

Verbatim Transcription

Excerpts from the Personal Memoirs

of

Charles Leo Boucher

Transcribed by Charles E. Merrill

Preface:

While in his retirement my maternal grandfather Charles Leo Boucher wrote a personal memoir or autobiography.

He served in C Company of the 102nd Infantry Regiment, 26th Infantry Division (the "Yankee Division") of the U.S. Army in the World War 1 American Expeditionary Forces.

Charles E. Merrill
Dunedin, Florida
May 27, 2002

Notes:

This document was written in longhand, by its author. For this verbatim transcription I have not changed the grammar except for very minor insertions of apparently missing words [noted in brackets] and have made only minor changes to the spelling [particularly for names]. I also divided the narrative into chapters.

The format of the Chapter Headings is as follows:

A Chapter Number and descriptive title supplied by the transcriber:

1 [*Early Military Experience*], Page reference in the original document where the text starts [*page 27*], an approximate time of the events [*1914*] (sometimes derived from other sources):

1 [*Early Military Experience, page 27, 1914*]

Corrections and completions for individual soldier's name and rank are shown in Appendix A: Names & Rank per "Connecticut Fights" Roster.

For ease of use with the Adobe Acrobat Reader® I have numbered the pages consecutively starting with the title page as 1.

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Charles Leo Boucher

Born February 13, 1894, Providence, Rhode Island

Died January 8, 1979, Clearwater, Florida

[Charles Leo Boucher (Boucher) was born on February 13, 1894, Providence, Rhode Island. His father was a carpenter and contractor, hailing from a line of French immigrants who settled in Quebec in the early 17th Century. Boucher's father was fatally injured in a jobsite accident when he was very young, compelling his mother Edith Griffith Boucher to return to her father's farmstead in Drummondville, Quebec to raise her children. Grandfather Griffith was a loyalist and his household was English speaking. When the children were grown Edith moved her family to the Boston area, as did many Quebecois seeking the opportunities offered by the growing industrial economy.]

Boucher was first involved in the military when he was age nineteen or twenty; the transcription starts here:]

1 *[Early Military Experience, page 27, 1914]*

...Al [Nichols] and I were members of the Second Corps Cadets of Salem Mass. The Second Corps with the First Corps of Boston were the only Cadet Corps in the country, at the time, and dated back to the time of the Revolution. We wore red coats, blue trousers, with white stripes, and bear shock hats, and were, at that time, Light Infantry. We had our own band which was one of the best in the country. Although we had drill nights, rifle practice, and summer camping there were quite a number of social activities including The Annual Cadet Ball in the Salem Armory and we also participated in Presidential Inaugural Parade in Washington, DC. We also took part in the "General Mobilization Parade" in Boston as all the Mass. Volunteer Militia were called on to report for duty in 1914. Later on we once again had to report for duty during the Big Fire in Salem, Mass. Orders were to shoot, on sight, anyone ransacking homes that were burned out during the fire. The disaster was as bad as the Chicago Fire and The San Francisco Earthquake.

While paying off the help at The United Shoe Machinery Co in Beverly, Mass. one could see black clouds in Peabody, Mass. But since such fires were frequent, no one paid much attention. Later in the afternoon, a stiff wind whipped the flames and carried the embers to the old railroad station right off Town House Square in Salem. Now embers were carried down into Salem Point near Salem Willows where the Mills were located and where those who worked in these Mills lived. Practically all the houses were made of wood and the flames swept through them like wildfire till only the chimneys were left standing. St Anne's Church was burned to the ground and the only part left standing was the entrance with a crucifix on top. A baby carriage was left in the street but only the charred remains of the baby were left. At one spot, near the Mills, a small boy was wedged between two high walls and, before anything could be done, the walls caved in and the Little Fellow was covered up.

The fire spread up towards the center and the winds shifted and it stopped in front of The Immaculate Conception Church. And then the flames ran along Salem Harbor where the coal docks were also, more textile mills were located. The water pressure was low and fireboats were brought in from Boston and other equipment was sent in from cities as far away as Howell, Lawrence, and Haverhill but, minus pressure, the fire raged on. Fireboats arrived from Boston but the tide was out so they could do nothing till the tide was high and, even then, after quenching the flames, the coal at the docks burned for two weeks. Hospitals were evacuated and it was a real tough job. Over a dozen maternity cases were placed on low slung wagons and were taken across the Washington Bridge into Beverly from Salem. Power was shut off and no lights were available only from some lanterns and candles. Power, gas lights, water were all shut off in the town and the troops and people got around as best they could till a semblance of order was restored

It seems on occasions of havoc and panic extra strength and courage is given by The Lord to those who are trying to help. I carried an old Veteran of the Civil War out of his home in my arms, returned and got his wife and, later on, I carried a good sized trunk holding most of the things he cherished.

In 1915, my old friend Al Nichols insisted on my taking the Post Office examinations that were being held in Lawrence, Mass. His contention was, that after my having studied so hard for the Railway Mail Service, the examination being held in Lawrence should be easy for me. He was right and, I passed with an average of well over 90% and I was second on the list of over one hundred fifty candidates. [Transcriber inserts break here]

2 [*Mexican Border Service, page 32, 1915*]

I was, now, transferred from The Second Corps Cadets in Salem, Mass. To C Co. Second Conn. Infantry in New Haven, Conn., and, while we were on duty, at Camp Niantic, we received emergency orders to proceed to Nogales, Arizona for Mexican Border Service, immediately.

At about one o'clock in the morning the Bugler blew "First Call" and soon after that, our Second Conn. Band struck up some snappy marches and soon we had our packs rolled and we entrained at a siding, and at four o'clock in the morning we pulled into the New Haven Railroad Station. The station was simply mobbed by people. My Mother had not been well so, there was no one there to say "Good By." Soon, the troop train pulled out for Mexico with orders of "Right of Way" on account of Villa and his bandits raiding our cattle and killing our citizens. It took us about five days and five nights to get there and we slept in coaches with one man to a seat. We were fed aboard our train by our field kitchens and, as often as possible, we were allowed a short time for setting up exercises and we received a series of inoculations from our Medical Detachment. It seemed we had a different inoculation every other day. As soon as we hit the Mexican Border in Texas and headed for Arizona, we had to lie on the floor of the coaches as sniper bullets began breaking our windows as they had no use for "Gringos." On arrival at Nogales, it did not take us long to put up our squad tents and of all the places, in "Rattlesnake Gulch." We were located near the bed of a dried up river, The Patagonia and Boy-Oh-Boy! then The Rains Came! Cloudbursts plus a torrential tropical storm! The quiet dried up river became a roaring torrent spreading over its banks in all directions. We heard the roaring of the flood waters in the foothills of the mountains above "Rattlesnake Gulch" but, before we could do much about it, we were caught in the middle of it and swept off our feet. We salvaged what we could but, we lost a considerable amount of our supplies and equipment.

After the flooded condition had let up, we had special details assigned to digging pits and burying all the cattle, hogs, sheep, and horses that fell victims to the flood. We were fortunate in saving our Missouri mules used by our Supply Company when on the march. Most of the time, however, we did much of their work, and they were treated like the sacred cows of India, and they were lined up in whatever shade could be found. The mules cost \$700.00 each, and we were given to understand we needed to keep on the go to keep our blood in circulation so we would not be subject to tropical fevers and other viruses.

"Rattlesnake Gulch" was no misnomer for our first campsite for the place was literally crawling with them. They would crawl into our packs, haversacks, and blankets. We had the old collar roll of Spanish War origin and the rattlesnakes had a way of making themselves cozy and quite comfortable in them till they were discovered by us. We made the acquaintance of sand fleas, tarantulas, scorpions, gila monsters and over-sized tropical centipedes, bats, mountain lions and coyotes.

One Sunday, after Mass, one of my Buddys and I went hunting for rattlesnakes, the big fellows. There was a small mountain that seemed very close to us till we started hiking towards it. Anyway, we finally arrived at the base, we cut alpine stocks and began to climb up and up and up again till we finally reached the summit and afternoon was half gone and, so far, no snakes so we ate our sandwiches and began to plan our return trip when, my Buddy said, "Charlie! Take a look!" and not more than fifty feet from us was a beautiful diamond backed rattlesnake. He was lying on a large flat rock near a small shallow cave and was sunning himself and, I might add, he was minding his own business so now, we began to plan as to how we would get him. We threw a couple of small stones and as soon as he was hit, he slipped under a rock and into the cave. His tail was sticking out from under the rock and the rattles were sounding off in great style for, now, he was real mad. Well, since we had alpine stocks for climbing, my Buddy got the butt end of his stock against his belly and held him tight against the back of the cave and, to show you how young lads can be, I grabbed the tail and told my Buddy, when I counted up to three he was to let go and I yanked him out. Gee! What a beauty. And, Boy! How mad he was! Before he had a chance to strike I dropped a good sized rock right on his head and a slicing stroke from my bayonet decapitated him. Then we slit both sides of his body and skinned him. It wasn't easy for he was so over-sized in the middle. I took another slash with the bayonet and out dropped a prairie dog. The prairie dog was whole and cannot have been swallowed long ago. He was suffocated, however, and it explained why the diamond back was so docile. Then we realized we had to get going so as to make it to camp before nightfall. We hadn't succeeded in getting to the base of the mountain before darkness had overtaken us so we had a harrowing experience for the base was interlaced with small canyons and cliffs. We hoped to be headed in the right direction and our hopes were not in vain for, soon, in the general direction of the camp, we could see a swarm of torchlights for a posse had been formed to hunt for us. With the light from the torches to guide us, we soon arrived at the camp and then, the "Top Kick" told us that the Captain wanted to see us right away. He then, assembled the whole company at attention and then he paced up and down in front of the "Outfit" and blasted the Hell out of us for having undertaken such a foolhardy adventure. He, then and there, issued orders that if any future hunting was attempted a group of a half dozen would be allowed and they must be fully armed for, incidentally, all we had was scouting knives and bayonets. He informed us that the place was full of mountain lions, panthers, and wolves, besides, every once in a while, some of Pancho Villa's bandits roamed the countryside to rustle our cattle and horses so that was the end of hunting for sport, before our Outfit took off.

