, I can probably get away with it when I get home. If he's lent it out at the usual rate of interest, it should double itself by then. There was \$150 in two "shipments" via the Y.M.C.A. I have receipts for it here. The \$100 should have arrived about Jan. 10th.

If I should decide that our "crusade" will be extended to such a length of time that it will be necessary to the full enjoyment of life, I may get married over here and rear a family. I'm sure you would welcome me in your declining years with my frau and a host of your grandchildren. Maybe the aforesaid money, if invested judiciously, would afford a means for educating the children if they are not beyond the school going age.

I hear politics in some sections of the states has taken a change of course. Certainly I hate to see the county go as it did, but it's just an indication of what will be widespread later on. Not for the world would I insinuate but some of our leading men seem to follow the sayings of Barnum instead of the proverbs of Lincoln. It seems to me there has been quite a contest between those principles.

I feel for Neely for I'm certain he's had a hard time. I don't understand how he has done the amount of work he has with the scarcity of help. The purchase of the last of that equipment seems to be "tres bien" (just to show you I know a lot of French). That is just about my limit with the exception of a few phrases.

I suppose the girls are still making their weekly visit to Decatur and wondering how long it will be until the school board meets to grant next months' salaries. Mabel said they had made a solemn agreement to write to me each week, but there is a resolution broken, or Uncle Sam's mail service is at fault. Knowing both parties concerned, I'm not condemning the service too much. Now I suppose I never will get another letter from either of them, but I've got a little secret score to settle with Olive when I get back anyway. She made a remark before I left home that I've never entirely forgiven her for.

Tell Neely I don't wish to be the least bit critical about his publishing. The only possible objection I could find was that some of the soldiers' letters were a little long. In some cases he has been unconsciously following the teaching of Barnum but better he watch his most opportune time to switch to those of our greatest home state President, gradually of course. Tell him also that I believe I'll bring back a bigger "load" than I started over here with, and I don't know but what it will be better thus.

Well, I'll have to close, hoping to hear from you regular.

* * *

Letter dated January 27, 1919 – from Eden Martin to I.J. Martin

Treves, Germany

As you will notice, I am still in Treves but not for long, as it is now almost noon and I have determined to catch the 1:17 train for Luxemburg, and with good luck I should be back with Co. L tonight at 7:30. I have staid a day or two longer here than was necessary but I like Treves as a city and was much more comfortable than I would have been in Befort and might just as well be here, as there had I been with the Company I should have laid around doing nothing anyway until my eyes improved, and here I have done the same. As a result I feel better than I have for months and outside of the defects in my vision which the glasses I hope to sometime receive from Paris will correct, I am quite O.K.

The last few days here I have been with Gordon Kibbe, who is stationed at Coblenz and was here a few days on a pass. I had been staying at the Red Cross Casual Officer Hotel, but after I ran across Kibbe I moved to the Hotel sur Post where he had a room. It put me nearer the Officers Club where I ate my meals and spent my spare moments. During the day time I got around the city a good deal, buying stuff I needed and stocking up a little at a time on cigars, cigarettes and things which the Commissary and Y.M.C.A. sell only in limited quantities – the latter in very limited quantities indeed. I attended an American Minstrel show played by soldiers, which was certainly fine, and two German shows at the theater; one drama and one grand opera. The acting, stage setting etc., was fine but of course I couldn't understand much of it. I never did get even a hint of what the drama was about except that it was a tragic situation where a girl's parents favored one suitor; she another; and a third seemed to be running on his own account. The opera was good and more easily understood. I could at least tell where to laugh for I have learned that as a rule the Germans are less demonstrative than we are and when they chuckled over something, I knew that I had ought to be expected to applaud uproariously and throw my hat into the air.

If the shows I have seen are on an average plain, I believe that in some ways they are better than ours and in some ways worse. I mean from

the standpoint of morality and decency. The American idea is to dress the clowns up in short skirts etc., and the nearer they are to being undressed, the better they are addressed. We connect that idea with a chorus; otherwise, it becomes a choir and ceases to be a chorus. Here the dresses were prim, neat, and respectable. They resembled well brought up school girls more than a "chorus." On the other hand, a theme seemed to run through the play in the acting and by suggestion at least, which would not pass censor in the United States.

I don't know to what I am returning. Your letter about the four classes of officers and the ultimate fate of class "D" set me thinking and enquiring, and I am in doubt as to just where I stand. When we received the order to classify ourselves, we were told that there were to be four classes and were asked which we deserved. The first dealt only with the Regular Army officers before the war; the second appealed only to those who desired to become Regular Army Officers; the third was the Officers Reserve Corps, in which one keeps himself equipped without service and income; and the fourth was for "Immediate and complete separation from the service." Asked which class I am desirous of going into, I naturally conclude that at the muster out of the regiment, Class four takes effect, and there is no other I could take anyhow. All of our officers, being asked which class we desired, naturally chose one or the other of those mentioned and none elected to remain with the regiment and then be discharged because they knew nothing of that class. So then, as well as myself, that was the meaning of Class "D." I didn't see the order. I was sick at the time for it was just before I went to the hospital in December, and the adjutant asked which class I would choose and I told him if he had nothing better, I would take class "D." To be frank, I thought anything could improve on the job I held then at the immediate mercy of Chimier [?] and Ruff, especially in my physical condition.

When I got your letter I was sure that I was to remain until muster out for so the order was construed in the regiment and almost all of the officers then present had answered it as I had. When I returned to Treves, I heard that from another Division Class "D" officer had either been transferred or ordered to a Port of Embarkation, and an officer I met from our Division said they were preparing to do the same. I met officers

here from other outfits and some had taken Class "D" but had added the statement that they wished to remain with the regiment until muster out, so I may be mistaken. I don't know.

I certainly didn't intend to ask for a discharge ahead of the regiment but if they construe it that way, I can't help myself, and while I don't want to leave the regiment in that way, still, I shall make no effort to change it for I don't like the climate and it doesn't like me and in addition, I want to get home as badly as any buck private in the U.S.A.E.F. If the mistake is made, I shall look at it as the hand of fate and offer no opposition.

As to the financial end of it, I ought to find some way of making a meager living when I get back, so I should worry. I am in a peculiar position. I feel the need of outdoor exercise and outdoor work though my mind is subject to change when I actually face physical labor. If my opinions are firmly enough set to stay with it, though, I think the rush is mostly for the easy life; short hours, and light labor of the mind instead of the muscle, so it ought not to be so hard to find employment of some kind. Income might worry me; not income tax, but "income." As I look back upon it, I don't feel that I have done much in the way of paying off my indebtedness; that is, not what I should have done. It has cost me more in the army than it should have, but you know, when a fellow has money and knows the pangs of hunger, he'll spend it for food, and when the chill winds blow and he is shivering, he'll buy clothes; and this, no matter how much the vendor robs him, if he can do no better.

I wore out a sixty dollar serge uniform in a little over a month's fighting because I could get no other at the time and place; and I came out of the war with no clothes fit to wear upon the street. I bought new stuff and didn't get to wear it once because the bunch at Regimental headquarters lost everything I had except what I was wearing while in the hospital. The stuff I had on, unfortunately, was the worst I had, suitable for the trip through Luxemburg in mud and rain. Now I have bought a new serge uniform, shoes, underwear, shirts, etc. all of which cost money, and if I stay over here I shall have many more things of similar nature and price to buy. I have spent my December pay entirely for things I had to have even if I start home tomorrow. Other things I

will not buy until I know where I stand. These are a few of the reasons why I have not paid more debts.

If I should get ordered home for immediate muster out, I shall be sure of January, February, and probably the better part of March pay, at least, but expenses will increase because of not being with a regiment and by the time I buy civilian clothes etc., I will be short again, and so it goes.

Well, my train is due in a few minutes and I must close. Give my regards to everyone and don't look for me until you hear from me that I am coming for I shall have ample time to write you so that you will receive the letter before I leave Europe. Don't look for it too strong for I am still in doubt about where I stand. Write often and tell everyone to do the same.

* * *

Letter dated February 1, 1919 – from Bob Martin to ?

Dear "Fawn" –

Got your letter a day or so ago. I had just mailed one to you a couple of days previous and suppose you have received it by now. There is nothing in particular that I wanted to tell you with the exception that if you intend to meet me in Chaumont you better be hurrying. From the looks of things, we're going right away from here. It's not known when we'll leave or where we'll go, but for the past week or so you could hear most everything. The favorite story has us going up near Metz to relieve the 5th Engineers and become attached to the 7th division. That seems a little absurd to me as the 5th is a regular army outfit. Our four months in France were up January 28th and the first fellows to take their leave were to go in a few days. All of a sudden these leaves were cancelled this afternoon. That and a few other minor details make me believe there is a possibility of us taking a longer and much more appropriate trip than to Metz. Rumors are one of the best kinds of camouflage I've ever seen, but the large number of these makes it hard to believe any. If we should go up there, it will probably mean several months more "war" for us.

It seems there is quite a controversy around that Peace Table in Paris. Of course we probably don't get much of the real dope, but "by the papers" Wilson must be learning a little about the greediness of some of these European nations.

Neely has had quite a time with the paper since I left. He hasn't been able to get sufficient help, but considering everything he's increased the business, I think. The shop ought to be pretty well fixed for equipment and he has got it at an unreasonable price – unreasonably low that is. I'll be glad to get back for my fingers are beginning to itch. [Presumably itch to set type.]

I wrote to Edgar a few days back, but he may be on his way home by now for all I know. From what I have heard, he had a very exciting time while the fighting was going on. I don't know much about Arnold, except that he expected to go home pretty soon. (I got a letter from Rich Birdsong a few days ago.)

I've been working in the kitchen today. It's not a bad job considering everything (which you probably don't). You could hardly consider everything unless you've been there.

If I leave here I'll let you know as soon as we get settled. Write as often as you can.

* * *

Letter dated February 6, 1919 – from Bob Martin to his older sister, Olive Martin

To Olive,

Your weekly letters haven't been arriving with any noticeable degree of regularity. In fact it has been about a month since I heard from you. My address is just the same and there are not very bright prospects of it changing much in the near future. I know you were expecting me home for my birthday, but you see that is an impossibility. I would feel happy if I knew I would be there by yours.

From the rumors that are making the rounds now we are going to see duty in Germany before travelling back to the new world. If that

is the case we ought to get home in time for the celebration of the first anniversary of Victory Day. I don't feel sure we're going up there, but that is the prevailing opinion now. I just heard we might go to Turkey. We've already been to Russia and lower California. Maybe some kind soul will send us home. He'll be a man after the heart of the A.E.F.

We had a payday the third and I bought a souvenir each for you and Mabel. One of the Sergeants bought some also and sent his and mine to his girl or his mother. She will send them on to you, if they ever get safely across the pond. They were a couple of silk articles and probably won't be of any practical use. Maybe you could have bought them cheaper at home, but you seem to want something from France. As for me, I want nothing. I have all I care for and need nothing to remind me of this country. It would be more appropriate if some great man would be smart enough to discover something to make me forget it.

I sent some money home to Neely quite awhile ago. The first installment of one hundred dollars should have reached there about January 10th, but in any letters I've got, nothing has been said about it. It went via the Y.M.C.A. Have some one let me know if it ever arrives. About a month later I sent fifty dollars more. That should be there about now.

I heard from Edgar [Edgar Martin, son of Joel Kester Martin, therefore first cousin to Bob] last week but he didn't say where he was. Arnold [Arnold Harpster, son of I.J.'s sister, another cousin] was about fifty miles from me at ___ but I suppose he is on his way home now. Eden writes every once in awhile. He is up in Luxemburg and so far as I know has no idea when he'll get home.

