

From Frederick B. Heitkamp '17

August 1917.

I have chosen as my field of service, during the war, the Army Y. M. C. A. After leaving college in June, I went to the Young Men's Christian Association College, at Springfield, Massachusetts, and took a special course in the war work. In August I was sent to Camp Mills, on Long Island, as Desk Secretary in one of the seven large Y. M. C. A. tents. My month of work proved to me that it was a branch of service greatly needed.

The aim of the work is to serve the men and to keep them busy when they are off duty. Ask any man who has been in the service what he thinks of the Y. M. C. A., and he will tell you that "it is the best thing in the army"; that without it the men would become greatly discouraged, due to the monotony and seriousness of army life. Men and officers show themselves ready to cooperate with the secretaries in every way. The Association workers are civilians and not enlisted men, and their authority to be in and work in the camps comes from General Order No. 39, issued by the War Department at Washington.

The activities of the Association are divided into five heads: Educational, Religious, Physical, Social, and Business. The last named is the position I now have.

We have charge of a large hut or building which is 120 feet long and 40 feet wide. In it is a piano, a victrola, magazines, a library, games, a large platform for entertainments, which are frequent, moving pictures being given twice a week at least; and many small things making for the comfort and welfare of the men. There is a counter at which paper and writing materials are given out, and the mail sent from my tent averaged over three thousand a day, which shows that the folks back home are getting word from the men.

At this desk many friendships with the secretaries are made, and these later lead to quiet talks. It is these talks which form the heart of the

Association work. They are not necessarily religious, but are generally so from the own wish of the man himself. Many nights have I had fellows come to my sleeping tent in search of some one to talk with - just lonesome - looking for sympathy and advice. Men twice my age were eager to know what I thought about things, how I would write this letter to the War Department, how I would ask this girl for her picture (simple for me); but there are many things on the minds of these fellows going to France for us, and the Y. M. C. A. secretaries try to help them out. While at Camp Mills I met many lads under eighteen, some fifteen, and they were just longing for friendship and advice.

All of these fellows have the desire to go to France, fight the good fight, and come home again. There is great disgust for the slacker, and the Southerner considers all those who did not volunteer as slackers.

The division at Camp Mills is the Rainbow Division, so called because of the many different regiments from some twenty-seven states. New Jersey has an ambulance corps there, and Sabath '17, is in the Quartermaster Department. Cobb '12 is with the 165th Infantry, and we have packed Packard '17 as lieutenant in the Artillery from Illinois, the 149th of the Division.

I have recently been transferred to the South and am at Camp Hancock, Augusta, Georgia, with the Pennsylvania National Guards. It is a great change from the plains of Long Island to come to the sandy, dusty, pine-covered hills of Georgia. The tents under the pines make ammemorable impression, as they can be seen on the hillsides. These men will have four months of special training here and will then go to France. They would like to go now.

Wherever the army goes, the Y. M. C. A. goes with it. And more often the Association gets there before the men and is ready for them. We have a large number in France now, and it is my desire to go there as soon as I am able but I am afraid that I shall not be sent over very soon.

But it is a great satisfaction to have a share in the work. The Y. M. C. A. saved the morale of the Canadian Army; it will save the morals of our army and will help the fight for democracy.

Camp Mills, Hempstead, N.Y.

September 3, 1917

Mr. E. R. Silvers,
Rutgers College,
New Brunswick, N.J.

Dear Silvers:-

Your circular letter is at hand and I wish to state in answer to it that I am in the Army Young Men's Christian Association at Camp Mills, Hempstead, New York, with the Rainbow Division the 42nd, and the first of the National Guards to go to France.

I shall soon be transferred to the South where I shall be at Camp Hancock with the Penn. National Guards at Augusta Georgia, in the Y.M.C.A. work also.

I was drafted into the National Army but was discharged.

Yours very truly,

Frederick B. Keithcamp



THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS

EARL REED SILVERS

ALUMNI HOUSE

NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.

Frederick B. Heithamp

ARMY Y. M. C. A., 78

CAMP HANCOCK

AUGUSTA, GA.

Frederick B. Heitkamp,
Camp U. M. A.,
Camp Hancock,
Augusta, Ga.

January 23, 1918

Dear Earl:-

Those periodical letters which have been sent out by you have helped me wonderfully in my work here with the Y.M.C.A. and I take this opportunity of thanking you for them.

