

IN TRAIN. ING CAMPS

Albert Johnson Tells of His Experiences In the Army Medical Corps.

Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia

December 9th, 1917

Editor Enterprise:

I have had for some time of writing you a line just to help the community public in getting an idea of some things about a soldier's life. From years of associating with many readers of the Enterprise and hearing considerable criticism of conditions as they are, I write this letter on behalf of our mutual Uncle Sam.

As you know I enlisted in the latter part of October, being advised to join the medical corps and so I did. I did for a time plan on the officers' reserve but that isn't the gilt-edge proposition it is supposed to be and I am thoroly satisfied with my choice to go in as a private. From being accepted at Minneapolis I was sent to Jefferson Barracks, Mo. where I stayed for two weeks in the recruit barracks awaiting shipment. While there I often wished myself well out of it all as I was given all kinds of regular labor such as taking care of a bunch of 26 milch cows, feeding 125 pigs, hauling logs, etc. I drilled very little. About all I recall seeing in Missouri was negroes and mules. They were very numerous. On the 9th of November, 500 of us were shipped out to various points all over this big country of ours. The medical corps men were sent to this point, Fort Oglethorpe, Ga. There were 45 of us in that week's shipment. We traveled all night and until 4 p. m. having our own sleeper. We passed from Missouri into Illinois, then thru the west end of Kentucky, lengthwise thru Tennessee and for a few miles, also into Alabama, then into Georgia, and here we are. The scenery along the way was quite different from that of our plains. Saw real mountains, saw the backwoodsmen's huts perched on the rocks among the scattered pines. I can't imagine how they live as fractions of an acre was all the land under cultivation usually. Some old, lanky negroes with smiling wives and laughing pickaninnies lived in huts thru which we could see daylight blocks away. It gave promise of our being comfortable for the winter anyhow (We were deceived) We passed thru Nashville but saw little else than smoke and narrow streets. Chattanooga, Tenn., is the city near which we are located, some ten miles from camp. We reached this in the afternoon and were greeted by the sight of thousands of soldiers. Every other man on the streets was a soldier. There are some 40,000 at this post, all branches of the service being represented. We were at once shipped out to camp, given a steel bed, a tick (and shown the baled straw) and introduced to tents for the first time. The weather was rather cool but not cold. We ate supper from a field kitchen, a tent where some large ovens were in use, roasting or cooking beans mostly as we found later. We pass around in a line and get what we want after which we eat, anywhere it is convenient, from our aluminum pans. If we don't get enough the first time we go around again and get "seconds", often the seconds are larger than the "firsts." Anyhow we get plenty.