By the way, after we salted and tanned the diamond back skin, we gave it to our "Skipper" to make hatbands and belts out of it. I never saw and, I don't ever expect to see again, such a beautiful diamond back rattle snake. If it is true, that the buttons on the snake's tail tell his age, this fellow was old enough to vote.

One day, while my Buddy and I were on a short hike, we came across what looked to us like a turtle headed lizard. We had already made friends with chameleons and carried them in our shirt pockets. This fellow looked so

different, we decided to capture him and take him along with us as a mascot or pet. I had a lot of very strong cord in my pocket so, I made a noose and then I dropped it over his head which resembled the head of a turtle. He had a good sized body and sturdy legs and a long tapering tail. We did not get very far when we encountered a Mexican who stopped us and asked us what we intended to do with our captive and when I told him he said "It is easy to understand you fellows are new in this part of the country" and then he told us we had a gila monster on our cord and he wondered how we had gotten the cord over his head without being bitten. He then took a piece of twig about the size of a pencil in diameter and he said, "Watch this" as he advanced the twig towards his mouth and he bit it clean through. He also explained to us how its poison was as bad, if not worst, than a rattlesnake, and then he said "Here's what we do with them down here," as he took a good-sized boulder and he finished him off. There were times when not knowing what to do, we'd find a tarantula and a scorpion and place them in a glass jar so that they could fight it out and, even though the scorpion was the smaller of the two, he would succeed in killing the tarantula. Later on, we lured and captured a full-grown coyote, we fed him well and then chained him to a post at the end of our company street. When the moon was out, and the night was clear, he would howl and howl and his pals would answer him till, one night, one of our men went to feed him and he jumped on him and tore his hands and arms pretty badly and, when the Colonel got the news of the event, he had the coyote shot so, it goes to show that one cannot make friends or pets out of all animals that one encounters.

The soldiering we did along the Mexican Border proved to be a wonderful experience and severe training as well. It was comparable to that of "The Foreign Legion" in the Sahara Desert in Africa. We had qualified for sharp shooting in the tropical sun in the Arizona Desert on the half-mile rifle range. It was not an easy assignment. We were kept constantly on the alert, and at times, had to sleep on our arms. Carranza had assembled some thirty thousand of his soldiers across The Border, facing us, and although our problem was with Pancho Villa, no Mexican soldiers liked The "Gringos" as we were called.

I got acquainted with a very nice Mexican who had served with Carranza. He left the army to go into business on our side of the Mexican Border. He suggested to me that I change to civilian and, on Sunday, while off duty, we cross over into Mexico for a hike and a bit of adventure. I was glad to accept his offer but, when I was ready, and called for him, he had changed his mind and he decided not to go for he feared to be picked up as one of Villa's spies so, after talking it over for a while, I decided to go it alone. The street that runs through Nogales divided Mexico from the United States so, I strapped my camera on my back and started out by myself. On the Mexican side, a sentry stepped out of his post house and said nothing to me but took my cameras and put it inside of the guardhouse. I said "Charlie! You have asked for it so you had better keep going on or, you'll excite suspicion." The only part of my uniform that I was wearing were my garrison shoes and they began to seem very large and conspicuous to me. Then, I struck out for the interior. Boy! Oh! Boy! The whole place was simply loaded with Carranza's men both Cavalry and Infantry and they were not "Little Greasers" with broad brimmed sombreros like the cartoons

had shown them. They were young men well armed and splendidly equipped. Their horses were well fed and they had new harness and the men had new rifles and a couple of bandoliers of ammunition. I kept walking, however, and I must admit I felt a bit scared for I began to think of the tales we had heard of a couple of Americans who did exactly as I was doing and they never did return. I dared not return so soon so, I kept going on and on passing schools and public buildings overflowing with troops and finally, I passed out of the city limits. I also passed the cemetery and the execution grounds, where, I was later informed, on my return to our side, that those sentenced to death were obliged to dig their own graves. Some were strung up on telegraph wires with their heads dangling in the air. It was simply gruesome! Anyhow, towards the latter part of the afternoon, my curiosity was well satisfied so, I turned back towards the Mexican Border hoping I would have as good luck going out as I had coming in. I must have been about halfway back, when a Cavalryman pulled his horse alongside of me so, I said to myself "This is it!" "You looked for it and now you got it." He had a new rifle strapped on his horse plus a couple of revolvers in their holsters at either side. He also had a bandolier of ammunition and his cartridge belt was loaded. Brother! He was really loaded. Well, he just hopped off his horse gave me a quick glance, and then he went through a archway and into an adjoining café. Gosh! To say I wished I was back on our side of the Border is only putting it mildly yet, I dared not hurry too much lest I invite suspicion. Soon, I began to recognize some of the landmarks I had seen on my way in and, finally, the sentry box came into view and the guard was marching back and forth. I had already decided that if any attempt were made to stop me, I would abandon my camera and make a run for it. My luck was with me and, it just so happened, he happened to be the same sentry that let me through in the morning. So he went over to the sentry box, got my camera, and then handed it to me. I decided I had plenty of adventures for a while and, returned the borrowed civvies and put on my uniform.

We were having a lot of trouble with our men, healthwise. Some had dysentery from the mineral sulfuric contents of the drinking water and, in no time, many lost from ten to fifteen pounds in weight and worse still, on account of the altitude, many of the others bled profusely from the nose, ears, and even the mouth so, the whole outfit was scheduled for a severe physical examination. A very large tent was erected and blocks of ice were placed on the ground and covered with sawdust. There were four or five doctors installed around the inside of the tent, then, each and every one of us had to strip and were completely checked from head to toe by these doctors with emphasis on the ticker. Those who passed, stayed on The Border and those that didn't get by were shipped back North and later on, replacements were sent down to replace them. It so happened that I passed the examinations and I stayed on with my regiment.

We were tanned and bronzed like Indians and, now, we had to prepare for a forced march of seventy-six miles across the Arizona Desert and to Fort Huachuca, Arizona which was at that time the Headquarters of the Tenth Cavalry. In the meantime, while we were unloading supplies, I got myself a hernia. We were to begin the hike on the following day and my buddies told me I should report for sick call but I could not see it that way. First of all, I didn't

want to be called yellow and, then again, I felt I was strong enough to make it. We had the old Spanish collar roll, two bandoliers of ammunition, plus our full amount of marching equipment and our thirty-thirty Springfield rifles. We were up and off well before dawn and well on our way to end our first day of forced marching just before noon having covered twenty -three miles. It seemed with every step forward, you slid back half way in the burning sand. We slept in pup tents and we broke camp early in the morning. My side began to bother me plenty, but, after a nights rest, I felt better and before dawn, we were off again. The forced march was across the Arizona Desert and, on the third day out, we lost our bearings and, to make things worse, we ran out of drinking water. No matter which way you looked, North, South, East or West all you could see was sand as far as the horizon. We kept on hiking in the hopes of finding an oasis and water. Our tongues stuck to the roof of our mouths and our feet, that is the soles of our feet cracked and bled. We did not stop as usual, but kept going right through the afternoon and, towards evening and, just when the sun was setting, our advance scout sighted an oasis. We were off on the double to get there before darkness overtook us and, even though we had strict orders not to drink water till it was tested, we lay down on our bellies alongside our mules and horses and drank and drank, and then filled our canteens. By the way, our canteens were from a Spanish American War issue, circular in shape, leaden insides, and covered with a thick canvas. When our canteens were filled, we soaked the canvas cover with water so as to keep the contents fresh. When mules and horses drink water, man is safe to drink for animals have a way of knowing if the water is safe to drink. Man can get along without food for quite a while but not without water. Early on the following morning, after we had gotten our bearings, we took off for Fort Huachuca. We had been making very good time and we were on our third day which was also our last day and, all of a sudden it got dark and the skies opened up and we were caught in a cloud burst and tropical storm that had moved in from the Gulf of Mexico. What were shallow streams soon became roaring rivers and we had to ford them as best we could. We held our rifles and equipment above our heads. The fact that we were soaked through and through didn't bother us at all after having been baked by the tropical sun we just welcomed the heavy downfall. We kept pushing ahead towards our goal and, sure enough, in the latter part of the afternoon, we were able to march into good old Fort Huachuca! The storm was spent and the sun came out and as soon as the ground was a bit dry we has pitched our pup tents, had a bite to eat and chose sides for a scrub football game. I played with C Co. and when the game was about over, I got kicked on the bum side where the hernia was located. Well, that was it, and I was carried off the field on a stretcher and into the Field Hospital. Dr. Stevens rode in from Bisbe, Arizona on horseback and performed an emergency operation on my hernia. I was kept in the Field Hospital for the better part of two weeks and I was then transferred to my regiment in Nogales. Incidentally, it was the Tenth Cavalry Base Hospital a colored outfit and I had wonderful treatment. The view from the porch of the hospital was out of this world. Desert flowers and cactus surrounded the place plus a grove of fig trees and, off in the distance, were snow capped mountains part of the Sierra Nevadas. The cool nights and sunny days gave me a ravenous appetite and I put on weight but my stay was brief and soon, I was in fairly good shape. I was then put aboard a covered wagon driven by an Old Timer. He had three pairs of mules and he brought me to the railroad station where I

began my return trip to Nogales, Arizona and, inside of a few days after my arrival, I was back on duty in full marching equipment and I was none the worse for experience.