Well, I'll have to close. Tell everyone to write for mail is about the only interesting thing we get over here.

* * *

Progress, March 14, 1919.

From Lieut. J. E. Martin
Befort, Luxemburg,
February 8, 1919

Dear Brother [Neely]:

I wrote you a letter a few days ago and I said that some day soon I would write you of an interesting scrap engaged in by a raiding party under command of Lt. Batson, which took place November 2, 1918, near Saulx-en-Woevre. I read the report of the raid at the time but when I talked to various men who took part I found it quite different in many respects and much more interesting. I don't suppose I can do the story justice, but as near as I can remember it, I will write it.

"In addition to those killed in action thirty men were wounded or gassed during the fighting. Of this number twelve that I know of were of the original company.

"Louis Maxedon, mechanic, was injured August 11, 1918, by the explosion of a German rifle. His injuries were slight and he is now with the company.

"Willis Howard was wounded by shell fire October 6th in the Meuse campaign. His injuries were slight and he has returned to duty.

"Robert Ferguson wounded by accidental gun shot, has not yet returned. I don't know the exact date nor how serious the injury. (Progress editor's note: Ferguson has now returned to Sullivan.)

"Sergeant Cecil Steele was wounded during the fighting on the east bank of the Meuse. The record states that it was a severe gun shot wound and occurred October 26th.

"Corporal Clarence Maxedon, wounded by shell fire, was recorded as 'slight' but has not returned to duty. His wound was received Oct 20th, near Consenvoye on the east of the Meuse.

"Sgt. Bert Gregg was slightly wounded in the leg October 19th during fighting on the east bank of the Meuse. He has returned to duty.

"Sgt. Hugh Brown was gassed at Cresnes. He is back on duty but, because of a surplus of sergeants, it was necessary that he transfer to Co. II of this regiment.

“Fred Lake was also gassed at Fresnes and has not returned to duty.

“Logan S. Atkinson, mechanic, was wounded by shell fire Nov. 7th but is now back on duty.

“Corporal John H. Stone was gassed Nov. 10th but is now back on duty.

“Glenn Bozell was wounded by shell fire November 10th and is now back on duty.

“I am sorry that I cannot furnish more intimate details concerning the company but it is impossible. They are at a town to which there is no railroad connection, and there are quite a few miles of young mountains between here and there. The roads are covered with snow and ice and walking that distance is out of the question for it would have been necessary that I return the same day. To add to the impossibility of it, I depart tomorrow morning for France where it is intended that I shall attend a month’s school in Infantry training.

“Perhaps I have given you some information that will be news and of interest. Doubtless I have also given some that in certain details, is incorrect. As I said, I got much of it from Regimental records, and Clyde Lewis of Company C added certain details as to those who have or have not returned to duty. I did not get to talk to him very long or possibly I could have written a more interesting account.

“I don’t know when we may expect to return to the United States. There is little to indicate a return anyway soon. I, personally, have hopes that we may be there some time in May but that is merely unfounded conjecture. Needless to say, we are all anxious to get back home.

“I have written all of this stuff so that you could make use of it, if you see fit. I have written much that was unnecessary but you can use your own judgment about that. If we are to see any more fighting before we return, I hope we get at it and get it finished. Waiting for orders to come home is a mighty monotonous occupation, especially when we don’t get them.

“I hear from Bob. He thinks he is to be ordered somewhere but is not certain whether it is to home or to Germany. He said his fingers are

itching to set some type, and I guess its catching for when I read his letter, I began to feel the same symptoms. Give my regards to the family. Write.

“Affectionately,

Eden.”

* * *



Postcard to I.J. Martin from Eden Martin, Beaufort, Luxemburg, February 1919

* * *

Letter dated February 10, 1919 – from Eden Martin to I.J. Martin

I got a letter from you and another from Bob today. I imagine that my illness in December may have worried you some, especially when you were so long without letters. I suppose I have already explained one reason why you did not hear so often as before. That was that I did not write so often. We were on the march through Luxemburg and I had no chance to write. After I went to the hospital I didn't write for a few days because I was in an influenza ward and I was a bit nervous about writing letters for fear of enclosing a few germs. That doesn't exactly agree with the Christian Science idea but

I am not exactly a Christian Scientist. I should not have attempted that trip through Luxemburg, but should have gone to the hospital in France and then reported to the regiment here by train. I would have been much better off. As it is, I am in good health, except for my eyes which are somewhat weak. I received my glasses the other day and get along much better.

I think I received most of your letters for I get them about an average of one a week. While Eathel was numbering her letters I didn't miss any, but later I think I must have failed to get at least one. I don't think Jim Pifer was with the regiment as he has been in the hospital several times on account of his eyes, I believe it was.

I think gas warfare is finished anyhow because everyone was pretty well sick of it. There is no doubt but the Germans were wishing it had never been started, and the Allies did not thrive on it. We had the best of it though, but the Americans had not learned the offensive use of gas like the British had. I was in a position to know what the American nation intended doing, and we would have revolutionized gas warfare, and with our new mask had the war lasted another month, we would have laughed at the Boche gas. I have no doubt it is finished. I even go so far as to hope that war itself, on a big scale, is finished.

I have occasionally read cut and dried opposition to Wilson's League of Nations plan, and it would be laughable if it were not so nauseating. The undercurrent seems to be either to accuse Wilson of being an advocate of "States Rights," or "Internationalism." I can't see how he is to go to both extremes at one and the same time, do you? The oversea *Chicago Tribune* based an attack a column in length on the meaning they presumed President Wilson had intended in the use of one word. As near as I can remember, the President was referring to the reasons why the United States "have" entered the war and the *Tribune* accused him of being an advocate of "States Rights" because he didn't say: "The United States *has* come into the war."

Throughout the article they tried to show that he meant that the States, collectively and individually, had entered the war, whereas he should have stated that the Nation acted without regard to the States that compose it. The *Tribune* pointed out the dangers of "States

Rights” and pretended to see Wilson’s actions and policies tottering in that direction.

Since then I have read in papers from home (I mean from Illinois) that the “League of Nations” means to turn the control of our army and navy over to European nations, who are notoriously selfish and unscrupulous; to give up our rights as a Nation and adopt Internationalism; to abandon the Farewell speech of Washington, and the Monroe doctrine, and entangle ourselves hopelessly in European strife and politics; to make that noble spirit of patriotism which we now possess a menace, or an impossibility; to adopt Internationalism.

That is a fine argument, but it is untrue. An English officer told me that but for the friendship and assistance of Great Britain’s navy at the Battle of Manila, the United States would have engaged German Warships along with those of Spain. I didn’t know it, but I have later understood that a German ship was threatening to fire when a British man-o-war moved to such a position that the Germans must fire over her. The Germans changed their minds.

It might be called Inter-nationalism for me to admit that I have been under the direct command of British Generals and of French. I have heard the statement made that we have been, at one time or another, in every fighting corps of the British and French armies who were operating on the Western Front while we were in the war. I believe the same statement included the American Corps as well. It seems like a broad assertion so I don’t vouch for it, but it was almost true, at least. Perhaps that might be called “Internationalism.” At that, I would rather be with them than against them.

The militarists in the United States would like to “enforce peace” – I beg pardon, they would like for others of the United States to “enforce peace” – but they don’t want to “enforce peace, justice, and freedom.” I wonder why they object to the two latter. The three certainly go hand in hand, and are lost when separated, one from the other two.

Since I have been over here I have learned to doubt our entire political system and I almost believe that it tends to kill sincerity and menace the free will of the people. We have two great parties, and

I am a Democrat because of principles I wish to see the Democratic party work out. If the Republican party worked harder for those same principles, I would rather be a Republican. It is the principles I try to be interested in and not the party name. But neither party can be perfect and so I should logically support that which I see that is good in both. If I follow this course I become, not a "stand pat" party man, but what might be called a "floater." While I and many others are "floating" hither and yon, in search of the high ideals to which we feel like lending our support, the standpat element "votes her straight," one way or the other and thwarts our purpose entirely. Then, likely as not, we are handed two lists of men for various offices in the general election and are told to choose, but probably it is hard to choose for they all look much the same and few of those we would like to support appear on either ticket. I guess the only hope under the circumstances is to grab one ticket or the other and try to make it what it had ought to be, and I am a Democrat.

I just got a letter from Eathel dated January 21st and she had never received a letter from me written later than Dec. 4th. I can't understand it. I know that I wrote Dec. 25th and have written to some one nearly every day since. It is very seldom that I have gone more than two or three days without writing. I think I wrote before the 25th but even at that, it would be high time she was getting it. I must close. I don't know when we may come home, but I hope to be there in May or June.

* * *

Letter dated February 22, 1919 – Eden Martin to I.J. Martin

Clamecy, France

As you probably know by this time, I am attending an Infantry school for a month in Clamecy, France. The regiment is still in Luxemburg and I suppose it will be for several months yet. Since I came down here, I am afraid I was a bit too optimistic when I estimated that I would be home in May or even in June. I suppose I shall be home by July or August anyhow. It seems a long time to stay in the service yet but it will pass, and if there is no more fighting I am pretty sure to get home

by July or August at the latest.

I haven't heard from Bob for a couple of weeks and in the last letter he said he was expecting to move but did not know whether it would be toward home or Germany. I don't think it is likely that his outfit will be sent to Germany so I suppose he will beat me home by a few weeks at least. I would like to get to see him and I may do so if he is near when the school ends. However, I hope to hear that he is on his way home for I believe it is much more to his benefit to get home than it would be to get to see me for a day or so.

Today is Washington's birthday and we have observed it as a holiday, so I have had more time to myself. I think I shall henceforth devote practically all my serious letter writing to yourself and Ethel and pester the remainder of my correspondents with letters when I feel frivolous. My reason for feeling that way is: you have a better understanding of what might seem queer to the present American ideas and ways of thinking, and while my mind is made up quite firmly upon most subjects which I consider seriously, still I feel certain that in many ways, my conclusions would seem queer or at least unique to the average American at home.

For instance, I don't enjoy my stay in France, nor do I look back with pleasure upon my brief visit in Paris. On this point my mind is firmly made up. I admire the French unreservedly in a great many ways, but with regard to the art, chivalry, beauty, etc., which one always connects with the idea of France, I can't see them for the filth.

Many people who do not know the British, think of them as more or less dull, slow-witted, "better than thou" folk, who, as a nation, are open to strong suspicion with regard to their motives, diplomacy, statesmanship, etc. In my personal opinion I have a very high idea of the British, for their brains, wit, logic, and broadminded fairness in most instances, and I consider the British as America's greatest friends. Throughout the war it seems to me, Great Britain assumed the attitude of a big brother to the United States and in many cases I have seen what I have believed to be the unselfish affection which would carry out that idea. True, as a big brother, the English evidenced the belief quite frequently that the United States is still possessed of the

precociousness (if there is such a word) of youth and our ally stood ready to offer friendly criticism and helpful advice. To carry the brother idea a bit farther, I would liken the relationship to that of two brothers of considerable difference in age. The older one being wiser and more consistent in his reasoning because of his wider experience in the ways of the world is, for all his fine physique and apparent strength, a step beyond his best days, and rather declining in vim and vigor. The younger is just arriving at the height of his physical strength but is still a bit thoughtless and reckless. Picture this older brother struggling for his own life and that of the rest of the family against a terrible foe. See how valiantly he met him in 1914 and how he put forth his entire strength for years while the foe centered his wrath and venom upon his person, until at last this fine specimen of strength and wisdom is almost beaten to his knees; his wisdom increased by this terrible experience, but no longer possessing the strength to profit by his former mistakes. And so in 1917 we see him terribly berated, torn, and bleeding; the neighbor who had fought on his left turned traitor, and the gallant neighbor on the right suffering and almost beaten, misunderstanding the extent of the fight and sacrifice he had made, exaggerating his remaining resources and with suspicious glances of doubt, demanding that in addition to carrying on his present fight, he also lend a hand on the right. If you can stretch your imagination to take in this picture with all I have stated as well as much that I haven't, and the enemy, recognizing the true state of affairs, indulge in a baleful grin as he redoubles his blows upon his two fast weakening adversaries.

