

World War I: Utahns at the Front

By Valerie Jacobson

Utah and the Great War

World War I began in July 1914, one month after the assassination of Archduke Franz-Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This event inflamed existing tensions in Europe and pulled the continent's great alliances into a global struggle, pitting Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy (the Central Powers) against Russia, France, and Britain (the Allies). The war also unleashed new and devastating technologies of warfare that would leave 17 million people dead and 20 million wounded worldwide.

Most Americans viewed the war as a European problem, and until 1917 the United States remained neutral. However, President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to declare war on April 6, 1917, after threats of German aggression against the United States and its people. One of these was the escalation of submarine warfare in the Atlantic, and the other was an intercepted telegram from Germany to Mexico that promised support for a Mexican invasion of the United States. It would be several more months before troops were sent to the front.

In the book, *Utah in the World War*, published in 1924, Nobel Warrum gives some Utah statistics for the war. Of the 21,000 Utah men who enlisted, 665 died during their service. More than two-thirds of these, 414 men, died from disease.

Across Utah, young men registered for the draft, and some joined the military before the draft was instituted nationwide. To keep in touch with family and friends at home, soldiers wrote letters that went by ship and train to their recipients. The letters in this collection were written by George Grimshaw, who served in the U.S. Army from 1917 to 1919.

Experiences at the front were not limited to men. Many women volunteered as nurses and a few were even ambulance drivers. Maud Fitch, of Eureka, Utah, was one example of a female ambulance driver. Her letters were published in Salt Lake newspapers, and they provide a window on her contribution to the war effort.

About These Documents

Map: Western Front

George Grimshaw Letters: Written 1917-1919, from Fort Bliss, Texas; Camp Greene, North Carolina; France; Germany.

Photographs: Maud Fitch, Gas Mask and Instructions, Army Uniform.

Newspaper Articles: Letters from Maud Fitch.

Questions for Young Historians

Why did letters need to be censored? What information could be sent? How did censorship change the way Grimshaw wrote home to his family?

How long did it take letters to travel from the US to Europe?

Why did Grimshaw write a hymn on his gas mask bag?

How much time did Grimshaw spend on the front lines?

Why was it important to have ambulance drivers be responsible for the maintenance of their own vehicles?

When did Maud Fitch do most of her driving? How much sleep did she get? How long were her shifts?

Why was Fitch awarded the French Cross?

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George Grimshaw, Utah Soldier

George Grimshaw grew up in Beaver, Utah. The youngest child of Duckworth and Mary Grimshaw, he was 21 years old when America declared war on Germany. He quickly volunteered in the U.S. Army and was inducted for service on April 30, 1917. By contrast, his older brother, Randolph, registered for the draft in June 1917, and was inducted for service on August 15, 1918.

Grimshaw spent nearly a year training at Fort Bliss, Texas, and Camp Greene, North Carolina. In his letters he tells his family about his daily experiences while in camp, such as field day, guard duty, visiting engineers, and his stay in the hospital. In his October 10 letter he reported how happy he was to receive a package from home containing fruit, jams, and preserves.

After the long months of training, Grimshaw sailed for Europe on May 22, 1918. He was finally headed to the Western Front in France. In his June 20 letter he explained to his family that his letters from Europe would be censored by the Army to make sure information would not fall into enemy hands. Grimshaw wrote, "We aren't supposed to tell where we are or where we've been, nor what we're doing, what we've done or what we expect to do." Censors read and initialed each letter to show that they been approved, and might cut away or black out sections of any letter.

Poisonous gas was used as a weapon by both sides during WWI. Chlorine, phosgene, and mustard were the most commonly used gases. These chemicals caused respiratory failure, external and internal blisters, damage to lungs and other organs, violent coughing, choking, blindness, and death. Because soldiers might encounter gas at any time, each had a gas mask as part of their pack (see photographs). In his July 14, 1918 letter, Grimshaw mentioned that he had to get used to carrying it everywhere he went. By August 11, however, Grimshaw was grateful for his gas mask. We do not know if he suffered any lasting effects from his exposure to gas during WWI.

Trench warfare played a central role in WWI. Ground forces on both sides dug trenches and dugouts to shelter their soldiers from enemy fire. The space between the two sides was called "No Man's Land" and was exposed to artillery fire from both sides. Night and the cover of darkness were when most of the offensive attacks took place (see 11/11/1918 and 11/25/1918 letters). Life in the trenches was dirty, muddy, and difficult. In the fall and early winter soldiers suffered from exposure, the poor sanitary conditions often caused diseases and even

Further Exploration

Utah and World War I, *Utah Historical Quarterly* Fall 1990 special issue
<http://utahhistory.sdlhost.com/#item/000000031000915/view/1>

Harold Rider Morris' World War I Diary - part of "Treasures in your Attic" project with Utah Valley University, original in possession of Karolyn Warnick.
<http://contentdm.uvu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/PIYA/id/367>

National History Day, Teaching World War I. Includes resources and lesson modules for middle school and high school.
<https://www.nhd.org/teaching-world-war-i>

The National WWI Museum and Memorial
<https://www.theworldwar.org/>

International Encyclopedia of the First World War. <http://www.1914-1918-online.net>

The World Remembers.
<http://www.theworldremembers.org>

American Experience, *The Great War* (DVD), PBS, 2017.

American Experience, *American Nurses in World War I: Under-Appreciated and Under Fire*, PBS, accessed February 2, 2018,
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/the-great-war-american-nurses-world-war-1/>

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death for soldiers. If a soldier did not change his socks regularly, he could suffer from the fungal condition known as trench foot. For Grimshaw, personal hygiene care was limited (see 8/11/1918).

On November 11, 1918, the combatants signed the Armistice, bringing an end to the fighting. The soldiers weren't immediately sent home, however. Allied soldiers were stationed in occupied Germany until the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919, officially ending the war. During this time, U.S. soldiers kept the peace along the Rhineland. Grimshaw became part of the occupying forces stationed in Germany. After the Armistice, the strict censorship of letters sent home from the front was relaxed. In his November 25 letter, Grimshaw was finally able to tell his family that he had fought on the Verdun front (see 11/10/1918 letter and map). He wrote to his family with place names for them to search for on the maps he had sent to them (see 11/25/1918, 2/22/1919, and 3/22/1919).

Eight months after the Armistice was signed, Grimshaw left Europe from Brest, France, aboard the USS Zeelandia. The ship arrived in Brooklyn on July 31, 1919. Grimshaw received an honorable discharge from the army on August 11, 1919, and returned home to Beaver, Utah.

Maud Fitch, Utah Ambulance Driver

Women in the United States were not permitted to fight at the front, but there were other ways women helped with the war effort. They purchased Liberty Bonds, participated in rationing efforts, volunteered for the Red Cross, labored in wartime industries, served in auxiliaries, or worked as nurses and doctors. Over 20,000 nurses worked with the wounded during WWI. Many of these women were near front lines, while others were at base hospitals.

A few women became ambulance drivers. Women who wanted to help driving ambulances at the front were required to purchase, ship, and maintain their own vehicles. Utahn Maud Fitch, the daughter of a wealthy Eureka mine owner, was one of them. Fitch was 33 years old in 1918, when she purchased her vehicle and shipped it to France at her own expense. While serving at the front, she paid for her own transportation, clothing, room and board, vehicle maintenance, and the gas for her vehicle (see photograph and newspaper articles).

Fitch drove as part of the Hackett-Lowther Unit along the front in northern France. She was in Europe for about one year. She received the Croix de Guerre (French Cross) in August 1918 with the other ambulance drivers in her unit (*Salt Lake Herald*, 4/23/1919). Fitch's letters report how the area she was in did not have many shops to buy mechanical tools or supplies for her vehicle. She found time to shop for monkey wrenches during a 24-hour shift in a larger town. Towards the end of her letter she writes "I do hope you get all my letters and that they are not too censored. I try to stay within bounds, but it is hard to tell what they are apt to object to," (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 7/27/1918).

The war experience was not limited to soldiers. Women served in Europe, and civilians did their share to support the war effort at home. The effects of the Great War were felt across the state, as communities supported the men and women fighting at the front. WWI altered the lives of many throughout the state. Some came home while others did not. Without these documents, their stories would not be known.

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STUDENT READING – World War I: Utahns at the Front

World War I began in July 1914, one month after the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire was killed by an assassin. This pulled Europe's great alliances into a global struggle, pitting Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy (the Central Powers) against Russia, France, and Britain (the Allies). The war unleashed devastating new technologies of warfare that would leave 17 million people dead and 20 million wounded worldwide.

Most Americans viewed the war as a European problem, and until 1917 the United States remained neutral. However, President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to declare war on April 6, 1917, after threats of German aggression against the United States and its people. Some 21,000 Utah men enlisted to fight in World War I. Of these, 665 died during their service; more than two-thirds of them died from disease, not from wounds.

George Grimshaw grew up in Beaver, Utah. He was 21 years old when America declared war on Germany, and he quickly volunteered in the U.S. Army. Grimshaw spent nearly a year training at Fort Bliss, Texas, and Camp Greene, North Carolina. After the long months of training, Grimshaw sailed for Europe on May 22, 1918. He was finally headed to the Western Front in France. In his June 20 letter he explained to his family that his letters from Europe would be censored by the Army to make sure information would not fall into enemy hands. Grimshaw wrote, "We aren't supposed to tell where we are or where we've been, nor what we're doing, what we've done or what we expect to do." Censors read and initialed each letter to show that they been approved, and might cut away or black out sections of any letter.

Poisonous gas was used as a weapon by both sides during WWI. These chemicals caused respiratory failure, external and internal blisters, damage to lungs and other organs, violent coughing, choking, blindness, and death. Because soldiers might encounter gas at any time, each had a gas mask as part of their pack (see photographs).

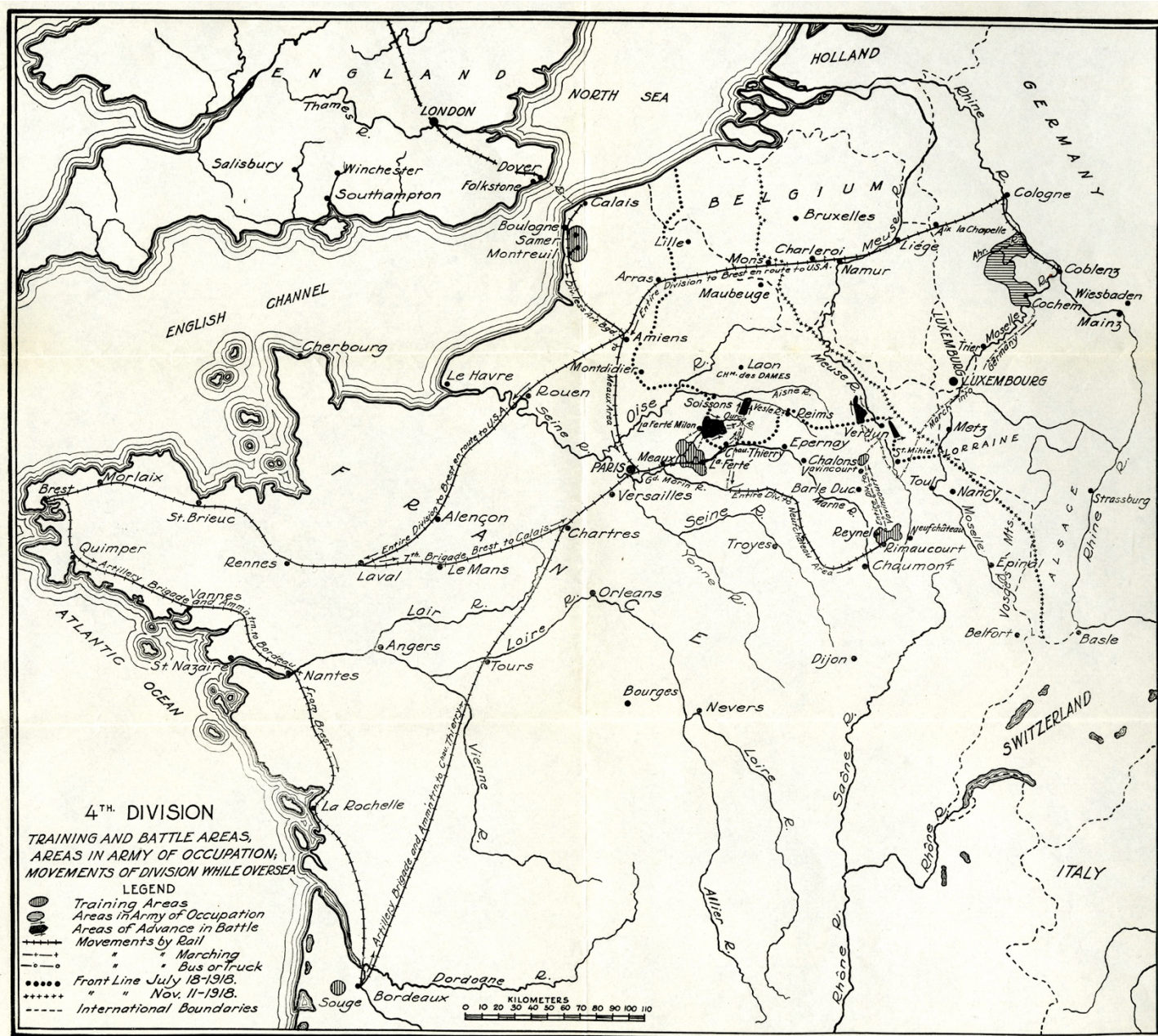
Trench warfare played a central role in WWI. Ground forces on both sides dug trenches and dugouts to shelter their soldiers from enemy fire. The space between the two sides was called "No Man's Land" and was exposed to artillery fire from both sides. Life in the trenches was dirty, muddy, and difficult. In the fall and early winter soldiers suffered from exposure, the poor sanitary conditions often caused diseases and even death for soldiers. If a soldier did not change his socks regularly, he could suffer from the fungal condition known as trench foot.

Women in the United States were not permitted to fight at the front, but there were other ways women helped with the war effort. A few women became ambulance drivers. Women who wanted to help driving ambulances at the front were required to purchase, ship, and maintain their own vehicles. Maud Fitch, the daughter of a wealthy Utah mine owner, was one of them. Fitch was 33 years old in 1918, when she purchased her vehicle and shipped it to France at her own expense. While serving at the front, she paid for her own transportation, clothing, room and board, vehicle maintenance, and the gas for her vehicle.

Fitch drove as part of the Hackett-Lowther Unit along the front in northern France. She was in Europe for about one year. She received the Croix de Guerre (French Cross) in August 1918 with the other ambulance drivers in her unit.

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Map George Grimshaw sent to his family. Courtesy of Utah State Historical Society.

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George Grimshaw War Service Questionnaire Photograph.



Randolph Grimshaw War Service Questionnaire Photograph.

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George Grimshaw Gas Mask Bag. *Utah State Historical Society*. Accessed December 26, 2017.

<http://remote.rediscoverysoftware.com:85/ProficioWebModule/Detail.aspx?rID=1992-011-127b&db=objects&dir=HISTORY&page=1>

Note the hymn inscribed on the strap. Analyze.

