Bert Blankenship, World War I soldier

Around 1919, the Kansas State Historical Society and the American Legion solicited biographical information from returning veterans (primarily members of the 35th and 89th infantry divisions) and the families of those who died in service, notably from the Gold Star Mothers. Each veteran or family member was asked to provide letters, photographs, a biography, and military records. This file contains information on Bert Blankenship, Company F, 137th Infantry, 35th Division. He was killed on September 26, 1918 in the Argonne Forest.

Creator: Blankenship, Bert

Date: 1918-1921

Callnumber: World War I Coll. #49, Box 4 Kansas Soldiers

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 225018

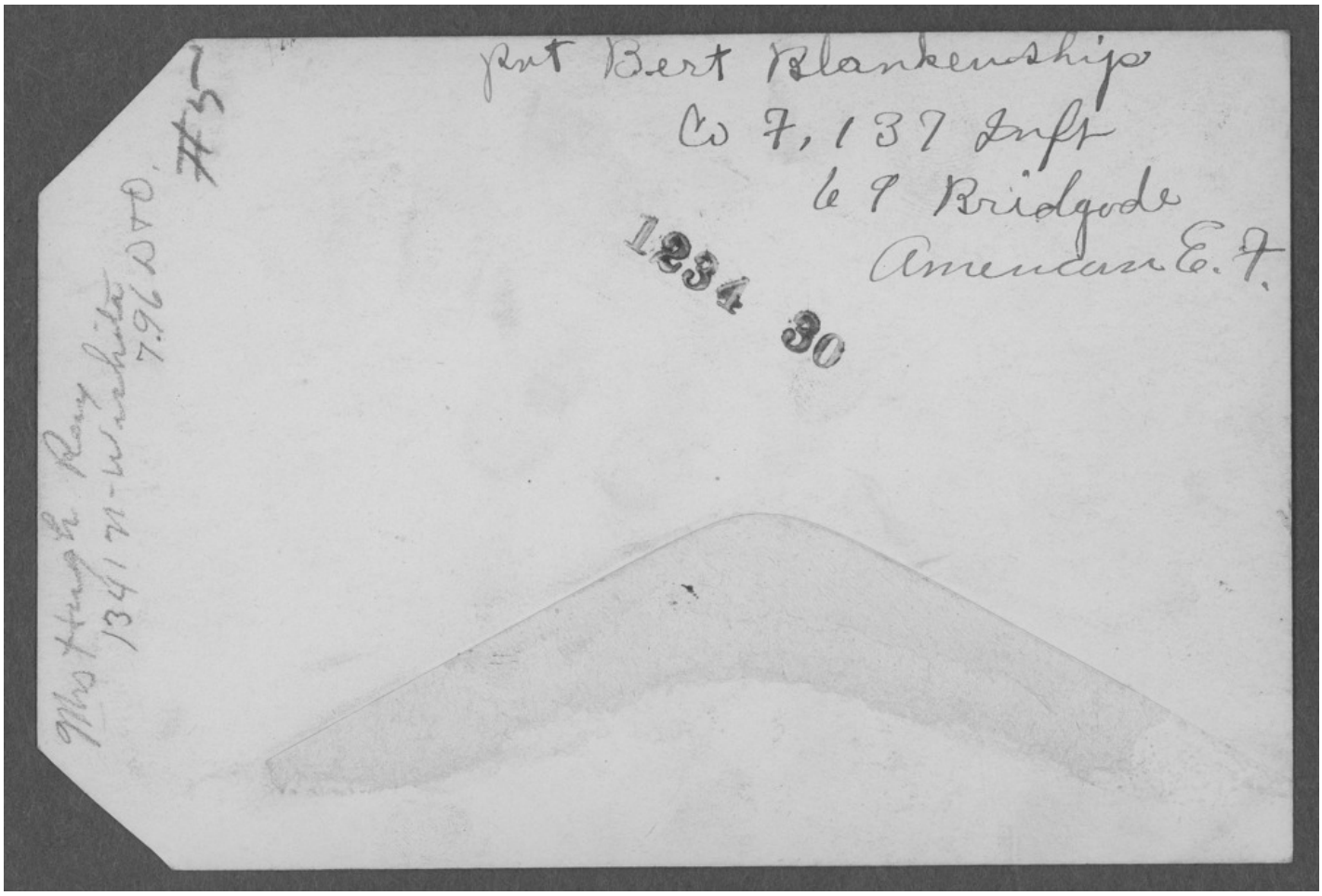