Then see their valiant hero, in spite of his own predicament, step to give the aid demanded by his neighbor. As he does so, his foot slips on the precarious ground and he begins to fall beneath the fury of the enemy attack. That gives a fair likeness to this situation as it was up to the time that the 5th Army gave way and threatened the entire British cause.

To make the picture more vivid, we will suppose that the younger brother had been attending college and quite busy with his studies and social pleasures. He had known of the fight his brother was in but he didn't understand what it was all about, and when he considered it at all, he dismissed the subject with the thought: "John is

strong and very able to take care of himself. Anyhow, it's his fight, and if he didn't want to fight it to a finish, he ought not to have gotten into it." But at last as John begins to fall, the younger brother begins to see what the effect is going to be. Already, the fence around the yard is beginning to be broken down and a brick has gone through the glass door of his beautiful house, and the beautiful glass panel upon which he had sentimentally engraved the word, "Welcome" is already cracked by the force of the conflict which, he is forced to admit, is coming nearer. He begins to get just a little excited, and calls out a warning to the enemy which has as much effect as a straw in the path of a flood.

The younger brother still believes that his big brother is able to keep up the fight but he can't understand his apparent weakening, so he begins to get into his fighting togs, and studies ways and means while he keeps his eyes glued on the fight.

At this point we will suppose he sees John slip and begin to fall. He is shocked but he doesn't realize the noble reason for the accident so he is rather disgusted with the display of weakness. However, he frantically throws off his coat and rushes forward to his assistance. He throws himself into the fight as his brother falls back and the look of heartfelt gratitude which he receives from his exhausted brother is a revelation. John was always slow to express sentiment and he had always mistaken his outward veneer as one of contempt, strange in a brother. But now, he'll never forget the look of that moment.

As John recovers his balance and returns to the fight with all his strength, he mutters: "Maybe, with your help, we can hold him." He has no hope of doing more for he underestimates the strength of this younger brother whom he doesn't understand. He mistakes his genuine confidence and enthusiasm for four flush foolishness of a boy, who has not cut his eyeteeth.

Then, we will suppose that this neighbor whom the boy has always respected and admired, attracts attention to himself, and we see him falling also, with tears of weakness, pain and helplessness in his eyes, as he cries: "Paris est finis! Paris est finis!"

Without considering cost, consequences, or reasons why, the boy springs to his aid also, and saves the day until the neighbor can spring

again into the fray. The latter acknowledges the timely assistance with a formal and chivalrous salute that is full of sincerity, and so the fight goes on and the three of them begin to drive the enemy from their gates.

John says: "Bally nice of you, old chap! Perhaps we can hold him now, you know. Once I had your enthusiasm but it's been a long and trying fight. If they come through, perhaps we can stop them before they cross the lawns. Of course, if you think you can stop them, do so. I don't care which of the three of us ends this war, just so it's ended. Carry on, but it can't be done, really."

The neighbor says: "Vive l'Amerique! We're glad to see you, but you've come too late!" But all three put forth their concerted effort to drive the enemy back, and to their surprise, they succeed beyond their fondest hopes. Fighting desperately foot by foot, he falls back. The new combatant is injured of course but with each hurt he redoubles his efforts. He knows little of scientific fighting, but he hits an awful "lick," and he unwittingly takes such chances that the enemy is awed and can't believe his eyes. The enemy puts up a defense that would have stopped the most seasoned fighter, but his new adversary wades right through it. He thoughtlessly offers so many targets that the enemy can't keep himself with bricks and just as he gets a fresh supply, this young giant plunges in and takes them away from him before he can throw them. And so he is rushed clear off his feet and as he falls he begs for mercy and is willing to accept any terms rather than meet his death, which he so justly deserves.

Now, we come to the finale. This young giant says: "We have gained our object. This thing, of course, is no friend of mine; nor is he exactly an enemy. So long as he lies still, I've no objection to sitting comfortably here and keeping my eye on him, and in the meantime we'll figure out what is to be done with him and I'll grind two or three "nicks" out of the edge of my sword." So he tells the enemy that so long as he is quiet he'll not be hurt. He doesn't threaten him and yet, he threatens him if you see what I mean.

John says: "He's been a pretty good sport, and has put up a mighty good fight. Of course he did pull some rough stuff, but a lot of it was really our own fault. Still, he's got to realize that he's conquered.

We can't take chances on his getting up, so I'll just keep my bayonet at his throat."

The neighbor says: "My friends, congratulate me. I've won. I'll just stick him a little, now and then to bring home to him the way he tried to deal with me. He must pay all damages to the last centime and in the meantime he must realize that I can play the part of the conqueror if he forces me to it, and he must keep his mouth shut and must not look my direction."

So the battle ends with the youth who has made victory possible for the three want nothing much out of the struggle except the few principles for which I came in. First and foremost, I want the rights and freedom of everybody insured, and I want a police force established on this block so another such fight will be impossible.

All three are essentially in favor of the same things but the neighbor is inclined to differ with the boy about the manner which they should go about it. John says: "The boy has a good idea and I'm for it. I've even got a few suggestions which should go even farther that way than he does."

To go further with the Big Brother idea, we can recall instance after instance in the past that will show that this attitude is not exactly a recent thing. I am sorry that I had to come to Europe to learn American history and from the British, at that. But such is the case. I am reminded of the settlement of a boundary quarrel in the eastern part of the States between the U.S. and Canada. The British call it the "war without bloodshed," and it was settled by compromise, largely through the efforts of Great Britain. I don't remember the exact date.

They also tell me about the incident at Manila Bay where a German commander intended to interfere. I am told that the Germans asked the British Naval Commander what his attitude would be in such case, and he received word that the British would also take part and the British ship moved forward to that the German must fire over it to reach the American ships. That strikes me as a very significant incident in our history, if I have recited it correctly.

I recall when I was attending a British school at St. Valery. I was never treated with such friendly courtesy as during those days,

and I had by far the best time that I have ever enjoyed in Europe. I have always been drawn toward the Canadian and Australian officers. I think all Americans have. The British impress me at first glance with snobbishness and inconsequence. They seem to cultivate and exaggerate that appearance, but they are gentlemen and sportsmen through and through. Most of those whom I have met are accomplished musicians and singers and droll comedians. They usually ridicule themselves, personally, or the English generally. They sing American songs with more zest than Americans themselves and are especially fond of southern melodies. I remember that the song, "I'm from Dixie, too," whatever the title is, was a decided favorite.

The English officer is fond of his Scotch and soda, but as a rule he doesn't drink to excess. He is very punctilious as to established customs and proprieties, but he delights in entering into the most ridiculous games and duties, and since he does this without relinquishing in the heart, his foppish appearance, it is the more ridiculous and laughable. When he is serious, he is terribly serious with a decided tinge of sarcasm which never fails to get under the skin. When he relaxes, on the other hand, he doesn't go half way at that either.

There is one story which an English officer told me which stands out clearly in my memory. I couldn't tell it as he did, much less, write it.

The English lower class in London gather at some inn after work in the evening and drink their ale, and the one he referred to in the story said he had told his wife, if anything happened of interest she could always find him at the Inn. So she hurried down one evening and told him that the home of a friend and neighbor was burning. So since this man was a friend with whom they had all drunk their ale, they decided as it was his fire, they had ought to attend, so they did.

When they got there, sure enough his house had caught fire on the first floor and burnt away the stairway and there he was himself at an upstairs window. They asked him a lot of foolish questions which I can't repeat, and then they asked why he didn't jump. He didn't want to without a net for the window was high up and the pavement was below, and it would be almost certain death. It was dark and the smoke was curling about so one of them called to him to jump, that they had a net,

and so he did. The cabby who was supposed to be telling the story ended it thus: "And the joke was, we didn't have a net at all."

I wish you would tell that to Olive so she won't accuse me of cheap English wit again. She surely won't see anything cheap about that.

I doubt if I've ever written such a letter as this one. This is the tenth sheet, written on both sides, and I don't recall having written anything of interest yet. I guess it is too late to try and repair the fault now, though. A lieutenant sitting next to me says that it will be nice if you get this on Sunday, so you'll have plenty of time to read it.

I have seen some mighty interesting dope circulated by the Y.M.C.A. lately, and one thing that might be considered significant. The latter is a circular extolling General Pershing. I am not generally suspicious but to a person who was, that might indicate that McCutcheon or someone was boosting the General politically. I'll enclose a copy.

Another thing that I think of is really good. It is a psychological study of the soldiers' mental attitude towards danger etc. from the standpoint of Christianity and a splendid justification of the present war. I had never thought of the possibility of killing an enemy in friendship, and being killed or wounded in the same spirit, but to a great extent most American soldiers have done just that.

I know that you hear fewer expressions of actual hatred among the men who actually did the fighting than you do in the S.O.S., and prisoners who a moment before might have been met with the bayonet, were greeted in a quite friendly and cheering manner after they had given up. I dare say there has been more bloodthirsty hatred for the Boche among those who didn't get across than among those who did. Certainly the wounded never think of hating the Boche for the wounds which they have received at their hands.

In my first paragraph I stated that I intended to write anything that I stated seriously to you or Eathel, and it was primarily these pamphlets which turned me to this decision. Yesterday I felt much as I have this evening, and it occurred to me that Rev. Hopper might be interested in these pamphlets so I thought I might write him a note and enclose copies of them. When I got started, I expressed sentiments

of which I am not ashamed and from which I have no intention of withdrawing, but it has since occurred to me that people at home think somewhat differently of many things over here, to what we do, and I might make perfectly natural statements such as I would not hesitate to make to officers or men of my regiment, and they might seem to convey an entirely different meaning to the average person at home.

For instance I made the remark that my duties did not happen to require that I, personally, kill a Boche with my own hands, and that, while I would have done so as zealously as any man in the regiment had the proper occasion presented itself, I was glad that it had turned out as it did. That is quite true, but I did not consider that some might accuse me of either shirking the duty of a soldier (presumed to be that of killing) or might imagine that I was intimating that killing under such circumstances was wrong. Neither is true. I was never placed in a position where I was required to kill a Boche, and my meaning in the second instance was simply that I was uncertain how the bloodshed might have affected my peace of mind, so under the circumstances I am glad that I was not required to make the experiment. Many patriotic souls might also object to my attitude of indifference between enmity and friendship for the conquered Boche. From a military standpoint, they are still enemies. Personally, they are certainly no friends of mine, but as individual members of a conquered territory, they are not personal enemies either, so long as they conduct themselves properly and show me the proper respect and courtesy due me in my present status. I certainly have no desire to slaughter a German when I chance to meet him on the street, as I did in the occupied territory.

