

DIARY OF  
CORPORAL ANTON PETEPSON  
18th Inf. Co. D .1st Div. A.E.F.

I purchased this book on Jan. 28 '19 at Neured, Prussia, while on a three day pass.  
Dec. 9 1918.

I have decided to begin another diary, having lost the one I started when I left Fargo N. D. August 18 1917. I enlisted in the Nat. Guard at Fargo N. D. 164 Inf. Co. B 41st Division

We drilled there until Sept. 29-'17. On the 29th we had a parade in town and we got almost three thousand dollars for our mess fund. At nine o'clock that night we loaded on a train and left for Charlotte N. C. It took us four days and nives to reach Charlotte passing thru some of the most important states in the union.

I failed to talk to sister Laura as they would not let us out of the train at M'p'l's. Our train ran over a blind woman shortly after leaving M'p'l's. EE made several stops on the road and went out and took physical exercise. We stopped about two hours in Chicago and went down to the lake and washed our feet.

On the morning of Oct. 2 we landed in Camp Greene Charlotte N. C. Here we were put in squad tents. Our squad consisted of 8 good men Cpl McEnroe, L. D. Johnson, Jack Hurley, Remley Myers, Witich, Bennie Severson, Pickles, and myself. I rec'd a package from sister Laura while at Camp Greene. Cpl McEnroe and I ate the chicken. Our infantry  $\phi$  went to the rifle range a distance of 12 miles. I worked at the canteen while at the range, and had all the icecream candy and smokes while I was there. It took me a long time to get used to army life as the bugle did not agree with me.

Nov. 18, 1917 we got orders to move to Camp Mills, Long Island N. Y. We got paid on the train and there ~~was~~ sure was some heavy poker games during the ride. We landed in Camp Mills Nov. 19. Our supply of chow was very short. Bennie Severson, Witick, and I scouted out and got our supper from Hq. Co. It was wet and cold here. We were again put in squad tents and drilled 8 hours a day.

The people of New York invited our division out for Thanksgiving dinner. Every one who went out reported a good time and more than they could eat. Camp Mills was a very poor camp--nothing but mud. On Dec. 6 we moved to Camp Merritt N. J. This was a very good camp--good barracks and waterworks all thru the camp. We did not drill here. We washed our clothes and took a bath every day. The nite we left Cpl Hamilton and his squad robbed a canteen and got away with a large booty of cigarettes and tobacco.

On Dec. 4 we got orders to sail for France. This is when the boys first began to think of home and the good times they used to have there. We loaded on the "Waterland" at twelve o'clock that day and sailed at about seven oclock on the morning of the 15th. We all yelled good bye to the Statue of Liberty, and hoped it would not be long before we returned to it.

Our trip across the pond was more of a joy trip than anything else. There was not a soldier on the boat who ever thot a submarine could ever sink us. During the day we would visit each other and tell stories, during the evening there were boxing and wrestling matches in the dining room. All lights had to be out after dark except in the diningroom. I met John Lyle on the boat. We landed in the docks at Liverpool on Dec. 24, '17. We stayed in the boat all day and in the evening  $\phi$  we entrained for Winchester England, Camp Devandaldown was the name of the camp and it sure had a good name, as we were about starved out the second day we were there. Everybody was broke and out of tobacco. We had put our tobacco in our barrack bags before we left the states. We ~~had~~ had our Xmas dinner in this camp. It sure was a good dinner--one turkey to fourteen men, and cooked with the feathers on. This camp was a dirty place with nothing to eat, but what can a fellow expect of a bunch of dirty Englishmen. Some of the boys of our company were on M. P. duty here and they sure were glad when night came and could come home and get a cup of would-be coffee and a piece of bread and goat cheese.

On Jan. 1 1918 we sailed across the English Channel for France. Talk about sick boys! Everybody on the boat was sick, even the old English Sailors. We puked all over the floor and on the walls and everywhere you could think of. We landed in Havre France about twelve oclock the next day, and here we were unloaded right away and sent to a camp in the outskirts of town. We were put in squad tents and got our first meal since leaving England. We got supper about midnight and every body was good and hungry. It rained all day and that night we waited in the chow line about two hours before we got our chow.

Jan. 3. we entrained for La courtine France. We were put in cattle cars, 40 men to a car, and the cars were about half the size of the ones in U. S. Of course it was not

so bad, half of us could sit down and take a rest while the other half stood up and kicked their heels to keep warm. After dark Cpl Hamilton got out and stole a stove which we rigged up, and it sure helped us to keep warm. Of course the ones next to the stove got all the heat. Cpl H. also hooked a ten gallon jug of whiskey. Benson and I got a box of chocolate containing 200 bars. We ate candy and drank whiskey until we were hardly able to take care of ourselves.