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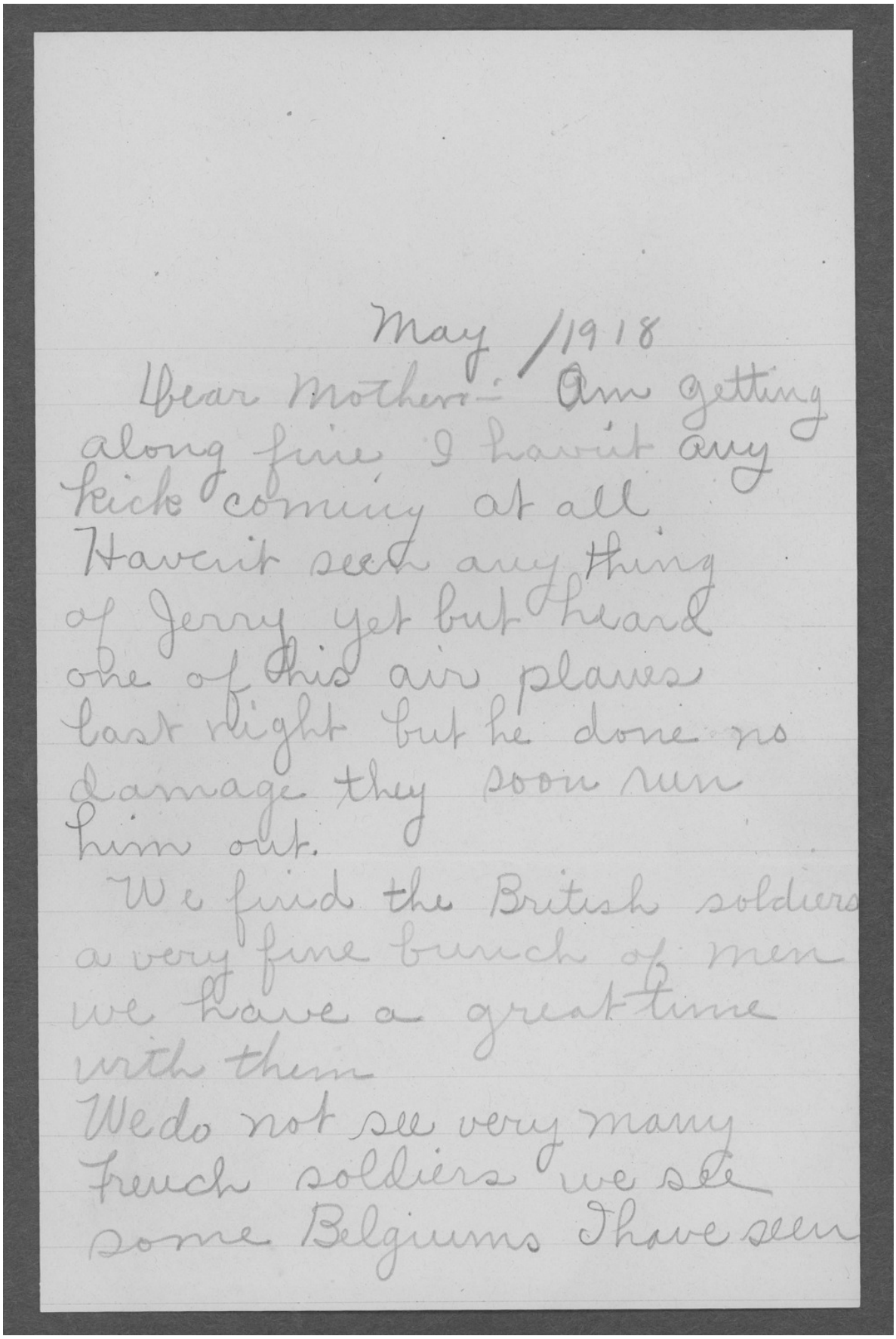
Bert Blankenship, World War I soldier



Bert Blankenship, World War I soldier



Bert Blankenship, World War I soldier



May 1/1918

Dear Mother- Am getting along fine I have'nt any kick coming at all. Have'nt seen any thing of Jerry yet but heard one of this air planes last night but he done no damage they soon run him out.

We find the British soldiers a very fine bunch of men we have a great time with them

We do not see very many French soldiers we see some Belgiums I have seen

several families that has been run out by air raids Nutz isn't doing much Has Hugh gone to California or not did Harold go with him I will close with lots of love As ever Your son Pvt Bert Blankenship
7 Co. 137 Inft
A.E.F.