During my past service I was called out of the line to special duty merely because I possessed the instruction which was required for the special duty at the time. I objected but it did no good. Should we do further fighting, it is my intention to again make an effort to take a more active, fighting part. Should the Boche make further fighting necessary, I certainly would not lack in incentive nor desire to fight them for all I was worth. But so long as they admit themselves conquered, I don't lie awake nights entertaining a desire to burn them at the stake or murder their wives and children.

I am feeling better now than I have since early fall and I lack but one thing to make me quite happy, and that is an order to board a ship for home. I am not what you might call impatient about that, either, for I know the time is coming. Write.

* * *

Letter dated February 24, 1919 – from Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

It has been quite a while since I last wrote you, but I've been writing to some members of the family pretty regularly of late. Eden and I have been keeping in close touch. His last letter was written Feb. 10. He was then in Befort, Luxemburg. Contrary to his earlier opinion, he seemed to think he would get home about May. That isn't very long to wait. The way things look, he should beat me several months. I should guess that I ought to be there in eight or ten months. That would be a short sentence in the penitentiary but it seems a long one in the A.E.F., not meaning that this is the worst of course.

We've left our old stand at Letrecey and are now located at Saizerais, about fifteen miles northwest of Nancy. Our regiment is attached to the 7th Division which is considered regular army. Not more than fifteen or twenty percent of the men are regulars, I think. It is rumored that the 7th Division is to relieve some division in Germany in a month or so, and I take it we were sent here for the purpose of going with them. The 5th Engineers who were with this division sailed on the same ship with Pres. Wilson. As they were regulars I can't understand why we should relieve them here so they might go back to the states. But so much for the army. It can't be figured.



Saizerais, Marked as "A", northwest of Nancy. Thanks to Google Maps.

This is certainly some town to be exiled in. It would be a fit punishment for the Kaiser to sentence him to spend the remainder of his days here. It is only a small place. The residences, cafes, and stables set back a convenient distance from the road in most cases, allowing room for the manure heap in front. Usually the buildings are joined together making one string of low stone along the side of the street. Evidently building lines were not in vogue when these houses were put up, tho'. The cafes sell nothing but very weak beer, and as water is scarce and dangerous, that is the main drink. I can't imagine anyone with capacity enough to become intoxicated on it.

In Letrecey it was possible to obtain any kind of a drink from greased lightening down if it was wished and the francs held out.

Well, I've about run down so will close. Will write again soon.

* * *

Letter dated February 25, 1919 – Eden Martin to I.J. Martin

Clamecy, France

I have written letters upon more different kinds of stationery than I had ever thought of before. Whatever ones views on Catholicism, this is a rather neat letter paper it seems to me [Knights of Columbus stationery] and they have done more in this way than put out writing paper, at that.

I just wrote a letter to Eathel and it lacks only a few minutes time of being afternoon drill period so I needs must make this brief. I just heard yesterday of an order published from G.H.Q. which stated proposed departures of fighting divisions and the 33rd came in the month of May. That is about as I had it figured. That ought to put me at home for good by the latter part of June if we are mustered out as soon as possible after getting back to the States. Unless something out of the way happens, I see no reason why we should be held long after getting home. It would depend somewhat upon conditions here and at home, I suppose.

It rains here day and night – but I have told you that before. We drill etc. just the same. I fired on the range in a cold drizzly rain this morning and got soaking wet. Imagine going out in the road in front of my house on the rankest weather of the year, lying down crosswise of the road and shooting at an indistinct object down towards where Power's elevator used to be. One might do it on a bet or for the novelty, or for a mud ball to cure rheumatism, but I couldn't imagine anyone spending a whole morning at such pastime.

I had to go to drill and it is now evening. We spent this afternoon much more comfortably if not more profitably. We went down to the city hall where we heard a couple of lectures on changes in Drill Regulations caused by what we have learned in the war. That didn't take all the afternoon, and the young Lieutenant in charge said he had been hoping that it would rain real hard so there would be an excuse for not going out and drilling in the mud and drizzle. I had been hoping it wouldn't rain because I had not noticed that anyone recognized such an excuse. To get around the difficulty he called on a lieutenant to give us a talk and I heard one of the most interesting lectures I have

heard in a long time. It was on phrenology and physiognomy in reading characters. I had always laughed at such things, but that young fellow knew what he was talking about and gave the “whys and wherefores,” backed up with well known cases, and I had to admit that it is a science.

I have learned to or three things here. Last week I had the correct method of shooting explained in a way I had never heard, and one instructor said that shooting a rifle is a purely mechanical operation, and that anyone who can see to get around, has strength to hold the piece to his shoulder, and who is not an idiot, can make a good score. I shot a fairly good score once years ago and got a “marksman” medal, but it was more accident than anything else, and I have always believed that accuracy in shooting is all art that many could not accomplish. To bear this out I have seen men who were ordinarily expert fall down to about my plane. So I was glad that I had been in the hospital for my eyes so that I could use that as an alibi in case anyone called me an idiot. I have had no hope of making a good score.

In initiating a lecture by the instructor, one lieutenant got up on a box in our barracks after a fairly poor day shooting and, assuming the pose of an orator, he declared that anyone but a “damn fool or an idiot” could make an expert. Then, he said, since he objected to being called a “damn fool,” he guessed he was an idiot. The instructor must have sold patent medicine on the street before the war from the way he lectures, but to get back to my story.

My right eye with which I aim is not good but I have shot two mornings and the first day I made 79 out of a possible 100, and today I made 85. That is not bad shooting but the remarkable part of it was that I didn't make a bad shot either day. Formerly I might hit the bulls eye several times but I'd also get a lot of flags which indicate a complete miss. The bulls eye counts 5, the first circle 4, the second 3, and the 3rd 2; and in the forty shots I fired in the two days I only got “2” and one ‘3.’ The rest were fours or fives, and the fours were all in the same place, which might have been caused by a defect in the rifle or by the wind, which was the same both days. The old Springfield rifle has a device for setting the sights to offset wind, but I was firing the new rifle used by many Americans during the fighting. Our outfit used Springfields in the

Meuse-Argonne but we had the British rifle in the Somme because of the difference in the ammunition .

As I was saying, though, I have learned that rifle shooting is a “purely mechanical operation,” and today I learn that facial expression and the shape of one’s head are not just “happen so” but are caused by what one thinks in a mechanical sort of way, and may be read mechanically by one who understands the language. Personal likes and dislikes, prejudice, etc., were explained in that persons of certain types liked certain traits in the character of those with whom they associated, and sub-consciously they had learned that people with certain expressions on their countenances had or had not those qualities. Therefore, without being able to say why, they were immediately pleased or displeased with those they met for the first time. He said the desirable character was the one where the different traits were so balanced that none were predominant and that that was the most difficult to read or estimate. It was very interesting and most of it very plausible.

I think I mentioned that the present prospect is for the 33rd to return in May. There are two things about that that interest me very much. First, is the opportunity to get back home again. I wish that it were tomorrow on that account. I am not a militarist and the war seems ended beyond doubt. I will admit that we had been under fire for so many days and the strain of wondering what new deaths or wounded each day might develop, had gotten on my nerves until I was quite ready for it to end. However, no matter how long I might have been there, I don’t believe I could ever have been in favor of the slightest compromise. Surrender of the Germans didn’t come a minute too soon to suit me but I tried not to complain of any hardship or sacrifice then because it was necessary. I don’t feel that I did a lot toward winning the war; I didn’t have a spectacular position, but I instructed the regiment and trained them in one particular, and I had the satisfaction of knowing that of the first 1400 gas casualties suffered by our division, our regiment had 41.

What I mean to say is that while I wasn’t such a rip-roaring militarist during the war, I got by in the position I held, but I cannot qualify in peace time. I’m through and I want to get back home as soon

as the government is through with me, and get back into civil life. It can't come too soon, and while May is a few months off, it is a lot more satisfactory than a year would be. I'm glad to hear that we are coming home. I'm not homesick in any petty sense. I don't spend my time moping or worrying but I want to get home. I want to see my baby and I want to resume my home life where I left off.

The other consideration is the financial side of the question. I have entertained hopes of so managing that I shall have a half way even start in life when I leave the army. I had hoped to at least, either pay all my debts or have enough cash to do so at least. Had I staid in service until next fall I would have accomplished this. At present, as near as I know, I have paid for a \$500 bond and have sent home \$400 which we can apply on the debt to Mrs. Anderson. If I get paid to the first of July, I will draw five months pay yet. I am going to try and save \$125 each month, which will keep me practically broke after I pay my board. That would be \$625, which would make \$1525 saved counting the bond. The immediate debts that bothers me are as follows: \$700 and something to Mrs. Anderson; \$1000 on the house; about \$150 for interest and taxes; and a few other incidental expenses. It might total \$1900 or \$2000. I suppose I will fall short at least \$500. If I remained with the Army of Occupation I would clear it up all by December, but I shall not do it for two reasons. I don't want to remain in the service any longer than I have to, and to do so under those circumstances I would have to admit to myself that I was selling my service purely for the money I get out of it. I never have admitted that and I never shall. Had I been risking my life for money and nothing else, the price would have been as much for five minutes in the Argonne as I get in a month.

My other reason is that I am not a militarist in any sense of the word. I can't make the bluff that I am a superior being to lots of these boys who have better educations and many times the business ability that I have. I can't conscientiously impress these men with the sort of feeling that they should have toward an officer in a military organization. I try to do so while I hold a commission but they see through the show and don't stand near as stiffly at attention when I am about as they would if they feared I might snap their heads off. So under the circumstances I

am not delivering the exact article that is required of me as an officer. I am like the grocer who hasn't the exact article but offers a substitute that is just as good, but I can't get by with the alibi. I must feel that I am not earning the money paid me so I must not seek to continue in what I construe to be a job where I don't earn the money I receive. Heretofore and at present I am not the judge of that question and am not here of my own accord. I have earned an honorable discharge and I am waiting for it, but if I ask to remain longer, I am grafting on the government in an effort to get money that is not my due. When the government is through with me, I shall step out of military life completely into that of the civilian where I shall be free to form and express my own opinion upon any question of public concern, and militarism itself will then come under that heading.

Therefore, I consider only the financial benefits I shall receive up to July first for I expect to be mustered out by that time at the latest. Of the pay for those months I shall save the most I can toward giving me a better footing when I leave the service.

I have not received any mail for two weeks because I have been away from the company almost that long and I told Abel to save my mail until I return. I miss the letters that I know must be here and am anxious to get back. Tell the girls to write. Tell them if they don't write a lot of letters between now and May, they may never get a chance to write to me again for I intend to stick pretty close to home. It will be a lot of trouble for them to take a trip just to get to write to me. Tell Bill I wouldn't object to a letter from him either. I haven't been getting the *Progress* lately and I get short for news. I must close. I will write as often as I can while I am at school for I have more time at nights.

* * *

Progress, March 21, 1919.

Quoting Letter from Bob Martin:

“Our regiment moved last week from near Chaumont to a small town of Saizerais northwest of Nancy, about fifteen kilos. We are now assigned to the 7th division and will probably stay with them for the ‘duration of the war’ which by the way, seems to be sort of an endless affair. At one time we expected to get home at an early date, but now I haven’t the nerve to hazard a guess. At our first location we were fairly comfortable considering every thing. The barracks had stoves and the mess was pretty good. Here we are billeted at the first place we happened to stop, all over town. Some of the boys call our billet the ‘Hotel de Horse.’ We attempt to sleep in the loft, but our equine friends below don’t seem to get along the best in the world. Stamping and kicking are not the most soothing sounds for slumbering ears as you may guess.

