

## Sergeant Albert I. Johnson and a Plow in Use in France

The following are extracts from a letter from Albert Johnson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Halvor Johnson, to his folks at home. He enclosed a photo of himself at the handles of a French plow, and we are reproducing the photo herewith. How would the North Dakota farmers like to do their work with machinery of the type of which this plow is a sample?

On Active Service, Aug. 22, 1918  
Dear Sister:

Let's see, did I tell you we had moved from the chauteu? Well, we have, and are in recently recovered ground. There are evidences enough of battle here. When we first came there were lots of dead Germans and French lying unburied. Dead horses, too, and tons and tons of ammunition, both for rifle and cannon. The retreat through this region was certainly unpremeditated. Things were left valued at millions of dollars. Right in through where we are now there was little attempt at wanton destruction.

When we want to go target shooting in an odd moment all we need to do is to start out empty-handed in any direction, pick up a French or German rifle, any amount of ammunition, and go to it. There are lots of unexploded shells, hand grenades, gas shells, etc., everywhere. Everywhere in the woods are gun pits, dug-outs, shell holes, up-rooted and severed trees. Personal belongings are everywhere, and then to make the war picture complete, a fresh grave with a little wooden cross and a simple inscription, "Mort pour France,"—died for France—and perhaps only a few feet away another, "Gesterbt in Gott fur vaterland." Isn't it inhuman irony? Common brothers, bound by the same ties of humanity and a boasted superior civilization wantonly slain at each others hand. Each is credited with a just cause in death and of course it is well to give all due credit. They died for right as they saw it, I believe, but it is all so fundamentally and forever wrong. Of course our position is justified. We didn't start the war. Viewing things as I have seen them makes me skeptical of human sanity in the large. It all preaches a sermon beyond the reach of the world's best orators. But to get back to earth again.

We have established ourselves very well and things are running smoothly. It has been very warm of late. I work nights and try to sleep days which is practically impossible. The flies are our worst enemy. They are everywhere and insist on their share of our meals. And then there is a sort of wasp here whose bite is about as painful as a bear. These and numerous ants and insects of all kinds make life mighty interesting.

We have not been bombed or shelled as yet. It seems Fritz has quit that for a while. Guess he has enough on his conscience at present. We see the boche planes go over every night. It's no fun to hear the whir of his motors. Flares are dropped, illuminating the country for miles around. Shells are exploding and guns going all through the night. Machine gun fire from airplanes adds to the nights' diversions. Star shells and anti-aircraft guns too helps the cause along. Yes, our nights are very busy. We have trenches to go to in case of aerial raids. So far, I haven't stepped into one. Some of

the boys double time it to them every time they hear the purr of a boche motor. Yes, life is interesting up here and comical—if it weren't so serious and tragical.

When will the war end? Well, I don't know. Though, of course, we all hope for peace even this year we really don't look for it until a year from now. We have gained ground, I knew, but it is a big hike to Bocheiland.

Am enclosing a likeness of myself with a French plow. My regalia is the regulation for overseas. It was taken way back before I came up in the advanced zone.

Sgt. Albert I. Johnson,  
Evacuation Hosp. No. 4,  
Am. Ex. Forces

The following is an extract from a letter from a Minnesota boy who has recently arrived in France:

"I have enjoyed my travelings and stay, here so far. I believe I know a little more about this splendid nation than I did before leaving the States. I do know, for one thing, that most of this country is very beautiful, probably not the rugged beauty and grandeur of our western states, neither the broad expanse of our central states. From the train, most of the country seemed to me to be a huge park, with cities and villages placed at frequent intervals in it. I thought to myself, as I beheld the passing panoramic scene, that it would be a big shame to permit the ruthless Hun to desecrate this Eden. England is the same way. To me it was a revelation. Now that I have seen this land and understand some of the conditions better, I believe I can more fully appreciate the feelings of these people and the sacrifices they are making. America is putting forth gigantic efforts to come to the aid of these plucky, cheerful people, and I am sure that every Sammy over here feels mighty proud of his country because of it. The Americans are proving themselves worthy comrades of these fighting men of our Allies, so we believe the Hun's goose is cooked and soon ready for serving."

L. Hareland Writes from Duluth  
Duluth, Minn., Oct. 9, 1918  
Dear Friend:

Some time ago I saw in the Enterprise that Rev. Thoreson had suggested that a collection be made for a monument to Robert Lyle. I have watched to see if others would express themselves on this subject and in regard to what sort of a monument it would be best to erect for our brave defenders of a just cause.

I have an idea in this connection which it might be well to discuss now, and come to some sort of agreement on, as it is not too soon to begin to plan something in the honor of those who will soon begin to come home as well as those who sacrificed their lives. What could be more appropriate to honor them all than to erect by popular subscription a modern hospital in Griggs county? After the war there will be many well-trained nurses to manage it. I would suggest that it be built fire-proof, with the names of those who fell on the field of glory cut into the stone above the main entrance, and the names of all the other Griggs county soldiers engraved on a large stone tablet or on the key-stone arch.

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