

Letters from Boys "Over There"

24 Oct 1918, Siler City Grit

Letters from Boys "Over There."

To his mother, Mrs. J. V. Goldston at Goldston.

Aug. 19.

Dear Mother:—I am taking over here just fine so far. Think this a good country and am sure I will continue to like it alright. It was an interesting trip over here; and I have seen a lot of things that were of much interest around in the different cities. There are fine crops over here, such as wheat and oats, and a lot of truck farming that is very pretty; I haven't seen anything that looked like corn or cotton; I don't suppose they raise anything like that. I suppose you all know as much about the war as I do, except that I have seen some of the effects and you have not. People here don't seem to think that the war will last so very long now. Be sure to let me hear from you as often as you can. I understand that the mail will be censored both ways.

Your son,
Corpl. Tom W. Goldston.

(The writer says this letter was written in "No Man's Land", just eight yards from the German trenches. Although received by his mother, Mrs. J. W. Gilbert, Sr., of Siler City, R3, it is addressed to 'pals,' for, he says, anything American is 'pal' to him.—Editor.)

Aug. 28.

Pals:—Well, dear little country-side, tonight as "Jerry" (the Germans) is keeping me in my hole with his "whiz bangs" and a few 15-inchers for a side line, I will try to push a few lines of dope across the foot lights that would make Guy Empey and his "Over the Top" shed tears of shame!

Yes, Jerry keeps me busy dodging invitation cards, in the shape of aerial bombs, five-point vines, and other collections of hardware that would make a machine shop look like an ice cream parlor in comparison.

Its a "cinch" that Jerry doesn't know how to take a joke. We pass him along a little gas to put his weary subjects to sleep and it seems to make him angry, and he retaliates by trying to blow us to 'kingdom come.' But, poor fellow, his blow is too weak. And if he is not mighty careful he will blow us to King (Kiser), but not to "come."

I must pity the Kiser-gr-gr—he has just received the news that he has been nick-named the "Beast of Berlin," and he is now looking for his "tail" (finish).

Well, Uncle Sam has sent it to him—I mean his "tail"—with a set of rules in the way it should be served. Pass it to him, "Sammy;" I just finished my iron rations. "Compre?"

I say, Siler City and Chatham county, don't worry about your boy, because he is coming home. But you didn't know you could get along so well without the pest, did you? Oh yes, we know you old fellows are having the time of your lives; but say, how in the name of all that is reasonable, can the old fellows get their legs under the ice cream parlor table?

Mothers, God bless you! You are the ones we think of when we go over the top of the parapet after Jerry; and when we try to sleep you are the ones that we know are praying for us and your prayers are the ones that we have confidence in.

If you want a soldier to pay a tribute to his mother, just ask him why he is fighting the Hun: he will answer you, "For my mother, wife, father, sister." So, mothers, don't sit down and worry about your "Jimmy" and "Dickey" because God is watching him; just trust all to Him, and your Jimmy and Dickey will come marching home. And, mothers, see that no one writes your boy discouraging letters. Write him bright, cheerful letters and lots of them, because that is the one thing he longs for.

This is my first letter to any paper since I have been in France. The reason for this one is that we want you to understand that we are not depressed in spirits and that we are having lots of fun. It is exciting and just a bit different from a stroll out to the drugstore and maybe to the pictures. We have one great advantage: we don't have to pay the price of a picture show to get a "tingle of excitement"—just crawl out of your dugout—and the gun play of William S. Hart or the narrow escapes of Pearl White fade into insignificance. So impress on the folks' minds to "cut" the "Oh, I know you will be torn limb from limb" stuff from their letters.

Yours for mothers, country and Chatham county,
Sgt. Jack Gilbert,
Co. C, 105 Engr. Regt.
Am. Ex. Force.