Villa had been rounded up with his bandits and he was shot later on by one of his own men. There were no more raids and cattle rustling and, soon, word got around that we were going to be pulled out and shipped up North and mustered into Federal Service so as to be ready for "Overseas" under General Pershing. Our return trip, up North, was very much more pleasant than when we were sent to Nogales in old railroad coaches. We were assigned to Pullman Sleepers and instead of our having to make it North on emergency orders, we spent about two whole weeks and we had numerous stops for reasons of setting up exercises and, when we arrived in Buffalo, New York, we were afforded a side trip to visit Niagara Falls. After having paid as much as seventy-five cents for a bottle of beer that had been bootlegged into Arizona, we were now in a position to have tall glasses, foaming over, for five cents a glass so you can understand how, quite a number of the lads went overboard and had to nurse big heads the following morning. When the outfit had been rounded up and got aboard our train, we were on our last leg of the trip which took us to New Haven, Conn. but before we were allowed to proceed to our homes, the Mayor, on behalf of the citizens, insisted on our being paraded through the streets of downtown New Haven. We would have much rather gone right home but, orders were orders so, we paraded and we were then dismissed but, for a couple of weeks, our headquarters were at the Old National Guard Armory in Meadow St. Soon, our tour of duty came to an end and at a home coming banquet at The Yale Dining Hall we were ready for discharge. Col. Wilson who had a leave from Congress to become Commanding Officer during our Mexican tour of duty, now returned to "The House" where he was made The Whip of his party. He was a very fine lawmaker and a wonderful commanding officer to us at The Border. Our old Captain of C. Company, James Haggerty, had been removed from duty before our going to Nogales and he was terribly disappointed and so were we who served under him and had got to liking him very much. We were given to understand he was suffering from a serious heart condition and he would not be able to stand up under tropical conditions. [Transcriber inserts break here]

3 [*Preparations for Overseas Duty, page 54, Winter - Fall, 1917*]

We were now held in reserve but were allowed to return to our homes and previous occupations. I, like many others, bought winter clothes for the real cold weather was soon upon us. The fact however, remained that we didn't have time to wear our civilian clothing very long for, by President Wilson's Orders we were, once again, called up for duty and, this time, we were stationed all along the Connecticut River guarding the railroad lines and bridges connecting Boston and New York. It was bitter cold for us and, especially so, after our tour of duty along the Mexican Border. I had now advanced from First Class Private to Corporal and my duties were "Corporal of the Guard" on the Saybrook Bridge which spanned the Connecticut River between Saybrook and Old Lyme. We were billeted in an old coach donated by the New Haven Railroad and we had Army cots plus a small potbelly stove. A buzzer system had been installed on the other side of the bridge and when the guard on duty had any reason to suspect that any suspicious characters were about to dynamite the bridge he pushed on his buzzer which, then, sounded off in my coach and I immediately crossed over to investigate. I sometimes wonder, now, how I ever got across the bridge when I was called by the guard. Since it was a railroad bridge, I had to walk the ties which were generally all covered with ice and snow. The gaps were wide between the ties and, in some places, I had to shift or drop into the Connecticut River as the ties came to an abrupt end. And to make things worse, I had to dodge trains going east or west by changing from one set of tracks to another as the trains went roaring by. On my return one night, after I had checked some suspects, I sat on my cot to relax and warm up while I was checking the guard list when, "Bang!" for one of my men had accidentally caught a finger on the trigger of his rifle and the bullet grazed my head. He had just come off guard duty and his hands were so cold, he didn't feel the trigger before it went off. He was one of our brand new recruits and although I had drilled him carefully on the use of his rifle and the Manual of Arms and explained that, in coming off guard duty, he should, first of all, inspect his rifle making sure that there was no cartridge left in the chamber. I also told him, even though he was quite sure all the cartridges had been removed to, once again, pull back the bolt to make sure no cartridges were left in the chamber. After the blast, he turned white as a sheet and went into shock so, I then sent for Dr. Hugo as he was running a high fever and was trembling all over when he saw how near he had come to killing me. Good old Dr. Hugo came right away and fixed him up so the following, he returned to duty a much wiser and more careful young man. Believe it or not, later on, over in France, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for bravery in action so it shows how you can never tell how a soldier may prove himself when under fire.

Well, we were on Bridge Duty till early spring and come summer, we were called into New Haven and bivouacked at Yale Field right next to the Yale Bowl. We lived in the old time squad tents with seven men and a Corporal to each tent. I was then, assigned to Company Clerk duty with C. Company taking care of the making up of our payroll doing recruiting work with Captain Lockhart [Lieutenant Lockhart, see Roster - Appendix A] and, at night I had been assigned, by Colonel Isbell, to manage an outdoor dance hall that was installed on the regimental parade grounds. I had more than plenty to do but satisfied

nevertheless, and, now, rumors were going the rounds that before long, we were to go "Overseas".

Physical examinations were in order and one had to have nothing, yes absolutely nothing wrong in order to pass these very tough examinations. Over a third of our men, that saw service along the Mexican Border, were discharged. To begin with, all married men were dropped and there were no exceptions and then those that had flat feet, bad sight, or bad hearing or even bad teeth were also discharged. Now, we had to double our efforts in the recruiting of replacements. Over half of the volunteers we succeeded in getting to Medical Headquarters were turned down as not physically for service. We had sixty-five men a company when we were on Mexican Border Service. But, now we had to build up to two hundred and fifty men in each company. The First Connecticut Infantry from upstate was then merged with our Second Conn. Infantry to, later, become the Hundred and Second Infantry. Long hikes and forced marches became our lot and we then had to qualify on the East Haven Rifle Range where I, incidentally, earned my Expert Marksmanship Medal. By August, things were shaping up and we were sworn into The Federal Service and we became known as the Hundred and Second United States Infantry and part of The United States Army, Twenty-Sixth Division, better known as the "Yankee Division". Suddenly, one evening before sundown, we broke camp at Yale Field and marched down to the Winchester Arms Co. railroad siding and entrained under secret orders on our way "Overseas". [Transcriber inserts break here]

4 [Transit Overseas, page 60, Fall, 1917]

Part of our regiment boarded troop ships in Hoboken, New Jersey but we went North to Montreal, Canada and we boarded the "H.M.S. Missanabee" [spelled as Missannabee] a Royal Mail Ship bound for Liverpool, England. Our trip down the Saint Lawrence River was pleasant and, then, on arriving in the Atlantic Ocean, we hugged the coast to Halifax, Nova Scotia to put up and await the rest of our convoy from Hoboken, New Jersey. Here like in Montreal, we had to parade through the city of Halifax. Incidentally, we only quit Halifax a short while, when a terrible explosion took place. It was found out to be a planned enemy act of sabotage, which, no doubt, it was. Our crossing of the Atlantic took thirteen days for we had about twenty boats in our convoy. We were the lead ship as we had Headquarters Outfit. Members of the Royal Canadian Air Force Cadets, a Hospital Unit, with a complement of nurses and doctors, also, in the hold of our ship, were fifteen million dollars in bullion [spelled as bouillon] from the Canadian Government to the English Government as a war loan. The chow was lousy for we had fish and rabbit and then, for a change, we had rabbit and fish, till it came out of our ears. Halfway across, I was ordered to a cabin to work on the payroll so, I was then able to bribe some better food, reading matter, and a decent berth. There were four bunks in our cabin and they were occupied by Sergeant Cederholm, Private Gehrke, and myself and, the fourth bunk was used for our typewriter plus all the payroll records.

We had been issued lifebelts when we first boarded ship and we were ordered to wear them at all times, even when we slept. They were in the form of vests with canvas straps that tied in front and were made of strips of cork. We had also been assigned to lifeboats, in case of our being torpedoed by submarines. Well, we were about two days off the coast of Ireland, when, we were startled by an explosion. The ship's sirens were blasting away so, we couldn't afford to lose any time before hitting the deck and, this is what took place. There was only one life jacket on a lower bunk and, Private Gehrke and Sergeant Cederholm both made a lunge for it each claiming that it was his. I had mine attached to me so I cast a glance around the cabin and right overhead, were two life jackets that had been placed in a rack. That, of course, ended the argument and we hurried on deck to the lifeboats assigned to us. The explosion that rocked our ship was followed by several more explosions and just about when we were about to abandon ship, we were informed that the explosions were caused by gunner practice. Of course, we had no idea that our ship was armed as we were flanked on each side by destroyers all the way across the Atlantic Ocean. After we had docked at Liverpool, England, the gold bullion [spelled as bouillon] was unloaded immediately and then we disembarked minus all our supplies and, before the stevedores had a chance to unload the supplies, a submarine came up the river and torpedoed our ship the "Missanabee". I might add that all of our winter equipment plus the rest of the cargo went down with the boat to "Davey Jones's Locker." The same day, we entrained from Liverpool bound for Southampton. It was our first experience on a British train and we were assigned to third class compartments and the seats were bare wooden benches and sleep was out of the question. It happened to be an express train and we made very good time. On our arrival in Southampton we were marched to the town of Winchester and when [then?] we were assigned to a large tented area.

The tents were white and real large and were from the British Army. Each tent accommodated about forty men. We slept on the floor and we were packed in like sardines. Oh! Yes! We ate. There were only two meals per day. We had a baked potato, bacon and a hunk of bread, marmalade, and tea in the morning and in the evening, we had a hunk of bread, marmalade, baked potato, bacon, and tea. During the time we stayed in Southampton, our rations were the same from day to day. There were teashops and chopouses for those who happened to have some change. Now, we waited for a favorable crossing of the English Channel to France. In about three weeks, there was a Channel Boat, "The Arch Angel," that pulled into the dock and we boarded her bound for [Le] Havre, France. Once again, we were packed in like sardines and away we went.
[Transcriber inserts break here]

5 [*Landing and Combat Training in France, page 65, Fall, 1917*]

The damned boat did everything but go under and, I don't have to tell you, that nearly everyone was seasick and we were happy when we saw the coast of [Le] Havre in the distance. It was late in the evening when we got off "The Arch Angel" and we marched along the muddy streets and up a steep hill to The Fortress of Saint Address where we had the same rations and the same kind of tents we had in England. After chow, we huddled on the floor of the tents, fully clothed, of course and, soon every Mother's son was dead to the world. All was well till about one o'clock in the morning when our bugler blew "First Call". We began to think he was drunk but no the call was official so, we slung on our packs, grabbed our rifles and down the hill we went still half asleep. Our train was waiting for [us] on a siding so we got aboard and began our trip to "The Western Front." Inactivity had begun to bore us and, we were glad to be on our way. Before long, we were going through the apple orchards of Normandy and, while we were stalled for a while, I hit out towards an apple orchard nearby. I threw my hands to the top of a stone wall and hauled myself up. The top of the wall was covered with broken glass and my hands were cut and bleeding but, since I had gotten this far I decided to get a few apples which I tucked in my blouse and, being a bit careful, I succeeded in getting back over the wall and started for our train. The whistle blew and now it began pulling out so I bolted for our car apples and all and I grabbed the door handle just in time. I gave everyone in my squad a couple of nice juicy apples. After changing trains a couple of times, we were given to understand we were now headed for the Aisne Sector [Aisne River] of the Western Front. After our train riding, we were then obliged to revert to shank's mare and after considerable hiking, we wound up in The Vosges Mountains.