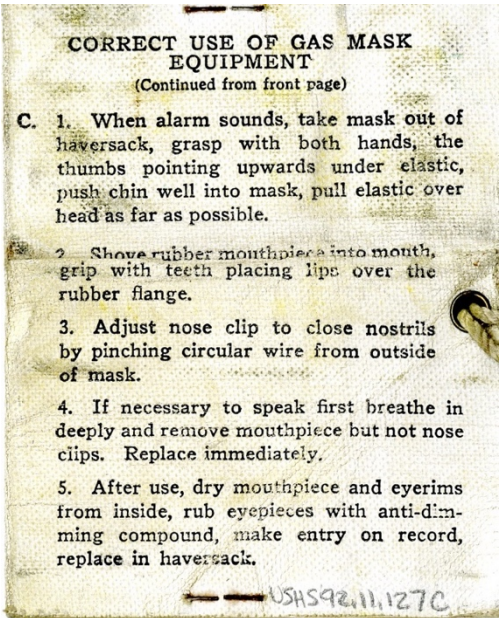
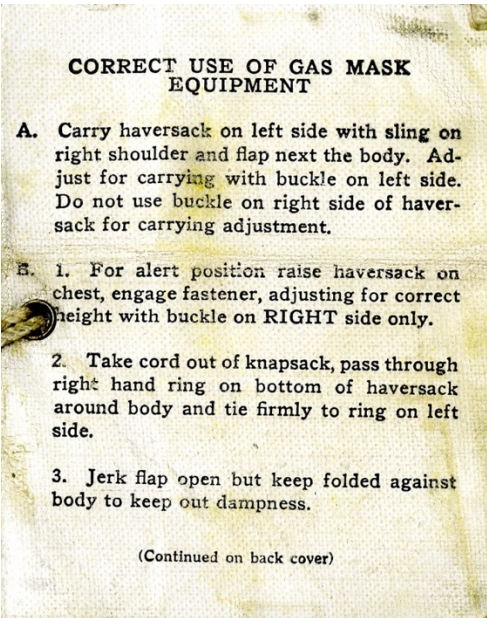


George Grimshaw Gas Mask. *Utah State Historical Society*. Accessed December 26, 2017.

<http://remote.rediscoverysoftware.com:85/ProficioWebModule/Detail.aspx?rID=1992-011-127a&db=objects&dir=HISTORY&page=1>

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George Grimshaw Gas Mask Instructions

Correct use of Gas Mask Equipment

Form—A1.

Date Issued.....

Date Returned.....

Div. 4th Reg't 13th Co. B. I.

Reason for return.....

Gas Analysis.....

HOURS WORN		
Drill with actual gas	Cloud Gas	Shell Gas
<u>5 hrs</u>		
		<u>2 hrs</u>

THIS POCKET CONTAINS

PLASTER FOR

REPAIRING

TEARS

IN HOOD

George Grimshaw Gas Mask Instructions

Drill with actual gas – 5 hours

Shell Gas – 2 hours

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George Grimshaw Helmet, *Utah State Historical Society*. Accessed December 26, 2017.

<http://remote.rediscoverysoftware.com:85/ProficioWebModule/Detail.aspx?rID=1992-011-115&db=objects&dir=HISTORY&page=1>



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George Grimshaw Boots

George Grimshaw Army Boots.
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December 26, 2017.

<http://remote.rediscoverysoftware.com:85/ProficioWebModule/Detail.aspx?rID=1992-011-118a-b&bd=objects&dir=HISTORY&page=1>



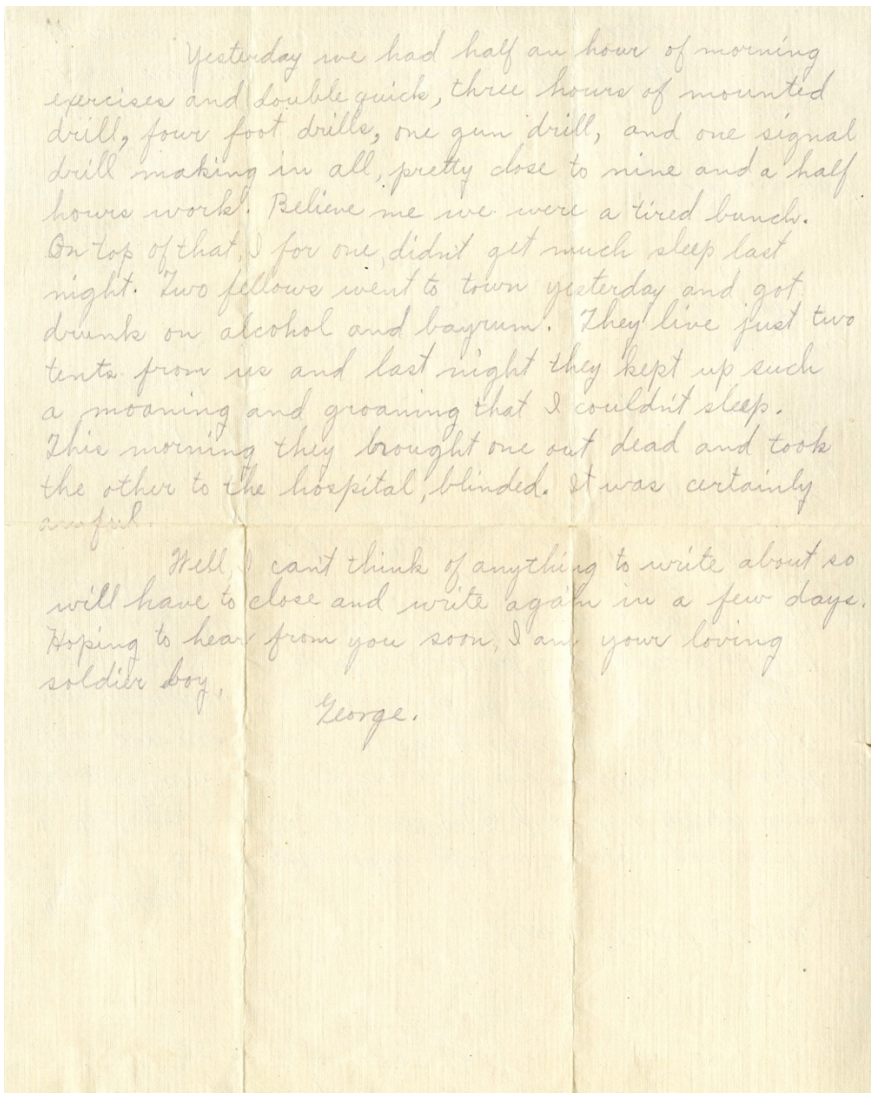
George Grimshaw Jacket.

George Grimshaw Army Jacket.
"George Grimshaw Papers,
1917-1965." *Utah State
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December 26, 2017.

<http://remote.rediscoverysoftware.com:85/ProficioWebModule/Detail.aspx?rID=1992-011-149&db=objects&dir=HISTORY&page=1>

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George Grimshaw Letter July 20, 1917, side 2. Camp Stewart, Texas.

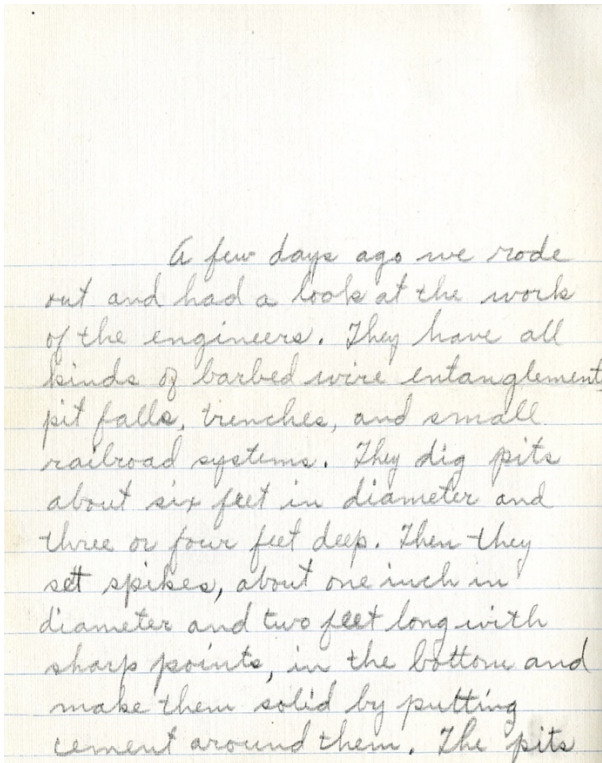
Yesterday we had half an hour of morning exercises and double quick, three hours of mounted drill, four foot drills, one gun drill, and one signal drill making in all, pretty close to nine and a half hours work. Believe me we were a tired bunch. On top of that, I for one, didn't get much sleep last night. Two fellows went to town yesterday and got drunk on alcohol and bayrum. They live just two tents from us and last night they kept up such a moaning and groaning that I couldn't sleep. This morning they brought one out dead and took the other to the hospital, blinded. It was certainly awful.

Well I can't think of anything to write about so will have to close and write again in a few days. Hoping to hear from you soon, I am your loving soldier boy.

George.

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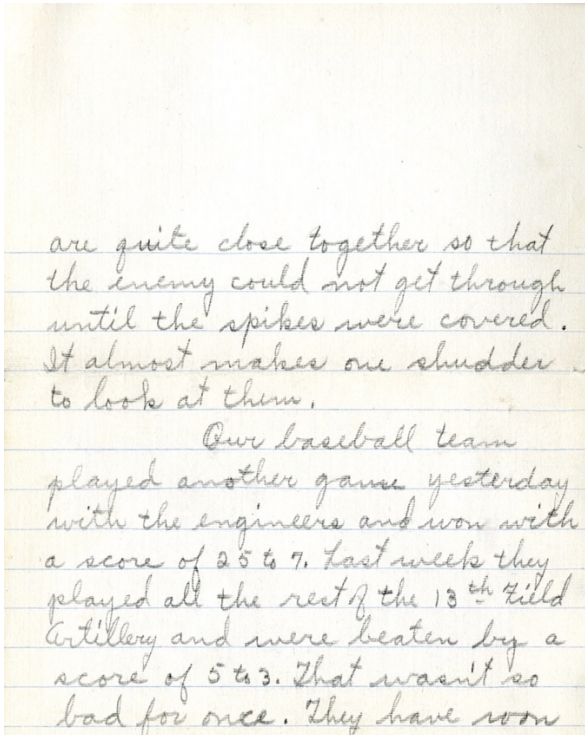
A photograph of a handwritten letter on lined paper. The text is written in cursive and describes the work of engineers, including barbed wire entanglements, pit falls, trenches, and small railroad systems. It mentions digging pits about six feet in diameter and three or four feet deep, setting spikes about one inch in diameter and two feet long with sharp points, and making them solid by putting cement around them. The pits are quite close together so that the enemy could not get through until the spikes were covered. It almost makes one shudder to look at them.

A few days ago we rode out and had a look at the work of the engineers. They have all kinds of barbed wire entanglement, pit falls, trenches, and small railroad systems. They dig pits about six feet in diameter and three or four feet deep. Then they set spikes, about one inch in diameter and two feet long with sharp points, in the bottom and make them solid by putting cement around them. The pits

George Grimshaw Letter September 2, 1917, sides 4-5. Fort Bliss, Texas.

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Our baseball team played another game yesterday with the engineers and won with a score of 25 to 7. Last week they played all the rest of the 13th Field Artillery and were beaten by a score of 5 to 3. That wasn't so bad for once. They have won...

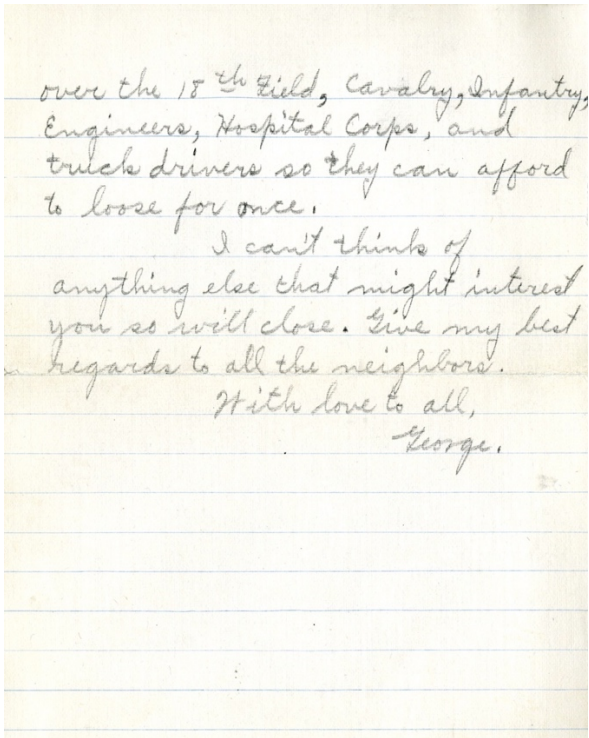
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George Grimshaw Letter September 2, 1917,
side 6.

over the 18th Field, Cavalry, Infantry,
Engineers, Hospital Corps, and truck drivers
so they can afford to loose [sic] for once.

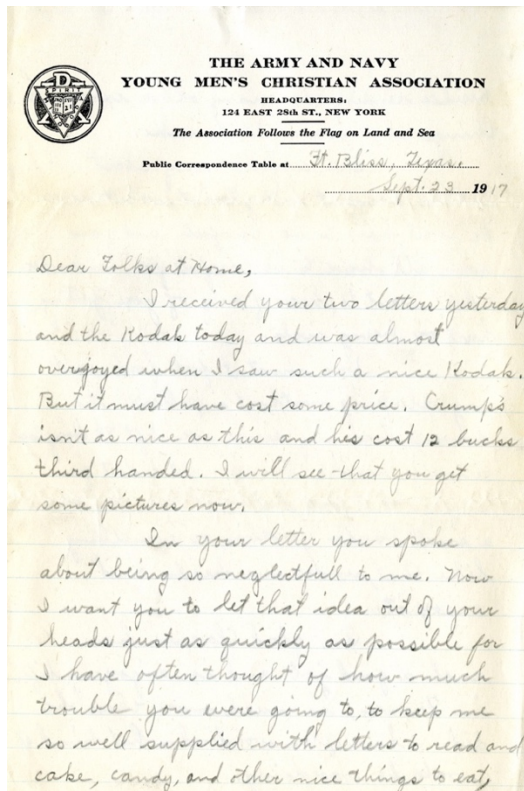
I can't think of anything else that might
interest you so will close. Give my best
regards to all the neighbors.

With love to all,

George.

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George Grimshaw Letter September 23, 1917, sides 1-2.

Ft. Bliss, Texas, Sept. 23, 1917

Dear Folks at Home,

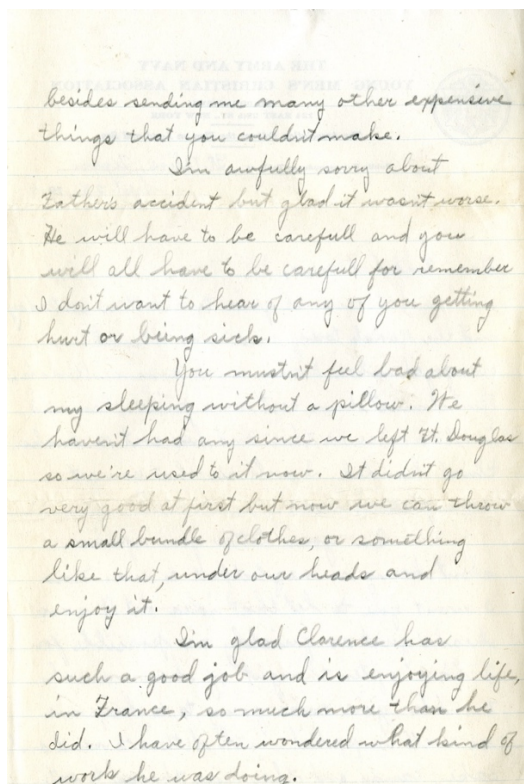
I received your two letters yesterday and the Kodak today and was almost overjoyed when I saw such a nice Kodak. But it must have cost some price. Crump's isn't as nice as this and his cost 12 bucks third handed. I will see that you get some pictures now.

