

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

STATE MAN TELLS OF THE SINKING OF THE TUSCANIA

A Penn State man, E. L. Hamilton '18, who was on the Tuscania when she was torpedoed, tells in a very interesting letter to his mother of the events during and following the sinking of the ship off the Irish coast. The following are extracts from the letter which was printed in his home newspaper:

On active Service with the American Expeditionary Forces

February 12th, 1918

Dear Mother—

At last I can write and tell you some of my experiences. I had many wonderful things to tell you, but I suppose you may have heard of the Tuscania being torpedoed some days ago. It may interest you to know that I was on board that ship when the Boche hit it, and have survived it.

It was about six p. m. and I had just come down to my bunk in the hold from the deck, where I had been observing the land, which we had just sighted shortly before dusk. I was sitting on my bunk reading a magazine, when all of a sudden there was a bang, a crack, a jar, and the lights went out. I made a dash for the companionway on the deck along with sixty or more other fellows, never stopping for coat, hat or life-preserver. We rushed up on deck in quite an orderly manner, considering the occasion, for they all knew what had happened.

Trouble Lowering Boats

I was one of the twenty assigned from E Company to lower lifeboats at No. 12, and had to climb to the highest deck to get there. When I got up there I saw the ship was still afloat, but had a slight list to starboard (she was torpedoed on the starboard side, forward of the engine room). There were only three or four of our crew up there, so I thought I would go back and get my coat and life-preserver. I climbed down a ladder to B deck, but the men were still pouring out the companionway from below so I could not get down. I went back up and waited for some of the ship's crew to come and direct us, as they were supposed to. Nobody coming, I went down again and got my life-preserver and helmet.

The men were orderly and lined up at their respective boats as they had been taught to do at the drills. We started to get down the first boat, got it loaded and in the water, but the fellows in it did not know how to unhook the falls, so some one cut the rope, rendering one end useless. There were three other boats yet to be let down, but we had no way to get them over except to throw them in. Then other three were sort of miffs, with sponsons around the gunwales, and having slides which could be raised up. Someone suggested tying a rope to each end and tumbling it down. We tied that and had an awful job getting it near the edge, as it weighed nearly a ton. We got her to the edge, then over but the rotten ropes broke and the boat fell upside down in the water and floated off. We tried to then get the other two, but they had not been moved since the ship was built, I guess, and we could not move them.

Company Sang Popular Songs

By this time someone had been shooting distress rockets, and the other boats were getting away with more or less difficulty. Fellows were jumping overboard, but as a rule the officers controlled their men very well. One company stood at attention and sang "Hull, Hull, the Gang's all here. Then one of the destroyers of our convoy steamed up on the port side and gradually made its way alongside, thus putting some hope

into me. It looked pretty hopeless before. We threw a bunch of lines on to her and the fellows slid on deck. But some missed and went into the water and got squeezed between the two ships. I saw one fellow go down a rope and the destroyer rolled just as he was down to her lifeboat as it hung in the davits and the boat hit him an awful blow.

Landed at an Irish Town

We landed at a certain town in the north of Ireland and were taken to a British camp where they fed us. We went to sleep on the floor at 2:30 a. m., wondering where the rest of the fellows were. In the morning we saw a large number of our companions who had come in on other boats. We were then taken to another camp where there were a lot of convalescent Scotch soldiers who had all been in the front lines and were recovering. We exchanged kind words in plenty. They treated us royally, and we were all very happy.

We were certainly the queerest-looking crew you ever saw. Nearly any word hats, some wore bathrobes, some sailor uniforms, all needed a shave. One man wore slippers, a caplain's overcoat, and a sailor's water on his head. We stayed at this camp some time, leaving there at 5 a. m. on Sunday. We arrived at a certain Irish city, got aboard a boat to cross the Irish Sea for Great Britain. They were accompanied by an American torpedo boat and arrived without mishap and in good condition. We entrained again and rode most of the night, arriving at this camp, which is very large and contains many American soldiers. We don't know how long we will be here but expect to leave soon for France.

They are two American Y. M. C. A. buildings here, and if anyone says anything disparaging concerning the Y. M. C. A. me, I will shell him. Please don't worry about me, everything is going fine.

Everett L. Hamilton
Co. E, 6th Battalion, 20th Engineers
American Expeditionary Forces, N. A.
via New York

PENN STATE FORESTER WRITES FROM FRANCE
On Active Service
With American Expeditionary Forces
Sunday, March 3rd

My dear Dean Walter—

I believe that it is about time that I write you a few lines just to let you know that I have not forgotten the old school and to tell you how we State men are getting on in this part of France. Several days ago I wrote President Sparks and I was really ashamed of the letter as at that time we were pretty well tied down by the censor, or thought that we were. Now, however, they have let down the bars, so to speak, and have given us more explicit instructions to follow.

