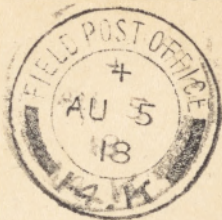


Pvt. J.H. Thomson
U.S. Army
Inf.

POST CARD

Soldiers Mail



~~Place Two
Cent Stamp
Here~~

Earl Reed Silvers

Rutgers College

New Brunswick, N. J.



"Some where in France" 8/2/18

Dear Silvers;

I was mighty glad to get your letter NO. ~~XXIII~~ which arrived about a week ago. It seemed good to get word of old Rutgers. I shall be anxious to hear from you again. Have not run into any Rutgers men yet, altho Wm Pat. is quite near me in the city. My address is still the same.

Thanks for the address of the American University Union over here in Paris.

am anxious to hear all about the incoming class at Rutgers and the University College. We were "out of luck" in not being there when the latter was opened.

Was sorry to hear of Jimmy Dean's golden wedding. He was certainly "worthy" of Rutgers.

Wish you the best of success in your "war service" work.
Yours in Rutgers

J. Harold Thomson '18.

U.S. Army
and AE.F.

J.

Middlebush Lad Writes of Being Wounded; Tells Parents Not to Worry

Rev. J. A. Thomson of Middlebush has received a letter from his son, J. Harold Thomson, telling of the latter's experiences in being wounded by a shell which also wounded his sergeant, two machine gun scouts and six other men of the Int. Section. The two scouts and the sergeant were wounded quite badly, and young Thomson's gas mask was knocked all to pieces.

The minister's son is not badly hurt and has had excellent care in the several hospitals he has been taken to.

Thomson was hurt on Friday, Nov. 1 a little after 6 a. m., when he was about a kilo and a half back of the real front line with Battalion Headquarters.

The young soldier's letter is as follows:

Somewhere in France,

November 3, 1918.

Dear Father and Mother:

I wonder if you can guess where I am now. As you said, mother, in your last letter we seem to be moving all the time. Well, I'll say I have been doing "some" moving during the last two days. My last letter to you was written, I think, on the last day of October at the front. I didn't tell you then, but we were then waiting for the almost immediate beginning of another big drive along the whole front. The newspapers of this date will tell in large headlines of that drive—the last one, I hope, of the war.

Well, we didn't know just when the order would come to go over the top, but there was no question in my mind that the time had come, when about 8 o'clock Friday morning, November 1st, I was awakened in my little "dig-in" by the terrific barrage which our artillery then let loose on Jerry. We were stationed about a kilo and a half back of the real front line with Battalion Headquarters. Our companies went over the top a little before dawn and then Battalion Headquarters was moved up toward the line further. The Intelligence Section, for some reason or other, did not move with them. They intended I found out later, to use us as relay runners between Battalion Headquarters and Regimental Headquarters as soon as Battalion Headquarters could be settled up the line. At 6 a. m. we got orders to get out of our holes and roll our packs and be ready to move.

I was sleeping with a food scout by the name of Raymond from Providence, R. I. We had just finished rolling our packs out in front of our hole when Jerry sent over one of his early morning compliments. I don't know what it was—all that I know is that something terrific happened, and the next second Raymond and I were knocked flat in our hole. There was a sting in my left side and a general feeling of being sort of knocked out all over, but when I looked at my buddy, Raymond, I nearly forgot my own "little thorn in the flesh." There he was on his back, rolling about with his hands on his stomach and crying, "Oh, let me die," evidently in great pain. I got out my little Red Cross scissors, which has been of such use to me on so many occasions, and ripped open his blouse and shirt. A dirty piece of shrapnel had hit him right "plum" in the belly, and every time he breathed—oh, well, I wouldn't try to tell you about it. I called to

I was sleeping with a good scout by the name of Raymond from Providence, R. I. We had just finished rolling our packs out in front of our hole when Jerry sent over one of his early morning compliments. I don't know what it was—all that I know is that something terrible happened, and the next second Raymond and I were knocked flat in our hole. There was a sting in my left side and a general feeling of being sure of knocked out all over, but when I looked at my buddy, Raymond, I nearly forgot my own "little thorn in the flesh." There he was on his back, rolling about with his hands on his stomach and crying "Oh, let me die," evidently in great pain. I got out my little Red Cross scissors, which has been of such use to me on so many occasions, and ripped open his blouse and shirt. A dirty piece of shrapnell had hit him right "plum" in the belly, and every time he breathed—oh, well, I wouldn't try to tell you about it. I called to another fellow for his first aid pouch, and with his help we got Raymond fixed up a little and soon had him off on a stretcher. Then I took a look at myself and found a dirty little hole through my clothes. A piece of that same shell had, as one of the jolly medical officers told me later, taken a piece of bacon from my left side, leaving my ribs all O. K. It got me just in the soft flesh below the last rib. The other fellow then bandaged me up and I began going through one of the strangest experiences that a fellow ever has over here—the journey from the front to the base hospital. By the way, I am now at Base Hospital No. 116, but on account of the big drive we will no doubt be moved on to another base at any time. Have only been here a day. Arrived 12 o'clock last night.

