

113 F. A.

A. E. F.

Via N. Y.

Letter No. 1.

June 23, 1918.

Dear Folks:-

Although no news from Raleigh has reached me yet although I have been away from America for nearly a month yet I guess I had better continue to write to you as you will be getting letters from me with some degree of regularity. I have written several letters to you. Some from England and some from France. Henceforth I am going to number my letters, starting this one as No. 1, in spite of the fact that others have gone before it. Then if you fail to get a letter you can tell by the number. Please do the same with yours, and I can tell about them.

No mail from the States has come to this camp in 14 days now so all are wild to get some. The P. O. seems to be falling down in getting mail to us. Here is hoping it wont be another month before we hear from home. Any how you write and some day the letters will arrive. When they do come they will be a month old.

Father, I have sent you, through the Y.M.C.A. \$50.00. Please pay it on my note at the Commercial Bank. I drew about \$50.00 over my account when in N.Y. at least I think I did not have that much to my credit so please attend to it for me. As I wrote you before, I am allotting \$56.00 a month to you. With it pay for my Building & Loan, \$15.00 every four weeks, and in-

vest the remainder in War Savings Stamps, or any other way you deem wisest.

Am going to buy a uniform over here because I failed to get one in N.Y. and that will take a good slice out of my pay.

Today I had two splendid services. One at the nearest Y.M.C.A. Over 500 soldiers were present, and it did me good if it did no one else. I am the only protestant chaplain of the six regiments here. They say they have had all Catholic except one or two Episcopalians who did not make much impression.

After my service I went about a mile through the camp to another Y.M.C.A. and preached. Had a fair size crowd and good attention. These Y.M.C.As are so busy trying to supply the soldiers with candy & tobacco that they have little time for other work.

The question of my status is up again. Last week the Brigade Adjutant offered me a captaincy on the Brigade Staff, and today I heard that General Gatley is quite put out with me because of my hard headedness. Major Pridgen & Capt. Joyner were over there today, and he said I had better stick to my prayers if I was not going into the fighting end.

Today I heard from one of the Catholic Chaplains that our status as chaplains has been changed. I expect to get some official information soon. I cannot understand by there are so many Catholics in the Artillery. Do you know that with only 500 men from Catholic homes in the 30th Division which numbers about 30,000 men, the Catholics have four chaplains out of ten. I

simply cannot understand these things. The ones I know are splendid men, but I do not think it would be right to send 4 chaplains who were Protestants to a Division in which there were 39500 Catholics and 500 Protestants, and the reverse is just as bad.

During the week I have taken several nice walks. The country through here is beautiful and there are some quaint little villages to which we can go. We cannot go farther than 8 kilometers or 5 miles from the camp without a pass, and the men must be in their quarters at 8:30. As the sun sets about 9:15 and it is not dark until much later it seems a hardship to the men. But they are in fine spirits, all pleased to be doing something definite and are looking forward to the range work and to going to the front. Many expect to be home by Christmas, but Christmas 1919 will please me mightily.

It has cost me a good deal to remain in my room this afternoon. Already I have loaned the men 27 franks. They have not been paid in such a long time they are pretty hard up. I fear they will get too much to drink when they are finally paid off.

Yesterday Col. Cox, Joyner & I went for a splendid walk out to a beautiful village where we got some real food. It certainly seemed good to us. Especially the vegetables. The first I have tasted this year, I think.

Lots of love to all. Please write.

Devotedly,

Addressed:

Mr. B.R.Lacy,
Raleigh, N.C., U.S.A.

Ben.

O.K. Censored
by B.R. Lacy Jr.,
1st Lt.