We landed in La courtine on Jan. 4, 1918, ~~after~~ after a hard disagreeable trip. We had good barracks here but the chow was poor. Russian soldiers had been in these barracks before we got there and trouble had arisen among them. They killed almost all of their officers and then the French got their artillery into action, shot up a lot of the buildings and captured all the Russians. We stayed here about five days and then were split up from the outfit. All the privates were transferred to the First division. It was a sad day we left our old outfit. There were a good many of the old non-coms who cried like schoolboys when we shook hands. Our old Colonel cried like a schoolboy who had just been spanked by his mother.

Jan. 9 we were loaded on cattle cars and shipped to Huddlecourt France. We rode for three days and nights. Pvt Meechem and I stole a stove the first night, and the second we got a ten gallon jug into our car. Of course we thought we were getting whiskey, but not! It was syrup. Well, we all filled our canteens and then we gently placed the jug on the side of the track. This was another disagreeable trip. It was too cold to lie down and sleep and too crowded to sit up. What is a fellow going to do in a case of this kind?

Jan. 12 1918 we landed in Huddlecourt and we were sure a hungry bunch of boys. Shortly after we lit we got dinner and everybody ate until they could hardly walk. We shaved, washed and brushed up. Well, we began to feel better now. The next day we were all ordered to have our hair cut. Some B.S. about the regular army, but of course we were not in the national guards now. The first time we fell in it was, "Snap out of it! Shape it up! You are not in the National Guards now, you are in the regular army". On Jan. 4 we all received our equipment and got our first test in the gas chamber. We all thought that this was going to be a dangerous proposition. However we all went thru all right and no one was gassed.

On the 15th we started for the trenches. We had 2 blankets, one suit of underwear, our toilet articles, reserve rations, and 100 rounds of ammunition. We had some load. It rained and the roads were sleet. It was hard hiking and some of the boys had to be taken in on the ambulance. I was all in, but the last five kilometers I hiked on my nerve. I borrowed 25 francs from Hegg and went out and bought some steak, took it over to a French woman and had it fried. She made some coffee, and we ate hard tack and our steak. It sure was fine. The next morning I woke up and found ourselves in a haymow. It was very cold, and the boys who took their shoes off were out of luck, as their shoes were frozen stiff. Well, we did not hike the next day, we went into French houses and got our clothes dried, got some hot feeds, and on the next day hiked a distance of 8 kilometers. The roads were not so bad this day, it took us about six days to reach Ansinville, a town about six kilometers from the front. When we were about ten kilometers from Ansinville we split up and hiked in groups of platoons. The reason for hiking this way was so the enemy could not estimate the amounts of troops coming in, and another thing if the enemy would locate a number of men of five or six hundred they would turn their artillery loose on us.

Our company stayed in this town one week. We went up to the lines every night and worked on the trenches. I saw Mervin Armstrong one day and he had the experience of sticking his head over the parapet and letting a German sniper take a crack at it. The ball went thru his helmet but it did not hurt him.

Our company went into the front lines one night and it sure was cold, wet, and disagreeable. We had to wade in water knee deep before we reached our position, and I tell you it was no fun to stand on post all night soaked to the skin. Tobacco was very scarce and the chow was worse. About six o'clock that morning our artillery put over a barrage on the Germans. Pvt Fascina and I were on an outpost, and we were almost froze stiff, but when the barrage quit I was as warm as if I had been next to our big heater on a cold winter's day. Leave it to me there was a good many of the boys who thought the same as I did, and that was the world had come to an end. The heavens were all red from the flames of the guns, and our trenches and the German trenches were only seventy-five yards apart. You can see where the artillery had to throw their shells quite accurately not to let them

not hit in our trenches. A few of the shells fell in our trenches but no one was killed. The next nite we were relieved by the third batallion and we went back to Ansenville, and dug trenches at nite. We did this work for a week and then we went back to the lines again. These trenches were fierce. We stood on post at nite and during the day we would work on the trenches and try and get some water out. Well, one day we got our sector of the trenches in fairly good shape. What I mean with good shape is that the water would not go over the top of your shoes. We were all glad and giving each other compliments on our trench. At six o'clock Fritz threw over a barrage and filled our trenches full so that we could not get thru them at all. When we went to chow that morning we had to crawl on our hands and knees from one shell hole to another. We got our trench cleaned out again that day so that we could stay down out of sight. This is the way it went all the time we were in the trenches. Chow was almost impossible to get to us, altho they would manage to get some hot slum, a litgle coffee, and enough bread for a grasshopper once a day. This would be brát to us by a detail from each platoon at mid-night. It was carried in cans like the creamery milk cans we have back home. Sometimes Fritz would throw over a few shells and spoik all our chow.