“Happily it isn’t uncomfortably cold and as yet the cooties haven’t invaded our wearing apparel. I’ve heard several good stories about cooties but luckily have had no personal combat with any. One fellow said he had cooties with service stripes and was ‘poofed off’ by his friend’s remark that he had cooties that had cooties.

“In discussing the shortest poems, the old one of ‘Adam, had ‘em’ seems to have won the gold watch until some one sprung this one: ‘Dam ‘Em.’ Don’t think I’m trying to run these as original for most of the time I’m not in the mood to even attempt any joviality.

“This town is the nearest to the front we have ever been. You might call it interesting or not as you happen to feel about it. If you would be interested in low stone buildings with no space between, narrow streets and large manure heaps, you would be at the height of your glory. If you would judge the wealth of the inhabitants as Mark Twain did in his book *‘Roughing It,’* viz: ‘the size of the manure heap,’ some of these people would rival a munition worker or even a newspaper man. As you go along the street you will find about three different kinds of entrances: cafes, residents and stables, and they are all joined together in one continuous building. The cafes serve nothing but

beer and from the taste of it, Wilson's two percent has a powerful kick, comparatively speaking.

"It continues to rain occasionally, that is, every few minutes, and the roads remain sloppy. We were supposed to have a dry season but I don't see it. It must have come in the wee small hours of the morning.

Pvt. Robert W. Martin

Hdq. Co. 113 Engineers, American E.F."

* * *

Letter dated March 2, 1919 – from Eden Martin to I.J. Martin
Clamecy, France

I don't remember exactly when I wrote you last but it has been several days so I shall write again this afternoon. I am still at school and have just finished half the course. I shall leave Clamecy the 16th. The first two weeks were sure bad for one simply can't feel comfortable lying in several inches of mud firing at targets which one can hardly see for the rain. I don't believe that it missed raining a day of the two weeks or that the sun was shining an hour at a time except yesterday. Today it is cloudy but not much rain. I try to be optimistic for the future and have even gone so far as to scrape the accumulated mud from my shoes and clothing. That shows a very commendable morale when a fellow can be so optimistic in France.

I suppose you know that our division is slated to return home in May. Personally I have not heard anything from the 130th since I have been in France, but a Lieutenant from the 129th received a letter from his captain stating that it was officially announced that the division is to return by way of the Rhine and Rotterdam (I believe it was) and that they were already preparing to move from Luxemburg. Another report was brought by a sergeant who just arrived which states that the Division is preparing to return to LeMans, France, preparatory to embarking in May. I don't doubt but that a move is to be made about the middle of March for whichever way we go, we will be held in some camp about a month or six weeks before embarking, while all records are gone

over and men examined etc. I hope we go by way of the Rhine, for the climate is better and we would probably have a much more pleasant (or less unpleasant) time of it.

This experience will be somewhat in the nature of the period that always precedes muster out, and while the Captain, 1st Sgt, clerks, etc., work their heads off on paper work, there will not be so much work for the men and there is always a disagreeable, dry, schedule to follow, rain or shine. Everything will be confusion, and everybody will lose their patience and good humor. As you see it will be bad enough if the climate is satisfactory. Add the French climate, mud, rain, etc., and it will be what Sherman meant when he made his historic statement. Possibly he was engaged in the work of muster out at the time. Another thing that makes matters worse is: when one gets away back behind the lines, one meets people who have secured their information regarding the enemy almost entirely from horrifying accounts of their cruel disposition, and from stories brought back to them by doughboys who delight in telling them things that will make their beautifully tailored knees strike together. When one thinks of a Boche only as a terrible ogre who delights in killing people, it takes a little bit of nerve to even go up to the Rhine now and look across at lines in his wild state, and one feels much more like undergoing the disgusting French winter rather than the more healthful climate of Luxemburg and Germany. So when one comes back to France one meets many such people in various capacities. I have even heard one complain of the hardships and unfairness of war because while the doughboys were reveling in the Argonne where they couldn't spend their money, he was billeted in Paris where he couldn't save any. It was pitiful as he told it; one could not help feeling that his salary should be raised beyond that of his more fortunate brothers in the Argonne. However, the point I wished to bring is that if we come home by way of the Rhine we will probably deal with men who will understand more about what our records need and will join in a more congenial effort to rectify any errors which they may find, than if we return by way of France. I know that the men will be more comfortable billeted and cared for.

I wish that I had some mail from home for I have had none

since a week or so before I left the outfit. I shall not receive any until I return for I told Abel to lock my letters in the truck whenever he got away. I was afraid that I might lose the letters entirely if he attempted forwarding them to me.

I was two days late getting to the school and had to "answer by indorsement hereon" to the commandant of the school. It was the first answer by indorsement I had been called upon to make since I left the States. I used to get one or two a day before that. I explained that my order stated that I was to leave Befort, Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, at 7:30 a.m. on the 13th and report here on the 14th; that I had to change cars at eight different cities and it could not be done. I have not heard anything further about it. One lieutenant who reported three days late is being court-martialed and there is some talk of court-martialing all who were 48 hours late. If they do more than that, they will get about the entire school including one officer and one non-com from each company in our division. Although I reported on the 16th I was only about 32 hours late. Anyhow, I am not worrying in the least. Even though I were court-martialed it would not amount to anything for they could not prove anything out of the way in my case. I made the best time that I could, but a court-martial goes on one's military record, and I hate to serve as long as I have with the record I have had, and then, just before muster out, have a thing like that go on it. If I deserved a court-martial it would be different. I don't think there is the least danger of it though. As a rule a charge is not preferred unless there is a good chance of proving something because it brings up a lot of trouble and red tape, and if they ever call me up to question me, I know enough about the court-martial manual that I feel perfectly confident that I can show them how futile such a proceeding would be.

I got paid day before yesterday and I have determined to send \$125 home, although I have expenses here that will cut my spending money for the month to almost nothing. I also need dress shoes and a few things of that nature but to buy them in France would be the height of folly. I priced a pair of shoes yesterday and they were 80 francs (about \$15). They were better if one can trust ones eyes, than the American Army shoes but the latter costs about \$5.00. The only trouble is, they

can't be bought. However, I'll wait. I have figured out the amount I really must have saved when I leave the service, which I expect to do in June, and to save that amount I must save \$125 per month. I can't afford to come out with no cash on hand, and I must pay Mrs. Anderson, my taxes, interest, and have a little to go on. I must close. Address me at the regiment with Co. L., 130th Infantry. Regards to all.

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Letter dated March 11, 1919 – from Eden Martin to I.J. Martin

Clamecy, France

I started a letter to you a day or so ago but I must have lost it before I finished it. Therefore I will start anew. Today is the first day that I remember since last summer sometime that the sun has shined all day. It has been fine today. The school work was very much as usual, and in decent weather a fellow gets something out of it. After the last of the work I stopped a while down town and listened to a band concert. It was the first band music I had heard in a long time. Quite a crowd of soldiers and civilians were there, and I was especially interested in one little kid. She was barely old enough to walk and kept breaking away from her mother and running about inside the circle formed by the crowd. She tried to dance to the music and was about as amusing as the entertainment.

The school here is almost over and we start examinations tomorrow. I am not in the least worried about them. I think I can pass them without trouble, but if I don't, I should worry. This morning I saw one instance of something that may prove my downfall. We had a tactical problem and a very efficient captain who commanded a company and later a battalion in the fighting, had command of a platoon. In two or three instances the captain put into practice two or three things that all of us have learned who have been near the front. One of these was moving forward avoiding straight lines of skirmishers and mechanical advance of one squad and then the next. The former is to avoid flank fire destroying your entire line, and the latter to deceive the enemy and prevent his

knowing just what men are to advance next and where they will take cover. In both cases the Captain's course of action was obviously the wiser course and any other would be suicide. The instructor had never seen action and had a craze for straight lines and beautiful uniformity just as we all had before we learned by experience. He told the class that the Captain had done everything he should not have done, and said it was the worst demonstration he had ever seen, etc., etc. And yet if we went back to our outfits and undertook to put a platoon through a problem as this instructor teaches, we would be court-martialed. Perhaps you see what I mean. I will have to guess how this instructor believes a thing should be done, regardless of my own judgment or my grade will not amount to a great deal. I have talked to several other instructors who have seen fighting, and all of them say our captain was absolutely right, but unfortunately they won't be the ones to grade our papers.

The school is almost over and I believe that it has been absolutely the worst month I have ever spent. I am sure glad to see the end in sight. A lot of those who had asked to remain in Regular service are now regretting it. The experience had the opposite effect upon me, though, for I have been tempted to ask for Regular army commission, qualify for it, and have the satisfaction of remaining in service and watching a lot of these inefficient, swell-headed, S.O.S. birds kicked out. I know so many really efficient officers whose ambition is to get back in civil life that I hate to think of such fellows as the instructor I spoke of staying in. It seems unfair to the service. Some such fellows ought to be court-martialed for acts to the prejudice of the service "in that they did, when given the opportunity to get out, remain in the service, thus lowering the standard for commissioned ranks."

I haven't heard anything definite from the Division. I've heard rumors but they are not reliable. I'll leave here the 16th and if the outfit has not left I should be back by about the 19th. One rumor was that the division is already on its way somewhere, presumably to the Rhine, and it is to return home on German ships. If that were true I would probably reach it somewhere in Germany. I am anxious to get started towards a port of embarkation and to get back to the Sates, and I would prefer to go by way of Germany, but I doubt the whole story and expect to find

my company in Befort where I left it. I am expecting to be back in the States about the 1st of June. I expect to be out of the service before my two years is up.

Well, I must close. I will enclose some clippings I wish you would preserve. One shows what the *Daily Mail* thinks of "The World's Greatest Newspaper." Give everyone my regards.

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Letter dated March 15, 1919 – from Eden Martin to I.J. Martin

Clamecy, France

Did you ever notice how hard it is to write very many letters without hearing anything from those to whom you are writing? One gets all "balled up," repeats things and ends up with being grouchy at the mere prospect of attempting to write. I have not heard any news from home that has happened during the past two months. I don't know anything concerning Bob during six weeks, and I don't even know anything definite about the 33rd Division for over a month. All I have known or had to do or think of has been closely connected with the Third Corps School, Clamecy, France, and the hardships, indignities, and miserable climate thereto appertaining. I dare say that my letters have been a sorry mess.

I am hoping that political news in the States is more reassuring than a few weeks ago. It seems a little that way to me at least. The *New York Herald* (over sea) is more careful in its attitude and even the *Tribune* is not so ridiculous as it was. The copies of *Life* and some other papers printed in the States and which are just now reaching us are truly disgusting. *Life* takes a really dangerous attitude if it were able to swing much influence upon the people. In the issue of February 6th, I see three things standing out boldly.

First is its opposition to the League of Nations. That I construe as support for the advocates of militarism, a large standing army, compulsory service and such things, which the League of Nations is conceived to make unnecessary and impossible.

Second, I see a desire to ridicule and oppose the President regardless of what he undertakes. It reminds me of "stand pat" tactics before the war and before the split in the Republican party. I recall, for instance, the controversy between Roosevelt and Mr. Bryan which led up to their famous correspondence. As I remember it, Roosevelt strongly opposed certain policies of Mr. Bryan, asserting that they were impracticable and ruinous, and later the latter charged Roosevelt with adopting those same measures which he had so strongly condemned. Roosevelt admitted that he had done so but stated that he had not changed his mind nor his policies for these policies enacted by Democrats would ruin the country, but enacted by Republicans they became the salvation of the nation, etc. I see that stand in *Life* at present. Anything proposed by the President is folly but at the same time they intimate that with certain indefinite changes and later, perhaps, they might be for the measures. In other words, given time for Republicans to secure control, and voted on and enacted by Republicans, the measures would receive their hearty support.