In your letter you spoke about being so neglectful [sic] to me. Now I want you to let that idea out of your heads just as quickly as possible for I have often thought of how much trouble you were going to, to keep me so well supplied with letters to read and cake, candy, and other nice things to eat, besides sending me many other expensive things that you couldn't make.

I'm awfully sorry about Father's accident but glad it wasn't worse. He will have to be careful [sic] and you will all have to be careful [sic] for remember I don't want to hear of any of you getting hurt or being sick.

You mustn't feel bad about my sleeping without a pillow. We haven't had any since we left Ft. Douglas so we're used to it now. It didn't go very good at first but now we can throw a small bundle of clothes, or something like that, under our heads and enjoy it.

I'm glad Clarence has such a good job and is enjoying life, in France, so much more than he did. I have often wondered what kind of work he was doing.



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Ft. Bliss, Oct. 10.

Dear Folks,

I can't help thinking that it must be some one's birthday today. Before noon I was writing to Jenn when the mail man came down and said he had some mail up to his tent for me. He certainly did for when I went up he handed me a letter, a paper, and four packages. Besides the jelly, cookies, and pears, was a box of grapes from Enoch. All the boys are out on an all day hike and I'm here alone. This morning I was given a meat and cheese sandwich which was to do me for dinner but which, however, did not do me for dinner as all these nice eatables came before noon and believe me I've had some feast. I was sorry to find two

George Grimshaw Letter October 10, 1917, side 1.

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bottles of jelly broken. I don't know who they were from, there are two bottles of Mother's, one of Aunt Martha's and the olives left. Everything else is in fine shape. The pears are very ripe, some wouldn't go another day so maybe it's a good thing you couldn't get a half bushel.

We sometimes get cookies and jelly at the kitchen but they're nothing like those made at home. And the fruit we get here is so tasteless and tough. It certainly is good to get something real if we were only closer so it wouldn't cost so much and so none of it would spoil.

I'm sorry Dolph's pals have had to leave. I guess it's about as bad to be left as it is to leave and I know how that goes. In my travels I haven't met anybody like Milo but have certainly been treated good by most of the boys. Before I went to the hospital, a guy came

George Grimshaw Letter October 10, 1917, side 2.

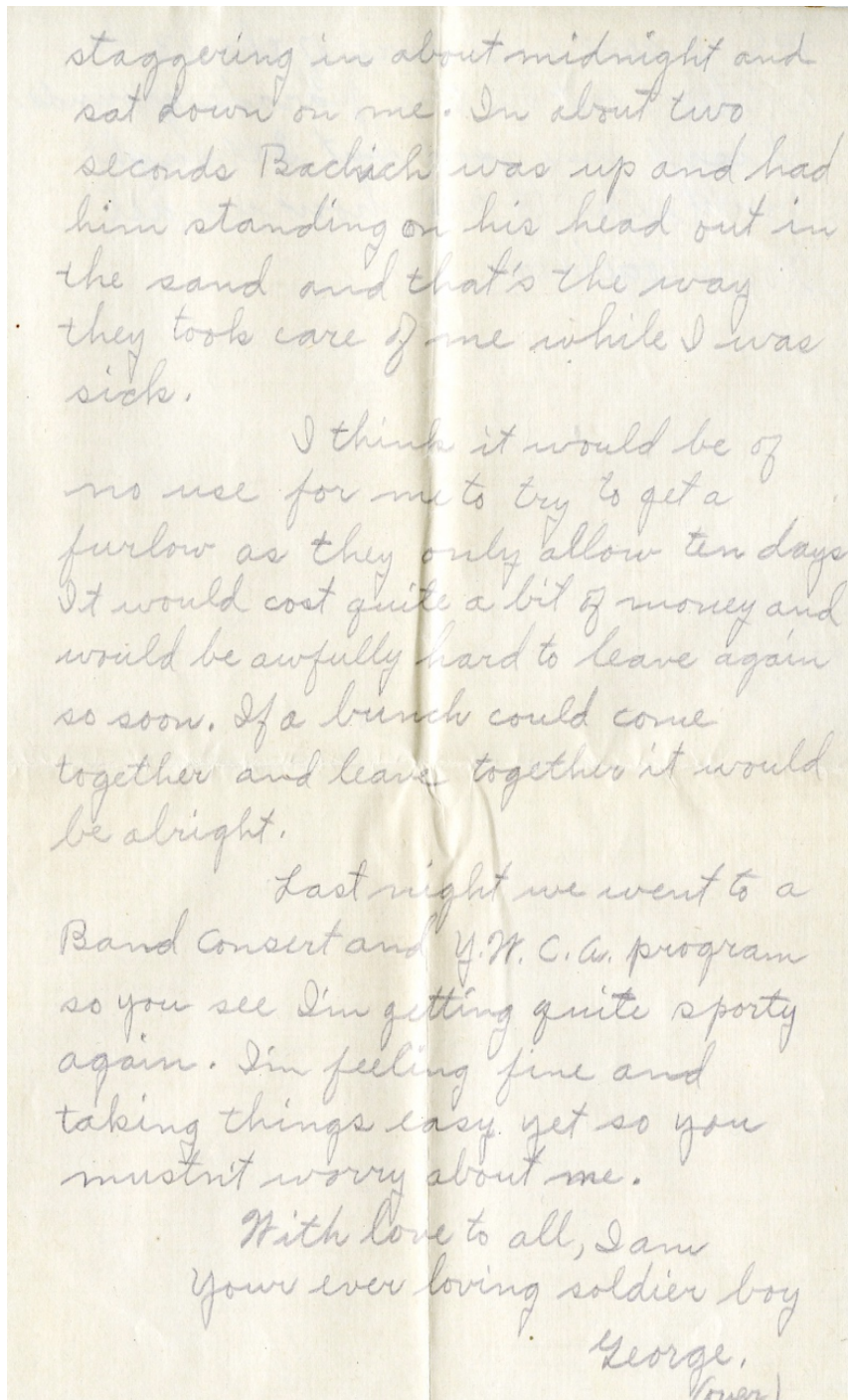
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George Grimshaw Letter October 10, 1917,
side 3.

staggering in about midnight and sat down
on me. In about two seconds Bachich was up
and had him standing on his head out in the
sand and that's the way they took care of me
while I was sick.

I think it would be of no use for me to try to
get a furlow as they only allow ten days. It
would cost quite a bit of money and would
be awfully hard to leave again so soon. If a
bunch could come together and leave
together it would be alright.

Last night we went to a Band Concert and
Y.M.C.A. program so you see I'm getting
quite sporty again. I'm feeling fine and
taking things easy yet to you mustn't worry
about me.

With love to all, I am Your ever loving soldier
boy

George.

(over)

OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

Camp Greene, N.C.
Mar. 2, 1918.

Dear Folks at Enoch,

I don't get to write very often but will try to drop you a few lines tonight. I received Lucile's letter a few days ago and was glad to hear from the Holy Land once more. Hope Will's folks are better by now and that you are all getting along alright.

Cile spoke about a "Flivver" but I hardly get the drift. I don't know whether they have a new "John Henry" or what to think about it.

We're still going to school and getting along fine and are learning many things which will be valuable to us. We study about electricity, telephones and ensyphering and desyphering messages. Then we have telegraphy which will always be useful. I'm not very swift in that yet but can receive or send as many characters as the army requires.

The weather is great here now, just like spring. We've put our summer underwear on again and go to school in our shirt sleeves.

I hope Dolph got along alright on the road and hope the weather will be suitable for work.

George Grimshaw Letter March 2, 1918, side 1.

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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

Somewhere
Mar. 20.

Dear Folks,

"I am," and that's all I know about it. We left Camp Greene, Monday about 9:30 A.M. and made the hike in one day. If you have a map with small towns on you might find about where we are. We came through Belmont, Lowell, and Gastonia and are about a mile southwest of Gastonia now. There aren't many soldiers around these little towns and of course nine batteries of Artillery on a march caused quite a commotion and everybody was out to see the soldiers. Even schools let out.

Well, naturally there were crowds of "quite good looking girls" along the streets so we got out our Kodaks and sure had one time. We'd snap at every bunch and always say or do something to attract their attention so they'd think we had their pictures. Some were tickled pink, some turned their heads, and some didn't know what to think. But you should have seen the expressions. Sometimes we nearly fell off our horses laughing and I believe that's the most fun our detail Lieutenant has seen for some time for he nearly busted his sides when he really should have been sore for we let our horses run out of line

George Grimshaw Letter, March 20, 1918,
side 1.

Somewhere Mar. 20.

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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

and everything.

We arrived here about 6:30 P.M. but didn't have anyplace to water our horses so had to take them back up town. Fifteen hundred horses can't be watered all at once out of tubs so as a consequence we got back to camp about 10 P.M. Meanwhile, the cannoneers, who don't have to water horses, pitched a bunch of tents for us to sleep in so we fared pretty good (that is if one can fare good without supper when he's as hungry as we were, for our last meal was that morning about 5 P.M.)

The next day we spent making picket lines, saddle racks, and fixing up the Battery. I was just getting ready to go to town when I was notified to walk my post in a military manner. Each Battery guards its own stuff so we only have three posts and no Officer of the Day. The sergeant of the guard gave me the best post and best relief so I didn't mind it much. He just told us what we had to do and left us. Each man found out where the others slept and each woke up his own relief so we slept in our own bunks in our own tents and everything went along fine.

Today our detail went out to the range. No firing has been done yet but we went out to scout around and get acquainted with

George Grimshaw Letter March 20, 1918, side 2.

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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

the country. We're in what's supposed to be the mountains and the scenery is certainly grand. Of course the mountains aren't like ours at home, we'd call them "ant hills" or "sand dunes" but the trees and shrubbery make it beautiful. All over there are trees covered with blossoms that would make peach and apple blossoms look old and faded and there are just enough young pines to furnish the green. It looks like one great bouquet.

Our target is on Kings Mt. Perhaps you've heard of the Battle of Kings Mt. in the Civil war, well, that's where we are.

We got our first mail last night and I was parading up and down the Battery street with a small tree on my shoulder (we had no guns) when your letter came. There is where I quit my post and read it and it sure listened good to me. But if you had only sent the "dut wot". We're starving and can't even get army candy and haven't been to town yet. You don't know what awful stomachs soldiers have or you'd not be so particular.

Well, I haven't said anything but the evening is gone so will have to close.

Love to all,
George.

Same address, same name.

George Grimshaw Letter March 20, 1918, side 3.

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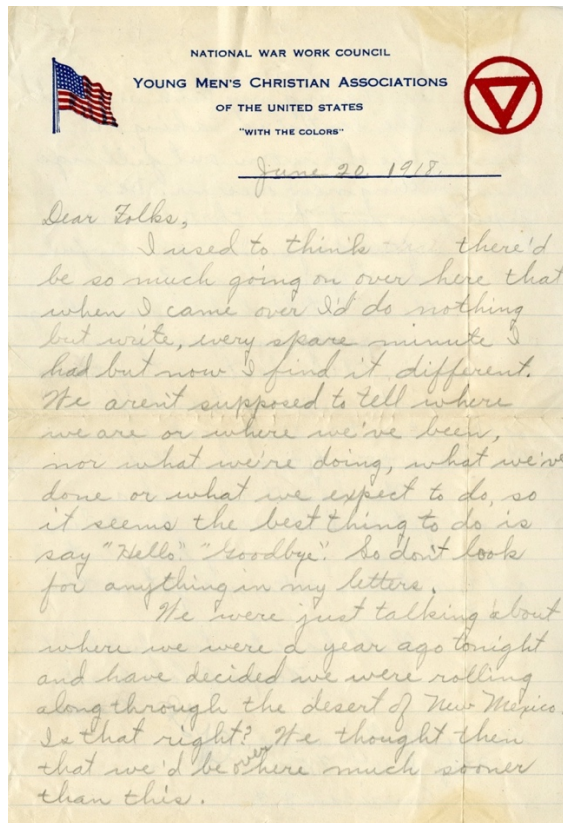
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Love to all,

George.

OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front



George Grimshaw Letter June 20, 1918, sides 1-2.

[France]

Dear Folks,

I used to think there'd be so much going on over here that when I came over I'd do nothing but write, every spare minute I had but now I find it different. We aren't supposed to tell where we are or where we've been, nor what we're doing, what we've done or what we expect to do, so it seems the best thing to do is say "Hello." "Goodbye." So don't look for anything in my letters.

We were just talking about where we were a year ago tonight and have decided we were rolling along through the desert of New Mexico. Is that right? We thought then that we'd be over here much sooner than this.

I'm having my teeth repaired again. The dentist is taking out some of the old worn out fillings and putting new ones in. He's fixed four and has three more to do in a few days. I'm an awful bother don't you think?

We're still holding meetings and are rapidly increasing in numbers. At the last meeting there were sixteen present, and five of the absentees send good excuses. We have twenty-two enrolled.

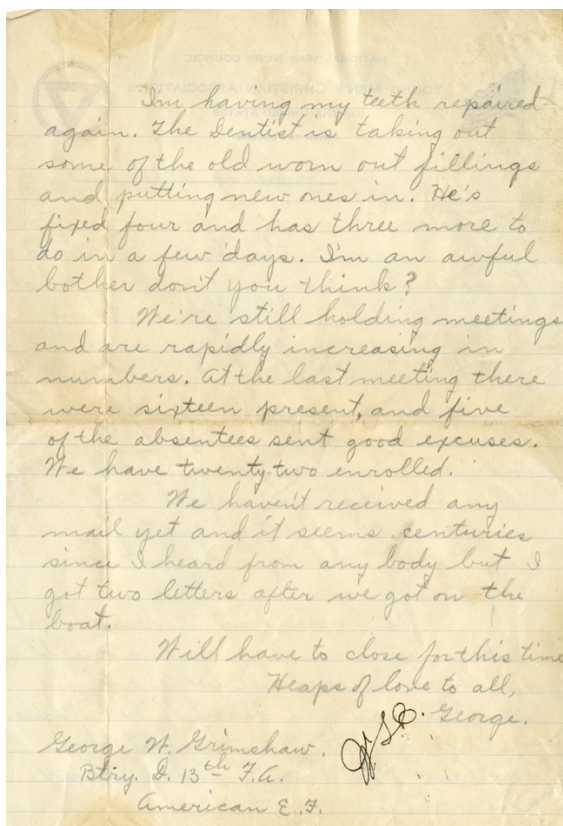
We haven't received any mail yet and it seems centuries since I heard from any body but I got two letters after we got on the boat.

Will have to close for this time.