Fascina and I had an outpost, and there was a ~~dead~~ dead Frenchman about twenty-five feet from our post, and when the wind blew in the right direction we could hardly stay on our post. On night two Germans came sneaking past our post, about fifty feet from us. They had quite a job getting thru the wires. The wires were so thick a rabbit could not get thru them without getting snared. We did not shoot ~~at~~ as we did not want to give our position away. I went back to our trenches and told our Lt, about it and he got the company on the alert. A few nights later about twenty dutchmen came over, but our men saw them before they got into our lines, and we opened up on them with our automatic rifles and thirty-thirtys. They soon disappeared. The boys ~~said~~ said they got a couple of them as a short time later they returned and carried the wounded away.

One night when the third batallion was in the lines the Germans came over with a small raiding party of two hundred men. "I" and "K" Cos, lost about half of their men. We were sent into the lines the next day to help cleanup the trenches and carry out the wounded. We lost a ~~lot of~~ ~~one~~ one man that day. He was out picking souvenirs off a dead German. Of course we all thought this was a great battle. The dutch went back without a single prisoner. They left all their hand grenades and high explosives in our trenches.

One nite when we had been relieved from the trenches ~~but~~ our platoon got lost and our Lt. told us to wait where we were, while he and one of the sargents went out to find the way out. We were afraid of running into the German lines. I lay down on the ground and went to sleep. When the Lt. returned they moved out and left me there. I woke up about an hour later, frozen to the ground and all alone. I started to hunt my way out, but I got into so much barb wire entanglements that I decided tht it was best for my health to wait for daylight. I unrolled my blankets and lay down to wait for daylight. After staying there I detected the difference between the report of our batteries and the Germans. So I made up my pack and started out to find some Americans. After crawling thru the wires and walking about a kilometer I was halted and asked for the pass word. I answered and told him the password, and then he took me into their dugout and looked me over. After he was sure I was not a German spy he went out with me and showed me the way home. Just as I reached the wagon road an amunition wagon came by and gave me a ride. I got into Ansenville before our company did.

We slept in barns and old houses that had been shot to pieces. We always got one day rest after being relieved from the lines. Sometimes we would not get as far back as Ansenville after being relieved. We would have to stop at Scherprey, a small town all shot to pieces. There was not a single building in this town which had not been shot to pieces. Fritz would always throw over a few gas shells at night in this town so that we could not sleep. While being in this town was the same as being in the third line trenches in support.

One day Colonel Parker came thru our trenches and he stopped and spoke to a young fellow who was all mud and wet. He asked him how he would like to get a new suit of clothes and a good long ~~rest~~ rest. The young fellow said "Fine". The Col. said, "You will soon get it". You can ~~not~~ ~~the~~ imagine how the boys felt when they heard this news. We had been in the trenches about two months without having our clothes off. We sure knew what the cooties were by this time. I could reach down in my shirt any

time I wanted to and bring out a good, big, fat cootie without looking for them.

On the night of March the seventh we were relieved, went back to Aenevillig stayed there one day and rested, and on the ninth we got trucks and started for the rear. We had a ~~the/~~ three hour ride that day. We went thru Huddlecourt and the town our company stopped at was Traveray. We got paid a few days after we got here, and eggs were quite plentiful here. L. D. Johnson and I bought two dozen eggs, cheese, butter, bread and jam and went down to the creek and had a good big feed.

The third day after we lit I was in the Y.M.C. A. and I heard an engine running in the back room. The noise of the engine seemed familiar to me, so I asked the Y.M. man what he had in the rear of the building. He told me it was a Delco Light plant. Well, I went in and looked it over and wished I was back in Farge. That nite there was a movie show in the Y. and they served hot cocoa and cookies. I felt like a new man that nite, being in a room lit up with Delco light, and one of their movie machines showing us the picture of Charlie Chaplin. We drilled here for about three weeks, had a couple of baths, got rid of a few cooties, and everybody had the pleasure of eating a few eggs.

Well, one day we got orders that we were going to move to another front. Our Ltd. came in and said that we were going to another front and that it was north. That spells action. Of course we all sobered up and that we were going to see the real stuff, as we had been reading in the papers what the Huns had been doing to the French and British. The Allies had got them stopped before we got to the front.

