

June 9, - 45

Dear Max;

My sister wrote me that you had visited her on several occasions. I presume she has told you something about youms truly, but that I am a very interesting subject for an intelligent conversation. At the present I am still here in the hospital but will be leaving shortly to rejoin my outfit after over two months of absence. The nurses will probably be glad to get rid of me. On the other hand one does get tired of this soft easy life. (Some guesses.)

It hasn't been very long since I left the States, but during that time many a varied and interesting experience have been crowded my way. It has taken me through several countries - Scotland, England, France, and Italy. But there is no place like the States and home. Incidentally my chances of getting home are still very slim. More awaiting out to do.

We are all more than thankful that the war in Europe has been drawn to a victorious end, but the news

It will stay for many years to come. I can recall when I first saw France and saw for myself in grim reality the thoroughness of the destructive force of war. This particular harbor at which we landed was just a mass of rubble of dust and debris piled high into uselessness. Geographically the city was still there, but it was far from its former self. The buildings and homes were just hollow and vacant shells, from among which ventured forth ragged, filthy, and ill-fed children begging for sweets. Our meager supply of sweets limit our charitable gestures and what more there is or on my regulations which prohibits giving away rations. We see so many of these misfortunes of war that our feeling of pity soon turns to weariness and indifference.

In morning around France we were herded into those ill-famed 40 or 8's which was such a terrible reputation in the previous war. I'd swear I never spent a more miserable experience on the trip or the way to Paris (2 nights and one day. Believe me, the freight even in the States are luxurious

III compared to those seen here.
The particular case I made or
rather I hung on to must have
been in service since the
Franco-Prussians were at one
time or another the car must
have been dragged through a
low tunnel for what remained
of the road wouldn't have covered
a rat hole. Then the ruins
came.

In France when I joined
the outfit it was stationed
along the French-Italian border
high among the French Alps.
From our gun position we
could see the Mediterranean and
eastward we could see the higher
peaks with their caps of snow.
Below us lay a small picturesque
village in a small green valley.
(It is the post in me.) A picture
of peace filled with the sounds
of war as the shells go
whizzing by on their deliberate
course.

Not in the too distant rear
lay the fabulous French
Riviera - Cannes, Nice, Monte
Carlo, Monaco, and lesser towns.
This region has been touched
only lightly by the war. It is
evident in the way people dress
and go about their normal
ways.

IV
Here in Italy I've had very little occasion to see very much of the country. The ways of the lives of the country people are simple and primitive, and I might add I've seen the famous leaning tower.

So much for now. I would like to hear from you, and I hope I shall be able to see you.

As ever,
Dick

P.S. I hope you can read my writing. Pity the individual who has to receive this. I'm willing to bet he can't make a lot of it out.

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