With regard to souvenirs which you have requested I am sorry that I have none to send. The "souvenirs" of my work are the impressions I make on the hearts and souls of the men as they come and go; and the only way they may be seen is in the morale and conduct of our men when they reach France and have the battles to fight with themselves and our foe.

I am sending you our Camp paper, however, which is published weekly and for which I do considerable writing.

Please give my very best regards to all of the fellows and the faculty, and especially Dr. Demarest.

Very sincerely yours,

Frederick B. Heitkamp

"Reverend, Pious and Learned Brethren in Christ:

"I have a son named Samuel, now entering on his twenty-fifth year. I instructed him myself for several years in the Latin and Greek languages. I then sent him to the Academy of Cambridge in New England, where I allowed him to pursue his studies for three years at my own expense. When he returned home he was desirous of visiting one of the universities of the Fatherland, and of continuing his studies therein. He accordingly went over to Utrecht, and having letters to Domine Voetius, he entered the university there. Although he is now separated from me many hundred miles, and I remain ignorant of his progress in his studies, or of his deportment in life, nevertheless as he conducted himself diligently, studiously and virtuously during his three years' residence in New England, according to ample testimonials given him, I trust that as he grows older he will not exhibit less industry in study, or less excellency of conduct in the University of Utrecht; and since he is so faithfully attending to his studies during the year now passing, that he will soon be prepared for an entrance on the Gospel ministry.

"At the same time, owing to the condition of the churches here it is necessary that there be sent out some English as well as Dutch preachers, it is my fraternal and submissive request, that when this subject comes before the Hon. Directors, and the Rev. Classis, that my son Samuel may be taken into consideration. And if he be deemed qualified for the office of the ministry, whether in Dutch or English towns, as he understands and speaks the English well, that he may be sent over in that capacity. As he is my youngest son, and I have been at much expense for him, having kept him for three years in New England, and now he is in the third at Utrecht, supporting him solely at my own expense, I cherish a strong desire to see him again among us before I die; as I expect that New Netherland, where I have now passed seventeen years of my ministry, will be the place of my burial. It will be a great joy to me to have my son return, qualified by God in doctrine and life, to build up the Church in this land. I commit these matters to God's providence and your kindness. May our God bless and strengthen you and myself in our ministries, to the glory of His name, the edification of his Church, and the salvation of our souls.

"Yours affectionately,

"JOHANNIS MEGAPOLENSIS.

"New Amsterdam, in New Netherland,
"Sept. 25, 1658."

(From Eccl. Records of N. Y.)

We find in said records a mem. of the Classis of Amsterdam dated 30th May, 1661, that "Rev. Samuel Megapolensis, S. S. Theol. Cand., has asked to be accepted as a recommended Candidate. Good testimonials from the Rev. Classis of Haarlem having been read concerning him, and he having delivered a trial sermon before the Deputies, his request was granted, after the usual subscription (of the formulæ). He lives at Viannen (in South Holland)."

Again we read that it having been made known to said Classis "that they have need of a minister in the regions of New Netherland, to assume the service of the Church

there," the Rev. Samuel Megapolensis was chosen out of three applicants and a time for his examination was set for 3 Oct., 1662," and the text, Acts xxvi: 17, 18 was given him by Rev. Examiner, for a sermon, on which date the "Rev. Samuel Megapolensis, called as minister to New Netherland, having stood within, preached a brief sermon (on said text) wherein he bore himself in such a way that it was unanimously judged that the examination be proceeded with. In this likewise he acquitted himself to the complete satisfaction of the Rev. Assembly, so that he was ordained to the ministry by the laying on of hands. He then subscribed the formulæ of concord and the rich blessing of the Lord was invoked upon him and his labors by the Assembly."

We further read of him that 2 June, 1663, "the Rev. Megapolensis, Jr., called as minister to New Netherland, has caused to be asked of the Hon. Directors an increase in his salary, because he will have to preach in two languages. The Rev. Classis resolved not to enter into this subject. And, whereas, it is reported that he is also studying medicine in Leyden, the Rev. Deputati will call his attention to the Synodical resolution against the practice of medicine (by ministers) and that according to his promise he must depart as soon as possible, the sooner the better, to his designated field of labor."

"1664, Jan. 20. Chamber at Amsterdam to Director and Council of New Netherland. Domine Samuel Megapolensis goes out by this ship. We have engaged him as minister on the same terms and conditions as Domine Blom and Selyns were formerly accepted, viz.: fifty florins a month."—Col. Docs., N. Y.