Third, they say, "Let us have peace between labor and capital." That is good and we are all for it, but *Life* represents it in a picture which depicts Capital as a benign, respectable old gentleman in the background while "Peace" in the form of a beautiful, fatigued, worried young lady in ancient robes, intercedes with a brawny laborer in overalls, and the title of the picture is: "Let us have peace a little while."

Yes, I take it *Life* is for peace between capital and labor. So are we all, but *Life* seems to see that peace altogether as a compromise between the two factors in which Labor does all the compromising. Some think that government ownership is the solution of these Labor problems, but *Life* pictures "Big Business" in ruin, at the very thought of Government ownership and, almost in a panic, it makes veiled charges of failure on the part of the postal service and everything else that is government owned, and recommends the immediate return of the President so that he may "fire" all public officials for incompetency.

Bolshevism is a chaotic state of mind: insanity on the subject of politics and government, and social relations generally. It is catching and the only cure for acute cases seems to be the bayonet or a firing squad. If

I have defined the malady correctly, I think you will agree that *Life* and the *Chicago Tribune* have caught the disease. Bolshevism is bred by doubt. We don't kill people or overthrow governments if we have confidence in them. A person can look through either of those papers and feel submerged in doubt of anything worthy, from right of suffrage to freedom of the mails, from his next door neighbor to the United States government. They are a mass of propaganda; they leave an evil taste and impression without a pretense of the support of facts; they cause one to see menace and venom on every side and to lose faith in everything; they are the intentional or unintentional advocates of Bolshevism. Those who believe what they read must have already progressed far on the road to this peculiar state of insanity. Those who don't, begin to doubt the mails and gesticulate wildly as they express their opinion of such papers, even as you and I. And so Bolshevism enters our souls.

I wrote to Eathel last night and I got started on my views regarding the President's visit to Europe and the League of Nations. I got such a start that I couldn't stop. Perhaps I wrote things that I should not have, but I didn't write anything in which I do not sincerely believe. The League of Nations may not be the perfect remedy for war and our present unsettled state, but it is a great bound in that direction. It may cost us prestige as a nation; it may cost us money in world trade. I don't know about what we shall pay for it, but I do know that, whatever the cost, we will be winners in peace of mind, relief from war preparation, and the brotherhood of man, if it accomplishes one tenth the good anticipated by the most prejudiced cynic. The *Daily Mail* (London) states that organization of the League is rushed through at a time when everything is opposed to clearest thinking and fair mindedness and of course we can expect mistakes. Every part in this great machine is not going to function exactly as we expect and these faults will continually show themselves, but a little sober thought, a little grinding here, and polishing there, will wipe out these imperfections. Nothing really great was ever accomplished without taking a chance and we will have to take that chance now and leave our fate to the sense of justice which dwells in the mind of man. If, as *Life* insinuates, this trust is placed in vain, society will run upon the shoals in due time anyhow; governments are to no

purpose; and civilization is a mockery, so after all, we shall have lost nothing for we shall have had nothing to lose in the first place.

I almost forgot to mention, also, *Life's* opposition to prohibition and its seeming fear that we are soon to have it prescribed when we shall go to bed and when we shall get up; what we shall eat and when; where and how, to the smallest detail, we shall employ our working hours. I am not a radical on such things. I am not personally interested in the abolishing of saloons in Timbuctoo, but I don't want them near my home. I am not going to take it as a personal affront if King George takes a drink of ale, but I am not going to make a practice of doing so myself. If the majority of the people of the United States vote dry, I am strongly for it and I shall vote that way myself. If Illinois or Moultrie County go dry independent of other states or of other counties, I am for it. If they don't, then I am in favor of my own city, or at least, my own home, going dry, anyhow. It is altogether a matter in which I leave it up to the majority and merely have my little say. The same is true of my home. If I were for the use of intoxicants I am outvoted, two to one, so I shall abstain.

What does make me sore, though, is that advocates of liquor traffic make a big "howl" that it is unfair to make the nation dry while millions are over here and could neither vote nor exert any influence in the matter. That is an inference that the A.E.F. is a bunch of "sots" and that anti-saloon forces gathered together those who were for saloons and sent them over here, and then slipped over the amendment in our absence. There is no evidence that such is the case; there is no evidence that the A.E.F. would vote "dry" with a big majority. I know this, that wines and liquor are very easily obtained in Europe and that light wines are used instead of water in many cases. I will say, that it is surprising to note how few men of our army get drunk and how many will even risk wounding the feelings of civilians by a refusal to drink even the light wines as used in the homes of the people. Very few of our men drink the stronger drinks which might compare to our beer and whiskey, and I resent the assumption without proof that our votes are for saloons.

I am sorry that anyone should follow a prohibitionist victory with a campaign against innocent habits which cannot be construed as a

breach of the peace, but I suspect such fanatics to be wet sympathizers who are systematically playing into the hands of opposition to prohibition. It seems to fit too nicely into the propaganda for "personal liberty." However that may be, I am sorry to see the wets get that argument to offer, but what really makes me "sore" is that *Life* should bring up the argument referring to the restrictions as to when one shall retire, arise, eat, work, play, etc., as the horrible danger which we face if we lend an ear to prohibition, and then tacitly put forth those same restrictions as the desirable feature of compulsory service and the beautiful influence and effect it will have on our character. I hate camouflage. I want a person to remain on one side of the fence or the other and not jump back and forth. It stands to reason that if restrictions, discipline, etc., are good for our character, the same influence is good wherever we find it, and *Life* changes colors so fast it makes my head swirl. A paper laying itself open to such charges should be tried fairly before a court and if convicted of such cross insincerity and shady tactics, it should be forced to suspend publication, temporarily or permanently, or fined, as the case might warrant. It should not enjoy the privilege of freedom of the mails but should be restricted for the public good.

I don't know whether I told you or not but the school here is ended and tomorrow at 5:00 p.m. men from our division and the army of Occupation learn when we are to start back to our organizations. That sounds better to me than I could ever tell you. Rumors are rampant as to when and by what route we shall start our journey back to the States. Reports that fly about in the army are not all reliable but all reports I have heard agree that we are not returning by way of France. The story is that we go to Coblenz and then to Rotterdam, but it is possible we may come by way of Antwerp. Either route suits me quite well. As to the time, I can only say definitely that we are scheduled to come home in May and should be in the States by the first of June. It will just complete our year in Europe almost to the day, according to that. It seemed almost certain that we would spend from a month to six weeks somewhere being checked up, inspected, "decootyized" and made ready for our re-entry into civilized surroundings. That would

necessitate getting on the move before the middle of March or by the 1st of April at the latest. Today I heard, however, that we were to remain in Luxemburg until about the middle of May and were to go aboard ship at Rotterdam the 21st of May. I don't believe it for I don't think that we could possibly make connections and, anyhow, I don't believe that anyone knows that much about it. It suits me for it would indicate that we are to travel by train. I would like to be sure of that little detail. So long as I believe we are to start home in May, I am satisfied. I would just as leave spend the interim in Luxemburg as anywhere else I know of in Europe.

I would like to know if Bob is on his way home. The last I heard from him was about six weeks ago and he was expecting to move. I wrote him as soon as I returned to France giving him my new address and asking him to write so that if he were anywhere near at the close of school I could look him up, but I didn't get an answer so I suppose that he has moved and didn't get my letter in time to get an answer back to me. He seemed sure that he was either coming to the States or going to Germany. Since I can see no probability of his being sent to Germany, I presume that he may even now be on his way home. I would like to see him but I presume he would be much better pleased to be on his way home. I hope he is.

I have been thinking some of what I am going to do when I get back home for of course I must get busy at something as soon as possible that will furnish me with an income of some kind. You said something of the opening for a more high minded sort of journalism. I am certainly in the mood for something of that kind but I doubt the financial wisdom of it, and I have no political ambitions so I could not expect to grasp a job on the side with an income to keep me going. I might make another effort towards law but I don't suppose I would make the grade. I would like to farm and I cannot be interested in anything that doesn't savor some of agriculture if it is no more than keeping a cow and chickens. Well, I must close. Regards to all.

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Letter dated March 18, 1919 – Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

It has been a couple of weeks since I wrote to you, and probably you'll wonder at the delay. Times have been pretty busy during March. The first week, or up until the 9th, I was at school at the village of Derneuve. It isn't large enough to deserve a place on the map. It is hard to understand why they hold these "soldiering" schools, but I guess they are laboring under the opinion that a soldier has nothing to do to occupy his time and mind. The school I attended was a hand grenade school and I got along very well, in fact everyone seemed more interested in the "things" than you might think they would be. But on second tho't it is easy to understand the reason for so much interest, mine at least. During the course, you are required to throw a few of several different kinds and it behooves the thrower to have some knowledge of the way the blamed things are going to act. Being desirous of retaining all parts of my anatomy intact, the grenades were the object of quite a bit of interest and study to me. The knowledge gained very likely will never do me any good unless anarchy or bolshevism should at some time become the national pastime.

Since returning from the school I got a "shot" in the arm as a guard against typhoid fever. That causes one considerable inconvenience for a few days, but the arm is about alright now.

The last I heard from Eden he was attending some school just across the line from Luxemburg in France and expected to be there until March 12th. He said he might get a chance to come down here, but he surely didn't or he would have been here before now. It isn't so far up there but it seems we can't get together and probably won't see each other until we both get home. His division is scheduled to go in May and ours isn't scheduled at all. It will probably get there in Sept. or Oct. We may not stay with the division tho, so you never can tell where when we will get back to the states. The "dope" has the 7th division which our regiment is still attached to going to Germany before long. If we should go up there with them I think it is a safe thing to say that we'll stay with them until they land back in the U.S.A.

Neely is certainly doing well with the paper considering the scarcity of help. A copy dated Feb. 20 came this morning and it looked

good to me. I imagine the night and day work both will tell on his health. I would certainly like to be there to help, but about the only chance for a discharge is because of dependents or being needed at home. Of course I have no dependents (lucky for them) and I suspect that kind of a need would not be recognized.

I didn't expect you or Olive to take me seriously as regards the German family. As yet I haven't seen any Germans of either sex. The French appeal to me only when they can manage some eggs, beefsteak and french fried spuds. Eggs are about the only "fruit" that can be bought in this town and meat is very scarce. The eggs cost 7-1/2 francs per dozen, which amounts to about \$1.30. With the help of a kind providence I've always managed to keep a few francs in my O.J's.

This town of Saizerais is a nice quiet place with nothing much doing. The YMCA puts on amusements once in a while with the help of the soldiers. Nancy is only 19 kilos southeast, but I've never been there. I don't care to go. Several men of our company have been on a 7 day leave to Nice and others are there now. I'm not crazy about going tho' every one reports a great time. The government pays all necessary expenses. Guess I'll go when my turn comes for the powers that be almost insist upon it, I guess. It would probably be educational, but I know all I care to about France and somehow I don't care for travelling any more except in a westerly direction. I'm a little like the man who was told he'd lose his eyesight if he didn't stop drinking. I've seen all I care to see.

From a long distance view, politics seem to be in sort of a disheveled state over there. Probably we get only the rumblings of it. But I don't take a great deal of interest in things like that any more. To an ardent democrat like you have always been since '96, things must look a trifle serious. I expect when Eden, you and I get together over there, opinions about things in general will be widely divergent.

Well, Father, I'll have to close as I want to write several letters if I can. Give everyone my best wishes.

