

February 12th 1918.

My Darling Wife and Kiddies:-

It has been two days at least now, since I have written to you. I got my relief from the mess job two days ago – Lieutenant Stanley has the honor now. It has been such a lot of work getting things straightened around for him and I have been out of town each day helping him draw rations that I have had absolutely no time to do anything else. I knew that after this explanation you will forgive me for not writing for two days. I have not yet recieved any more mail from home. I guess a lot of my mail has been sunk on the way over and that reminds me. Did you recieve a little gift – souvineer – and a letter of congratulations and love that I wrote you on January the 24th and mailed at my first opportunity? I will hear from you about it if you did, I know but I am speaking of it now dearest, so that you will know I was thinking of you on that day, the day which brought me more happiness and gave me more to live for than any other day of my life.

Only one day of my life can be compared to it and that day has not come yet. That will be the day I return to you and the babies and we know that we will never be separated again. I don't believe any happiness in this world will ever even approach that in magnitude – do you darling? Won't it be wonderful? I can have the best sort of time even now, just imagining the wonders of our coming Honeymoon. It will be the greatest experience of our lives dear. Don't you think so?

Lieutenant Notbohm is at present holding a clinic in this room. He is operating on a boil on one of the orderly's neck. Yesterday the biggest bunch of niggers I ever saw landed in this camp. A whole regiment of them, brought in for labor duty in this vicinity. I hope that I get away from here before any trouble starts, for it is always expected

whenever white troops and colored troops are stationed together. They are nearly all from Mississippi. Yesterday evening when I was returning from a town near here from a ration expedition, I hailed an ambulance for a ride, and it picked me up. There were two officers in it. Suddenly one of them said – “Are you A.B. Smith?” I said I couldn’t deny it. It was two fraternity brothers of mine from Ann Arbor and I have seen neither of them for years. It did prove that after all this is a small world and it is mighty hard to be anywhere in it that you won’t meet someone you know well. Wasn’t it a great coincidence that we should meet in just that way?

Our outfit – E.H. #2 – has gained an enviable reputation for efficiency

ever since we have left the Fort. I am more and more glad all the time that we are associated with it, and I feel mighty bad that Fisher is not here. I wonder how he is getting along. I never felt more sorry for anyone in all my life than I did for him. He has T.B. there is no doubt, and it makes me sick to think of such a fine chap – and so young – afflicted in such a manner. I presume you have seen him by this time as he intended paying you a visit as soon as he got out of the hospital. I hope he will take good care of himself so that he will have his best chance to throw it off. Sunday – which was day before yesterday – I went

to high Mass at 10:00 o'clock at the quaintest little French church you ever saw. There was no sermon but the priest made several announcements in English. It brought back home and my trips to Church with you, so vividly that it made me homesick Dearest, but I have made up my mind to go whenever I have an opportunity for I know that it will please you. In one of your letters you mentioned that Mr. Wishart spoke of the "terrible amount of drinking American troops are doing over there". It is not so dearest. They are permitted to drink only light wines and beer and the beer is a very poor beer at

that. Among all the thousands of troops I have seen I have seen no more than two men in an intoxicated state and they were men who must have gotten ahold of brandy somewhere. There is no whiskey in this country. The men are worked awfully hard and often wine is much easier to get and much safer than water. So Dr. Wishart's statement can be flatly contradicted by conditions in the sections through which I have passed, at least. Another thing, he mustn't lose sight of the fact that in this army men are men, and can't be treated like Sunday school children.

The Y.M.C.A. is a wonderful thing for the Army. More than any other factor it is serving to keep the men good natured and keep them contented. The buildings are packed every night. There are all forms of entertainment – billiards, pool, music, reading, vaudeville shows, fights etc., and believe me they are all well patronized. The Red Cross is also another wonderful influence in this war. The two together are certainly doing a tremendous share towards winning it for the Allies, and Honey dear, don't for one moment think it isn't going

to be won for it is. Last night for the first time I heard the thunder of the Heavy Artillery at the front. It is a long way from us, but we could hear it very plainly. It was very impressive to me and in fact to all of us, for it gave us our first realization that we are getting closer to the real stage of the great conflict.

Well my Lover, I must close now. I have to shave and get some accounts closed up before mess, and it is not very long until mess.

I am thinking of you and my dear ones constantly, and

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longing to see you so much. I love
you all with all my love
every moment of my life, but
my own dear wife, I love you
most of all. You are such a
dear, wonderful little girl. I
love you. I love you. I send
love and kisses to my dear
babies and you and ask God's
Blessing on you all.

Daddy.

From.

1st Lt. Ansel B. Smith M.R.C.

Evac. Hosp. #2. U.S.A.

A.E.F. France.