Here is just a brief outline of my trip back up to date. Walked from my hole to the First Aid Station 200 yards down the road, where I was hooked and tagged, walked to nearby town about a mile away where there was another R. C. station working overtime, and then some, waited here till nearly noon for an ambulance (the serious cases were sent away first); rode by ambulance (sitting up, of course,) to R. C. dressing station three miles further back; rode in auto truck ten miles to a Field Hospital (all tents); after going through "the mill" there we rode in another auto truck about ten miles further to another Field Hospital; was there most of the night, or at least to nearly midnight. Then we went by ambulance for a couple of hours for about 15 miles or so to an evacuation hospital. My wounds were again dressed and we were given something hot to eat and a nice warm, real honest-to-goodness BED—the first I have seen in many a month. Had a wonderful sleep. At noon the next day we boarded a very long hospital train and rode until about midnight last night, arriving at the large base hospital somewhere in peaceful France. When and where we shall go next is the question. "So it goes." Life is one darn thing after another, but when a fellow is wounded, each day seems to be better than the former one.

I am now in a large R. C. Recreation Hall. It is very pleasant to say the least. Just had a fine bath and a great dinner.

It may interest you to know that when I landed in one of the field hospitals back of the line I ran into a couple of other fellows from our section. Seemed good to see them. They had slight wounds, and they told me that the shell which got Raymond and me also wounded our sergeant, two machine gun scouts whom I remembered were standing

just in front of our hole, and six other fellows of the infantry section. One shell and nine casualties was a pretty good hit for Jerry. The two scouts and our sergeant were wounded pretty badly. My gas mask, by the way, was knocked all to pieces. For an hour or so I thought I nearly was out of luck, for we were under shell fire until after noon.

Well, this is getting to be a big letter, and it is all about me—all the time. Received your letter, another written just after Lauren's wedding. It was such a fine one. I got it October 31st. Those things you sent me may come in very good, for I have lost everything—even my diary. I feel as if I had lost an old friend. I am mighty sorry I left that in my little hole. My address will still be the same. When I get settled somewhere I will let my lieutenant in the section know, and he will forward my mail to me.

I am going to wish you all a Merry Christmas, and get ahead of you this time. Won't it be a Merry Christmas if the war is over! and I am sure it will be. Don't worry one bit about me, nothing went inside of me and I am feeling fine.

With lots of love to you all.

HAROLD.

ON ACTIVE SERVICE
WITH THE
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

AMERICAN RED CROSS



NAME _____

Nov, 6,

1918

Dear Silvers:

For the last six months I have been expecting to write and let you know what a joy it is for a fellow over here to get one of your War Bureau (pardon the spelling I it's been a long time since I've been in school and had "spelling") letters — provided of course that you are a "man of Putgers". That letter, coming as it does when you least expect it, is like a drink of refreshing water to a thirsty and weary traveler for it always satisfies a certain longing and craving one has ever had for a bit of news and gossip from the banks of the old Kantar. I never realized how fine old Putgers is and what a pleasant few years we put in there until I came over here. It seems the further one gets from a good thing, the better he likes it. Well, anyway they say "absence makes

the heart grow fonder". I have found out that it is true with reference to persons and also to institutions.

From the heading of this paper I suppose you will think I am doing my bit on some bomb proof job back in the S.O.S. regions in the Hospital Corps or something like that. Well, I am back in the safety zone, far, far from the front but I've only been here a couple of days. As luck would have it after being at the front for a couple of months, I have been forced to join that 'body of Yanks whom Jerry has tried to put out of action. But Jerry made a bad job of it, as he has always done in everything else, for he only wounded me slightly — just a "little slice of bacon off the left side, leaving the rib" — is the way one of the Medical Sents. described my little "thorn in the flesh". When the doctor comes around in the morning and pours some fiery liquid in that little gash, it helps a lot to think of the fellow across the way with one leg in ruins and his head smashed up. Then my own little trouble seems but a trifling.