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Letter dated March 22, 1919 – Eden Martin to I.J. Martin

Beaufort, Luxemburg

Unless something happens to prevent, I rather expect to be headed for a port of embarkation before another month is past. I just mention that because it is a piece of news of more or less importance in my mind.

I am back with my company and it seems like heaven after my stay in France. The last month seems like an awfully bad dream, more than anything else. When I returned I got letters from you dated Dec. 6, Jan 30, Feb. 7, 14, 21, 27, 28, together with fourteen from Eathel, three from Bob, and quite a few from others. One from Mabel and picture too, one from Olive, Ella, Roy Martin, Aunt Nancy, S.B. Hall, and there may have been some I have not mentioned. I also got some copies of the *Progress* and the *Independent*.

While I think of it, did you ever read the *Pathfinder*? I saw one copy over here and it impressed me very favorably as a fair minded, non-partisan sort of journal. I have quit judging things on short acquaintance though. What do you know about the *Pathfinder*?

Your letter of Dec. 6 reached the outfit while I was in the hospital and travelled through various hospitals and all over Europe. I just got it the other day. I expect I have answered everything I could in other letters but I will go over them again to make sure.

We were at that time in the 3rd Army and were ordered into Germany. Just as we crossed the border the orders were changed and we were placed in the 2nd Army where we have remained. We have changed corps so often I haven't attempted to keep track of it. I think we are now in the 6th Corps.

I never have heard anything much of John Eden's participation in the war. I have often wondered if he were injured or saw active service. I never run across the 36th Division that I know of.

I am anxious to know more about Mr. Bryan's campaign for a safe and sane reconstruction. However, I might feel on Presidential questions I am confident that he is the great guardian of the interests of the people at present and will strip the camouflage from those who

would shout patriotism and bravery, etc., while they get their hands on the purse strings of the nation. It is sickening to hear such vociferous and unreasonable expressions of praise and adoration for those who fought when you can also get glimpses behind the mask and see the fangs of predatory interests. As I write that I am thinking especially of *Life* and the *Tribune*.

I expect you have been somewhat puzzled by the tone of my letters for I have usually written about as I happened to feel. I am putting it mildly when I saw that all through December and the latter part of November I felt absolutely wretched. My letters I suppose were about the same. Since I returned from the hospital my health has improved steadily and now I feel as well as I ever have since coming across. I probably look different but not less healthy. The fact that I struggled through the past month in Clamecy is proof of my constitution. When I came back I met my old friend Capt. Humphrey (now Major), the regimental surgeon and he seemed quite delighted at my condition. He said that I didn't look "puffy," but have good color and look hard. I didn't know that I ever did look puffy, but I'll admit that a month in Clamecy is enough to make anyone hard, if it is no more than "hard to get along with." We have been lucky to be up here in Luxemburg for it is not muddy, exactly, and the sun has shined occasionally.

I suppose you have heard that Bob's regiment is now attached to the 7th Division which as generally rumored will be the last to come home. There is some talk that it may come home in December. I anticipate that cases where there is good cause for discharge may be replaced by some sort of voluntary means and I think that Bob should ask to come home for business reasons as well as for the purpose of continuing his education. I suggested in another letter the other day that a request for business reasons might carry more force if made before my return.

I made my formal written statement last night as to my status as desired in the future. Needless to say it was for "complete separation." I never did let things over here get on my nerves quite as much, perhaps, as my letters sounded. I don't say though that my disgust hasn't touched bottom quite a few times. I am not revengeful. When I say that I shall

oppose certain politicians in every way I can, I don't mean from any personal cause but because I won't stand idly by and see such characters or such methods win out. I know that such men do not always succeed but they do if no one opposes them. If I refrain from saying anything, I cannot blame others for doing the same.

Major Bittel of our 3rd battalion is now a Lt. Colonel in our regiment. Lt. Col. Bullington is in charge of a Russian prison camp in Germany. Krigbaum's [?] type have succeeded quite well. Bittel I imagine is similar only more so.

I don't recall reading "Roast Pig," but my sentiments on compulsory service are very pronounced as you know. I am not for Pershing for President nor for Wood. I am not for anyone who advertises his rank as a reason for political advancement. Unless they run on some other than a military platform and show other than military qualifications, I am not for anyone who places "General," "Colonel," or any other military title before his name on a political ticket to gain prestige. I want to know what a candidate's war activities were. I want to scrutinize them very closely, but I don't care, on the face of it, whether he was a private or a General or held any intermediary rank. What I mean is: I don't cast my vote for any rank, but only for intrinsic qualifications and future intentions. I take it that Col. Roosevelt's organization of veterans of the great war is a premature effort to swing a powerful semi political-military maneuver. What do you think of it? Doesn't it seem premature when the mass of the veterans are still in Europe?

As to any promotion for me, there is no probability of such. Furthermore, I am absolutely opposed to it if there were. The idea is repulsive to me and I would not be satisfied with promotion unless I could also get an immediate discharge. I have seen so many promoted whom I have suspected of being "molly coddles," "posers," and also, of having "gotten along with the big ones," as Krigbaum inferred, and I have also seen as many officers who have successfully fought their battles and proven their ability overlooked time after time in the way of promotion that I don't want promotion. I consider that any number of lieutenants have done more to earn captaincies than I have. As a

matter of pride I would like to return home a captain, but I don't want to exercise command over lieutenants whom I consider more deserving of promotion than I. I didn't have that figured out back in the States. In fact, conditions were different, and I was ambitious. I saw promotions made that I couldn't understand but that made no difference to me. I soon began to look at it this way. I saw the race for promotion as an unscrupulous battle of wits, in which no weapon was barred and any throat was subject to being cut. I held a job that no one wanted; why step into one where I would have the uncomfortable feeling that someone was creeping up to thrust a knife in my back and step into my shoes. That is how I felt when Capt. Oliver told me that his assignment to regimental headquarters would mean my promotion. It probably wouldn't have, although his judgment was valued at its true worth, but I told him that I didn't want promotion and told him why. So far as I know that was the only time that I was ever remotely considered for promotion. Since the Armistice there is only one way that I would accept promotion and that would be with immediate discharge. I would not feel comfortable as a captain. There is no need of my possessing such pronounced aversion to promotion, though, for there is absolutely no chance or prospect of it. I know that to be *true*.

Clinnin is not a West Pointer, but a Chicago lawyer. He was Major in the old 1st Ill. N.G. He secured Col. Lang's transfer to the S.O.S. just before we entered the Meuse fight. I have never heard what became of him. We were almost in position when he left. I understand he felt very badly about it. Capt. Oliver is now Lt. Col. of the 108th Engineers in our division. He commanded the 1st battalion until a day or so before the Armistice, first as a captain and then as a major. General King, formerly a U.S. cavalry captain I think, commanded our brigade almost from the time we arrived oversea. Gen. Hill was relieved from command for some irregularity in the equipment of some of his men at a maneuver I have heard, and was sent to the S.O.S. for reclassification, where he was to be returned to the States. I have understood that in times gone by he had qualified for a Regular Army Commission as Major and had retained his National Guard Commission as Brigadier General rather than accept it. When he was to be sent back I am told he asked

for his Regular Army commission as Major and was killed soon after in the Argonne. I happened to meet a lieutenant at Clamecy who was with the General when he was relieved of command by Gen. Bell and another who helped carry him back when he was killed. The latter said that he was killed by a machine gun bullet so he must have been right at the scene of the fighting.

I tried every way I could to recover my baggage but could get no trace of it. I looked up the Act of Congress under which it is possible to get paid for the loss but it has been tied up with so much red tape that it is next to impossible. I guess it is probably necessary to do so for about half of the officers have lost their baggage and the bill that would go in would be appalling if it were not discouraged. I know of some who sent in several months ago and have heard nothing about it. Probably they will some time but they'll be old enough to know how to take care of the money when they get it.

I guess you know that the 33rd is coming home soon. Official announcement was made that we would come in May but there are strong rumors that it will be sooner. We feel that we will either come by Rotterdam or Antwerp and that we probably won't be held at the port of embarkation so long as usual in France. The impression is that we are ready for departure. Our division has backed down the 5th and 7th Division both in contests consisting of drills, and horse and transport shows and in other ways has made itself favorably noticed. We are being inspected frequently now which is the fore-runner of a move and are getting new equipment and clothing. I don't know anything about it but the opinion is strong that we will move soon after the 1st of April and will probably embark in April instead of May. The only reliable information we have, though, is that we will come in May.

Speaking of the effort to get our letters to us, I mentioned that I got one from you that had followed me to the hospital and had been all over Europe since. Just now I got another of the same kind from you and you had not heard from me since the Armistice. Also, I got a letter from Eathel that was mailed November 14th. It had three pictures of the baby in it. The letter had been all over Europe and at one place had been directed back to the United States, but I don't think it had gone back.

The hospital in which I had been marked for evacuation had addressed the letter back to the States.

I am glad to hear that your work has been better but with everyone working, you had ought to get along with less work than you ever have before, I should think.

The other man I mentioned as opposed to Clinnin must have been Abel Davis. I have heard that he was talked of for Mayor of Chicago. I don't suppose McClure will have much chance will he? I should think that would be laughable, to say the least. I hear rumors that the Public Service Company is almost doomed. Am I right? I should like to have that report verified but it would make it the more necessary that we watch our step in city elections. The City Plant must not be permitted to drag as I am rather afraid it has done to some extent. It should be made a justification of government ownership rather than an argument against it.

I have been watching accounts of Ex President Taft's work and my opinion of him has jumped several notches. What do you think? I think he would have been a much better public man had he dared to oppose the fierce opposition that Roosevelt exerted.

I explained in some of my letters the circumstances which caused that long period during which you did not hear from me. I was so hard pressed and depressed that I didn't realize what you might think at not hearing for awhile. Otherwise I might have tried to mail a card through some other outfit stationed along our lines of march.

Your advice is good about talking too strenuously about something until one knows all the facts, but many of my strongest statements are in letters to you and I trust your judgment as to what should be given too much publicity. I simply can't write an intelligent letter if I am restraining myself from saying what I believe. I may take queer positions, and I undoubtedly take unwise courses, but I am essentially sincere and I despise insincerity and camouflage.

War makes many things right that peace would not countenance, and causes steps to be taken in perfect wisdom that common sense would not tolerate in peace. I am not opposed to any measure, no matter how inconvenient, if it would lend force to our united blow, thus ending hostilities sooner and lessening casualties

and suffering. I have always been enthusiastically for anything of that kind but I shudder at the thought that that sort of thing seems to be the ideal which some would like to see entwined about the peace for which we fought.

I am glad to hear that Bill has had plenty of business, but I am sorry that he has had to do so much of the work himself. How is he coming in the matter of debts? I believe a real good efficient machinist operator is what he needs and it would be a saving if he knew the work himself. If I ever get back in that sort of work I want to take a course somewhere, someday, in the mechanism and nomenclature of the linotype (how do you spell it?).

I must draw this to a close. It is rather a long letter as it is, but I broke the record on the letter I wrote to Eathel the other day. I think that there was something like thirteen sheets or twenty-five pages. That's not so bad but there was one of her letters I hadn't answered then. Today I got two other letters from Eathel in addition to the one that had made the rounds of Europe.

Tell the girls I'll probably get a letter written to them tomorrow. Tell Olive that I thought that letter I wrote would bring an immediate answer. Oh! Yes! I have another message for her. I heard that at the beginning of the war the Germans charged the British with vigor, but that I don't believe everything I hear about the British and probably they are not guilty.

