

France, December 2nd, 1918.

My Darling Wife:-

I am again up against it for ink, and can't help resorting to the machine. I really do not like to use it now, as I have had to so much in the past, but it cannot be avoided, so I must make the best of it. I have been very busy for the past two or three days, with inspections and other preparations for our departure. We have not left yet, as you may have guessed and we have no more idea now than we had a month ago as to when we will leave. It gets terribly monotonous sitting around here waiting for orders to go we know not where, but as we can do nothing about it we must make the best of it.

I have been more or less held in or around camp by my job as Detachment Commander, but will be able to get away in a day or two, and am then going up to Nancy for a days vacation, the first I have had since I was home a year ago last month. I am a little in need of a rest, as I have been very constantly and arduously on the job ever since that time. Rosy, Nuts, Dempsey and I are going up together and spend about two days doing nothing but eat and sleep for all that time. We will be able to get very good meals there, and it will be a welcome change from what we have been having. I have gotten very tired of Army fare which is monotonous although nourishing, and the biggest job you are going to have when I return, is to feed me up on so many different things that I literally crave. I will leave it to you to do it also/ for I know of no one who can prepare better meals than we have at our home.

The weather is remarkably good for this time of the year. It is quite mild, and the sun shines a good share of the time. I have not yet been able to wear my overcoat and be comfortable for a whole day, as it gets too warm in the afternoon. I am perfectly willing that it should stay so too. I have taken the Company on a good long hike every day since the outfit finished packing, and it has done all of us good. I have hardened up again so that I am in as good condition as I was at Fort Harrison, and I can now walk twenty miles at quick time without a quiver.

I am sending to you in the mail today a German helmet, which is the type worn by enlisted men of the German army. It is one I found in the trenches up here at the line, in an old artillery dugout, and I am sending it to you merely so you can see what sort of things they have had to wear over here in the way of armor of the middle ages. This helmet is much larger than the ones worn by the British or French or Americans, and is not as practical in many ways. You can either save it or give it away, whichever you desire. I will try to send an officer's helmet before long although they are harder to get. I have some other interesting souvenirs, but not many, as I am not inclined to burden myself with a lot of junk which has no value whatever, and which will soon be manufactured in great quantities for the trade supplied by American tourists.

I will really be glad enough to get myself back, without bothering with a lot of junk of that description. I am afraid that I have made the last purchases of lace and such things until I get started home. I have exhausted the supply of this shop in town, and will now have to wait till we get in some other town to get a variety. I wonder if you wish me to buy any more of the stuff. I hope you like what I have bought, and I can get more if you want it/ I am very much in hopes that we will be on the way home, before you can let me know whether you want it or not, however, but I guess I may be a little too optimistic. A good many units are either on the way home or have their orders already, and I don't think it is expecting too much to expect that we should be at least among the first 200,000 to go back. I am going to feel that we are very much out of luck if we are not.

We will have been in France a year on the 7th of next month. That entitles us to some consideration I believe. However in spite of what I believe, I am afraid that all it will entitle us to is another service stripe. I will be satisfied to return home with two of them, and some men are returning with only one. O well, it's the army, and it does no good to complain. I want to see my wife and kiddies. I am on the verge of being good and homesick. I try not to be, but now that everything is all over it is hard to see the necessity of remaining over here.

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It has now been about ten days since I have had a letter from you, and I am afraid that that fact adds to my discontent. I expected mail yesterday, but the man came back from Nancy without a bit for any of us. I am a bit worried about you all and hope that the Influenza epidemic passed you over.

It is not long now until Christmas. How I would love to be home then! However Dearest, we will never be apart again on Christmas will we? I can not imagine any circumstances that will ever succeed in prying us apart again, can you Dear? I am afraid that the parcels that You have sent to me will not reach me on Christmas, and maybe not at all. I hope that the ones I have sent to you reach you all O.K.

Well Dearest, I will close now. I have to make my inspection of quarters, and that will take some time. Then I have nothing to do until this afternoon, when I am going on another hike with the Company. Give my Dearest love to the babies and Glad. With all my love and a million kisses to you sweetheart, I am as ever your loving and homesick husband,

*A.B.*

*Ansel B. Smith*

Ansel B. Smith Captain M.C.

Evac Hosp "2 USA

Amer E.F. France.