We took over a training area in Upper Landaville near Neufchateau. "The Alpine Chasseurs" of the French Army were assigned to train us for combat with the enemy. We had no machine guns so we used the French Chauchat [spelled as "Chaud Chauds"] also English and French hand grenades. Now, we were issued British helmets and gas masks and, before long, we had become well trained in the use of the bayonet and the trench knife for hand to hand fighting. We, now, began having our first casualties from frozen feet and hands for our winter clothes and equipment which went down with "The Missanabee" was never replaced and, in the bitter cold, minus gloves, the butt of our rifles stuck to and tore the flesh from our hands. Our issue of bread was sent us in bags and when the sacks were empty [we] used them to wrap around our feet but, regardless of any precautions, we suffered a number of casualties with no chance of getting any replacements for some time to come. As we moved up through [Fort de] Malmaison, Nancy, and Verdun, we began to have real trouble with our men who had been wounded and gassed and, still, we had no replacements. After our having been in the Aisne Sector and Chemin de Dames for a while, we were shifted to "The Toul Sector" which meant days of hiking and very little food was available. [Transcriber inserts break here]

6 [Toul Sector-Suicide Orders, page 68, Spring, 1918]

We relieved soldiers from The First Division and, although this sector was supposed to be a quiet one, it wasn't long till it was turned into a "Hell on Wheels" for us. Replacements were now coming in which had a tendency to boost our morale for the time being at least. Just before our taking over in The Toul Sector, and on the last day of our hike from The Aisne Front, we had quite an experience as we climbed the slope of a good-sized hill. We saw nothing out of the ordinary till a large opening on the side of this hill came into view. This proved to be one of the openings or entrances to the famed "Chalk Mines of Soissons." As we marched down a slope which led us into the mines thousands of lights came into view and routes leading in every direction. Allied troops were coming and going, British, French, and Italian. Guides from the French Army took over and led us into a section that had been assigned to us till we moved on the next day. Four pieces of two by four were used, two long and two short and after they were nailed together, heavy screening was attached then the forms were placed on sturdy legs forming our bunks for the night. Then, I began to explore our new surroundings. Well, it didn't take long for me to get myself completely lost. I had located a French canteen and as soon as I had made my purchase, I turned to go back to our location. Oh! Brother! There were plenty of routes but I wasn't sure which was the right one. In the meantime a French Sergeant saw me and realized that I was lost so, with a little French I had picked up plus a bit of English, he understood, he took me to his outfit first where a good sized party was underway. One of the non-commissioned officers had just been promoted and a celebration was in order and I was invited as their guest. Plenty of food and wine was consumed and then, I was guided back to my outfit. I was told that there were over twenty thousand troops billeted in this particular section of the mine and, without guides, one could travel all night without getting to your destination so once again, I was just "Lucky Charlie."

The entrance to the "Mines of Soissons" was well camouflaged so that enemy planes might not spot them from above. Come morning, we hiked out onto a country road which was camouflaged for quite a distance. While taking over our new assignment and sector, we were like in previous occasions, when moving up into the front lines, greeted with heavy cannonading and the horizon was a sheet of flames. When one is dog tired, lousy, and hungry the rat-tat-tat of machine guns and the booming of artillery just have a tendency to put you to sleep for, soldiers constantly under fire, must snatch, of rest, what he can and where he can as the circumstances may permit. Mother Nature takes over and that's all there is to it. The last move up, we had, took us to the base of Mount Sec in the Toul Sector which was at the time, occupied by the enemy and they were so well situated that we were exposed to their view day and night. Technically speaking they could look right down into our trenches from the mountains. We had to do something about it as soon as humanly possible so, on the morning of April 19th, our Captain sent a runner to my dugout with orders to report to him immediately. As I entered the "Post Commander's (P.C.) Dugout," being the last to report, I was seated at a long table that had been hastily improvised by placing long planks on trestles running the length of the dugout. Maps had been laid out on the table and candles were sputtering at

either end and the rest of the dugout was in darkness. Some of our Company Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers had been sent to Chaumont, General Pershing's Headquarters for training periods. Lieutenant Johnson and Lieutenant Carruth [spelled as Karuth] were already seated and the Non-Commissioned Officers, that is the Sergeants from the rest of the platoons also were seated. Then Captain Griswold stood at the head of the table and he began to explain the plans arrived at for the take over. He addressed me, personally, as I was Senior Non-Commissioned Officer of the First Platoon of C Company. He told us all that the French Intelligence Division [Deuxieme Bureau] had tapped the enemy's wires and found out that an attack of "German Shock Troops" was in the making. They did not, however, find out when the attack was to take place but they had decided it would take place tonight. He then pointed out a position on the map to me, which was at the base of Mount Sec that I was to occupy with my Platoon. Our Platoon plus two other Platoons, one from Company B and one from Company D were to relieve the Third Battalion of the One Hundred Second U.S. Infantry. Then, the "Skipper" explained that we were not to advance beyond a given point and my men were to be deployed to the best possible advantage as a strong point which, later, proved to be a suicide post. I was then ordered to keep the information of an impending attack away from my men and, furthermore, if the attack materialized, we were to hold our post till the very last man. Then my Captain asked me if I had anything to say before the meeting broke up. I then asked for additional men as we suffered recent casualties and I was left between fifty-five and sixty men including a couple of machine gunners. The group began looking at each other but, no one volunteered to give me any additional men. Finally, however Lieutenant Carruth said he would give me a squad from his platoon and said I could pick out the squad I wanted so, I chose Corporal Gritzback and his men and, as it so happened, in the fighting that took place during the night and the following day I lost everyone of them as Killed in Action. [Transcriber inserts break here]

7[To the Last Man, page 74, April 20, 1918]

As the day wore on and darkness began creeping towards us, I formed the men in single file alongside the Church at Mandres [spelled as Mandrais]. The usual orders were passed along the line, No smoking, no lights, and no talking. I also ordered them to remove and sheath bayonets so as to avoid any accidents and then we moved along a well camouflaged and torn up road till we came to a garden gate that was still standing and we dropped into a communication trench and then we had to keep closed up so as not to lose contact with the man ahead. On our way in, we were considerably helped by the light of the moon although it was tough in spots where we had to expose ourselves on account of rock formations.

When the enemy sent up very lights or flares, we simply froze in our position resembling trees or posts till the lights died out and stumbled onwards. We made record time in relieving the Third Battalion. Recognizing the point that had been designated on the map where we were ordered to make our stand, I placed one machine gunner at either end of our platoon also, a bayonet man on either side to challenge anyone coming near our position. The rest of the men were allowed to rest up as best they could in the bottom of the trench. Another Non-Commissioned Officer and myself crawled out on our bellies about midnight to inspect the barbed wire emplacements in front of our position. The wire had been cut in zig-zag style so, when looking at it from the front, it seemed solid. We found out, however, that it had been cut to prepare for an attack. No sooner had we regained our position than the moon was clouded over and it was so dark you couldn't see your hand ahead of you, so I decided I should let my men know what we were in for. It hadn't been easy keeping the news to myself so now, I ordered bayonets fixed and hit the parapet. No sooner than that was accomplished, than it [was] simply Hell let loose as Austrian seventy-seven's and German Eighty-eight's blasted away at us. It had been altogether too quiet while taking over our new position with only intermittent shellfire plus an occasional rat-tat-tat from machine guns but, now, we got the business. The barrage lasted till dawn began to show and our first casualty was discovered. He was almost completely covered with earth and the blood was pumping from his mouth, ears, and eyes. Nothing could be done for him so he just choked up and passed on. We all knew what we could expect after such a heavy barrage and, since we were short of ammunition, I ordered our men to hold their fire till the Prussian Shock Troops hit the barbed wire. We hadn't long to wait and, just as they arrived at the barbed wire, we opened up on them.

They advanced in close formation and soon the wire and the ground in front of us was covered with their dead and wounded. They then crawled over each other only to be mowed down by our deadly fire. The shouting and screaming of the wounded and dying wasn't easy to listen to and very hard to forget. A platoon had been captured in the Bois de Remieres [spelled as Remiers Woods] on our right and another on our left so, now, we were surrounded on all sides and our casualties began to pile up on us. I had been wounded early in the morning by a hunk of shrapnel so, I used a shoe lace and a piece of wood I cut

from a duck-board in the trench to make a tourniquet and stop the bleeding and hobbled about the rest of the day, as best I could. Corporal Gritzback was in charge of a Machine Gun Squad and his Gunner, Private Lilley, was hit on the head and killed so, Dodi Gritzback lifted his body off the gun and took over. He mowed them down as they kept on coming in on us and, finally, he was hit just below the brim of his helmet. The helmet was scooped off his head and hit one of his men on the face opening up his cheek. Then, Corporal Coe got a bullet in the guts and we lain him on the parados. [parados n. bank behind trench or other type of fortification, giving protection from the rear] He kept hollering "Charlie! Oh! Charlie! For God's sake, do something for me." I gave him some water from my canteen. Then, I ripped open his shirt and there was a hole in his belly. Then a piece of shell hit him in the neck and decapitated him completely so his misery was over. The enemy had over estimated our strength for, those of us who could stand up, used the rifles and ammunition of our dead comrades to ward them off. About the middle of the afternoon, the hand to hand fighting died down and "Fokker" planes flew low over our position. We lay still alongside our dead Buddies for, at the least sigh of movement, their "Fokkers" opened up with machine gun fire.

