

# LETTERS FROM BOYS OVERSEAS

Gust Swenson Is With Army of Occupation at Coblenz—Sig Olson Writes From Bordeaux.

Ehrenbreitstein, Germany,  
Dec. 28, 1918.

Dear Friend:

Just had supper and will write you a few lines and let you know I am still alive and feeling as well as ever.

Well, how did you spend Christmas this year? I spent mine by writing letters and lying around. I cleaned my truck up a little in the forenoon and in the afternoon did as I told you. Had a good dinner and supper after which we had a little entertainment and also two Christmas trees. Then we hit the hay.

A year ago Christmas we were on the boat and on New Years day riding in a box car. Cold! Oh no! Just cold enough to freeze so you couldn't freeze any more.

We landed at Brest on the 27th of December, but didn't get off the boat until the 31st and went down to the train. Were on the train two days and two nights with 40 men in each car which was only half large enough. On January 2nd we arrived at La Courtine, a training camp which the French had used. There were large stone barracks here but they were cold and damp. We had coal and made the best of it. It rained about two-thirds of the time we were there. It also snowed some but it didn't amount to anything.

Had a merry time on all hikes on the ice when the rain and sleet followed the snow. The country was hilly, well I'd call them mountains, as we could see real snow capped peaks from there. Here we stayed until the first part of February when we went to Gondrecourt, where the 1st Corps school was located. Here we were greeted by more rain for about three weeks straight. We were billeted in barns, etc. until we took over the camp hospital. We had school and lectures all the time until we took over the hospital.

Have a cigarette? What kind? Lucky Strike.

Were over at the hospital three weeks before we took it over to get acquainted with everything.

In April we took over the hospital and were kept busy until we left on July 17th. Went to Longres and got our transportation of 11 Packard, 3-ton trucks, and on the 17th of July in the night we left for St. Cyer. We got about 15 kilometers and stopped for a few moments at a small town and heard a Boche plane coming towards us, but the anti aircraft guns started to throw a few shells around him so he turned the other direction. We arrived at Bar Le Duc, just half an hour after the town had been bombed. We considered ourselves pretty lucky on not being there. We drove all night and the next day until four o'clock in the afternoon when we finally reached our destination. After staying here two days a call came for five trucks to go to the front, so five of us went to Bezer La Gare. The lines were just a few kilometers away so we hauled rations and moved dressing stations, field hospitals, and took back wounded to the place where we were stationed, and had a hospital in the church. We sure were kept busy for a couple of weeks. In the mean time the company moved to a nice city of La Ferte where they took over a hospital. We were sent back to La Ferte to help move our company to a chateau at Villers sur Marne. After a week here we went to Ebo Bezu, north of Chateau Thierry; was there for some time and then moved back to Villers sur Marne. There I saw Lewis Kaasa, and we sure were glad to see each other. Here we stayed another week and then left for Chaligny, close to Nancy. The company took over a hospital there but I wasn't there only three times as I was on detached service with the car with Hdq. 1st Corps Sanitary Train. Made many trips to Nancy and Toul, and surrounding country, as we used to make the rounds to the field hospi-

als. From there they moved to Rarecourt in another sector which was a long trip. From there to La Grange Aux Beaux, where we were stationed about three weeks when we moved to Varennes, where there were two hospitals.

Every once in a while shells came humming over. Was in a traffic jam one afternoon, when they started shelling the road. The first shell hit a truck loaded with ammunition just ahead of my car, and there wasn't enough left of the truck to start a fire of the box. Got the wreckage cleared and the fellow sent to the hospital when over came another one. Whiz bang! and a big cloud of dirt to the left of me about forty feet, then the train moved about fifty feet and then comes another one on my left side. I was beginning to think my hash was settled but no one was hurt but the driver of that truck. Out of 12 shots four hit in the road where there were five miles of trucks and cars standing in the road. My car was covered with mud and lime stone all over but that was all.

Everything was shot to pieces in the towns around there. Not one whole building was left standing and it sure looked awful.

From Varennes we moved to Villers sur Dun. The country around there looked as though it had been ploughed up every foot as the shell holes were so thick you couldn't miss one by trying to walk along. Stayed here three days and then moved to Stiensel, Luxemburg. Some difference coming to a country all shot up and one where no shooting had taken place at all. You can't imagine how it looks.

The people couldn't do enough for us, it seemed. We were billeted in their homes, and the night before we were to leave, five of us told the people we were going away the next day and the lady made a large apple pie and before we went to bed had to eat that pie. It had only twelve large pieces in it. Good? Well, I guess.

From there we moved to Echternach, on the boundary line between Germany and Luxemburg. Had a hospital there for a week and then moved to Prum, which was some trip. We went through the mountains and followed the Moselle river about all the way. Had a hospital there for some time. We had to haul our rations for 90 kilometers, which made a two day trip. From there we moved to Ehrenbreitstein, where we are now quartered in German officers' barracks, electric lighted, and beds to sleep in.

The day after arriving here four of us left with our trucks back to Prum for the rest of our equipment, and on the way back passed the 146 F. A., parked along the road and got part way down the hill and was telling my orderly I had a friend in that organization and all of a sudden here was Lewis Kaasa walking up and down the road guarding their trucks. Talk about glad to see each other, I guess we were. Had passed that line of guns and trucks five times but never saw anybody around to find out who they were.

We are now stationed across the Rhine from Coblenz. Tomorrow is the truck drivers day for passes to visit the city. We are on the top of a mountain here and can see over the whole area and a long ways up the river.

Christmas eve we got our first snow but I don't think it will last long as it rains quite often. Yes, quite often, as it has been raining for the last three weeks.

We have every afternoon off until the first of the year. Inspection of trucks and billets every forenoon. Received five Binford Times a couple days before Christmas so I read them on Christmas day.

Can't think of anything more so will close hoping to hear from you in the near future. Regards to all from your friend,

Wgmr. Gustav W. Swenson,  
162nd Field Hospital,  
A. E. F. A. P. O. 754.

Sig Olson's letter appears on page 4.

Wyoming and Soft coal at the Farmers' elevator.