

Soldier's Letters --

WWI was over, but many Chatham soldiers were not yet home. Letters published in 6 Feb 1919, *Siler City Grit*.

SOLDIERS' LETTERS.

Things They Think and See and Do and Wish For, Etc.

From Pvt. C. W. McManus to his mother Mrs. N. E. McManus Bear Creek R1.

Base Hospital No. 6, France.

Dear Mama—Your letter rec'd a few days ago. I was very glad indeed to hear from you and to know that you was getting along so well, I am getting along nicely, enjoying the very best of health.

I was very sorry indeed to hear of Emma Councilman's death, as she was just in the prime of life. I never had anything shock me as bad in my life, but we all have to go sooner or later. I noticed in the home paper that there were several deaths in the community from the flu. I hope that you at home can miss it; I think I had enough of it for the whole family.

I guess E. W. and M. M. will soon be back at home with you, as I understand the boys are being mustered out. I know you will be glad to have them. I was the first to enlist and I will be more than apt to be the last one to get back, as we have the wounded men to look after just the same as if the war was still going on. But it is a known fact that we will send them back to hospitals in the states just as soon as they are able to stand the trip. By doing that I think we will be home by July 1919, and you know that isn't so far away.

I still haven't heard from N. F. in about four weeks, but you know how it is up on the front in the way of writing—they haven't paper every time they would like to write, and you know he is a wagoner and has to look after the stock. I am expecting to hear from him any time.

You ought to see me now—I have all comforts of home. They have given me a little room to do my work in; it is about the size of the dining room at home. I have my plaster table and splints and writing desk in it; but the best of all is a good o'd stove; these cold days I can run the patients in here and put them on the table and put plaster casts on their broken limbs without their suffering with cold. I find it mighty nice to sit around the fire until about 9 p.m. to see that it doesn't catch the room on fire. Of course that is just my excuse, as our sleeping quarters are cold.

From Pvt. Hertford G. Self to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. I. E. Self of Silk Hope community.

A. P. O. 745, France.

I am very glad to have the privilege of writing a word to the loved ones at home again. I'd give just anything I have if you all knew that I am alive and well now that the war is over. I have not had a chance to write you in several days, but now I have and am doing the best I can. I have and wished many times since firing ceased that you knew about me, for I know you have been uneasy. Perhaps you will be surprised to know that I had been up on the firing line several days when the war ended. I went over the top on Sunday, Nov. 10th and was holding the line Monday when we got orders to cease firing. So there is no use for me to say I was glad for the war to end. But I was fortunate in not getting a scratch of a wound. I was in the battle of the war and guarded the front line until Wednesday noon when we moved a few miles. This is the first chance I have had to write you, as I couldn't get stationery. On account of being transferred I have not received any mail from you for some time. Don't be uneasy any more; I think we will fare very well now until we come home, a time for which we all long. Write to me at my new address and tell all the news; and don't look for another letter from me until you see it. But I hope to be in a few days where I can write regularly.

From Pvt. Joseph G. Brown to his brother and sister.

Your letter was a good while reaching me. I just wonder what you all are doing now days, having a good time I guess. I am getting along just fine and growing fat every day. We have been having some damp, rainy weather for the past few days. You said I would get over here too late if the paper was true, when you wrote, but I think I'm in plenty of the excitement. Gee! I surely would like to parade up and down the streets of Siler City now! I hope the time will soon come when I will have that opportunity. I have written home almost a dozen times since I left the States, but I have not had a line from home, but I guess I will hear soon.

Well, I guess I had better stop now, as it is about time to eat and I am always ready for that. Write when you can for I'm always glad to hear from you.

From Corporal Joseph Grady Goldston to a relative at Goldston, December, 1918.

I am in the vrr. best of health; have only one trouble and that is heart trouble, wanting to go home and we have no prospects at all of going any time soon.