I must have lost a lot of blood for "Gwatsy" Mendillo who was doing a fine job as a Rifle Grenadier tried to cheer me up by saying "Gee! Charlie! We got them good this [time] and they're running for the woods." He didn't have a scratch on him, so far, so I said, "For God's sake keep your head down 'Gwatsy' but it was already too late for a hunk of shrapnel dug through our parapet, hit him in the chest, and opened it up and he died almost immediately. How he succeeded in speaking, I still do not know but his last words, to me, were, "Charlie! They got me."

George Cooper, from Roxbury, Mass. was one of our Machine Gunners I had posted on the right end of our position. He was hit on the right shoulder early in the morning and the enemy rushed him. I was on the point of throwing a grenade only, if I did, then he also would have been killed so, they captured him and, as it turned out, he was the only one of our Platoon to be taken prisoner for we had decided we would fight to the end rather than be taken prisoner. Just before darkness set in, I heard a noise in a gully that ran into our trench so I figured it must be the enemy mop-up patrol. I only had a couple of bullets left in the chamber of my forty-five. The noise stopped and a head popped into sight. When I was about to fire, I gave another look and a white and distorted face proved to be that of George Cooper so, I grabbed his shoulders and pulled him down into our trench beside me. He must have had about twenty bullet holes in him but, not one of them was well placed enough to kill him. He made an effort to speak so I told him to keep quiet and conserve his energy. I had a few malted milk tablets left and, I forced them into his mouth. I also poured the last of the water I had left in my canteen [into his mouth]. Then, he asked me if I had any bullets left in my revolver and begged me, with tears rolling out of his eyes, to please, for God's sake kill him. He screamed "Charlie! I just cannot stand the pains any longer." It is an awful decision to make but I just could not up and kill my Buddy like that. "No, George", I told him, "when night falls, we will crawl under the barbed wire, find the road, and crawl back to our lines". Just then, a German Fokker flew overhead and, as I turned to look, he grabbed

my forty-five as the holster was open, but, before he could use it on himself, I got it away from him and then, night overtook us. Now, we began to crawl towards the road and, on our way out, he gained strength and explained how he was taken to an enemy First Aid Station where his wounds were dressed and then the doctor motioned to have him taken to the rear of their lines. But, the Sergeant Major pushed him towards our side and "No Mans Land," pulled out his Luger Automatic and shot him down. Then, he began to crawl towards our lines little by little, being shot at consistently by the enemy snipers till, finally, he arrived in our position. Before darkness had set in, Art Hubbard had skirted the Bois de Remieres [spelled as Renriers Woods] and got back to our outfit. I had asked him, on leaving, to have reinforcements sent up to us but, in the meantime, a Box Barrage had been dropped around us and, as a result, no one could get through to us. Our Regiment had given us up since we were known to have been completely surrounded and they assumed we were all killed or captured. When we hit the road, it was pitch dark and when flares lit the sky, we searched for the steeple of the Church at Mandres [spelled as Mandrais] but it had been destroyed by shell fire so, now, we had to decide if we should turn to the left or to the right as there remained nothing to guide us. To make things worse, a heavy gas attack was sent over with chlorine shells. Our gas masks had been torn by shrapnel and what was left of our uniforms was torn into shreds and were muddy and bloody. Out of our original platoon of over sixty men there were only eight of us still alive and [all] were badly wounded.
[Transcriber inserts break here]

8 [At what a price!, page 83, Spring, 1918]

Our orders to hold our suicide post had been carried out. But Oh! God! At what a price! We finally, decided to follow the shoulder of the road to our right. We kept crawling along on our bellies as we had no food and we were weak from loss of blood. Soon, the road was being splattered by rifle fire but the sound was that of our good old "Thirty-Thirty" Springfield's for we had been taken for an enemy patrol. With what strength we had left, we hollered "For God's Sake Let Up." So they came towards us and scooped us up in their arms and carried us into a "First Aid Station". We were given hot drinks and also were given shots in the arm to deaden our pains and then we were placed on stretchers to wait for the ambulances to take us to the One Hundred and First Field Hospital [101st Sanitation Train].

George Cooper's stretcher was placed next to mine and then we talked. He cracked a joke about when he borrowed my rifle when we were on guard duty along the Mexican Border. We both had a good laugh and then George straightened out and died. In order to get to the Field Hospital, it was necessary to go through "Dead Man's Curve" which was full of deep shell holes and was under constant bombardment. Another gas attack had been launched and the Klaxon Horns were shrieking and blasting all along the lines. I was alone on the floor of the ambulance and the driver stopped and asked me if I had a gas mask. I said no but for God's sake put yours on and, I will cover my head with my blanket I had given me at the First Aid Station. "Dead Man's Curve" was one Hell of a Place but our good old Ford Ambulances plowed through the shell holes and bombardments and didn't let up till we arrived at the "One Hundred and Second Field Station" where I was given more shots, a cup of hot cocoa, and cigarettes. I was placed in a squad tent to await further transportation to the "Evacuation Hospital" at Toul. I was constantly drugged to kill the pains and, as soon as the effects of the drugs began to wear off, I opened my eyes and all that I could see was lights all around me, and I was on the operating table. I could barely see the doctor and then, off in the distance, as my left inner ear drum was fractured, I dimly heard the doctor asking the orderly when I was brought in from the "Field Hospital" and the last words I could hear were "I'm afraid we may be compelled to amputate his leg." Then I was gone again, this time with ether. When I came to, I was sitting up in a bed in a large ward of the "Toul Hospital". Although I was half cocked from the effects of ether, I was cussing to beat Hell for I thought I was back up in the Front Lines and I was hollering at my men, "Give em Hell the SOB's!" till I felt the hand of an orderly on my shoulder and he was saying "Take it easy soldier there are women around." He was referring to our Army Nurses. I then lay back and calmed down a bit. Then I remember a well built elderly nurse, with gray hair bending over me and she said, "Try and be as quiet as you can as you have just had a severe hemorrhage of your wounded leg and, since you've lost so much blood already, when in the trenches, you need every drop of blood you have left." And, then she bent over me and scooped me up in her arms from the blood soaked sheets and put me in another bed, nearby. She gave me a shot and left me to rest. [Transcriber inserts break here]

9 [*Hospitals in France, page 87, Spring, 1918*]

When I once again, opened my eyes, I found that I was on a stretcher on the floor of a large ambulance with a row of up-patients sitting on each side of me on benches. The men told me we were on our way to a Base Hospital in Bazoilles-sur-Meuse [spelled as Busevaux] near Neufchateau in the Vosges Mountains. The hospital had been hastily constructed and was used as a sort of Relay Station for the more seriously wounded cases. The tendency was to get as far away from the Front Lines as possible in order to make room for the newer casualties. My stay here was short and, soon it was the stretcher again, then an ambulance which took me to a Hospital Train that was headed for Vichy in Southern France. We were taken from the Railroad Station to the "Ritz Carlton Hotel" that had been converted into a Base Hospital. All of the fancy stuff had been stored in vaults including a solid gold dinner service that had been used when entertaining European Royalty and rich Americans then, hospital beds were set in between the palm trees on the main floor of the Ritz Carlton. From my bed, I could get a tiny glimpse of the city outside. Vichy was, and still is, a very beautiful city, noted as a watering place for wealthy folks from near and far and has its share of high class gambling casinos. My leg was stubborn and the fourteen inches of wounds refused to heal. Gas gangrene had set in and it looked as if [I] would lose my leg after all. Oh! Yes! While making his rounds, the Ward Surgeon told me they were going to place a German Officer in the next bed to me so I told him, "if they did, one of us would be found dead the next morning." It was much too soon for anything like that after the experiences I had gone through so recently, especially the sight of my dead Buddies with their heads split open and their guts hanging out plus the brutal treatment that my Machine Gunner, George Cooper, had been given after his having been wounded and taken prisoner. I guess they realized I meant what I said and the vacant bed was given to an American casualty but, the following day, when I asked for shaving equipment, as I had lost everything I had, in combat, they sent in a barber and, when my meals were served me on my bed tray, all my food was cut up. I then realized they had concluded that I must be dangerous and decided not to allow me to have any cutting instruments.

