

113 F. A.

Am. Ex. F.

July 22, 1918.

Dear Mary:-

Saturday slipped by without my finding time to write a letter. And today I have been busy trying to arrange for my first funeral so I have had little time to write. In thirty more minutes we go to the little cemetery and lay to rest No. 29 under French soil. ~~The man died of heart failure yesterday under circumstances which are not to his credit.~~

I began the above after dinner, and before I had writtan a full page a R^{oman} Catholic priest came in, and stayed with me until time to go to the funeral. The latter was quite simple, yet as always quite impressive. First went the band playing Chopins "Dead March!" Then Col Cox and myself immediately in front of the six black horses which drew the caisson on which the coffin was carried. The coffin was covered with a large U.S. flag. Next after the caisson with the pall bearers was the escort of honor, and then the entire battery. The men and officers all had on rain coats and out steel helmets for it was raining all the time. As we passed the French and American soldiers along the road, they uncovered and remained so until the body passed. The services were concluded just at four o'clock, and as it was the hour for gas defense drill the entire battery walked back to quarters with their masks on. The men filling the graves did the same. It reminded us of the fact

that there may be funerals in days to come when we will all have to have on our masks. They will be silent ones as far as the preacher is concerned.

Afterwards I wrote a letter to the man's wife. I hear he only left her \$5,000 insurance, but I imagine she is better off with it than with him, as he was not a good soldier, and probably not too good to help. "De mortum etc."

It was good of you to write me such a fine letter. Wonder if you can imagine just how much good a chatty letter like that does a fellow. Tom read it too and let me read his letter from Rufe. And I especially appreciate your saying you pray for me every day (except when you forget it or are too busy). For that is so much like the way I pray. Prayers seem more real now, yet I find so many other things which interrupt my prayer life. I guess one has to learn the attitude of prayer. But it is hard to learn unless you have a definite season of it at some time. But take today. I have been on one continual strain all the time, was interrupted before I could read and pray this morning, and only now I can find time to do these things, and now I am writing to you. And I know busy house keepers and busy business men must be always thus.

Today I got one letter, from ~~Blank~~ ^{Blank}. It made me long to be in Raleigh once again. The thoughts of all of us now center in our return to North Carolina. Never did home seem so dear as when so many question if they will return. But none of us question that - we all know we are going to return. It is the other man who will get bumped off. But the news is all good

these days, and a million or more Americans this year will make an Allied victory almost certain for next summer. A man is here now telling of the latest news. We all wait for the "communique" which is hard to get in this corner of Brittainy.

It is surprising how France has changed since I was here here before. There is nothing to buy, and one has little need of money over here. Instead of making fine lace, silk and other luxuries, all France is making fine shells and guns to shoot them in. And of course it is hard to buy anything nice to eat. Their famous "patisseries" are no more for it takes wheat and sugar to make good cakes and both are not so common here as heretofore. Still life is not so hard here as I imagined it would be, and one does not notice it as much as he does in England.

The rainy season seems to have set in, for it is raining almost every day now. I know it is going to be terrible this winter for I imagine coal will be difficult to obtain. You see German(y) holds the principle coal fields of France, and because of that very thing she is not going to want to give them up, and will not unless she is badly whipped.

The doctor has come to go to the Hospital with me so I'll close for this time.

With lots of love to every one of you,

Yours affectionately,

Ben.

Addressed:
Mrs. R. Y. McAden,
Garner, N. C. U.S.A.

O.K.
B. R. Lacy Jr.
Chaplain. 1st Lt.