Heaps of love to all,

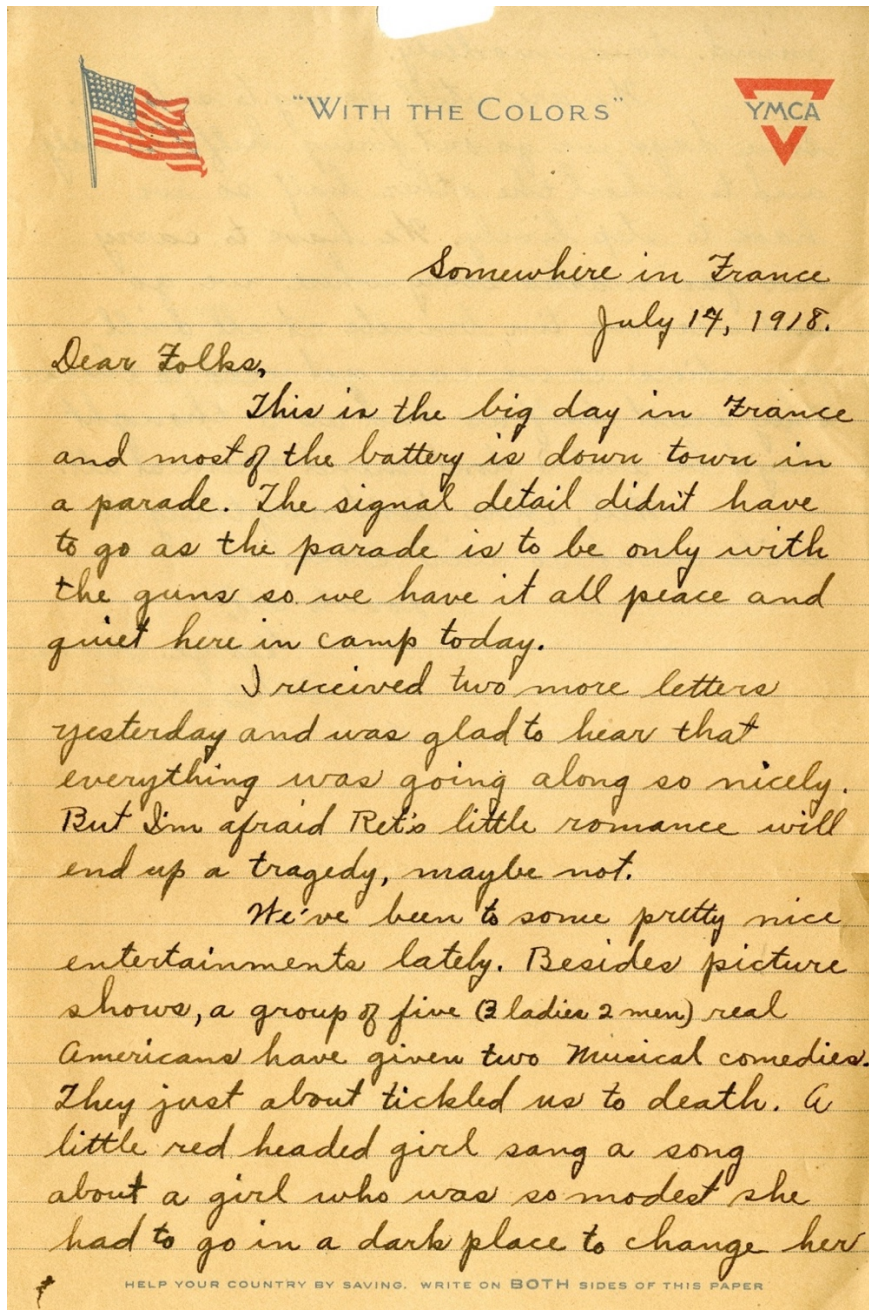
George

George W. Grimshaw
Btry. D. 13th F.A.
American E.F.



OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front



George Grimshaw Letter, July 14, 1918, side 1.

Somewhere in France
July 14, 1918.

Dear Folks,

This is the big day in France and most of the battery is down town in a parade. The signal detail didn't have to go as the parade is to be only with the guns so we have it all peace and quiet here in camp today.

I received two more letters yesterday and was glad to hear that everything was going along so nicely. But I'm afraid Ret's little romance will end up a tragedy, maybe not.

We've been to some pretty nice entertainments lately. Besides picture shows, a group of five (3 ladies 2 men) real Americans have given two Musical comedies. They just about tickled us to death. A little red headed girl sang a song about a girl who was so modest she had to go in a dark place to change her

OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

mind. Some modesty.

We are still going to school. Some days we go out firing half the day and to school the other half so we have to step lively. We have to carry our gas masks everywhere we go and wear our tin bonnets at all drill formations so we can get used to them. They aren't half as bad as I thought they'd be and I don't mind them at all.

Well, there isn't anything to write about so will close.

Love to all,

George. Grimshaw
Dat. D-12-17 P. a
C. W. P.

George Grimshaw Letter July 14, 1918, side 2.

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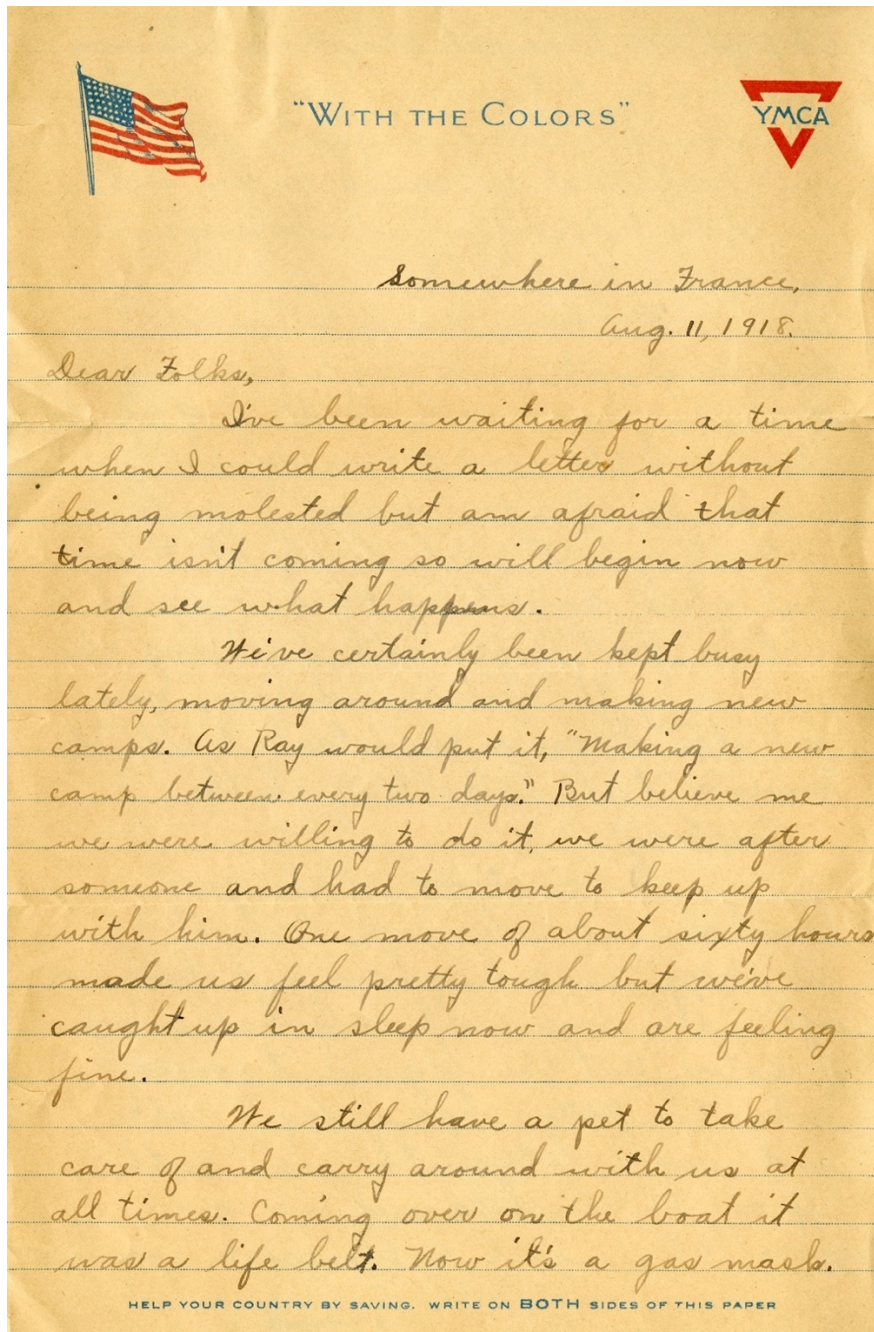
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Love to all,

George.

OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front



George Grimshaw Letter August 11, 1918, side 1.

Somewhere in France,
August 11, 1918.

Dear Folks,

I've been waiting for a time when I could write a letter without being molested but am afraid that time isn't coming so will begin now and see what happens.

We've certainly been kept busy lately, moving around and making new camps. As Ray would put it, "Making a new camp between every two days." But believe me we were willing to do it, we were after someone and had to move to keep up with him. One move of about sixty hours made us feel pretty tough but we've caught up in sleep now and are feeling fine.

We still have a pet to take care of and carry around with us at all times. Coming over on the boat it was a life belt. Now it's a gas mask.

OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

At first we thought they were always in the way but we've changed our minds. After being in gas a few times one finds that his mask is his best friend and doesn't mind sleeping with his arms around it.

We have many musical entertainments now days. The singing of the airplanes and whistling of shells above and the echo of the big field heavies on all sides make it quite interesting and quite lively at times, but when something throws up the dirt in front of you and something else throws up the dirt behind you, you feel it ^{more of} a pleasure than task to side-step. However it all helps to break the monotony.

I sometimes wish you could see us when we deem it necessary to wash, shave, and clean up. Often it's done with only half a cup of water. But the big event comes when the Battery has a day to bathe and wash clothes. The men gather up all the buckets and tin cans available, march to the creek, spring,

George Grimshaw Letter August 11, 1918, side 2.

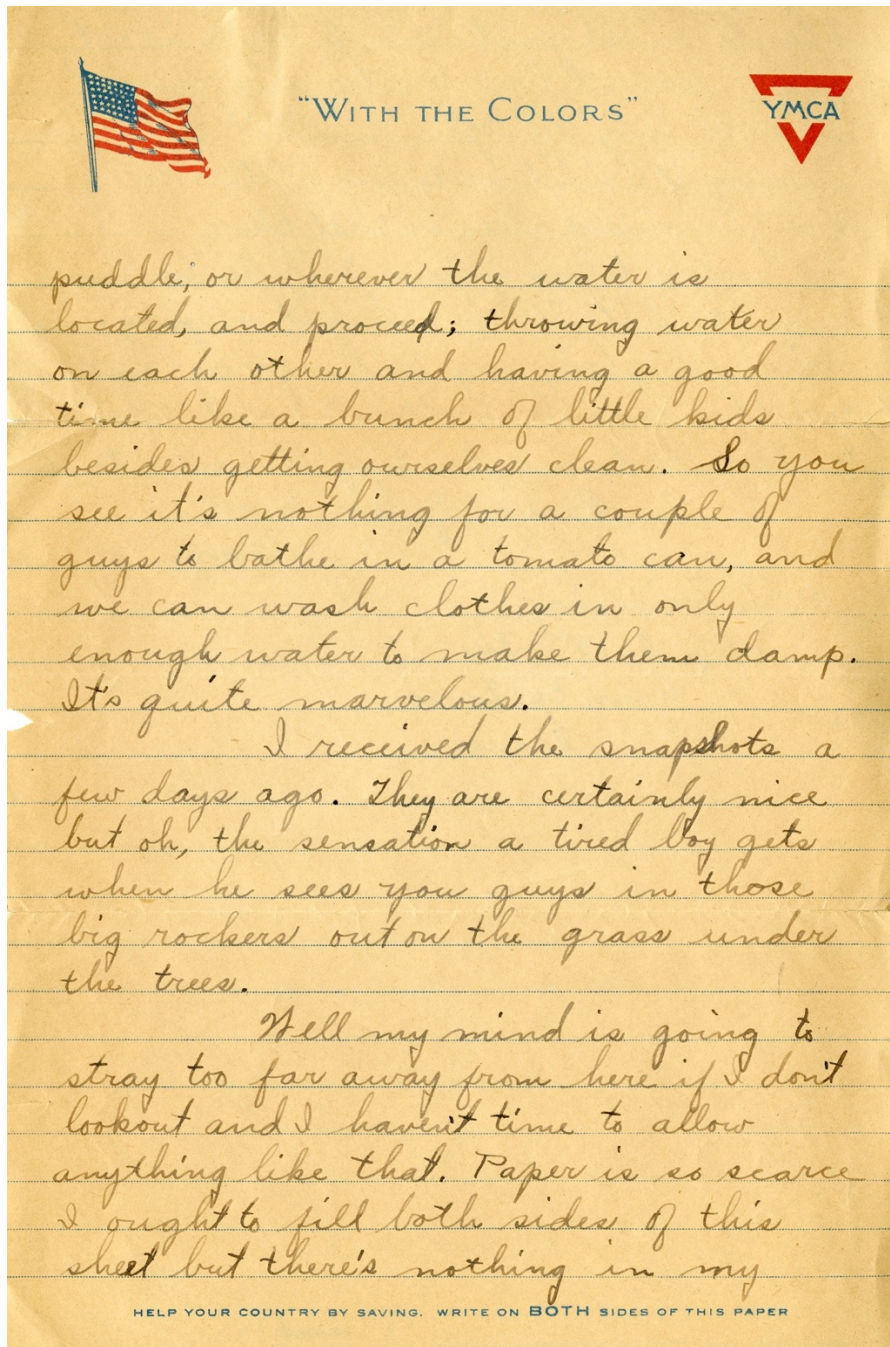
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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front



George Grimshaw Letter August 11, 1918, side 3.

puddle, or wherever the water is located, and proceed; throwing water on each other and having a good time like a bunch of little kids besides getting ourselves clean. So you see it's nothing for a couple of guys to bathe in a tomato can, and we can wash clothes in only enough water to make them damp. It's quite marvelous.

I received the snapshots a few days ago. They are certainly nice but oh, the sensation a tired boy gets when he sees you guys in those big rockers out on the grass under the trees,

Well my mind is going to stray too far away from here if I don't lookout and I haven't time to allow anything like that. Paper is so scarce I ought to fill both sides of this sheet but there's nothing in my

OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

Argonne. Somewhere in France
Oct. 1, 1918.

Dear Folks,

At first sight you might think I'm going to be stingy, writing on such small sheets of paper but I have plenty of it. It's Dutch stationary, how do you like it? They're getting quite nervy of late, right now while I'm trying to write, the dirt, rocks, and shell fragments are making so much noise on our tin roof that I can hardly think. But they aren't putting anything over on us. We have quite a strong belief that it's more blessed to give

George Grimshaw Letter October 1, 1918,
side 1.