The letter sent out by Di Sparks, together with the picture to the men was great, and could not help but cheer us up. You can not begin to realize how much we all appreciate the interest which the home folks take in us. His letter was awaiting me one evening when I came in from the woods, wet to the neck and chilled through, from the cold wind. Needless to say, I was pretty groggy and mean, but after reading that letter and seeing the picture by going out and cutting enough firewood to run the old Sibley stove until tap. They couldn't say anything mean enough for the rest of the evening to get a rise out of me. I told you in a previous letter that

I had taken a trip over New Year's, and now I am permitted to tell you more in detail. Three of us, John Howe, A. H. '19, John B. McClelland (Wooster College) and I secured four-day passes to Bayonne. We got to Bayonne at one a. m. and went to the Grand Hotel where we bunked during our sojourn in the city. Getting up early in the morning we started out to see the sights. As we were among the first Americans to visit the city, you could hear the natives on all sides, as we passed, say, "American" or "Americano." Incidentally, it is a great advantage to be among the first Americans to visit a town. For one thing, the prices of articles and food are as a rule cheaper than they are later on. The French have a false idea that we are all rich and it does not take them long to boost the price when they see us coming. Another unfortunate thing is that some few soldiers, sooner or later, overstep their privileges and so spoil things for the many who know it is wrong to conduct themselves in an orderly and respectable manner.

To return to the sights of the city we saw the exterior of the St. Andrew Cathedral and St. Esprit le Paroisse and Lachepallier, Pont-Neuf, Le Chateau-Vieux, in Croix and le Fontaine de St. Leon. On the following day, Sunday, we went into both cathedrals and it was well worth our time. They were wonderful, and you could not help but wonder how they could build such large and spacious structures at the time these buildings were erected. I was particularly interested in the old city wall, most and destroyed, which were still standing though the city had expanded far beyond the original limits. The Citadel, built way back in the time of Louis XI, with its narrow, barred windows, could still strike terror in a warrior's heart. The cinema of Napoleon I is now partly in ruins and is extremely beautiful with its luxurious masses of ivy and other vines climbing over it.

On Monday we took a side trip to Lihiltz, a very fashionable summer resort on the sea shore. In no time the natives say it is "tres joli" for me. Though it is only a small place, the stores were large and wonderful, the hotels very large, and the "boardwalk" (which happened to be a broad road of macadam) was full of gaily dressed women and men. From one of the high promontories overlooking the bay we saw what we were told were the Spanish Pyrenees. I believe that view, just before sunset, was the prettiest of any that I have seen in France.

Tuesday the first we spent roaming about Bayonne and in the evening we came back to camp. Tom Burleigh, Forester '18, and I took a long walk down to the sea today.

Company I 10th Engineers, Forestry, A. P. O. 705-A E F.

P. S. The Y. M. C. A. is fully organized here and is doing a great work.

"TOMMY" THOMPSON DESCRIBES LIFE IN ENGLAND
February 23, 1918,
153 Aero Squadron,
Somewhere in England

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While walking along the road we passed through American soldiers and much to my surprise when I looked them over, one was Jerry Bowman, '14 Forester. Surely neither of us ever dreamed when we said goodbye on Commencement Day in the spring of 1914 that our next meeting would be in Southern France. Jerry is the same jolly fellow and looks fine. Some of the boys at school now will remember him. He is at his home at the Beta house on the campus. He is a private in Company D of the 20th regiment, 4th battalion.

The work here is progressing rapidly. Our big mill, capacity 20 m per tower, made its first cut on March first, and we expect to be running two shifts of ten hours, or three shifts of seven hours each day by the end of the week. It is likely that I will work in the mill as soon as the next shift goes on.

I expect you are getting tired reading about what we are doing here so I will stop and write a few lines to Prof. Ferguson.

Best regards to Mrs. Watts and any of the other people whom I knew at State.

Very truly yours,
W. G. Edwards
Company I 10th Engineers, Forestry, A. P. O. 705-A E F.

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church just as the services were concluded. No men worshipped, only women and children and they were dressed in black. Little children in black and white mourning are seen everywhere in the city. The women certainly manifest a noble spirit of sacrifice.

I often think of Penn State and all it means to me, and especially the good times we had. I suppose "Curt" has a hole already dug for his "sink", and G. Burt is growing his mustache before combating life. With kind regards to all, and hoping to see you all soon I am Cordially
Norman D. Thompson "Tommy"

NO ELECTION

Due to the fact that no suitable drawing was submitted in the competition for the position of cartoonist on the COLLEGIAN the election of said cartoonist will be postponed until next year.

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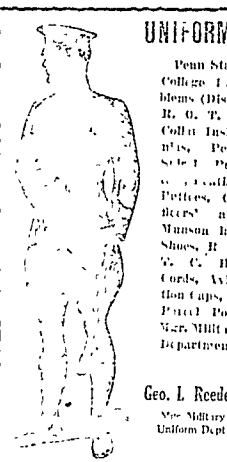
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