On the ninth of April we were started for the Picardy front. We loaded on the train and rode for three days and nites, going thru the outskirts of Paris. We saw some beautiful country and scenery on this trip. We unloaded in a small town and then we started on a long march. It was very warm and we carried two blankets, extra pair of shoes, one suit of underwear, two pair sox, reserve rations, toilet articles overcoat, helmet, --a load of about one hundred and forty pounds. Some load in this hot weather. The third battallion killed four men in one day on this hike. M Co. was the unlucky company. We stopped for ten days at Fra Lavillie and drilled. We took up the French drill now, as it was believed that their way of going over the top was better than the American. There was a French captain along with us. We left there and went to Cantignay. On the twenty-sixth day of April we went into the trenches. I well remember what our Ltd. told us when he told us it spelled action. The artillery fire and the machinegun fire was fierce. After dark a fellow was darn glad to keep his head under cover. It was almost impossible to get chow to the men in the front lines. It was one continuous round of artillery fire. As soon as it got dark Fritz would put about twice as many guns working as in the day time. Gas was used in some part of our sector every nite, all the while we were in the lines. We went from twenty-four to fifty-eight hours without chow. Water was almost ~~impossible~~ impossible to get to us.

On the sixth of May Fritz put over a six hour heavy gas attack. The casualties were very heavy in our battallion. C Co's casualties were about seventy-five percent. Our company lost the least of any of them. The next day a report came out that we were going to be relieved, as we did not have men enough to hold the lines. However we were not relieved. We stayed in the lines twenty-one days without being relieved. We could not get enough water to shave with, and I guess if the Germans had come over, we would not have needed to fire a single shot, because we all looked so tough that we would have scared the devil.

We were continually told to be on the watch as Germans are coming over tonight. Well they did not come over except once in a while they would send over a raiding party. Patrols from both sides were busy every nite, and one time our patrol and the German patrol came together. There was not much of a fight excepting the exchange of a few hand grenades. Well the nites were very long in these trenches as we were always worrying about the Fritzes coming over, and then the chow was so poor that we were ~~starving~~ starving. Tobacco was very short. Sometimes four or five men would have to smoke one cigarette. I received a package from sister Laura while in these trenches, cigars, raisins, chocolate, gum, --and it never in the world could have come at a better time.

When we went after chow it took about thirty men, as we carried chow for the whole battallion. We had to go about four kilometers after chow, and the only way to get to our chow wagon was to go thru dead-man's valley for a distance of about one kilometer. This was a very bad place to take men because Fritz would shell this valley continuously and there was not a single nite ~~but/what/~~ passed but what a bunch of men would be caught there.

Our batallion headquarters were at Villertarnalle. This town was shelled and covered by machinegun fire day and nite. Our company lost about twenty-five men during this hitch in the trenches. Our Lt. Bloom was hit in the face one nite by machine gun fire but he did not die. On the nite of May 16 we were relieved and went back to Rodencourt for a few days rest. We stayed here for a few days and then returned to the second lines. Here we stayed for four or five days, ducking Fritz's big shells and taking in a good big breath of his gas now and then. On the nite of May 25 we returned to Rodencourt and were held there in support of the twenty-eighth infantry. We piled rocks and strengthened our dugouts in good shape.

On the morning of May 28th the 28th Infantry and the second batallion went over the top and captured Cantignay. The Germans made seven counter attacks on them, but in vain. The German guns all opened up and worked continuously for two days and nites. We were not called out as the twenty-eighth held off all counter attacks. June third we went into the trenches at Ecclainvillers. We were in support here and did not worry much about the Germans as we were four kilometers from the front lines.

June 14th we moved to the front lines at Grievennes. This is where a wealthy Frenchman had his park and chateau, but it did not look like a park now. It was all shot to pieces and the ground was all covered with dead Germans and "frogs." It stunk so that lots of the boys went to the hospital with enfluenza. In these trenches is where I saw my first German fall, altho from where I was I could not tell how badly he was hit. We stayed here for several days, and on the morning of July 4th our batallion and the Germans tried to see who could put over the most shells. But both sides put over enough to suit me. There was hell on earth this morning and I know it.