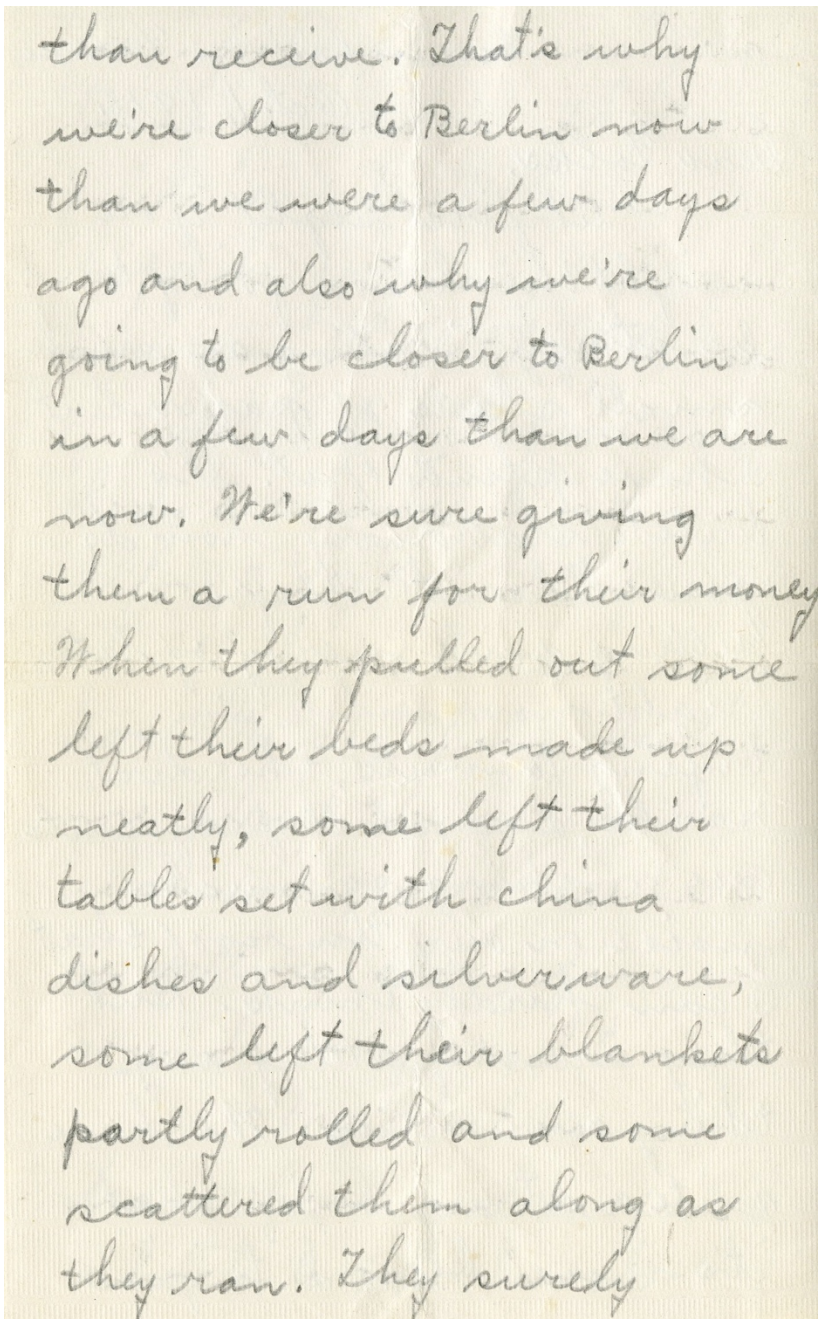
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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

A photograph of a handwritten letter on aged, yellowed paper. The handwriting is in cursive, written in dark ink. The text is a fragment of a larger letter, starting with 'than receive.' and ending with 'They surely'. The paper shows signs of wear and discoloration.

than receive. That's why
we're closer to Berlin now
than we were a few days
ago and also why we're
going to be closer to Berlin
in a few days than we are
now. We're sure giving
them a run for their money
When they pulled out some
left their beds made up
neatly, some left their
tables set with china
dishes and silverware,
some left their blankets
partly rolled and some
scattered them along as
they ran. They surely

George Grimshaw Letter October 1, 1918,
side 2.

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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

had some classy dug-outs with tables and benches and board floors, board walls, heavy tin roofs, and doors with glass in. So when we get chow we go right to our dug-outs and enjoy eating with our feet under the table once more.

A guy just brought me seven letters. It sure seems good to get mail after being without so long. Two were from you, dated Aug. 22nd and 27th and one from Dolph.

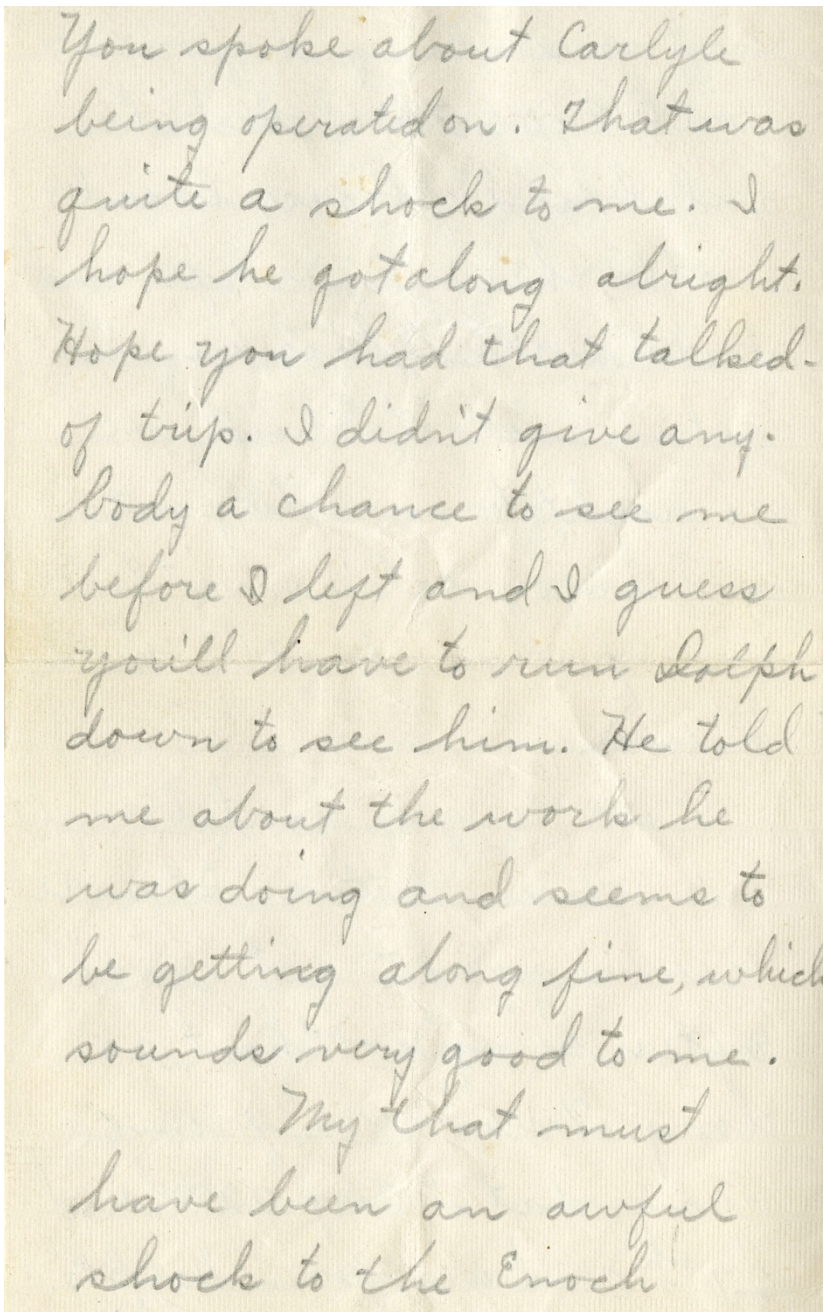
George Grimshaw Letter October 1, 1918, side 3.

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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front



You spoke about Carlyle being operated on. That was quite a shock to me. I hope he got along alright. Hope you had that talked-of trip. I didn't give any-body a chance to see me before I left and I guess you'll have to run Dolph down to see him. He told me about the work he was doing and seems to be getting along fine, which sounds very good to me.

My that must have been an awful shock to the Enoch

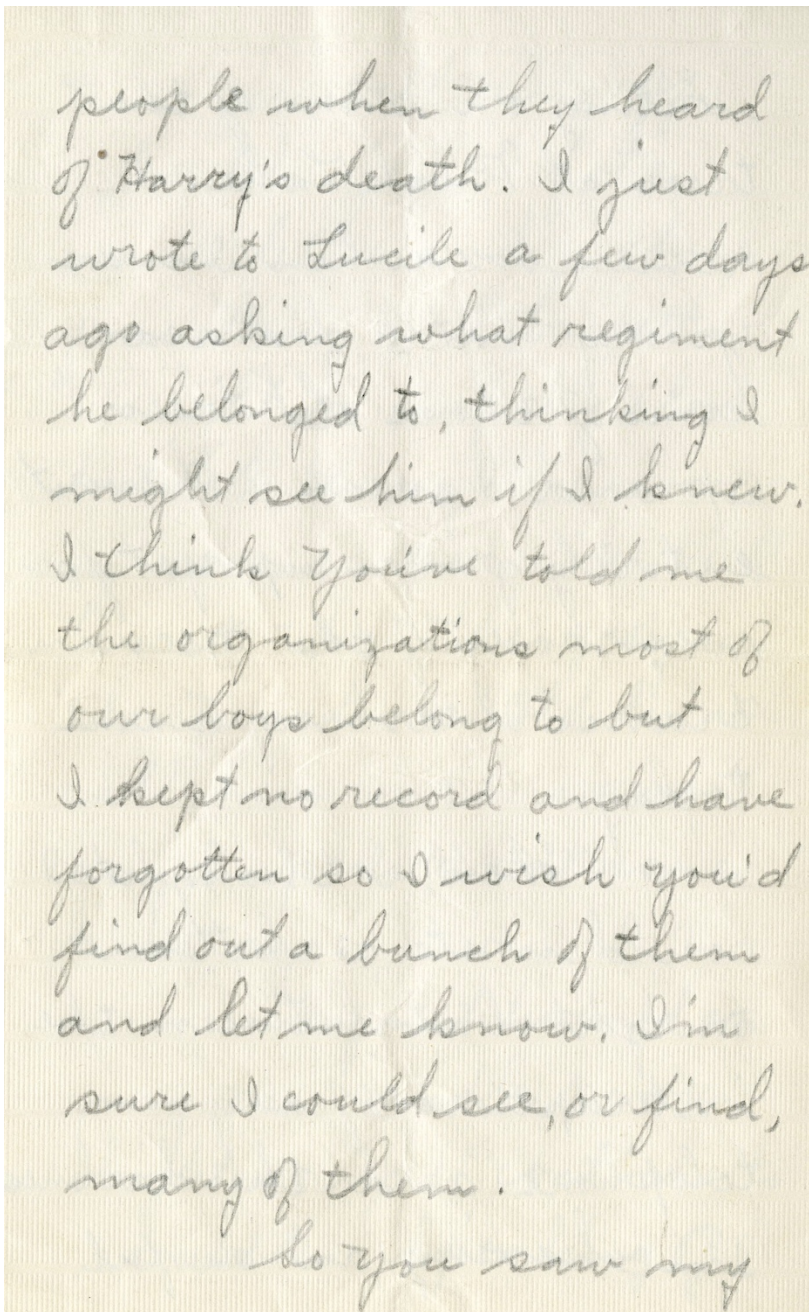
George Grimshaw Letter October 1, 1918, side 4.

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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

A photograph of a handwritten letter on aged, yellowed paper. The handwriting is in cursive and matches the typed transcription on the right. The paper shows some texture and slight discoloration.

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of Harry's death. I just
wrote to Lucile a few days
ago asking what regiment
he belonged to, thinking I
might see him if I knew.
I think you've told me
the organizations most of
our boys belong to but
I kept no record and have
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find out a bunch of them
and let me know. I'm
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So you saw my

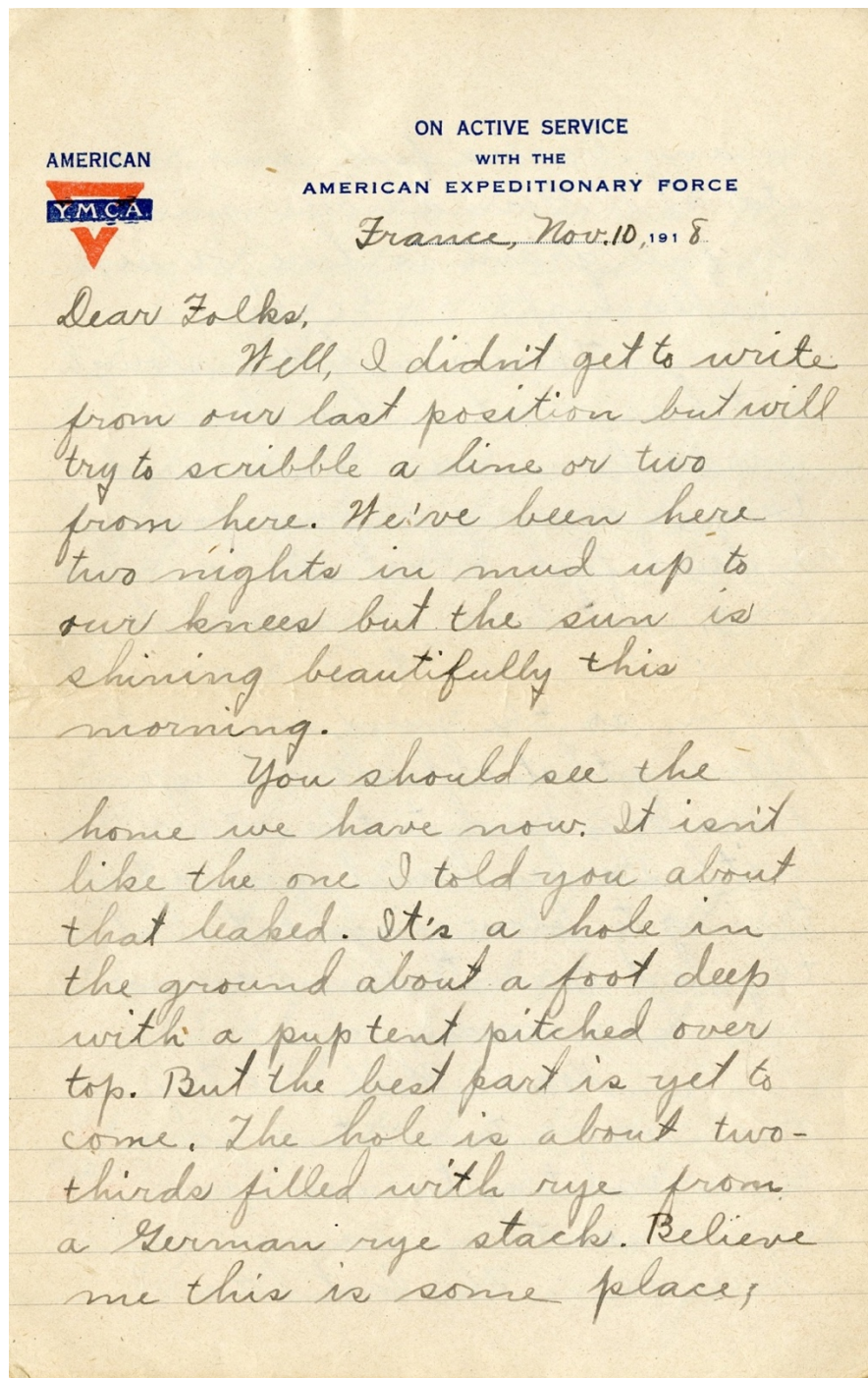
George Grimshaw Letter October 1, 1918,
side 5.

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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front



George Grimshaw Letter November 10, 1918, side 1.