He remained until 1669, when he returned to the Fatherland with "praiseworthy testimonials from the Consistory of New York as to his faithfulness in the ministry," and in 1670 was settled at Wieringerwaard, his father's first charge, in the venerable Classis of Alkmaer. In 1677 he "departed from the Church, there to go to the English Church at Flushing, Long Island."

What One Man Can Do For the Soldiers

BY BUITON THOMAS

"YOU want some stories of our personal experiences with men?" repeated the Camp Secretary at Camp Hancock. "Go over and see Fred, at Building 76. He has a continual stream of soldiers coming to see him. He is one of the finest personal workers we have. That's a high compliment, too, for any man on our staff has a great many interviews every day."

Fred proved to be a tall, stalwart young fellow who had graduated from Rutgers College last year. After being rejected from the army on account of heart trouble he had become a Y. M. C. A. Secretary. His flashing smile and cordial handshake told volumes, and it was not hard to find the reason why a continuous procession wound in and out of his room.

"Experience along personal lines? We all have so many I don't know where to begin!" he said with a smile. "I'll just tell you what comes into my head as I go along.

"Only recently a rather rough-looking soldier came in and asked for a money order. We always write out money orders privately, you know, because that gives

* Heitkamp, Fred. B '17

over

But would she? Criticism isn't pleasant, and if it descends into nagging is downright injurious; but doesn't it force us to take stock of our religion and see whether it will bear the test of rough as well as smooth weather?

"I think I'm a pretty good Christian when my worldly brother isn't around," says another. "He's always telling me about where I fall down and the mistakes church people make, and so on. He's the biggest hindrance I have in my Christian life."

But was he? Outsiders don't take the trouble to sugar-coat our pills, and they go at us rough-shod; but after all, aren't they the drags that keep us from heeling over in the breakers of self-righteousness? How often our little life crafts sail along with a bad list when a word of honest criticism, if heeded, would right them! The crit-

such a good chance for a personal interview. This chap said he wanted one for \$50.

"'Been saving your pay for a couple of months, eh?' I asked him—or rather just remarked with a question in my voice. Of course I suspected he had been gambling, and I proved to be correct.

"'No, I won it shooting crap,' he told me.

"'You must be pretty lucky,' I said.

"'Well, I'm a professional gambler,' he said in a burst of confidence. 'I want to send this to my wife.'

"I drew him out before going on with the money order, and he said among other things that his father had been a gambler also, and that he himself had never done a day's work in his life until he got into the army. After he had told me quite a good deal about his past life—and believe me it had been some life!—I said, watching him pretty carefully:

"'Well, if you want your wife to have that kind of money, I suppose we'd better get it off.'

"'What do you mean?' he asked then.

"Then I opened up on him, and we got to talking about the men who had lost that money, as well as a good deal more that he had won. We always remind the gamblers that 'most likely the money they win is taken from wives and babies at home that need it badly. He had never looked at it in that light before seemingly. Finally I said again:

"'Well, old man, if you want to send it off, let's go on.'

"'I don't want to now,' he said, which was what I half expected. It wasn't hard then to lead him along further, and before we got through he 'came clean' on a Christian decision. He has been back several times since, has signed the War Roll, and reads his Testament every day. He told me that the service he attended the Sunday following our interview was the first time he had been to church in over ten years. He comes to Bible class regularly now, too.

"'If only my racetrack friends could see me now!' he said last Sunday as he came into the class carrying his book, and I had to laugh with him. He is certainly coming along in great shape, though.

"It is almost magical to see the way you can worm your way into the confidence of men here. They seem to just jump for anybody who is willing to talk with them about home, parents, sweethearts and so forth. I wish I had a dollar for every love-letter I have had read to me since I became a secretary!

"Sometimes we're able to help in this line, too—keep them from the wrong kind of girls and help them in the other direction. I have gotten several fine motherly women at home to write to lonesome boys down here.

"That reminds me of a case that came along just a week or so ago.

"A good-looking chap came up to the counter with a copy of some brewers' magazine in his hand. I don't know where he got it.

"'Look here—there's a girl wants to write to me!' he said with a grin, and showed me an ad in the paper. I noticed her address—in Newark, N. J. I come from New Jersey myself, and I knew that her street doesn't bear a very good reputation.

"'Well, are you going to write to her?' I asked him.

"'Have already!' he said, and showed me the letter.

"I asked him to come in my room, for a minute to see my girl's picture, and we talked along about the tender passion for a moment.