July 9th we were relieved by the "Frogs" and we got trucks to Pistula. Here we cleaned up, got clean clothes, cooked ourselves some gooseberries, stole a chicken and cooked up a good feed. Wallner, L. D. Johnson, Daigle, and I had current sauce and a good fat goose for dinner. We went from here to..... where we got paid and the Y.M.C.A. man came to town and we bought chocolate, cigarettes, tobacco and cookies. Well, we did not stay in town but a few days until we got orders to move still farther to the rear. We got trucks one morning and left for the south. We rode all nite and part of the next day. Here we lit in a small town, stayed here two days, when we got orders to move to the front again. We took our back tracks almost all the ways. We unloaded in some big woods and camped here one day and one nite. Our whole division was camped in these woods. This was the last time I spoke to Mervin Armstrong. He came over to my company and we had quite a visit that day. We both had some cookies and chocolate along with us. We ate them and then bid good-bye to each other, and said we were going after the Huns. Well we did, but there was one less after the battle, so we could not tell our tales to each other.

At noon on July 18th we started for the front. We hiked the afternoon and ~~the~~ all that nite. We got into position about four-forty-five in the morning of July 18th. Fifteen minutes all the guns on our side opened up at the same time. Every gun was set to fire at the same second. Our company commander blew his whistle and made a motion with his hand. Forward! and before we knew what had happened we were on the top going towards the German lines. As far as I could see to our right and left were "Sammies" going forward. The first half hour we did not loose a man, but then we met the German barrage. Here we lost quite a few men. I well remember the squad on my left right about sixty feet away. A big shell lit between them, and all I saw afterward of the squad was one man on his feet. Well, I got thru that day and all of my squad did the same. We met with very heavy artillery and machinegun fire that day. The Cpl. of our squad was the only officer in our company when our Div. was relieved. The officers and non-coms were all wounded or killed. Lt. Allen was wounded and Major Hans was killed. On the second day we ran into a real live hornet's nest. We lost quite a few here. Our major gave us orders to retreat and we did. We fell back about four hundred yards and took up another position. About eleven oclock we went forward again but in vain. We did not fall back this time, but they held us so that we could not break their lines. Our tanks were all out of commission by this time, so we had to depend on our hand grenades and rifles to do the work. We had advanced so fast that our artillery was of very little good. We flopped in the wheat which was waist high, and took what cover we could find. The squad I was in was still together and not a single one wounded. The seven of us lay down in a squad column about ten feet apart. The balls were dropping all around us, and the Cpl. and four of the other men jumped to their feet and went back a short distance. My gunner yeller, "Let us go with them". I said, "Stay there", so we both tried to make our

selves as small as we could. I put my ammunition bag and helmet in front of my head and lay there directly facing the machine gun that were firing on us. All at once I felt some thing warm touch my hand. It was a ball which passed between my second and third fingers, and went thru my ~~helmet~~ helmet and lodged in my ammunition bag. If I had not put the helmet and ammunition bag in front of me, the ball would have struck me in the top of the head and gone thru me lengthwise. However, some one got close enough to the machinegun ~~to~~ to throw a few hand grenades into the pit. That soon put a stop to their fun. The bullet<sup>s</sup> soon stopped coming so thick and we went forward again. That night we camped in a ravine and did patrol all that night. We got some chow up from the kitchen that nite, and we got our canteens filled up with water. I stole about two hours sleep that nite. The third morning we went forward again and we sure were a tired bunch of boys. We advanced about three kilometers that morning and I did not see a single German. But they sure sent a lot of G.I. cans over at us. Several of our boys went west this morning and our company was getting very small. We dug in on the side of the railroad track and waited for the 16th infantry to advance on our left. The shells were falling very thick and everybody took what shelter they could find. I had a hole dug about four feet deep, and I sure kept my head down. I heard some one yell and looked up to see what he wanted. It was a runner and he wanted to know where the 26th infantry is. I raised up out of my hole, and while I was talking to him a large shell lit close to him and blew him to a hundred pieces. A little piece of it struck me on the finger. I stayed in my hole about two hours, and when the firing eased up I got up and beat it to the rear. I got to a first aid station and a short time later I was put on a truck and started to the rear to a hospital. The truck was jammed full of wounded men. We stopped at a field hospital and had our wounds dressed, and from there we got on a Red Cross train and ~~started / for / the / rear~~ went to St. Angon France. On this train is where I saw and ate my first piece of white bread since I left the states. We lit at the hospital on the 22nd of July. Here we got a bath as soon as we got off the train. All our clothes were taken away from us and we were issued pajamas. I was not sick but was mighty glad to stay in bed for three days. To sleep in a bed seemed so good that I would have given any thing in the world if I would not have to return to the lines again. After staying in the hospital for two weeks it began to look as if I was about ready for the lines again. A few days later I was sent to a convalescent camp at Nevers France. Here I stayed for three weeks and did light duty. I was sent from here to St. Agony France, a replacement camp. I stayed here one week, got all new equipment and was sent back to my company. I had not got any mail since I left the company so you see I was quite anxious to get back to the company.