France, Nov. 10, 1918

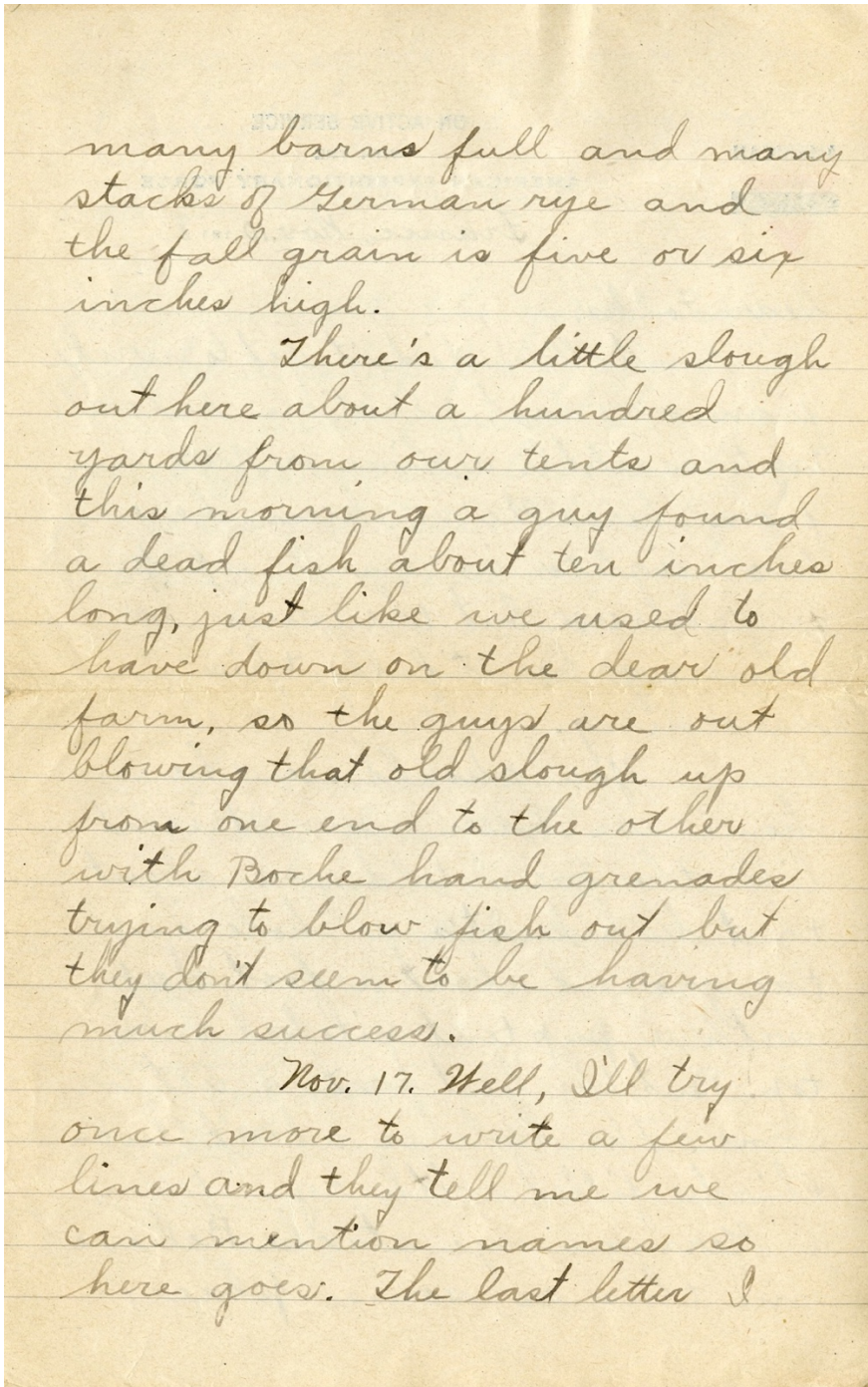
Dear Folks,

Well I didn't get to write from our last position but will try to scribble a line or two from here. We've been here two nights in mud up to our knees but the sun is shining beautifully this morning.

You should see the home we have now. It isn't like the one I told you about that leaked. It's a home in the ground about a foot deep with a pup tent pitched over top. But the best part is yet to come. The hole is about two-thirds filled with rye from a German rye stack. Believe me this is some place,

OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front



George Grimshaw Letter November 10, 1918, side 2.

many barns full and many stacks of German rye and fall grain is five or six inches high.

There's a little slough out here about a hundred yards from our tents and this morning a guy found a dead fish about ten inches long, just like we used to have down on the dear old farm, so the guys are out blowing that old slough up from one end to the other with Boche hand grenades trying to blow fish out but they don't seem to be having much success.

Nov. 17. Well, I'll try once more to write a few lines and they tell me we can mention names so here goes. The last letter I

OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

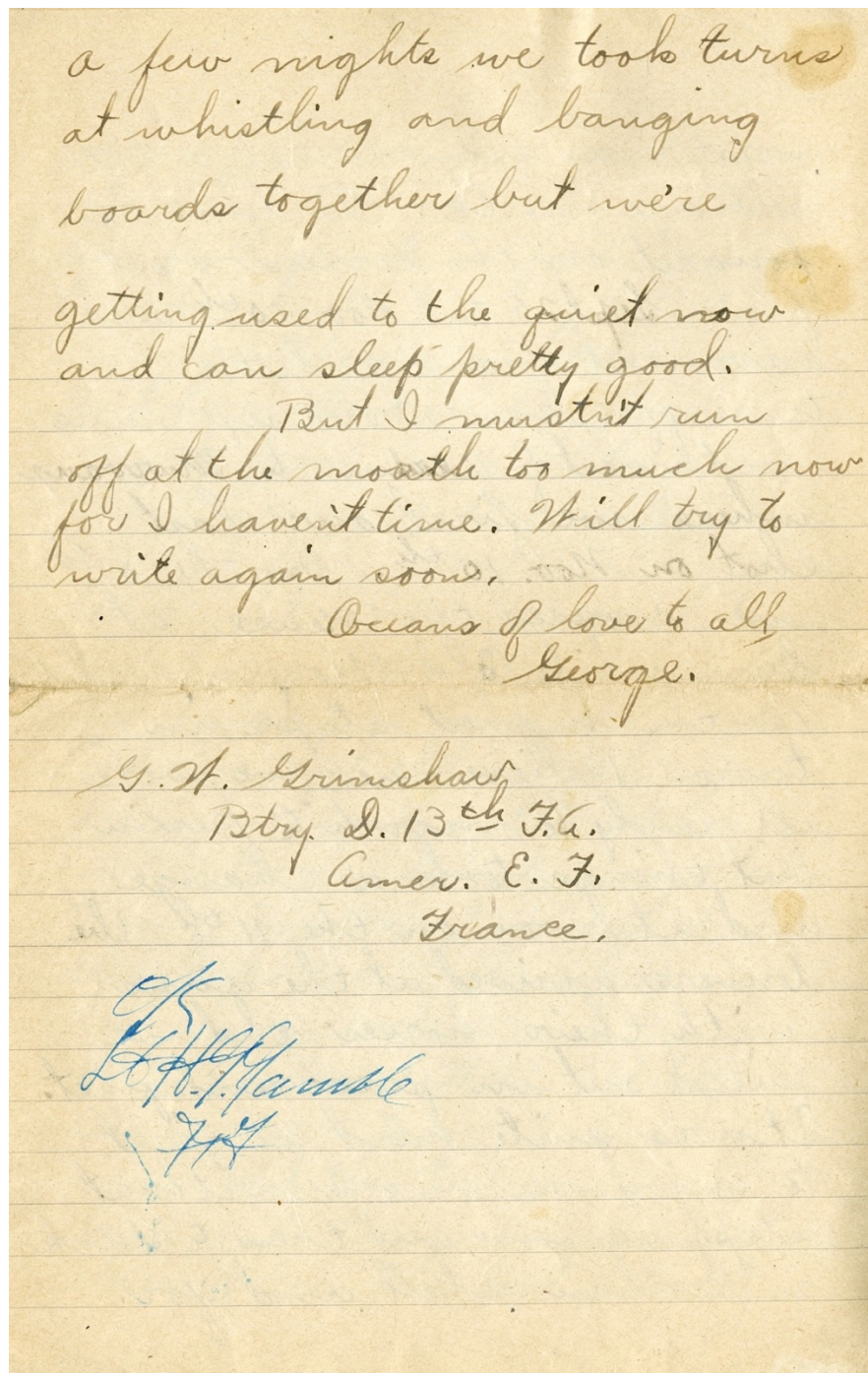
wrote was from Cunal, a little village north of Verdun. We fought on the Verdun front from Sept. 25 till Nov. 10th and advanced from a little town of Esnes about six miles northwest of Verdun to Murvaux where we fired our last shot on Nov. 10th. On the 8th we crossed the Meuse at Dun while Old Glory waved on the highest steeple in town. Believe me, we were all ready to march to Berlin but things took a change and at noon on the 11th the drivers arrived at the guns with their horses and we pulled out in peace and quiet. It was quite hard at first to enjoy our work without stopping now and then to duck a German shell and for

George Grimshaw Letter November 10, 1918, side 3.

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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front



George Grimshaw Letter November 10, 1918, side 4.

a few nights we took turns at whistling and banging boards together but we're getting used to the quiet now and can sleep pretty good.

But I mustn't run off at the mouth too much now for I haven't time. Will try to write again soon.

Oceans of love to all,

George.

G.W. Grimshaw
Btry. D. 13th F.A.
Amer. E.F.
France.

OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

Somewhere in Old Germany
Nov. 25, 1918.

Dear Father,

I just saw a paper, which said, "Write Home to Dad and tell him all you know." Well, I don't know very much but here comes a little. So far I haven't given many names nor dates but will start at the beginning and tell you a few places we've been.

We landed at Brest on May 31 making eight days on the water (some different than when you crossed.)

George Grimshaw Letter November 25, 1918, side 1.

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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

At Brest we stayed for six days in the old Pontanezen Barracks, built by Napoleon, then we went to Camp de Souge near the City of Bordeaux. It was at Camp de Souge that I grumbled a great deal about the sand and heat for we certainly had plenty of it for almost two months until July 30 when we left for the front.

On Aug. 1, we hit Chateau Thierry and saw the first real war ruins and saw an air battle which we thought was quite exciting. But we weren't

George Grimshaw Letter November 25, 1918, side 2.

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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

quite in the swim yet. We were taken up behind the lines for a few days and on Aug. 6 started the real fight. After ten days on the Chateau Thierry front we went to the rear and were billeted in the little town of Cirey-les-Mareilles.

On Aug. 29 we left for the St. Mihiel front and on Sept. 9 took up a position near Rupt. There was no action on the part of the enemy so it took about three days for preparation and at 10 o'clock A.M. of Sept. 12 the great attack was made. It was the most wonderful

George Grimshaw Letter November 25, 1918, side 3.

quite in the swim yet. We were taken up behind the lines for a few days and on Aug. 6 started the real fight. After ten days of the Chateau Thierry front we went to the rear and were billeted in the little town of Cirey-les-Mareilles.

On Aug. 29 we left for the St. Mihiel front and on Sept. 9 took up a position near Rupt. There was no action on the part of the enemy so it took about three days for preparation and at 1 o'clock [sic] A.M. of Sept. 12 the great attack was made. It was the most wonderful

OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

attack I've seen but was rather one sided as only five enemy shells fell near us. The barrage lasted for about six hours without a pause and it was said that when our Doughboys went over the top they found everything destroyed and the enemy gone. But I guess behind the first barrage things were different for prisoners were taken by the thousands.

From the St. Mihiel sector we went to the Verdun front and started our last drive on Sept. 26 a little

George Grimshaw Letter November 25, 1918, side 4.

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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

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Perhaps you have read in the papers that our division is one among the few chosen ~~to~~ occupy German territory until peace is signed and everything is settled. Well, here we are but we have a few days yet to hike before we get to our

George Grimshaw Letter November 25, 1918, side 5.

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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

destiny. The country up here surely looks good after being among the ruins for so long.

Well, I guess that's enough from my diary. May told me about your eyes being bad but I think she greatly modified your condition. Now dady you mustn't try to do too much. Wait till your big boys come home from the war and I'll try to snap out of my dope and make up for some

George Grimshaw Letter November 25, 1918, side 6.

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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

of my lost time. Take
things as easy as you can
and have Mother and the
rest do the same. Hoping
you are all well and
wishing you all a Merry
Christmas and a Happy
New Year, from
Your loving son
George.

G.W. Grimshaw
Btry. D. 13th F.A.
American E.F.
France.

George Grimshaw Letter November 25,
1918, side 7.

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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

Beaver City Dec 27 1918
Mr Geo W Grimshaw
Dear Son It gives me great pleasure
to pen you a few lines in answer to your
much desired and long looked for letter.
While some were getting tracers out to locate
their boys, we ^{gave} due consideration to the fact
that the armistice was signed 9 days after your
last letter was written, and if you got through
those 9 days all right, then you would likely
have gone on to Germany somewhere, as that
would be more reasonable than to get a
lot of new hands, at least it looked so to me
and we looked for a letter each day for weeks
and we began to weaken a little and think that
something might have caused you to be in the
hospital. we were making Christmas day
as pleasant as possible and had a good dinner.
The girls then went for the mail, and soon
returned with smiling faces saying a letter
from George, and we soon had a house full

Family Letter to George Grimshaw
December 27, 1918, side 1.

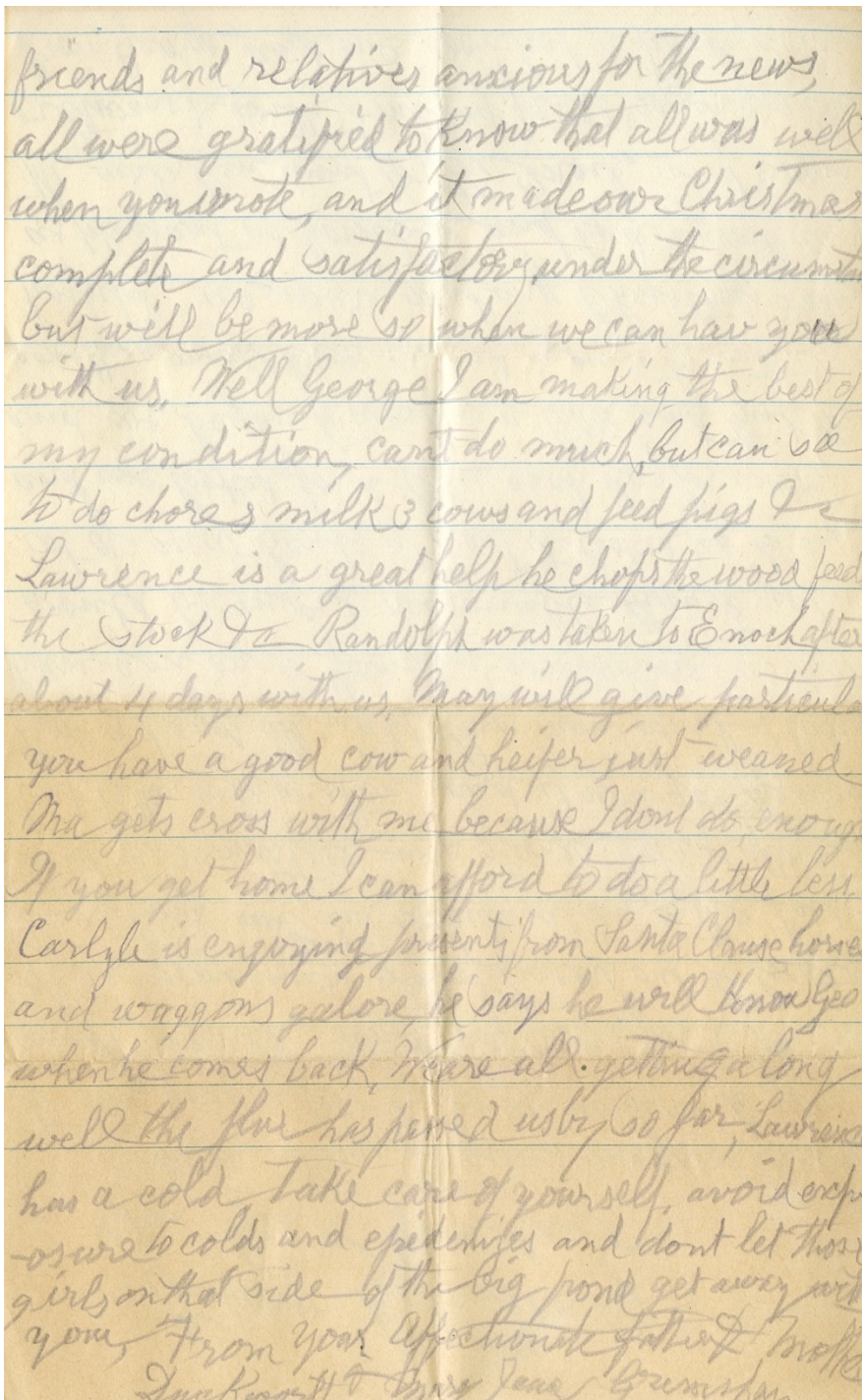
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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