I must close. I am looking forward hopefully to the day when I shall see you all.

* * *

Letter dated March 27, 1919 – from Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

Your letter dated March 10 arrived this morning, which is pretty good time. As I have nothing much to do this afternoon, I had the opportunity of answering immediately.

There is nothing much new with us. About the only thing is that someone has decided not to send the 7th Div. to Germany, where

it was billed to go. In the next week or so it will move down below Toul to Colembey, Les Belles and our regiment will have headquarters there. At least that is the supposition among everybody. The regiment is still attached to the 7th Div. tho', so our possibilities of returning home are not changed to any great extent. No telling what will happen tho' when we get started moving. I'll write again when we get down there. Colembey is a better and larger town than this.

A letter from Eden arrived this morning. He was through Letrecey on Feb. 17, just two days after we left there, and on his way back to his company passed through a town about five kilos from here. If he had known I was here he could have stopped off very easily. He talked like he might get a leave and come down in this neck of the woods before going to the states. His division is billed back home in May, but talked like they might get started back in April.

I thought probably you would be a little worried over that card I sent Neely, but the cards were issued to us with orders to fill them out and mail them. I supposed the army was taking sort of a census so didn't feel like saying I was in the best of health. As far as ordinary health is concerned, I am as well off as before coming in the army with the exception of a little rheumatism, but I strained myself at Letrecey and have been bothered by that since then. I've been thinking some of going to a hospital. There is no need of you worrying about it any, for I wouldn't have even mentioned it had the army not put it up to me.

You mentioned about the possibility of getting a discharge. There are many trying it now on the grounds of dependents or distress of some kind at home. That's about the only grounds I know of to get one, but if you can start something through the war department it would be alright. I know I'm needed there to help Neely in the business but I don't know if that would be any ground for discharge.

I don't know where I'll be when I get a chance to write again, but we are going to move before very long. Probably we'll go to Colembey, but no telling how long we'll stay there. There are rumors afloat that we will be relieved from this division. If that should happen, we would probably be home soon. Well, I'll have to close. Write as often as you can.

* * *

Letter dated March 30, 1919 – Eden Martin to I.J. Martin

Befort, Luxemburg

I only have time to write a short letter but it will suffice to assure you that I am in the best of health and quite cheerful. Rumors are still going that we will be leaving here in the next two or three weeks and the feeling seems to be that we will not waste much time at a port of embarkation. Col. Clinnin told me the other day that we are to return by way of Antwerp and that he would not be surprised if we got ordered to leave here any time after about April 5th. We are to be transferred into the 3rd Army again April 1st. Most of our time now is taken up with inspection and most of the men already put up a splendid appearance. If we could get a little more new stuff they would be the finest looking bunch of men that anyone could wish to see. They have already backed down both the 5th and 7th Divisions in competition both as to picked Honor Guards and transport and animals. Our band also won from both. I don't mean our regimental band but the one chosen to represent the Division.

A while ago I was looking at a picture and the thought struck me to try and copy it. The result is on the next page. It is not very good and with only a blunt point fountain pen I didn't dare try to finish it. I enclose it just to show that even if I have grown into an old and decrepit veteran of many wars, I still have my regrets that I didn't try and develop what few talents I may have had in sketching. It's such easy work you know, and you don't have to wade mud and all that.

Well, I'll close for the present but will try and write a longer and more interesting letter in a day or two. I hope that it will not be too long before I can be back with you all and talk over everything. I usually like to write letters but I have made up my mind that I don't ever want to get far enough away from home again to make it necessary. I am glad of all my experiences, even those in the hospital, but I shall be satisfied with those of a less spectacular but more pleasant nature in future.



Drawing by John Eden Martin in France, March 1919

* * *

Letter dated April 9, 1919, from Uruffe France – from Bob Martin to sister Olive Martin

My dear Sister,

As it has been quite a long time since I heard from you, I presume I've been negligent in writing to you. You understand I don't keep much track of the letters I owe, but I miss the ones I don't get. One reason I don't write much is because there is nothing much to write about. All these towns are about the same, only maybe some are a trifle dirtier than others. We got into this town yesterday and if there is any difference, this is a better place than we were before.

In your last letter you said you couldn't get up much enthusiasm in writing me for you thought I might be on the way home. There doesn't seem much chance of that in the near future. I'll let you know about it in plenty of time to stop any wasted effort in writing.

I'm now in my bunk and consequently not in a very convenient position for writing. We're located in barracks and everything is fairly comfortable considering it is getting warm enough that we don't need a fire much, and that helps a lot. The weather has been fine here for the last few days, but tonight it has been raining. When the weather is nice here it is certainly fine. The man who called it "Sunny France" must have struck it lucky and been here for a few days when it was at its best.

I'm still carrying around some silk "stuff" that I've been intending to send home. Maybe I'll get it off some time.

As I've about run down, I'll have to close. Tell anyone to write and don't forget to do the same.

* * *

Progress, May 16, 1919.

Co. C Starts For Home

Brest, France—May 11 (delayed.) More of the 33rd division started home today (Sunday) when the Siboney sailed at 3:30 in the afternoon. The destination was changed from New York to Newport News. Besides the 65th Brigade headquarters commanded by Gen. Edward L. King the Siboney had on board the 130th infantry, Col. John V. Clinin and the 123rd Machine Gun batallion, Maj. Albert D. Culbertson. The voyage is expected to take about a week.

Company C, with the 130th infantry is now on the water enroute for home, having embarked Wednesday of this week according to information in Washington dispatches. The regiment should reach New York the latter part of next week if average time is made on the trip across, and Sullivan relatives are looking forward to the arrival of the boys in Sullivan during the early part of June.

the early part of June.

According to letters received this week from Lieutenant J. E. Martin of Co. L., 130th Infantry, general orders have been issued that all troops shall be taken to the camp most convenient for discharge. If this order is not followed with special orders for the 130th infantry, the regiment would be discharged at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, for all of the companies of the regiment could get to their home stations without change of cars from St. Louis with the exception of the Champaign company, and the mileage would be shorter. If the regiment is discharged at Camp Grant, none of the companies can reach their home stations without changing trains.

There are two reasons why local people expect that special orders will take the regiment to Camp Grant, however. There have been plans for the returning units of the 33rd division to parade in Chicago, and if this were done in the case of the 130th, it is only natural that the regiment would be taken to Camp Grant for discharge. And there is the additional fact that the colonel of the regiment is a Chicago man, and he may naturally wish that his regiment would be taken to a camp near Chicago for discharge.

BEHAVING TO A DONKEY

* * *

Letter dated May 11, 1919 – from Bob Martin to I.J. Martin

Uruffe, France

As we are preparing to move and the post office is liable to close at any time, tho't I'd better write a short letter at least. When I wrote last, the prospects of us returning were nil – we were expecting to go to Germany at any time, but now we are expecting to move to Le Mans about the 15th. Some of the men think we will be on the water in three weeks, and we may be if we aren't held up too long at Le Mans. We may be there 3 or 4 days and again we may be there a month. There is no

way to tell, and guessing is useless. My judgment would say we would be home the latter part of July while some place the time in June, which is possible. Don't get the idea to stop writing and don't let the others do so, for no telling what will happen.

Suppose Eden is on the water by now. His last letter to me was dated May 2nd and he expected to be in Brest for only a few days. I'm expecting to hear from him again.

Batson has decided to stay over for awhile and will be stationed at Brest. Possibly I'll get to see him if we go through there. It will be the first time I've seen anyone from home since I came to the Eng. with the exception of Frank Baker. There is no one in this regiment from nearer home than Decatur, and I don't know any of them personally.

We have had fine sunshiny weather for about a week. It's hard to become accustomed to after so much rain. The country is pretty and is not marred any by fences, farmhouses and barns. All the farmers live in the villages. I don't know who owns the land but each man farms a small strip with no fences between them. They certainly do farm tho' and the ground resembles a well tended garden. It seems there is quite a bit not under cultivation tho'.

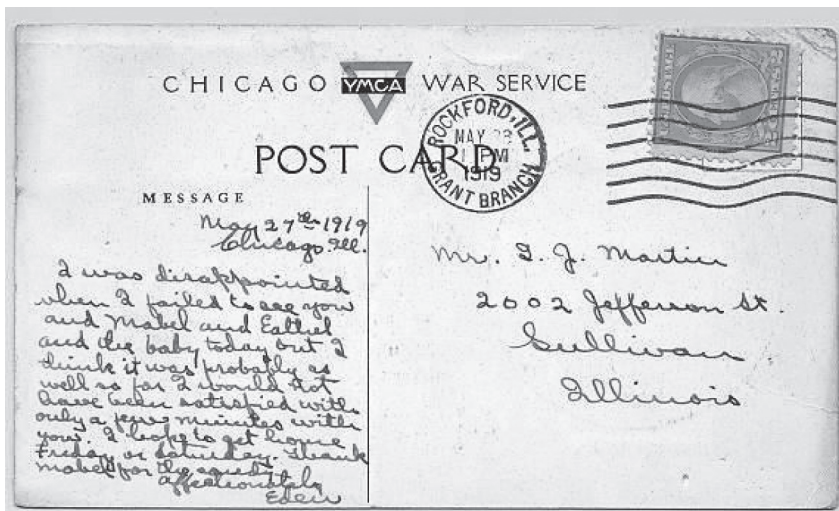
If I knew what reg't McCune was in, it might be possible to see him, but under the circumstances it is very improbable.

One ironical postmaster has just informed me that there is mail for me this evening, so probably I better close and go get it. Will write later if I learn anything of importance.

* * *

This was Bob's last letter – or at least the last letter saved – from the period of his military service. He arrived in the United States on June 19, 1919, and was discharged at Camp Grant, Illinois, on June 26, 1919.

* * *



Progress, May 30, 1919.

PLAN RECEPTION FOR CO. C BOYS

"All well, and glad to be this near home again," sums up the words of the Moultrie county boys of the 130th infantry to those from this county who went to Chicago Tuesday to see the regiment pass in review in the big welcome celebration, which was the greatest welcome home ever extended to returning soldiers in Illinois.

A committee composed of J. L. McLaughlin, E. J. Miller and J. N. Martin were among those who went from Sullivan to welcome the boys from Moultrie county back to Illinois, and extended an invitation to the festivities which are being planned to be carried out on the arrival of the boys in Sullivan.

Company C had not arrived at Grant Park at this time, and the committee next found Lieutenant Eden Martin in Company L. Lieutenant Martin looked the picture of health. The committee didn't have to ask him to hurry home. He has a little daughter he has never seen. He was even thinking about asking for a furlough to keep from waiting a couple of days at Camp Grant.

After the parade the 130th infantry marched to the La Salle hotel where they were entertained at dinner. Then at 3:45 they entrained for Camp Grant with the expectation of being discharged some time Friday.

* * *

Progress, June 20, 1919.

—Lieutenant John E. Martin returned to Camp Grant Saturday, his fifteen day leave having expired.

Progress, June 27, 1919.

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s		al:
-		
n	BOB MARTIN RETURNS	
-		
n	Bob Martin, former associate editor	me
f	of <i>The Progress</i> , and a member of	ea
-	the headquarters troop of the 113th	m:
n	engineers has returned from nine	er
f	months overseas, and is now at Camp	F:
-	Grant awaiting discharge. He is ex-	I
-	pected home the latter part of this	-
-	week. He went with a Moultrie county	bu
-	contingent to Camp Shelby, Hatt-	ca
-	burg, Mississippi in May, 1918 and	ar
g	went overseas with the 38th division	K
-	in September.	by
-		m

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