About one thousand of us was shipped out of this camp. We got orders to have our packs rolled and be ready to leave camp at six oclock that eve. We were all on the job, but as usual the train was late and it rained all night. We stood around all nite in the rain. About ten oclock the next day our train came. Of course we had not had a bit to eat since supper the nite before, and the mud was knee deep. But this was a start of trench life again. This army life is fun, nothing to do but eat, sleep, and smoke cigarettes. But I do hope if war ever breaks out again, and I have to enter the game, somebody will take a good shot at me before I start. However they got us packed into boxcars, about 35 strong in each car, threw in a box of hard bread and a case of corned beef in each car, and started out. We were on the road five days and nites, before we were unloaded. When we were unloaded that eve we had 15 kilometers to hike to reach battalion headquarters. Here we got some hot coffee and slept wherever we could get a place to flop. The next morning was Sept. 6 I found my company. They were campon in some woods close to Verdun. It was raining and everybody had pitched pup tents. I crawled in with L. D. Johnson and his squad. We stayed there a few days and then we got orders to make another hit on the Huns. The nite of Sept. 11th / we started for the lines. We hiked all nite in the rain and mud, and got into position before daybreak the next morning. We thot we were in position but we were not, because everybody was lost.

Our artillery had been working all nite and we had lots of big heavy guns working on Mount Zek. We went over about six oclock that morning but did not meet very strong resistance. The Huns surrendered easily. We captured lots of artillery pieces, store houses full of small arms, all sorts of clothes and equipment, and lots of beer, but little chow. We drove the Huns back about fifteen kilos on the twelfth, and on the 13th the French closed in on our flanks and captured all the Germans in the pocket. The civilians living, who lived here, had been held prisoners for four years, and they came out and gave us a drink of snopps as we passed thru their villages.

On Sept. 14th we were relieved and marched towards the rear. We rested for two

days in some German barracks ,and then got trucks and started towards another front. We rode one day and nite ,and then we were unloaded and camped in some woods for about a week. The company got paid here. But me and a few others who had been in the hospital did not get paid. We left here and put in a good long nite hiking. Several of the boys went A.W.O.L. that nite, and several fell out that nite. We camped in some French barracks for a few days, then we got trucks and started for the front. We rode all day and hiked all nite. The next morning we dug in and were in reserve fo the 35th division. We stayed here for four days waiting for the big guns to get placed. On the morning of Oct. 4th we went over the top. We drove the Germans back six kiloes that day but our company did not loose so very heavy. K Company lost very heavy. we dug in on a side hill that nite and the Germans fired on us from both sides and the front. We held our ground here for about five days and on the morning of Oct. 9 we got orders to take Hill 240. There was a very heavy fog and we could not see a man twenty-two yards ahead of us. Our battallion was formed at the foot of the hill about fifteen minutes before the barrage started. The Germans got wise to us and they opened up on us with machine gun fire. Our barrage and the Germans' started at about the same time. We made very slow progress as the Dutch had all kinds of machine guns, and our men fell like flies. Pvt. Svaboda and I were in a shell hole about forty yards from the German lines. We stayed here and after the fog blew away did some good sniping

Here is where I saw the first German fall from a rifle shot. Boys from old Co. B 164 who fell in this battle were L. D. Johnson, John Bannister, Fred May, and Burdell. Co D lost very heavy. We had thirty-six men answer their name after the battle. The 16th Inf. captured a German colonel, but there was not very many Germans captuted. On the 10th we advanced about 4 kiloes, lost a few men. Pvt. Albert Wallner from Hunter was wounded here, and four other men and I carried him out to the first aid station that nite, but he died just as we reached there.

We were relieved on the 11th and went back about ten kiloes. Here we got some replacements ,stayed here one day and one nite. Then we started on a long hike and expected a long rest. We hiked about ten days to Rosness France. Here we were recruited up and started to drill again. we drilled about ten days .then we statted for the front again. We got trucks and rode towards the front lines. We rode one day and nite and then we camped in some woods. We had to stay hid during the day, and at nite all lights had to be put out. The reason being German planes. We stayed in these woods about ten days, and then we got orders to make another push on the Huns.