A photograph of a handwritten letter on lined paper. The handwriting is in cursive and somewhat slanted. The paper shows signs of age, with some discoloration and a vertical crease down the middle. The text is written in dark ink and matches the typed transcription on the right side of the page.

friends and relatives anxious for the news,
all were gratified to know that all was well
when you wrote, and it made our Christmas
complete and satisfactory, under the circum-
stances, but will be more so when we can have you
with us. Well George I am making the best of
my condition, can't do much, but can see
to do chores & milk 3 cows and feed pigs &
Lawrence is a great help he chops the wood, feeds
the stock & Randolph was taken to Enoch after
about 4 days with us. May will give particular
you have a good cow and heifer just weaned.
Ma gets cross with me because I don't do enough.
If you get home I can afford to do a little less.
Carlyle is enjoying presents from Santa Clause horses
and waggon's galore, he says he will honor Geo
when he comes back. We're all getting along
well the flu has passed us by so far, Lawrence
has a cold. Take care of yourself, avoid ex-
posure to colds and epidemics and don't let those
girls on that side of the big pond get away with
you. From your Affectionate Father & Mother
Duckworth & Mary Jean Grimshaw

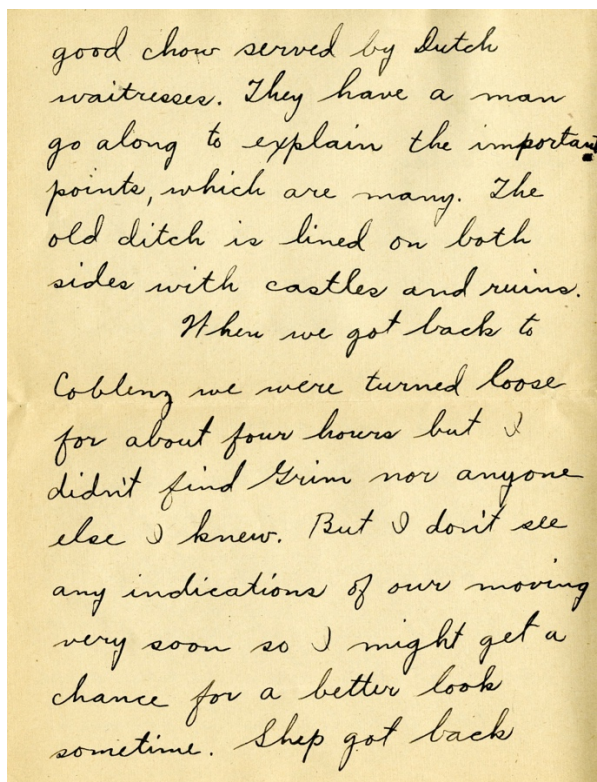
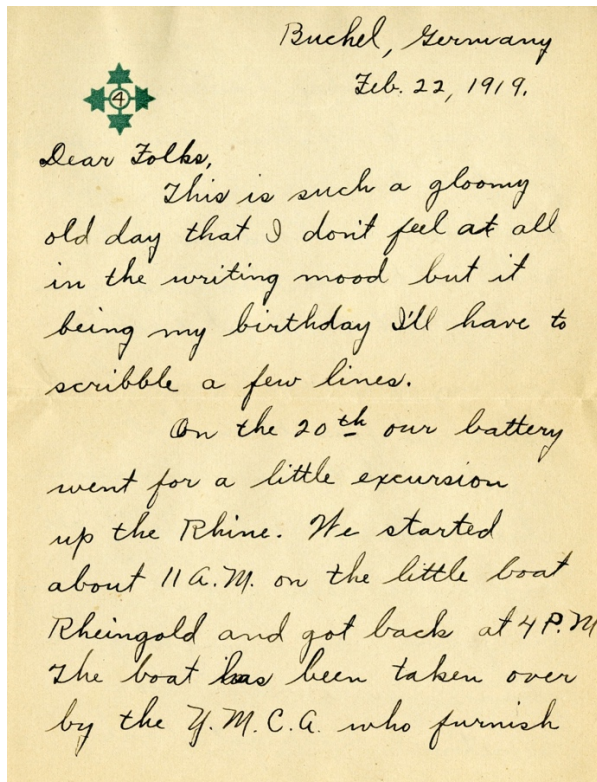
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December 27, 1918, side 2.

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days with us, May will give particular you
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Santa Clause horses and wagons [sic] galore,
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Take care of yourself, avoid exposure to
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Mother

Duckworth and Mary Jean Grimshaw

OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front



George Grimshaw Letter, February 22, 1919,
sides 1-2.

Buchel, Germany
Feb. 22, 1919.

Dear Folks,

This is such a gloomy old day that I don't feel at all in the writing mood but it being my birthday I'll have to scribble a few lines.

On the 20th our battery went for a little excursion up the Rhine. We started about 11 A.M. on the little boat Rheingold and got back at 4 P.M. The boat has been taken over by the Y.M.C.A. who furnish good chow served by Dutch waitresses. They have a man go along to explain the important points, which are many. The old ditch is lined on both sides with castles and ruins.

When we got back to Coblenz we were turned loose for about four hours but I didn't find Grim nor anyone else I knew. But I don't see any indications of our moving very soon so I might get a chance for a better look sometime. Shep got back

OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

last night and in his mail was a letter from Arnold Parkinson. He, Monto Levi, and a number of others are in Coblenz so we ought to see some of them.

A few days ago I sent you a map but it had so many lines on already that I couldn't mark out our route so will give you a few names to look for. Chateau Thierry isn't on there so I'll begin at Cirey les Mareilles where we were billeted for a rest after the Chateau Thierry fight.

We left Cirey the last of August for the St. Mihiel front and stopped at the following places: Joinville, Euville, Bar-le-Duc, Vaubecourt, Souilly, pulled into position near Rupt between St. Mihiel and Verdun, and made the attack at 1 A.M. Sept. 12th. From there to Ancemont, Blercourt, started another drive at Esnes on the morning of Sept. 26th, passed Hill 304, to Haucourt, Malancourt, in woods near Sept Sarges, Nantillois, Cunal, Doulecon, and fired our last shot from Murvaux on Nov. 10th.

George Grimshaw Letter February 22, 1919, sides 3-4.

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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front



On Nov. 11th we took a backward course to Bantheville, Avocourt, Senoucourt, Pierrefitte, to Commercy then came our march to Germany. From Commercy to Essey Maizerais, Jarny, Joef, Ebingen, Garsch, Borg, Beurig, Oberzerf, Waldweiler, Hermeskeil, Morbach, Neiderweiler, Wurich, Bullay, and Buchel. But the last few places aren't on the map. I'll try to get a better one some time.

I'm sending you an Army of Occupation insignia in this letter, if it gets by. What do you think of it?

There's nothing going on to write about so will close. Give everybody my best.

Oceans of love
George.

G.W. Grimshaw
Btry. D. 13th F.A. 4th Div.
A.P.O. 746. American E.F.

O.K.

Lieut. 13th F.A.

George Grimshaw Letter February 22, 1919, sides 5-6.

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Censor added – A.P.O.746.

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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

We also learned that the orders regarding our leaving were changed and we are again transferred to the A.O. to wait till the Squareheads get ready to sign peace. It seems like they're giving them a h— of a long time to decide what they want to do.

It's the (S.O.S.) "We'll give you a little longer" the same as it used to be, "We'll give you another chance" or, "We'll let you sink one more ship."

George Grimshaw Letter May 22, 1919, sides 4-5. Ahweiler, Germany.

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Well, although sticking around here is getting rather tiresome, I'm a believer in preparedness so am willing to stay here just a little longer to be prepared to blow them sky high if they don't kick through. So I wont [sic] be home by the fourth of July as I expected but think I'll be there soon after that.



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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front



Maud Fitch photograph, October 5, 1918. Fitch riding horseback in France.



Maud Fitch photograph undated.



Maud Fitch photograph undated.



Maud Fitch photograph undated.



Maud Fitch photograph undated. Fitch is the woman on the right.

Utah Girl Given French Cross for Saving Wounded

MISS MAUDE FITCH of Eureka arrived in New York yesterday wearing the ribbon of the French war cross, which she won last August by driving an ambulance for forty-eight hours under fire, carrying wounded during the advance of the French Sixth army at Compeigne.

Miss Fitch was met at the pier when the White Star steamship Adriatic arrived from Liverpool by her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Fitch. She sailed for France in March, 1918, and joined the Hackett Lowther ambulance unit, which was assigned to service with the French army.

Miss Fitch was one of six Hackett Lowther unit drivers decorated for bravery by the commanding officer of the army to which they were attached.

In New York yesterday she declined to tell reporters who met the steamship the details of her services at the front or the circumstances under which she won the cross.

"Utah Girl Given French Cross for Saving Wounded," *Salt Lake Herald*, April 23, 1919.

<https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=10263954>

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OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

UTAH GIRL TELLS OF LIFE BACK OF THE BATTLE LINE

Miss Maude Fitch of Eureka, in Service With Ambulance Unit, Graphically Describes Her Experiences; Wins Decoration for Brave Conduct.

WORKING night and day, taking only minutes for sleep and seconds for refreshments, Miss Maude Fitch, Eureka girl, well known in Salt Lake, is experiencing adventures of a most thrilling character back of the battle line in France. The young woman is driving an ambulance attached to a division under the French colors.

Miss Fitch, who is the daughter of Walter Fitch, Sr., a mining man of Eureka, enlisted for ambulance service last March, and since taking up the work has been decorated with the French cross of war for gallantry and bravery at the front.

June 14 she wrote relatives at length telling of day and night experiences encountered in the operation of her ambulance machine. This letter depicts the horrors attending modern warfare, picturing in bloody detail the tremendous daily wastage of human flesh through the carnage of battle. She tells of tedious and exciting journeys with an ambulance filled with screaming, delirious, wounded soldiers. "The men got delirious and screamed and groaned and moaned until I thought I should lose my little remaining brain power," Miss Fitch says, telling of a particularly bad night during the progress of a big battle, through which she worked incessantly without rest. The letter, as complete as censorship permits, follows:

Miss Fitch's Letter.

We've moved about so that I've had none of your dear, longed-for letters for a week; perhaps it's not a week, for I've less idea of time now than ever. I'll go back to June 9 now, as since then it has been fairly hectic from a matter principally of lack of sleep and food.

On that day at noon I went on my 24-hour duty evacuating a hospital in front of the advancing Huns. Got back the next day at 2, having lunched, and dined and breakfasted on bread and jam; worked on my car until dinner; rushed in to wash at the first gong, and at the second, just as I was about to sit at the table, three of us got rushed off again on our cars on an emergency call. I took the worst blesses I ever have had and ever hope to have again on to another hospital about twenty kilometers off. I can't even think of the trip going, it was so ghastly, but coming back I lost my way and the excitement of that in the dark set my mind going again from its utter state of lassitude. I asked two French officers at — where I was and one said his bureau was back in a village where I could get onto the right road so that he would go along with me. At — he invited me into his bureau to get directions and you would have been amazed at the scene—three dogs on his bed, that sprang at me at once, and five other officers scrambling after them; then seven of us peering over a road map quite indistinct in the sputtering flare of only one little candle. I got going finally to experience the most wonderful scene on the road, a retreat, most orderly and so silently the men and horses marched along the congested road it seemed unreal, ghostly. Great, tremendous guns

blesse got delirious and screamed and groaned and moaned until I thought I should lose my little remaining brain power. I had to go the whole distance on bottom gear, and it took me five hours, and what was the worst of all, I found myself going to sleep at the wheel, absolutely losing consciousness for whole seconds at a time, so that three times I had to get out and wash my face in the wet grass. Then I had the most extraordinary hallucinations, such as an immense hand that reached out from a passing car, and I found myself lurching sideways so as not to hit the fingers. Then another time a man floated ahead of me in a horizontal position, face down; so this made me laugh, and I got out again and washed my face. Psychologically, I should like to know what was wrong with me that night. Could I have really been dreaming with my eyes open? As a climax, a sweet little climax, while I waited for about fifty camions to pass, one lurched out and caught my front wheel, and if the traffic man had not shouted at the top of his lungs he would have dragged me over, and good-by to the blesses; I could have jumped easily. A man with a pipe thing helped me straighten it enough to get on, and I could not even thank him; I was so afraid my voice would tremble, and imagine a driver in the war zone near to tears! Ca, c'est drôle, n'est pas! After getting on, I realized the accident was really heaven-sent, as it woke me up completely, or I think something worse, and of my own doing, would have happened.

I got into — at 5:30, dumped the blesses, and went to the hotel, where, after pulling off my belt, tunic and shoes, I crawled into bed with Sarah, and I assure you no more surprised person breathed than she when she woke up, as I crawled in unable to give her an explanation, as I was off in a second. At 8 o'clock I had a real breakfast of honey and coffee, and Sarah departed for Beauvais, where she is going to nurse. I cleaned my very much sooted plugs and got back on my bent axle, which took some slight muscle to guide, just as the household were departing for a place in the forest, bag and baggage; turned around and joined them, spent the afternoon going back for leftovers, water tins, etc. Had dinner at 8, for which, by the way, I was not at all hungry; bed under the trees, in my heavenly bedroll at 10:30, after a delicious sponge behind a tree in the dark in my 12x12 tin basin.

On Gunga's Birthday.

The next morning, Gunga's birthday—no, that was the day before we came here to this big chateau at —, where our cars are camouflaged in one of the enchanting little allees. We were given rooms in the servants' quarters, which were too stuffy for me, so I pitched my bed under the trees in a wood, alongside my car, and Salvage and Rogers joined me—two awfully nice English girls. We had a wonderful night's sleep, and, as my car's axle is at the forge now, I am having a day off and am writing this on the edge of my bed, perfectly rested and peaceful.

would loom up suddenly alongside of men; then a team of white oxen carrying the household goods of some refugees; more cannon, more men, in a never-ending line clear back to the chateau I was helping to evacuate. When I got there at 12:15, I being an "extra," Miss L. ordered me home for sleep, as I had been up since the morning before; but I no sooner got back at our chateau when the news came for us all to evacuate ourselves and our luggage; that meant three hours' steady packing, carrying out to our cars of all our own luggage as well as that belonging to the six on duty, and at 3 o'clock one car at a time dashed through C — and over the bridge, where the shells fell with intervals of five minutes between.

A Grand Reunion.

It was not so exciting at the hospital, as they kept us waiting until about 9, when — again changed her mind, and we were ordered back again. Did you ever hear of time spent so futilely? At 12 o'clock I was again on 24-hour duty. This time I had to take my blesses over a fearful road to —, forty-seven kilometers. After leaving them at the hospital, I stopped at a little shop and had my dinner, two cups of delicious chocolate, at 3 o'clock. I also did some longed-for shopping of monkey wrenches, etc., as the shops have been closed in C — for a long time. As I was changing a spark plug in front of the hotel, who should yell out of her bedroom window at me but Sarah Cunningham. It was a grand reunion, and I stopped long enough to have a far with her. Going back a shorter way the late afternoon made everything so absolutely exquisite that I forgot all my depression of the two nights preceding and only wanted you all to make things really perfect, and to enjoy the gems of the three villages I passed through, with spires marking their whereabouts long before I reached them.