Soon, I was placed on a stretcher again and the bearers were carrying me to an ambulance at the front of the Ritz Carlton. As I looked up from my stretcher, all I could see was a line of faces on either side looking down at me. I heard someone say "Pauvre Chien" [*poor dog*] and, the little French I had picked up, had taught me that "Chien" was French for dog and I was insulted for I did not understand that "Pauvre Chien" was similar to our expression "Poor Devil". The ambulance drew up at the Railroad Station and I was taken off there and was placed in a lower berth of the Hospital Train and, this time, we were headed towards Bordeaux, in Southwestern France. It seemed an eternity that we were on this train. My leg had no change of dressing, enroute, and, as the train bumped along on a road that hadn't been repaired since the war started, I felt as if my leg was going to fall off. How! I suffered on this trip! Finally, we were shifted on a side line and our train pulled up on a siding in Monpont in Dordogne. My stretcher was placed on the ground and a double decked ambulance drove up and then my stretcher was hoisted to the upper compartments and the ambulance rumbled off towards "Vauclaire" where the

Chartreuse Monastery had been taken over by The American Army and converted into a hospital. On arrival at the Monastery I could see, from my stretcher, that the gates were opened and Guards were stationed with forty-fives strapped on their belts, and Boy! Oh! Boy! A funny feeling came over me. It was difficult to understand that this was an American Hospital. Being a bed patient, I was put in a bed downstairs near a path that I found out, later, led to the morgue. Finally, the Head Nurse of the ward came over to my bed and looked at my bandaged leg and, she asked me when it had been dressed last so, I told her not since we left Vichy. The bandages were soaked with blood and pus [spelled as puss] and the stench of rotten flesh was almost unbearable. After she paused a while, and without looking at my chart, she blurted out, "Well, who's fault is it if you have a body that won't heal a wound?" Up to now, I had not been off my back and what she said cut me deeply, like a sharp knife. I then told her that, If she were a man, I would take the crutch that was leaning against the next bed and wrap it around her neck. And I told her it was only too clear that she was intimating that I had some kind of venereal disease. She turned as red as a beet and told me I was mistaken so, I went on to say, if I were mistaken and she would explain just what she meant and, I was wrong, I would retract my statement and beg a humble pardon. Without another word, she got up of [sic - off] the end of my bed and walked away. In a few minutes, a young doctor came over to me, bared my arm, and extracted about a gill of blood and went away. I knew it was for a "Wasserman Blood Test" and the sample was sent to the Laboratory for examination. Later that afternoon, an orderly came into our ward and he placed some papers on the desk at the end of the ward so I called him over and, knowing he couldn't divulge any information to the patients, I asked him to just riffle the reports and when he came across Sergeant Boucher's "Wasserman Test" all he had to do was nod and I would know that the report was negative, and I already knew it had to be. So he finally, agreed and my point was proven. Later on, the Head Nurse returned to our ward and, immediately, she checked and then she came directly to my bed and asked me how I was feeling so I told her we had an understanding and, [I] still was awaiting an explanation for why I should have been insulted. She reddened and she then asked me if I wanted my wounds dressed so, I told [her] I was suffering terribly and wished the bandages to be changed but, not by her. I then requested a Canadian Nurse, stationed in our Ward, to please dress my leg. The bandages were saturated with blood and pus and were stuck to my fourteen-inch wound. It hurt a lot and the leg hemorrhaged considerably but, she was so kind and gentle trying so hard not to cause more suffering than she could help so, I had lots of patience, causing her no trouble. From that time on, she took charge and dressed me daily. The Ward Surgeon had a gallon jar of Carrol-Daiken solution suspended over my bed and he inserted five tubes into the wounds and the leg was irrigated frequently in order to overcome the gangrene condition. I credit this treatment with saving my leg. "The Spanish Flu" hit the hospital and the deaths mounted to an average of twenty-five a day. Between the beds, stretchers with Flu patients had been placed for lack of space and, in the darkness of the night, I could hear the coming and going of the stretcher bearers as they brought in new cases and removed the dead. I had a slight attack and came through Okay, thank the Lord. Those, however, that got a severe case, plus their wounds, did not survive. We all had a terrible dread of amputation for it seemed that those who

had to suffer an amputation did not have much of a chance of survival. An orderly would pass by from the operating room with the amputated leg or arm in a rubber sheet followed by a stretcher with a patient with a sheet tucked over his head so, it is needless to say our morale was very low. The food was far from good and, for quite a while, it wasn't uncommon to have hard tack and "Corned Willie". After all we were only about forty miles from Bordeaux. Complaints were made and as a result, the chow got a bit better. "The Spanish Flu" epidemic passed and, I got a bit stronger and, then we had a General Inspection and my Buddy in the next bed to me, and myself were listed for operation, the following day. He begged them not to operate and asked them to ship him back to "The States". After arguing back and forth, for a while, the Commanding Officer said, "It seems as though you have forgotten that you are in the Army and you can be court-martialed for refusing an operation when it is for the good of the service which [he said] was quoted in "The Articles of War". That ended his pleading and, the following morning, the rolling table was brought between our beds and he was placed on it for the trip to the operating room. On towards noon, he was brought back and placed in bed with a nurse alongside him with swabs and the usual sputum pan. Soon the effects of the ether began wearing off and, then he sat up. He shoved his blankets aside and stared at the bandaged stump for his leg had been amputated. Then he screamed, "They've taken it on me, The SOB's and he laid back and he died.

Since I was up for an operation also, you can understand how I felt. But there was no operating that day nor the next. Then, Major Yankhauer took over my case and, I believe, he was about the best doctor I ever had, up to now. He used a number of guinea pigs that he put in cages. He cut away pieces of flesh from my wounds and extracted liquid from these particles and, then, injected the guinea pigs with it. After that, he used an antidote to counteract the poison from the gangrene. He explained to me, that, if it worked on them, he would try it on my leg. He did his best but, the suturing kept breaking down and, of course, healing would not set in.

For some time after my being wounded, I could neither see nor hear and, I was still having trouble with my eyes from chlorine gas burns and my ears from the effect of shell fire so, Dr. Yankhauer patiently worked over my ear condition and, before long I could hear fairly well with my right ear but, he gave me to understand that I would never have use of my left ear as the inner drum had been badly fractured. Dr. Yankhauer had my bed rolled out in the courtyard of the Monastery every day and, I was given further treatments plus sunbaths but, my wounds refused to heal. Since I was getting stronger, generally, my doctor decided on exercise, and I was given a pair of crutches. It felt so real good to try and stand erect and, little by little, I was able to make a few more steps from day to day.

Then, one nice sunshiny day, I went out in front of the Chapel and I leaned against the wall taking in a fine view of everything. As I said, the sun was shining, birds were singing, and I could see the river winding in, and out of the countryside. The River L'Isle was bordered on either side by tall poplar trees. All this delighted me and I was so glad to be alive. Then a nurse crossed the lawn in front of me. Since I assumed I was about to be greeted, I wanted to be careful

what I might say as one's vocabulary has a tendency to get very crude when one has been soldiering in the Front Lines but, I had no chance to say a word. The nurse halted a few paces ahead of me and barked out "Who are you? What are you doing here anyway? Don't you know that this is the Officer's Quarters, so you had better get back to where you belong." Well, I knew it was better not to say anything but I was so disappointed then, that one of our own American Nurses could act and talk that way to wounded soldier on crutches. If on the other hand, I had been taken prisoner, I could expect to get pushed around. Now, don't get me wrong, for I've been in over fifteen hospitals "Overseas" and back home and practically all of the nurses and doctors I had were just wonderful but this place, although it was far from the Front, was a "Lulu".

The hospital was located at the foot of a hill on top of which was the town of Montignac so, one fine day, feeling stronger than usual, I decided that, with the aid of my crutches, I would try and climb up to the town, and take a look around. I made it alright but Boy! I was so weak. I had on a pair of French Army pajamas and a terry cloth bath robe. The view was simply wonderful. I could see the Monastery down below on the bank of the river which wended its way towards the city of Bordeaux where it emptied into the Gironde River and, still further away to the south I could just about make out the Pyrenées [spelled as Pyrannes] Mountains. The day was clear, the sun was hot, and there was a silence all around me. The men folks were in the Army at the Western Front and the women were in the fields harvesting their crops and tending to the livestock for, someone had to carry on when there were no men around. I ventured a little further into the town before returning back to the hospital. I decided, however, that if it was possible, I would return the next day which, incidentally, was Sunday so as to visit the town and the people. Sunday proved to be another very nice day and a crowd of the folks were assembled at one of the houses at the top of the hill. My French was still very poor but we managed to converse a bit all around and, then it happened my gaze took me to a group near the well. Men, that is, old men and women were chatting away and there were a few girls in the group. That's where I first laid eyes on "Valentine". She was reserved and quiet, dressed in her plaid skirt and white blouse. Gee! I said to myself, "That girl is going to make some man a wonderful wife." She is cute as can be and as neat as a pin. I now had more of a reason to climb the hill and, one-day, I tried out my shaky French as she and her Mother were sewing away in the shade of some trees that surrounded their house. I had bought a French-English dictionary so, with its help and what little French I had learned, we struck up a limited conversation. They brought out a chair for me and a glass of wine which, by the way, was very welcome for my hill climbing on crutches, was quite an ordeal and had weakened me considerably.

I got to looking forward to these visits and it helped very much to pass away the time. Before long, however, a large contingent of troops arrived from Kentucky and, as luck would have it, they were billeted up on the hill, in Montignac. Feeling ran high between the Southern Troops and The Yanks and, after a few rough incidents, Montignac was declared out of bounds for the personnel and patients at the Hospital at Vauclair and Guards were placed at the road leading to Montignac so, I had to devise a method of some sort to continue friendship with "The Folks" on the hill.