On the nite of Nov we started towards the front a distance of twenty kiloes. It rained all nite and we got lost. Our Captain was acting major and I was on side of him one time while he pulled out his map to see where we were. we were in some woods and of course it was impossible to find out where we were, because the rain would put out his match and the map got wet. Well, we got ordeds to take a rest. We unrolled our blankets and slept about an hour ,when we got orders to move again. Lots of the men fell out, and when we got there we did nothave more than half a company. At five oclovk in the morning we were in position to go over the top. Everybody was all in and hardly able to walk. I did not dare to sit down because if I did I was afraid I would be so stiff I could not get up and walk. We advanced about eight kiloes that day, lost a few men, but we did not meet with strong ~~resistance~~ with strong resistance.

That nite we dug in on top of Hill 242, but we had to retreat late on account of artillery fire. That nite I led my squad away from the company about one hundred yards and I told them we were for to hide from the rest of the company. We found a good place to dig in, and we did. We dug ourselves in good and deep two men to a hole. While the men were digging I scouted out to see if I could find something to eat. I got up close to our company, and I heard our captain getting his orders from the major. Here is what the major told our captain, "Be at Sedan before daylight in the morning with your company" I heard him say it was about twenty-five kiloes. These news sounded good--like hell. We had not had any sleep for two nites except that one hour in the woods the nite before. Well, I went back to where the squad was and I told them to be quiet as the company was about to move and I was not able to make a 25 kiloes that nite. After I had been asleep about an hour one of the boys came over and gave me a pull on the leg. He said Sergt. Myers was around yelling for Cpl. Peterson. I told him to go back in his hole and stay there and not to make any noise. Well it was not more than fifteen minutes before I was sound asleep and when I woke up the sun was shining in my face. I got everybody up and told them to roll their blankets, while two other men and I went out and looked for chow. We were not

gone more than one hour when we returned with a large can of coffee a can of bacon and a box of hardtack. We ate all we could and put the rest of it in our packs. Now we were feeling pretty good and ready for another battle. We started out to find our company. Of course we were not in very much of a hurry and we did not have a commander. We slept in a town that nite. The Huns had left it the day before. We bummed supper from some French people that nite and saved our bacon for breakfast. About eight oclock the next day we started out to find our company. Two hours later we met them on their return. The company was seven strong, the rest of the men had all fell out or been sent to the hospital. We camped in a small town that day, got some hot chow, and about four oclock that day we started for the rear. The French had taken Sedan before our company got there.

We camped in some woods that nite and the 10th of Nov. we started to hike towards the rear. We heard that the guns were to stop at eleven oclock the next day, but we did not believe it. Everybody thought we were making a flank movement. On the eleventh we started towards the rear again. I purposely got lost from the company that morning because I did not have any tobacco, and if I could get away from the company I knew I could get tobacco. I found another boy that was lost that day and we hiked together. Of course we always knew where our company was. We learned of the Second Division commissary and made for that town. We reached this town about one oclock and we had not heard a gun fire for a long time. The wounded soldiers were coming in truck loads. The Second Division had gone over the top that morning at five oclock and there was lots of fight left in Fritz yet. We camped with our company that nite and occasionally there was a gun that would fire. When we would hear a gun fire we would say, "Now do you believe that peace has come?" Our major told us that day that peace had come but we would not believe it. There seemed to be a lot of fight left in those blamed Germans, and they had plenty of ammunition. We could not see any sign of the Germans being weak, the only thing was, whenever we captured any of them, their chow seemed short. But there was plenty of beer.

Our hike had just started now about the 13th of Nov. We camped in some woods near Verdun and during the nite there was a continual celebration. Most of the boys were too tired to celebrate, but still there is always somebody that you cannot kill. All a fellow could see that nite was sky rockets being sent into the air, and all kinds of them. Of course this was stuff that had been captured from the Germans. Now we were allowed to ~~smoke~~ smoke and build a fire after dark, the first time since we came over here-- that is when we were near the lines. It sure looked funny to see fires on every hill, and all over.

We learned that we were going to march into Germany and form our lines there, stay there a short time, and then sail for U.S. You can imagine how the boys of the 1st Div. felt to hear this news, because they had been the first over and wanted to be the first back.

I do not remember very many towns we went thru, but I will try and outline the route we took. Our hike was a hard drag all the way on account of the country being so hilly. We would make about 15 kilometers a day. The roads were muddy and everybody was weak from being in the ~~trenches~~ lines for such a long stretch. There was lots of the boys who fell out the first week, but everybody stayed by it as long as they could, on account of them telling us that we were going home soon and by way of Belgium.