ON ACTIVE SERVICE
WITH THE
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

AMERICAN RED CROSS



NAME _____

19

Right here I must say that too much praise can never be given the Medical Corps and the Red Cross nurses on this side of the water in the work they are doing. They do it so well so cheerfully and so willingly. After being in the army for six months and up at the front for two months, it seems like heaven back here in a base hospital. But I'll say the road to this heaven has been a rough one alright.

It was on the morning of Nov. 1st that Jerry "got me". The 1st Army Corps began another big drive then and it is still going on. I was with the Intelligence Section. By the way, my address has been changed ever since the 1st of July. Your letters however have been coming through just the same, albeit rather late. My new address is, First Battalion Intelligence Section, 310th Inf. A.E.F. 78 Division. There are a few other Rutgers fellows in this division I understand but

I have only run into one— Bill Patz '18. Bill and I were together during the whole four years and we were drafted at the same time. I came upon him one day when we were back in reserve in a big forest. There he was sitting in his little "jup" tent, stuffed to the skin, with his under shirt in hand examining it very carefully— of course he could not be looking for cooties(?) Any A.E.F. man who has not done the same thing, has never been at the front long enough to duck a shell. Bill, by the way, is now a Sergeant and has made quite a hit with the Germans as a scout and patrol leader. My work was observation work.

I'm getting mighty anxious to get your next letter and to hear about the opening of College and the football "slaps".

Wishing you the best of luck in your good work I remain

Sincerely yours

for Old Outgers

J. Harold Thomson '18

o f
RSSerham
Capt me

16
From Private J. Harold Thomson '18

American Red Cross, France.

November 6, 1918.

For the last six months I have been expecting to write and let you know what a joy it is for a fellow over here to get one of your Ear Bureau (pardon the spelling)- its been a long time since I've been in school and had (spelling) letters- provided of course that you are a "man of Rutgers." That letter coming as it does when you least expect it is like a chink of refreshing water to a thirsty and weary traveler for it always satisfies a certain longing and craving one has over here for a bit of news and gossip from the banks of the old Raritan. I never realized how fine old Rutgers is and what a pleasant four years we had in there until we came over here. It seems the further one gets from a good thing, the better he likes it. Well, anyway they say "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." I have found out that it is true with reference to persons and also to institutions.

From the heading of this paper I suppose you will think I am doing my bit on some bomb proof job back in the S. O. S. regions in the Hospital Corps or something like that. Well, I am back in the safety zone, far, far from the front but I've only been here a couple of days. As luck would have it after being at the front for a couple of months, I have been forced to join that body of Yanks whom Jerry has lived to put into action. But Jerry made a bad job of it, as he has always done in everything else, for he only wounded me slightly-just a "little slices of bacon off the left side leaving the rib" is the way one of the Medical Huts described my little thron in the flesh. "When the doctor comes around in the morning and pours some fiery liquid in that gash it helps a lot to think of the fellows across the way with one leg 'in ruins' and his head smashed up. Then my own little trouble seems but a trifle.

Right here I must say that too much praise can never be given the Medical Corps and the Red Cross nurses on this side of the water in the work they are doing. They do it so well, so cheerfully and so willingly. After being in the army for six months and up to the front for two months, it seems like heaven back here in a base hospital. But I'll say the road to this heaven has been a rough one alright.

It was on the morning of November 1st that Jeffy got me. The 1st Army Corps began another drive then and it is still going on. It was with the Intelligence Section. By the way, my address has been changed ever since July 1st. Your letters however have been coming through just the same although rather late. My new address is 1st Battalion Intelligence Section, 310 Infantry, A. E. F., 78th Division.

There are a few other Rutgers fellows in this division of instant, but I have only run into one -- Bill Patz '18. Bill and I were together during the whole four years and we were chatted at the same time. I came upon him one day when we were back in reserve in a large forest. There he was sitting in his little "pup" tent stripped to the skin with his undershirt in hand scanning it very carefully-- of course he couldn't be looking for cooties! Any A. E. F. man who has not done the same thing has never been at the front long enough to duck a shell. Bill, by the way, is now a Sergeant and has made quite a hit with the Huns as a scout and patrol leader. My work was observation work.

I'm getting mighty anxious to get your next letter and to hear about the opening of College and the football "dope."

Wishing you the best of luck in your good work,

December 3, 1918.