"'Look here, do you want someone to write to?' I asked him all of a sudden. 'I mean some one who is worth writing to—not a red light girl!'

"He was surprised, and I explained to him what my suspicions were. He tore up the letter after a while, and I got in touch with the wife of a doctor in my home town. She is a splendid mature motherly woman, and she wrote to this lonesome, homeless orphan immediately.

"Well, in a few days he came tearing over to the Y. M. C. A. with that letter in his hands, so pleased he didn't know what to do. He wrote an answer immediately, and they have corresponded ever since.

"Talking about the doctor's wife led to 'mother,' and finally to a Christian decision on the part of this boy. He was unutterably lonesome and had felt almost desperate, he said, watching the other fellows get mail and not having ANY himself. He wrote and told his foster-mother about the new stand he had taken, and I guess he'll always keep the answer he received from her.

"There are lots of boys just like that. There is a little Belgian in camp who told me he had worked in the mines as long as he could remember. He and his mother had always planned that the day the mortgage on their house was paid off he should cease work and go to school. It was a queer coincidence, but the very day the last payment was made, war was declared, so he enlisted right away without the long cherished schooling becoming a fact.

"He is only seventeen, and his mother died after he entered the army. He is absolutely alone in the world. That boy made the Y. M. C. A. his home—he was here every spare minute. He seemed to like to talk to us.

"Finally I noticed that he looked awfully blue one night, and I found out all this I have been telling you. I arranged right away to send him downtown to some fine people for a meal and an evening in their home, and you never saw a more excited boy in your life than he.

"That night about one o'clock I was awakened by a tap on my window. Outside was that boy, with a grin on from ear to ear. He was so happy he didn't know what to do. He has been down at that house several times since.

"I wrote home and got a lady to sort of adopt this boy, too. She writes to him, and on Christmas sent him a box that nearly threw him into hysterics of joy. Of course, all this time we had been getting close to him, and got him into a Bible class. He has signed the War Roll now, and he is really a fine Christian boy. It is amusing to see him tow one or two comrades into service or Bible Class every week.

"'Thass what Jesus do!' he says with a wide smile.

"Another man who was in just this morning needed our help if ever anybody did. He had married a country girl, brought her to live in Plattsburg, N. Y., and then after a while had enlisted. He said that since he had been away she had gone wrong, and the poor fellow was just about crazy. He was really in awful shape.

"I talked with him for two hours. There isn't much you can say, but I did succeed in bringing a knowledge of Jesus Christ to him, and he seemed to be comforted somewhat as he thought of a loving Heavenly Father who even knew when the sparrows fell.

"'I ain't never gone in none for religion!' he told me with a pathetic little smile, 'but I sure do need somethin' if anybody ever did.'

"He was right, and I think he had found that something. He is coming again this afternoon to talk with me."

That young secretary told a great many more stories as he rambled on, but the limits of this article will not permit recounting all of them. The incidents I have chosen are reproduced exactly as "Fred" told them. They hold the secret of Army Y. M. C. A. work, and the reason why an Army 'Y' man is respected—yes, loved,—by every soldier in the land.

January 28, 1918.

Mr. Frederick B. Heitkamp,
Army W. B. C. A.
Camp Hancock, Augusta, Ga.

Dear Fred:

I appreciate your kind word of January 23rd and
acknowledge also receipt of your camp paper. If there
is anything that I can do for you at any time, I hope that
you will call upon me.

With kind personal regards,

Very sincerely yours,

Assistant to the President.

ERS/MVH

Fred H. Heitkamp
Chatham, N. J.

Chatham, N. J.
August 10, 1918

Mr. Earl Reed Silvers,
Rutgers College,
New Brunswick, N. J.

Dear Reed:-

This is a brief note with the purpose of telling you that five of the members of '17 gathered at Kleines for a little meeting to talk over class business and to renew the class spirit as far as possible.

Those who were therewere Levy, Bloodgood, Woodward Bowen and Heitkamp. It might be of interest to the rest of the members in service to know that we are trying to keep things going here.

I shall look forward with eagerness for the Service Letters for they are fine.

Sincerely yours,

Fred

December 11, 1918.

Mr. Frederick B. Heitkamp,

Y.M.C.A. Hut 78,

Camp Hancock, Georgia.

Dear Fred:-

Thank you very much for your letter of December 8th and for the description of what happened at Augusta when the armistice was signed. I hope that with the ending of the war, you will be able to get back north again and will not forget to come in to see me for a good chat.

With best wishes,

Cordially yours,