

25 December 1918

My Beloved Wife and Family:-

Here is your Daddy, on Christmas say, thousands of miles from home in Germany. Christmas – and I am with you only in thought and mind. Christmas – and the babies will have their tree without me. Oh! I tell you these Germans have a lot to be accountable for. Separations of families by the thousands – yes – and some of them will never be reunited. After all when that is considered Dear one, we have much to thank God for. Barring unforeseen occurrences we know that we will be together again and to me, nothing else in all the world matters. To be once more united with my darling wife and babies and sister, is all on earth I ask. I will stand any sort of privations or suffering after returning, and count it as nothing because I will have you.

Christmas this year after all, is a time for happiness and good

cheer in spite of our separation and the many things we think we should regret are more than offset by the many causes for rejoicing. The war is over and while Peace is not settled, it is determined. Millions of people in the world are relieved of War's burdens, and already hundreds of thousands have their Daddy with them again. If we eliminate selfishness entirely from our consideration of the circumstances, we indeed may feel proud of our part in effecting this wonderful condition, instead of regretting too much that we have to be apart today.

Our men are going to have a Christmas after all. The nurses have a big tree and have it decorated (Lord only knows where they got it) and our 350 men will have a Christmas. Each

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one will get a Red Cross Christmas package, some ciggarettes, cigars and candy. In each of the hospital Bldgs they have also fixed up a tree for the patients and in the evening I hear there is to be one for the officers. I will have to go, out of courtesy but I dread it for I know how homesick it will make me.

The nurses are deserving of a lot of credit for what they have done and I tell you they do a lot to make life easier for the boys over here, who are sick and wounded. We have a nice lot of girls, all good nurses but I only know three of them by name. However, I know that they are always working hard all the time for the comfort and welfare of the men, and that is what we are all desirous of.

I was much surprised this morning when I woke up to see that the ground was covered with snow. It as a light snow, however, which lasted for only an hour or two after day break. However it secured rather nice to see a white Christmas for a while, even if it did eventually make the mud worse. We have not seen much snow since we have been over here. Once in Baccarat there were two days in which we had a little snow but it left very quickly. This winter, in spite of reports regarding severity of winters over here, has been no more terrifying than our ordinary Michigan October weather, so you can imagine how little impression it makes on me. I have only worn a raincoat during rainy

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weather, and have not yet had my overcoat on at all. You are able to judge from that fact how mild the weather has been.

I have things running very well in the Detachment now. Discipline is good and the men are behaving themselves splendidly. I may have some trouble with some of them but for the most part I feel confident that I will have very little. They are a good lot of men even our new ones, and I feel that I have them very well under control. It is most interesting work and I thoroughly enjoy it, both for the experience in handling men and the interest that is aroused in the psychology of the men. You should see them drill. They take a great pride

in their ability to march and drill as well as troops possibly can. And I will say that on the road, I have never seen a snappier looking outfit. I am proud of them myself. They are a wonderfully fine lot of boys. I presume in civil life I shall see some of them at different times and if I do they will always be welcome at my home (with the permission which I know you will give.)

The day is going fast. Many interruptions have strung out the time I have put on this letter, until now it is nearly noon. I started it at eight this morning and hoped to finish it at once, but there has been a steady stream of matters that have required attention ever since. The men have been excused from work as far as possible today, and

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have consequently had more time to bother me.

Well Honey, I must close now. It is time to eat, my Christmas dinner of beans, beef and coffee. God bless you all. I love you and long to be with you, and pray that I may be one of those early chosen to return to the states. With dearest love, Oh! so much, and wishes for a very merry merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I am your loving and

Devoted

Daddy.

Ansel B Smith

Capt. M.C. U.S.A.