A young Frenchman, a relative of the family, volunteered to lend me civilian clothing for me to use when I had occasion to visit them. Although the Guard halted me a couple of times, I spoke to him in French and, that plus the civvies I wore got me by Okay. Everything went along just fine but Orders came from Central Headquarters for the evacuation of all patients. We were then classified as follows: a large initial A was placed on the chart of those that had been sick and were now well enough to return to their outfit for duty. A large B was given to those who were well enough to travel on to another hospital for further treatment, after which, they were sent back to the lines. A large C was applied to those that could do duty at Ports of embarkation and debarkation. And finally a large D was given to those who were unable to return to their regiment on account of their wounds and they were to be returned to The United States on the first "hospital Ship" that was available. I was one of those that got a D classification. It was the time of the Drive in The Argonne at the end of the war and the hospital beds were needed for the final casualties. Of course, I was glad to be on my way back home but, on the other hand, I felt sad to think I would have to say "au revoir" to those folks who had treated me so wonderfully while at Vauclair. I made my good bye visit and we were all very blue. We had a real nice dinner at their home and, then, I was on my way to a large Base hospital at Saint Nazaire [spelled as Saint Nazarre]. [Transcriber inserts break here]

10 [*Homeward Bound, page 104, Summer-Fall, 1918*]

It was one of the saddest hospitals I had been in so far, only the toughest cases were here waiting to be shipped back to "The States". I was able to get around, now, with a crutch and a cane so, I would feed those whose arms were in splints or casts or those who had suffered amputations. I also helped with rolling sterilized bandages and it made me feel good to help out in any way that was possible. Then one day, just before the Armistice was signed, a lad called me over to his bed. I wondered what he wanted so I got near and Gosh! I could hardly stand the smell for, a large piece of shell had torn out a large portion of his side and, as a result, he was paralyzed from his waist down. Although he was on rubber sheets and was dressed frequently, the stench from the rotten flesh was unbearable. I had the very same condition with my leg but his area was much greater. He said, "Buddy! Will you shave me?" I just couldn't say no. I borrowed a razor, brush, and some soap from a lad in the next bed to him. He hadn't been shaved for over a week and he had a very heavy dark beard. In cases like this, The Good Lord must give a fellow some additional strength for I finished the job, but the perspiration was just rolling down my back and I was just as weak as I could be without fainting. Then he said there is one more favor I want to ask you for he went on to say he heard me talking French to one of the nurses and I asked him what was this favor he wanted of me and then he told me, without batting an eye, that, by that evening, he was going to die and he asked me to get him a shot of rum to help him "Over the Top". I told him that any French citizen caught selling liquor to any of the patients would be dealt with severely. He still insisted on my trying to get him some rum, just a half a pint, he begged me. He then lifted his pillow where he had some hundred franc notes he had won shooting craps before he was wounded. He handed me one and said, "For God's sake please try". It was getting dark so, I managed to get by the Guard and with the help of my crutch and cane, I hobbled over to a French cottage and knocked on the heavy wooden door. An old man came to the door and he only peeked out so I told him what I wanted and was willing to pay well for it. "No! No! No!" the old fellow said, "c'est défendu". When I told him the condition of the man I wanted it for and that I was not getting it for myself, he changed his mind and got it for me. I had one Hell of a job getting back to my ward with the hidden half pint of rum but, I finally made it and the poor lad's eyes were just popping out of his head when he saw me coming down the ward. Well, I gave him his rum and he made short work of it. I was on the point of slipping his change under his pillow, and he said you hang on to that for I'm sure you haven't got a franc of your own which was very true. Then the orderly came along with a couple of husky stretcher-bearers. He shook my hand and said, "God bless you for everything". They got him onto the stretcher and started for the door but, before the door was opened, he passed away. I asked myself if I did the right thing and my answer was "Yes".

Two days after the Armistice, on the 13th of November, I was put aboard "The Orizaba" bound for New York. Before putting out to sea, we sailed down the coast of France to the city of Brest where we took on a crew of French Sailors also, headed for New York to take over a boat that was stationed in the Harbor of New York and, bring it back to France.

Well, "The Orizaba" was primarily a cargo ship and had been transporting troops and supplies so, when she hit the high seas for New York as a "Hospital Ship." there was no cargo below decks so, she became top heavy and pitched and rolled so much that, when we hit a heavy storm off the coast of Ireland, the life boats were torn from their stanchions and were washed away to sea. The balustrades were badly smashed, in places, and the lurching and plunging plus the ever present rolling, cut our progress in half. The Officers ordered the pumping of seawater into the hold of the ship, about twenty feet, and then she stabilized and she began picking up speed. Of course many of the enemy submarines had not received news of the Armistice so, they were still hunting our ships with orders to sink on sight. Each of us wounded men was assigned a crewman to take care of us in case we had to "abandon ship". It was storm after storm all the way over and, I was at a loss to understand what they could have done for us as, all they were able to do was to look out for themselves.

We were bedded down in hammocks and it was one Hell of a job to get in and out of them. The chow aboard ship was very good for those that could get to the mess hall. I got there Okay but how I got there is a sort of a mystery but, I made it. We had about a dozen or more that who [sic] passed out on board and they were buried at sea. Quite a few fell out of their hammocks and broke their arms and legs and had to have them set over again. [Transcriber inserts break here]

11 [*Good Old U.S.A. – More Hospitals., page 110, Fall, 1918*]

Finally, we made the “Good Old U.S.A.” and a number of tenders unloaded us and took us to Fox Hill Hospital located on Staten Island, New York. Thanksgiving Day was only a couple of days off and I phoned my Mother so she and my two brothers, came and had dinner with me on Thanksgiving Day. Of course my Mother had received a telegram telling her I was severely wounded in action and she was almost afraid to ask me just how badly off I was. I was glad to tell her, how, my leg, although badly wounded, wasn’t amputated so far, at least. We had a wonderful dinner together and then I returned to my ward.

Those of us off the “The Orizaba” were only kept at The Fox Hill Hospital long enough to be classified and deloused. I was put on a Hospital Train headed for Colonia, New Jersey right outside of Rahway. It was classified as an “Amputation Hospital” and, naturally, I began to do some serious worrying as to whether they would be able to save my leg. The hospital was one of those hastily built, temporary, places and was torn down right after the war, that is, just as soon as the government had no more use for it. I spent the better part of thirteen months in it, during which, I had a number of operations. The final operation was performed by a Major Aldrich a bone specialist, one of the very best in the country and, in the world, for that matter.

It happened that the Chaplain of the hospital came into my ward and sat on the side of my bed. He told me that many of the boys were making their “Easter Duty” much earlier this year and I said “Father I’m sure you’re kidding me for, I know that I’m up for a complicated and very serious operation and I was ready.” I told him I had already received “The Last Rites” on a couple of previous occasions “Over There”, and was ready once again to make my peace with “The Good Lord”. The nurses and orderlies prepared me for the operation and, the following morning, I was given two grasshoppers one in each arm plus a shot of anti-lockjaw tetanus then, I was brought into the operating room. I was given ether and then, gas on top of the ether and, from about eight o’clock in the morning till about half after twelve I was on the table while the doctors worked on me. There was Major Aldrich, Colonel Roper, and Dr. Harding that composed the team and thanks to God and those doctors, they did not have to amputate, after all. Splinters of bone, pieces of shrapnel, and scar tissue, were removed. The fourteen-inch incision was sutured and clamped and then a plaster cast was placed over the leg reaching up to my hip. For about a week, I didn’t care much whether I pulled through or not. I could hear the tick tock of the clock in my ward all night and all day and the nurse would tell me to holler or scream for she knew I was suffering but no. I had figured the others had to rest but I tore the sheets with my fingers which helped, somewhat. My bed was wheeled out onto the porch during the night and come morning, I was brought back inside again. Easter Sunday morning, I woke from a deep sleep and, I felt like a brand new person and the suffering and pain had almost completely left me. Then, I began to look around me and, on my table, by my bed, were flowers and potted plants plus books and candy and, when I asked where they were from, I was told they were from the doctors and nurses who claimed that I had been a very good patient. Liquid diet was allowed and also light sedation to allow me to

regain my strength and, now, I wanted to recover and do some more living. Later on the cast was removed and I was allowed to sit up in my bed. As I, gradually, gained my strength, I was assigned a wheel chair and, before long, I became an expert in the handling of the chair. We would attend the boxing matches and movies at the Red Cross Building which was at the top of a long inclined corridor and, after the movies, we would line up our wheel chairs three or four abreast and race down the long corridor till, one night, one of the wheels of a chair, next to mine, locked with my wheel at the foot of the incline and over [we] went. The racket caused by the collision, brought the doctors and nurses out from the wards and that meant “Good Bye” wheel chair races for good. The next step was crutches and I was soon able to get going along fine till one day the suturing broke down all along the wound for over twelve inches. The clamps were of no avail and the stitches cut through the raw flesh and it made me real miserable and discouraged. New suturing was then applied but, once again, the suturing tore through the flesh or the tension was too great and would not allow healing. They then tried a series of skin grafts and, later on, they tried a needle graft. I was given no anesthesia and then my leg, the wounded part, was needled till it bled profusely and, then another patient was wheeled in alongside me and his leg was amputated and flesh and skin from his amputated leg was transferred to my wounded leg. I had to be kept entirely quiet for a couple of days the, the bandages were removed but the grafting did not take. So, I began to feel sorry for myself but, then, I would look around me and see a lad with his leg off or someone with his arm gone and, I would say to myself “I must be softening up and I must be a sissy.”

The government paid a man who was with the circus to come into our ward to help show those who suffered amputations how to take care of themselves. They called him “The Armless Wonder”. As he came in the ward, he would grab his cap with the stubs of his arms, toss it in the air, and land it on his head and he would shout, “How is everybody?” A lad a couple of beds away from me would reply, “I can’t kick.” It was true for he had lost both his legs. Further down the ward, a lad had both his arms shot away with machine gun fire and “The Armless Wonder” had taught him how to clothe himself and how to shave himself. He was always smiling so, we called him “Happy”. Soon, they gave him artificial arms and he was allowed home on furlough. He wore a cape like the West Point Cadets and the nurse hooked it at the neck in front and one couldn’t tell he had no arms. So, “happy” went home and, then, he told his Mother of his having lost his arms and asked her to unhook his cape so she unhooked it and when she saw his condition she said, “Oh my God! You would have been better off dead,” without thinking. While she was preparing his meal, “Happy” went up to the roof, jumped off and killed himself.

The time passed slowly in this hospital and, even though I was now in the “United States”, visits were infrequent as my Mother had been, and still was sick for a long time. My Sister, Mary, lived in Lawrence, Mass. and with her family responsibilities, never got down to see me. I had an Aunt Matilda who was a Nun at St. Joseph’s College for the deaf in West Chester, New York who came to see me on a couple of occasions. She wanted me to attend a seminary in Brooklyn, New York after my discharge but, I gave her to understand the Priesthood wasn’t meant for me. In the meantime, I had been writing to The

Folks I had met in France, Valentine Breton and her Mother. My letters were very poorly written as my French had not improved to speak of so, I got some books. Beginners, of course plus a dictionary. Then, I began to study, once in a while, as best I could but, with no one around with whom I could converse, and also no one to correct my mistakes, I was unable to make much progress.