Back at the evacuated hospital I fell into great luck—was ordered up this time to fetch blesses. My first chance since the night I wrote you of; in fact, none of us has got it since. It was only a very few miles, but every inch was a picture never to be forgotten. This time there was nothing but cavalry coming toward me, and their bronzed faces above the faded blue of their uniforms, with the setting sun glinting on their helmets, gave me the most indescribable feeling of elation. It may have been part of a retreat and it may not; neither seems to matter; one only thought boche be hanged; they have got their place in the sun and they'll keep it. That picture was all it needed to dispel the first bit of pessimism—dark pessimism at that—that had crept into my heart from the night before.

When I got to — it was awfully funny. Our Medicine Chief came out and made me put on my tin hat; then, when an obus fell (miles off, I'm sure), he jumped in with me, saying: "Maintenant allez—allez—vite." So, accordingly, I made old Pippa Passes live up to her name, and when we got to the place he dragged me into the court and made me wait there while the orderlies put my wounded in; then, when I went to get out, he excitedly held me back until the next obus fell, though I expostulated violently with my five French words that it was better I should be off instead of leaving the poor blesses out there; but no, il faut que j'attende, the poor blesses seems to matter not at all in sunny France, and when the shot fell he called: "Now for the petit point; you have got five minutes." I wanted to scream with laughter. It was all so utterly absurd; not a piece of shrapnel fell near us.

A Trying Experience.

I again passed the cavalry, who this time, instead of just gazing with surprise at seeing a girl that side of C —, shouted all sorts of "Bonne chance" and "Bonne courages" at me. It was all very nice, but the next trip—whew! I shall go over it quickly as my back and brain ache to think of it. Three coughers for —, where they were filled up and ordered me on to —, the same

I never was the least bit tired and really did not feel even sleepy, though my eyes did do such funny things. We had at last landed post de secours work, and the unit started on it this morning. Read went as a second and I shall hear all about it tomorrow, as they stay out there in the dugout twenty-four hours, for some unknown reason.

I do hope you get all my letters and that they are not too censored. I try to stay within bounds, but it is hard to tell what they are apt to object to. Last night's news from the front was the first real encouraging news we have had, the boche having been driven back to between seven and eight kilometers from Compiègne instead of the five they were at when we left. It was fearful watching the daily demolishing of the lovely city, two churches wrecked, and whole rows of houses gradually coming down under the bombardment and the bombs.

Au revoir, my darlings. Much as I love you, I could not give up a moment of this to go back, and you are all so adorable to have let me come.

Complete transcription next page.

OUR PAST, THEIR PRESENT

World War I: Utahns at the Front

"Utah Girl Tells of Life Back of the Battle Line," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July, 27, 1918.

https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=14962257&facet_paper=%22Salt+Lake+Tribune%22&q=Maude+Fitch&rows=50&sort=rel&date_tdt=%5B+1917-01-01T00%3A00%3A00Z+TO+1920-12-31T00%3A00%3A00Z+%5D

Key:

- Blesse (French) = injured person
- Blesses (French) = wounded people
- Secours (French) = help
- Boche (Older French Slang) = A disparaging and offensive term used to refer to a German, especially a German soldier in World War I or II.
- ——— = word blacked out by censors.

UTAH GIRL TELLS OF LIFE BACK OF THE BATTLE LINE

Miss Fitch's Letter.

We've moved about so that I've had none of your dear, longed-for letters for a week; perhaps it's not a week, for I've less idea of time now than ever. I'll go back to June 9 now, as since then it has been fairly hectic from a matter principally of lack of sleep and food.

On that day at noon I went on my 24-hour duty evacuating a hospital in front of the advancing Huns. Got back the next day at 2, having lunched and dined and breakfasted on bread and jam; worked on my car until dinner; rushed in to wash at the first gong, and at the second, just as I was about to sit at the table, three of us got rushed off again on our cars on an emergency call. I took the worst blesses I ever have had and ever hope to have again on to another hospital about twenty kilometers off. I can't even think of the trip going, it was so ghastly, but coming back I lost my way and the excitement of that in the dark set my mind going again from its utter state of lassitude. I asked two French officers at ——— where I was and one said his bureau was back in a village where I could get onto the right road so that he would go along with me. At ——— he invited me into his bureau to get directions and you would have been amazed at the scene ——— three dogs on his bed, that sprang at me at once, and five other officers scrambling after them; then seven of us peering over a road map quiet indistinct in the sputtering flare of only one little candle. I got going finally to experience the most wonderful scene on the road, a retreat, most orderly and so silently the men and horses marched along the congested road it seemed unreal, ghostly. Great, tremendous guns would loom up suddenly alongside of men; then a team of white oxen carrying the household goods of some refugees; more cannon, more men, in a never-ending line clear back to the chateau I was helping to evacuate. When I got there at 12:15, I being an "extra," Miss L. ordered me home for sleep, as I had been up since the morning before; but I no sooner got back at our chateau when the news came for us all to evacuate ourselves and our luggage; that meant three hours' steady packing, carrying out to our cars of all our own luggage as well as that belonging to the six on duty, and at 3 o'clock one car at a time dashed through C——— and over the bridge, where the shells fell with intervals of five minutes between.

A Grand Reunion.

It was not so exciting at the hospital, as they kept us waiting until about 9, when ——— again changed her mind, and we were ordered back again. Did you ever hear of time spent so futilely? At 12 o'clock I was again on 24-hour duty. This time I had to take my blesses over a fearful road to ———, forty-seven kilometers. After leaving them at the hospital, I stopped at a little shop and had my dinner, two cups of delicious chocolate, at 3 o'clock. I also did some longed-for shopping of monkey wrenches, etc., as the shops have been closed in C——— for a long time. As I was changing a spark plug in front of the hotel, who should yell out of her bedroom window at me by Sarah Cunningham. It was a grand reunion, and I stopped long enough to have a fag with her. Going back a shorter way the late afternoon made everything so absolutely exquisite that I forgot all my depression of the two nights preceding and only wanted you all to make

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things really perfect, and to enjoy the gems of the three villages I passed through, with spires marking their whereabouts long before I reached them.

Back at the evacuated hospital I fell into great luck ——— was ordered up this time to fetch blesse. My first chance since the night I wrote you of; in fact, none of us had got it since. It was only a very few miles, but every inch was a picture never to be forgotten. This time there was nothing but cavalry coming toward me, and their bronzed faces above the faded blue of their uniforms, with the setting sun glinting on their helmets, gave me the most indescribable feeling of elation. It may have been part of a retreat and it may not; neither seems to matter; one only thought boche be hanged; they have got their place in the sun and they'll keep it. That picture was all it needed to dispel the first bit of pessimism & dark pessimism at that & that had crept into my heart from the night before. When I got to ——— it was awfully funny. Our Medicine Chief came out and made me put on my tin hat; then, when an obus fell (miles off, I'm sure), he jumped in with me, saying: "Maintenant allez – allez-vite – vite." So, accordingly, I made old Pippa Passes live up to her name, and when we got to the place he dragged me into the court and made me wait there while the orderlies put my wounded in; then, when I went to get out, he excitedly helped me back until the next obus fell, though I expostulated violently with my five French words that it was better I should be off instead of leaving the poor blesse out there; but no, il faut que j'attende, the poor blesse seems to matter not at all in sunny France, and when the shot fell he called: "Now for the petit pont; you have got five minutes." I wanted to scream with laughing. It was all so utterly absurd; not a piece of shrapnel fell near us.

A Trying Experience.

I again passed the cavalry, who this time, instead of just gaping with surprise at seeing a girl that side of C——, shouted all sorts of "Bonne chance" and "Bonne courages" at me. It was all very nice, but the next trip – whew! I shall go over it quickly as my back and brain ache to think of it. Three couchers for ———, where they were filled up and ordered me on to ———, the same place of the early afternoon, which again necessitated going the long way, forty-seven kilometers off. The blesse got delirious and screamed and groaned and moaned until I thought I should lose my little remaining brain power. I had to go the whole distance on bottom gear, and it took me five hours, and, what was the worst of all, I found myself going to sleep at the wheel, absolutely losing consciousness for whole seconds at a time, so that three times I had to get out and wash my face in the wet grass. Then I had the most extraordinary hallucinations, such as an immense hand that reached out from a passing car, and I found myself lurching sideways so as not to hit the fingers. Then another time a man floated ahead of me in a horizontal position, face down; so this made me laugh, and I got out again and washed my face. Psychologically, I should like to know what was wrong with me that night. Could I have really been dreaming with my eyes open? As a climax, a sweet little climax, while I waited for about fifty camions to pass, one lurched out and caught my front wheel, and if the traffic man had not shouted at the top of his lungs he would have dragged me over, and good-by [sic] to the blesses; I could have jumped easily. A man with a pipe thing helped me straighten it enough to get on, and I could not even thank him; I was so afraid my voice would tremble, and imagine a driver in the war zone near to tears! Ca, c'est droll, n'est pas! After getting on, I realized the accident was really heaven-sent, as it woke me up completely, or I think something worse, and of my own doing, could have happened.

I got into ——— at 5:30, dumped the blesse, and went to the hotel, where, after pulling off my belt, tunic and shoes, I crawled into bed with Sarah, and I assure you no more surprised person breathed than she when she woke up, as I crawled in unable to give her an explanation, as I was off in a second. At 8 o'clock I had a real breakfast of honey and coffee, and Sarah departed for Beauvais, where she is going to nurse. I cleaned my very much sooted plugs and got back on my bent axle, which took some slight muscle to guide, just as the household were departing for a place in the forest, bag and baggage; turned around and joined them, spent the afternoon going back for leftovers, water ins, etc. Had dinner at 8, for which, by the way, I was not at all hungry; bed under the trees, in my heavenly bedroll at 10:30, after a delicious sponge behind a tree in the dark in my 12x12 in basin.

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On Gunga's Birthday.

The next morning, Gunga's birthday – no, that was the day before we came here to this big chateau at ———, where our cars are camouflaged in one of the enchanting little allees. We were given rooms in the servants' quarters, which were too stuffy for me, so I pitched my bed under the trees in a wood, alongside my car, and Salvage and Rogers joined me – two awfully nice English girls. We had a wonderful night's sleep, and, as my car's axle is at the forge now, I am having a day off and am writing this on the edge of my bed, perfectly rested and peaceful.

I never was the least bit tired and really did not feel even sleepy, though my eyes did do such funny things. We had grand news last night, that we had at last landed post de secours work, and the unit started on it this morning. Read went as a second and I shall hear all about it tomorrow, as they stay out there in the dugout twenty-four hours, for some unknown reason.

I do hope you get all my letters and that they are not too censored. I try to stay within bounds, but it is hard to tell what they are apt to object to. Last night's news from the front was the first real encouraging news we have had, the boche having been driven back to between seven and eight kilometers from Compiègne instead of the five they were at when we left. It was fearful watching the daily demolishing of the lovely city, two churches wrecked, and whole rows of houses gradually coming down under the bombardment and the bombs.

Au revoir, my darlings. Much as I love you, I could not give up a moment of this to go back, and you are all so adorable to have let me come.

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Miss Fitch Relates Her Experiences On Battlefield

This week we are able to publish another of those interesting letters from Miss Maude Fitch of Eureka who is a member of the Hackett Lowther ambulance unit in France. Miss Fitch has had many wonderful experiences as she was performing gallant work when the Germans were driving the French and English soldiers back toward Paris and then she has had the pleasure of witnessing the wonderful offensive of the allied troops which turned the tide of battle and brought crushing defeat to the German arms. One of her letters reads as follows:

France August 30

I could never describe adequately the wonder of the last three days. We have been attached to two different American ambulance sections advancing with them on the very heels of the retreating boche through miles and miles of devastated country that looks like the pictures in that old red volume we pored over as children of Dante's Inferno of the lost souls peering out of trees all twisted about in leafless agony. On the top of one hill there is not even a branch left much less a leaf. Here one of the worst hand fights of the advance took place.

September 2 After starting this to you at the most advanced post I have been to there has been so much work ever since I could not get back to it.

I have already got used to the depressing country we drive through

old abandoned abris where blesses could be carried for first aid. And sure enough about a kilometer down my western eye for trails detected one going into the woods which I investigated and found to be the indicated spot.

The medicin chief nearly died when I went back for him and said: *Mademoiselle vous avez l'habitude pour la guerre plus que moi!* In fact he was so amused that he sent another reserve car off with the first blesses and kept us on to move him up again to a still more advanced poste. A second order having come in the meantime.

This was more thrilling this time as the prisoners had started coming in and the medicin chief stopped one. He took a picture of them then proceeded to cut off their shoulder

especially as the boche dead have now been buried and most of the mammoth shell holes filled in. There are still a few rather objectionable dead horses lying about but I quite shamelessly tie a handkerchief around my nose through these districts. The first day in passing on a narrow road a line of big camions my hind wheels slipped into a shell hole and I stalled my motor right in the center of a pool of blood where three horses had been killed the night before by a bomb dropped on the soup kitchen they had been driving and the horror of it was the engine was so hot that I had to slide around in the blood for fully five minutes before the dashed thing would go!

Plunkett and I had an awfully amusing time here the other day August 29 the day we took Noyon. We had been sent up the night before to a fairly advanced post where the medicin was just leaving with all his aides so we installed ourselves as usual on the floor of his abri and were just going to sleep when the new medicin and his staff arrived.

His amazement knew no bounds when he glimpsed two dames asleep on the floor of his abri. He did not even know that dames drove at the front so at 2 o'clock in the morning he woke us up saying:

We just had orders to attack for Noyon at 6 so Madames you had better return.

straps for us made them empty their pockets of cigarettes and tobacco which he gave us at this last kindness. I could feel my face getting scarlet as they were such a miserable unhappy underfed lot.

I would have preferred to leave them their smokes. However when I passed them on to some fierce looking Zouaves and saw their faces break into grins I was well compensated. As for boche helmets for souvenirs I can pick them up at every turning so shall wait to collect them as they are rather cumbersome baggage to have about.

When we got back to the chateau that night at 11 o'clock we had been gone thirty six hours instead of twenty four and the section had lost track of us in the many moves.

MAUD FITCH

Return? said I. What for?

Because the road will be very much bombed and it is not good for you to be out in such Mademoiselle.

Of course at this we could not but laugh in the old dear's face and finally succeeded in explaining that one never returns even if one is only a dame so his fears put at rest he showed us the plan the colonel had just sent him where we were to move on.

We loaded up old Pippa Passes with all the appurtenances of the Groupe Bronchardieres Divisionnaires and steamed off with all of them. When we arrived at the canal he told me to turn to the left which I informed him was wrong according to the plan. He grinned and I drove to the right where he made me stop at a Bois d'Acacia indicated by the colonel for the new poste. Here he and his staff took out their plans and pored over them until I got very nervous as it was almost 6 o'clock and the order read that we were to be in stalled by 6.

I suggested to Plunkett that we get into the car and find the place ourselves which I knew must be an

Complete transcription next page.

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"Miss Fitch Related Her Experiences on the Battlefield," *Eureka Reporter*, October 25, 1918.

https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=3104190&facet_paper=%22Eureka+Reporter%22&q=Maude+Fitch&rows=50&sort=rel&date_tdt=%5B+1917-01-01T00%3A00%3A00Z+TO+1920-12-31T00%3A00%3A00Z+%5D

Key:

- There was no punctuation used in the article as printed in the *Eureka Reporter*, although we can assume that Fitch used punctuation in the letter she sent.
- Abri (French) = shelter
- Medicin (medecin, French) = doctor
- Madames (French) = Madam
- Mademoiselle (French) = Miss

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