Lucille, it is quite interesting, this place where we are. Our barracks are built right on the side of the road where Joan of Arc and her army rode by on her way from Romorantin, France, to Selle, France. When we landed in Brest, France, on July 13th, 1918, I was in the enclosure that Napoleon built. It was made of stone and inside were the barracks where he kept his soldiers. They are called them Pontanejan barracks.

There are lots and lots of under ground caves here that were built during Napoleon's time, and

people are living in them now. Some of the caves are big enough to hold very near a million men. I have seen the picture of Napoleon's tomb which is in Paris. It is well preserved to this day.

Several of the men in the company have been to Paris but I have not had the chance to go yet, but certainly intend to go if I get a chance.

The French soldiers are all coming back home now. I don't like the French soldiers much; the French don't like the English soldiers. They all seem to like the American soldiers, especially the Australians.

A remark like this was made between a German and a Frenchman, when they were beating the Germans. Frenchman—"Is God still with you?" German—"Yes, God is still with us; but the Americans are with the French."

I have seen several large Chateaus which are very beautiful. Among the many curious things in them was a room full of old relics, all kinds of swords, and implements of war. Another room was a sun parlor; every thing in that room is perfectly white, furniture, walls, and chairs, tables and everything. There was also a beautiful flower garden just a few rods away from the Chateau. No one lives in this house. Oh, the horrors of war that France has had to go through with! It is impossible for the people in the States to realize one-fourth of the things that these European countries have suffered. We ought to be thankful that we live in a civilized country, where men have their rights, and where there is justice shown to the poor and needy.

From Pvt. Roland R. Rives to his mother.

France, Dec. 30, 1918.

I hope I can soon return to the good old states where I long to be once more. I have heard of "Sunny France", but if I were to name it I would call it muddy France. It rains most all the time over here but it hasn't been very cold. We had a little snow the day after Christmas.

I had a very good Christmas. Wish I could have spent Christmas with you all but my time is coming yet, and I am going to have a real Christmas when I get home. I am in the 78th Division. Maybe you will see in the papers when we are to return to the states. When the Division goes back I will be with it. I haven't been paid but once and that was while I was at Camp Jackson. I haven't had any money since I left the states and I may not get paid until I get back and I would like to have a little money.

I want you to write me just as soon as you get this and I want you to just put a five dollar bill in the letter and mail it to me. It will get through alright. I may be here sometime yet; I can't tell about that but if I should happen to leave for the states before I get it, "let her go", I will freely lose it if I can get back before I get it.

Well, I will try and tell you something about where I am, as the war is over and I guess the censor will let it go through. I think this is about Central France. I am in a little town and they have opened up a school here at night for the soldiers to learn to read and write. I don't have much to do during the day, so you see we are having a pretty nice time. I am getting plenty to eat and I am with a fine bunch of boys. Soldiers are just like brothers, you know, and as I didn't get any Christmas box (and of course I didn't expect any for nobody knew my address in time to send me one), the boys divided with me and I had a very good Christmas after all.

Say! I want you to send me a bunch of the new-st Siler City Grits you have; it will be so much news for me. Oh, I would give anything for a copy of the Grit tonight! Well, as it is most bed time I will close and write more next time. I want all of you to write me a long letter and tell me all the home news. Hoping this will find you all enjoying the best of health, and hoping to be with you soon. Love to all; may God bless you all.

From Private Georgie G. Burke to his brother S. B. Burke, Bear Creek.

Dear Brother—To-day with great pleasure I will write you. I am well now, and getting along fine, but have been sick a few days.

I truly hope this will find you all well and getting along fine with your work. I am not doing much now, but don't know anything about when we will get home, but I think maybe by the first of March. Wouldn't it be nice if I could get there for my birthday dinner? Sammie, I am in Joinville France; have been here about five weeks; was here when we heard the glad news! Gee! Believe me, it was some time, too, and I will never forget that day. What time did you hear the news? Wish I could have been there and seen my dear father and mother and all the rest.

Tell everybody hello! for me.