Valentine answered my letters and made her replies as simple as possible so I might understand them more readily. I explained to her that if they were obliged to amputate my leg, I would never think of getting married. I also told her, with the young men from her neighborhood now being returned home, that, if she were asked for in marriage, not to pass up the opportunity and later on, after my discharge, I hoped to visit France and I would drop in and see her and her Mother. Then, I received a very touching letter from her in which she said she hoped and prayed I would not lose my leg but, in case I did, she was a dressmaker and we could surely get by very nicely. She was very sincere about everything and I thought an awful lot about her. More so, now, than ever after the way she explained that the loss of a leg would make no difference and, if I still cared for her, we would surely get by.

I already had occasion to compare a case similar to mine for, a lad in the bed across from me, had to have his leg amputated and his fiancé came to see him for the first time since he returned from “Overseas”. They were to be married as soon as he would be discharged. She did not know, however, he suffered an amputation till she made this first visit. I saw him lift the blankets and show her the stub that was healing nicely and, an artificial limb was being prepared for him but, the lad in the next bed to his couldn’t help hearing most of the conversation. When she realized the condition he was in physically, she said that they could still be good friends, but, the engagement would have to be postponed indefinitely. When she left the ward, he took his crutches and went out towards the lavatory and kitchen. This hospital, like most hospitals, had guards stationed and, while off duty, they had a practice of leaving their forty-fives in the kitchen. Well, he went into the kitchen, took one of the forty-fives, and blew out his brains. Her brush-off was very crude to say the least, and the shock was too much for him so he decided to end the whole business and, he did. We had no reason to know his intentions for, we all had our crutches at the head of our bed and we used them frequently when we had occasion to use the lavatory or to shower. It only goes to prove that, when a man is in such a condition, it does not require very much to push him over the brink. His hopes and plans were high and [when] he was suddenly let down, he just couldn’t take it so, he just did what he did.

My leg, although not completely healed, was doing quite well so, I was transferred to the surgical ward of Camp Upton Hospital on Long Island, New York. Once, again, the suturing broke down and the old wound opened up most of the way so I was once again returned back to New Jersey to the “Amputation Hospital” in Rahway for further observation and treatment. I was considerably disappointed but not discouraged for, as I had concluded before, there were many so much more worse off than I was and I never lost faith in the doctors and nurses that took such good care of me. They did all they could.

After a few months of treatments, I was asked if I wanted to go home? I guess you know my answer so, I was told that I would have to have my leg dressed twice a day and I would have to report to them every month so they could check on my condition. I was then transferred to a Casualty Unit on Long Island, New York preparatory to my being discharged with maximum improvement but, as totally disabled. Total disability, at that time, carried a Compensation Award of \$30 per month till a short time afterwards, [when] “The Reed Bill” was passed making a payment of \$80 for total disability. [Transcriber inserts break here]

12 *[Discharged - Back Home, page 122, Summer, 1919]*

When I got back home, my Mother told me I was pretty well licked with the gas burns of my eyes, corneal opacities, plus the fractured left inner ear drum, also my fractured right femur and pelvis with semi-paralysis of my right foot. She went on to tell me, that, if The Folks I had met at the Base Hospital in Montignac, France were half as good to me as I claimed, then I should go back, marry Valentine and bring her and her Mother back to The United States and she said, she was sure we would be very happy together. It was not so easy to book passage to France at that time. I took my Mother's advice, however, and finally, I got a reservation on "The Chicago" which was bound for Bordeaux. The State Department was real tough but, my passport arrived just before sailing time, September 13th, 1919. On leaving New York, and arriving at quarantine, we had to drop our river pilot. Well, as he was climbing down the rope ladder, he missed a rung of the ladder, and he fell overboard. The alarm was sounded that there was a "A Man Overboard". The pilot weighed well over two hundred pounds and when the dory manned by two sailors came alongside, he grabbed the side and darned near upset the dory. When the "Man Overboard" was sounded, most of the passengers started to crowd the rails on the side of the ship where he went down. Soon, a couple of French Officers ordered everyone to stay away from the railings as the ship had begun to lurch on that side and, there was danger of capsizing. One woman started screaming and wanted to be taken ashore for she claimed, it meant bad luck if a person fell overboard. It wasn't long, however, before everything returned to normal and, we were on our way to Bordeaux. [Transcriber inserts break here]

13 [*Return to France – For a Bride, page 123, Fall, 1919*]

We had a wonderful crossing as the weather was fine and the sea was quite calm. Everything was just lovely till we rounded the Irish Coast and, as we started up The English Channel a squall hit us and it got real nasty. An elderly man stopped me on the promenade deck and gave me a fistful of tobacco and told me I should chew on that and, I would not be seasick. As soon as he was out of sight, I threw the tobacco overboard and, when I saw him, later on, he was hugging the railing and feeding the fish. There were still some enemy submarines prowling the High Seas so it took us the better part of thirteen days before we arrived at Poliaque, at the mouth of The Gironde River. Now, we had to wait a while till the tide came in so we could negotiate the river. As we started up the river it seemed as if we must be touching the banks on either side. People in the vineyards waved at us as we passed. You see, it was grape growing country and the grapes were being harvested for the making of the new wine. Bordeaux wines are known and renowned all over the world. I only had two valises to get through the Custom Officers and soon, I was hiking along “Quai Louis Dix Huit” [*Quay of Louis the 18th*] on my way to find a hotel. As I was walking along the Quai, I heard a shrill whistling across the way and, there was an American Buddy from The Yankee Division who had arrived a few days before me and, he also, was returning to marry a French girl. As soon as we had a chat, I hailed a hack and told the driver to take me where I might locate some lodgings, not too far away. So, he took me to a place with the rooms upstairs, and no running water, also very expensive. I had told him to wait till I could look the place over so, I returned to the hack and told him to take me to “The Hotel de Paris” a brand new place near “The Opera” and right in the center of Bordeaux. I dismissed him as soon as I had paid my fare and headed for the hotel lobby. I went to the clerk and on asking for a room, I was informed the hotel was filled up so, I turned around and started for the street. There was a sidewalk café and, as I wended my way past the tables, I was grabbed by the arm and on looking around, there, seated at one of the tables were two American Officers. They invited me to sit at their table and they ordered drinks. They were on a detail in Bordeaux for the Quarter Master Corps of the United States Army. They were rounding up and returning to the United States all supplies and equipment left by the Army after they had been shipped home. They already knew that The Hotel de Paris was all filled up and told me not to worry for they had a place in mind, near the Gare dé Midi [spelled as Garre de Midi] [Gare = *Station*] where I would get my train the next morning. It was equally as good and less expensive so, I then ordered drinks. They then called a Sergeant over to our table and ordered him to bring the car, a Dodge, to the entrance as he was on duty as their chauffeur and away we went to “The Gare dé Midi”. They found me a real nice room. I thanked them very much and they drove off. I got my train the following [morning] and, soon I was in Montpon [spelled as Montpont] I hired a cab and was driven to Montignac. Valentine was waiting for me for, I had sent a cablegram from aboard the ship so, again, we were together. I had the necessary papers with me so, we then went to the Mayor’s office, and had the banns of our coming marriage posted on the bulletin board of the town hall, as required by law, in France. There was the required two weeks waiting period and then, the Mayor of Ménestérol (spelled as Ministerol), with a tri-colored band over his shoulder, while standing on the

front steps of the City Hall, pronounced us man and wife. The following morning we had a Church wedding in her Church up in Montignac.

The Church was over five hundred years old and the altar was hand carved. The marrying priest was a Chaplain in the French Army and was wounded during the war. When the Mass was over, the whole town turned out for the wedding feast. And what a feast it was. Temporary tables had been installed on long planks and supports between the houses. Jars of wine were placed at intervals and then, the courses were served, roast chicken, roast veal, roast beef, roast lamb, and all the side dishes right up to, and, including desert, which items, were too numerous to mention. The wedding wound up with café smokes and liquors. We sat down at noon and, as we chatted and ate all afternoon, it must have been about four thirty when the party finally wound up.

Now, Charlie was a married man and had responsibilities that were real. I had to think about returning to the United States and also, had to plan for my return to the Postal Service as I had requested and was granted a Military leave of absence for the duration. I, now, had Valentine's Mother as part of my new family...

[The Transcriber leaves off the story here, because Boucher has no further military service.]

Appendix A: Names & Rank per “Connecticut Fights **” Roster

Name [Corrections or completions per CFR]	Rank [per CFR]	Connecticut Fights Roster (CFR)	First Mentioned Verbatim Transcript (page)
Boucher, Charles L.	Sgt.(T) [Corp.]	341	(author)
Cederholm, [Arvid A.]	Sgt.	346 KIA	14
Coe, [Clarence E.]	Corp.(T) [Pvt.]	347 KIA	20
Cooper, George [H.]	Pvt.	349 DW	20
Gehrke, [Fredrick J.]	Pvt. [Sgt. Maj.]	359	14
Griswold, [Alfred H.]	Capt.	331	18
Gritzback, “Dodi” [George]	Corp.	361 KIA	18
Haggerty, James [A.]	Capt.	331	11
Hubbard, Art [Arthur M.] (Runner)	Pvt.(?)	365	21
Hugo (Doctor), [John G., Regimental Surgeon]	[Maj.]	332	12
Isbell, [Ernest L.]	Col.	332	12
Johnson, [Albert]	Lt.	332 DW	18
Karuth [Carruth, Harold B.]	Lt.	330	18
Lilley, [John E.]	Pvt.	372 KIA	20
Lockhart, [Charles E.]	Capt.(T) [1Lt.]	332	12
Mendillo, “Gwatsy” [Frank J.]	Pvt.	377 KIA	20
Wilson	Col.	Not Listed	11

(T) denotes a presumed temporary or “acting” rank

* Connecticut Fights *The Story of the 102nd Regiment*, Captain Daniel W. Strickland, Quinnipiack Press, 1930.
The "ROSTER of the 102nd INFANTRY", is on page 329, et seq.