Prvt. J. Harold Thompson,
First Battalion Intelligence Section,
310th Infantry, 78th Division,
American Expeditionary Forces

Dear Thompson,

I am sorry to hear of your injury, but glad that you took the trouble to write me about it. Your experiences have been most interesting, and I suppose that we should be very thankful that you came through as well as you did. Let us hope now that you will be among the first to return to the good old U.S. When you do get back, don't forget to drop in at the college. We shall welcome you with open arms.

With kindest personal regards,

Cordially yours,

A Schoolroom in France

From Private J. Harold Thomson '18

France,

January 31, 1919.

I am taking advantage of the A. E. F. educational scheme. I am taking a course in French, or "frog talk," as it is more commonly known among the Americans in France. Can you imagine me taking up French after my little experience with it in Rutgers? This war has done many wonderful things to different nations and individuals, and not the least wonderful is the change that it has made in my attitude towards the French language. I see it all only too well now. "Little did I think back in college that the day would some time come when a little "parle vousing" on my part would bring my hungering inner man relief and satisfaction, and also put me on good terms with many French companions in both military and civil life.

A sergeant in our section does the teaching, and he can speak French to perfection. I have attended two classes thus far. They have been held in the evening from 6 to 7 o'clock, twice a week. We hold the class in the village schoolhouse, and like all the buildings in France, it is of stone, very heavy looking on the outside and dismal on the inside. Perhaps it is more cheerful by daylight, as I have only seen it from a crude oil lamp on the teacher's desk. So far my interest in the work has been somewhat weak, for the walls of the room have interested me more than the lesson of the evening.

There are four objects hanging on the wall of this little country schoolhouse that have interested me more than the lesson taught. On the wall over the teacher's head when he is in his chair hangs a photograph of none other than President Wilson - our President. At the first sight of my old friend it did not strike me as being unusual, until I looked about and found that there was no other picture in the entire room. Woodrow had the room to himself. All day long he looks gravely down on those little French children as if to say, "Children of France, I am for you, I am with you." And they in turn look up to him from their books and wonder how he

could be so great and good to them.

After saying "Howdy" to Wilson, I glanced slightly to the right, and there over the front door was a large map of God's own country - the "State Unis," it was called. It thrilled me just to look at that cheap outline of our country. What a noble looking country it is! How bighearted it looks! It is a perfect picture of everything that we love most dearly. It looks just like home, that map does. Every name on it is precious, although spelled sort of French-like. I was pleased to see it here in this out-of-the-way place.

Then I glanced to the left, and there was a map of France showing merely mountains and streams. Of course, a French school would have a map of France, but I was surprised that it was not a better map. Then my eyes fell slightly toward the right, and there - could it be possible? - was another map of the United States. And there she was again, perfectly at home, as if to say, "America first place," even here in France. That school is certainly showing up America to the pupils, with two maps of our country, and the picture of our President to help along.

After the class was over I made a closer study of those maps, and there was written in French the fact that we are the richest nation in the world, that we are sending to France, soldiers, guns ammunition, ships, food, etc. It does me good just to go into that little room and take a good hour's look at the U. S. A. from two angles, and also our President.

• AMERICAN UNIVERSITY CLUB

UNDER AUSPICES OF Y. M. C. A.

UNIVERSITY OF MONTPELLIER

—*—

Montpellier, Fr
Feb, 20, 1919

Dear Silvers:

The "war record" slip which you will find enclosed was forwarded to me from home a few days ago.

Your idea of publishing a book of Rutgers' part in the war is a good one. Hope the information that you want will come in fast.

The last "War Service" letter that I have received was the one of Feb, 10. Always glad to get them. You will notice that I have changed my address again.

Am having a wonderful time down here along the Med. Sea at the old university town of Montpellier. Theodore Bodrees' Rutgers '15 and myself are the

only other Rutgers men down here. Just at present we are enjoying an Easter vacation and going on sight-seeing excursions to the many places of historic interest in this section of France. There are about one thousand students here of whom 560 are American soldiers, and the remainder are French, Greeks, Serbians, & Yugoslavs.

I shall think of you all on June 9th during the big war reunion day. Sorry I can't be there — perhaps in another year or two I can.

Sincerely

Harold Thomson

Address:

A.S.D. Univ. of Montpellier

Montpellier, (Hérault) France

T.P.O. 949.

May 16th, 1919.

Mr. J. H. Thompson,

A. S. D., Univ. of Montpellier,

Montpellier (Herault) France.

A. P. O. 949.

Dear Thompson:

I acknowledge with appreciation your interesting letter of April 20th, telling of your present whereabouts and activities.

It is always good to hear from you.

Cordially yours,

ERS/b