The first town I remember the name of was the capital of Luxemburg. We ~~hiked~~ paraded thru this town and passed in review for the Queen of Luxemburg. By this time the boys were quite tired, but everybody tried to hike with a smile. Our next town was VillaRue. Here we stayed one nite and two days. We had some clothes issued to us here. Most of the boys got shoes, but they were of the English make, and our boys cannot hike in these shoes.

The result was that almost every man that had a pair of these shoes got crippled up, and then they would throw the shoes and go barefooted, or get some old shoes which were ~~worn out~~ worn out German shoes or anything they could find, beg, or steal. During this hike we were so close to the Huns that sometimes we had to stop before entering a town and let the Huns get out.

Our next stop was Maxthus. It was on the line between Luxemburg and Germany on the Moselle River. We stayed here for seven days and then resumed our march. The reason for staying in this town for so long was that we could not enter Germany until a certain date.

When we entered Germany we set out ~~guards~~ points and guards but had no trouble of any kind. The people were all good to us. We stayed in Trier one nite and day. Now we began to strike some real hills "small mountains". The horses that hauled the supplies were so poor and road drilled that they could hardly walk. Now I know that a man can out hike a horse. The artillery horses were the same way. It takes a mule for a war horse.



During this hike we got two meals a day, but the Germans fed us most of the time.

Our next stop was at Coblenz. We paraded thru this town and then got billets and stayed here for one day and a night. Everybody was glad to stop in such a large town as there was lots of girls on the streets. We were allowed down town but we had to go in pairs, and had to be armed with a hundred rounds of ammunition and a rifle. You can imagine me trying to make eyes or flirt with a Dutch girl and a big long rifle on my shoulder. However I did not make much of a hit in this town.

We continued our hike to Grenzhausen. Here we stayed in a school house, got a bath and some new underwear. We stayed here for about two weeks. We left here on the 27th of Dec. 1918. We drilled every day, rain or shine. I often wondered if we ever went thru this again, if our officers would benefit by these experiences.

On the 27th we left Grenzhausen and our next stop town was Naxsain. Now we were within five kilometers of the front lines. A and B Companies were in the front lines. Our drill when we first struck this town was eight hours a day.

On Jan. 8th, Goddard, a German boy, and I went out hunting. After a half hour hunt, the boy drove a deer on me and I got it at the first shot.

Jan. 19. Goddard and I were out hunting. Goddard shot a deer.

Jan. 20. Was out hunting but no luck.

Jan. 22. Cash, Goddard, and I were out hunting. Goddard shot two deer and Cash shot one.

June 27th at 7:30 o'clock Pvt. Thomas Luger and I got orders to report to the orderly room. The Top said to us, "Are you ready to go home?" and we both replied "Yes". "Well?" he said, "go and get your equipment and turn them in". Well, ~~talk~~ talk about two happy old stiffs, we sure were. Luger and I have been in the same squad from the time we were on the hike, and now we have pledged ourselves to one hell-of-a-time the first night that we are turned loose in New York.

B. June 27, 1919 A.D.

I, ~~Thomas B. Luger~~ Luger

I Thomas B. Luger and Anton Peterson do solemnly swear that we will raise hell and do anything within the law, and that we might break the law, providing we are the only ones that know about it, on the first night we are turned loose in the great city of New York.

Germany

Anton Peterson

Thomas B. Luger

(SEAL)

Sworn in and signed before me on this date, June 27, 1919

Anton Peterson, Thomas B. Luger.

Justice of the Peace.

June 28. we left Coblenz at 10 o'clock in the morning enroute for Brest. The train cannot go fast enough to please the boys. It is 3:30 P.M. and we are at the capital of Luxembourg.

Our route home:

Lueterod, Montebard, Sheirshalm, Verges, Enger, Coblenz, Cochem, Wittlich, Triers, Conz, Machtum, Luxembourg, Thionville, Als Lor. Hagondange, Metz, Neveant, Ponta, Mourxam, Luerdum, Eschertul, Digon. Taylon, Laroche, Golsny, Paris. Left Paris on June 30, arriving in Brest at 11 o'clock on July 1st

We are cleaning up and getting ready to leave for the U.S. On July 5th we left Brest at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. We loaded the ship Liberator, a stock boat. About 2500 troops on board. This is our second day out and it has been great sport. First day out we made 251 miles, second day 277, third day 243, fourth day 254, fifth day 291, sixth day 268, seventh day 274, eighth day 245, ninth day 243, tenth day 148, eleventh day 214, twelfth 239.