American Y.M.C.A.

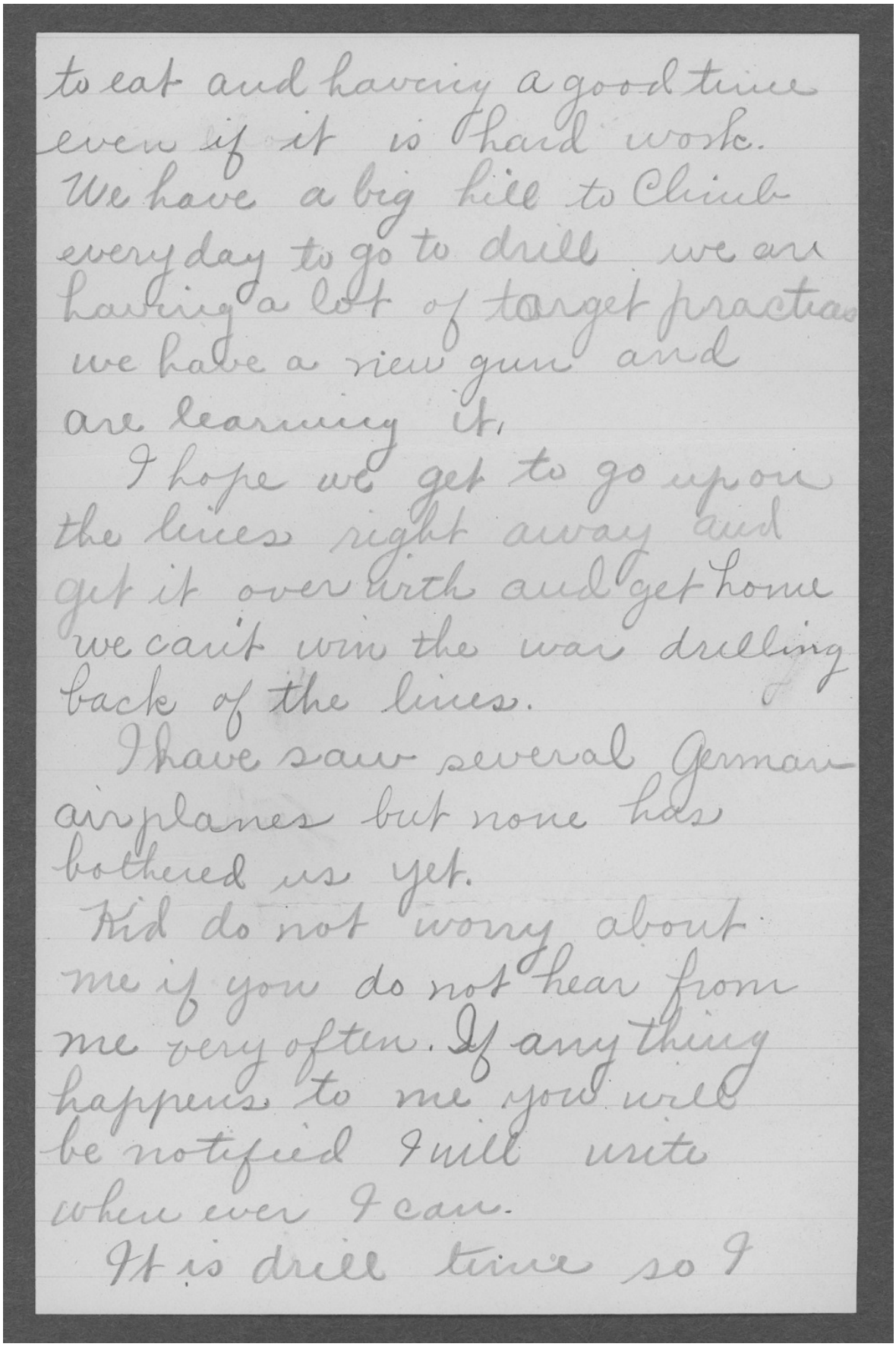
On Active Service with the American expeditionary Force

June 20, 1918

Dear Sis:—

Will answer your most kind and welcome letter which I received some time ago. I would of answered sooner but I could not get any stationary it is awfull hard to get paper. We have changed places since I wrote to you last we hiked —— and a train ride had box cars to ride in I had rather ride in the freight cars than the passenger cars they have over here for we can sleep in the freight cars.

We are getting plenty (over)



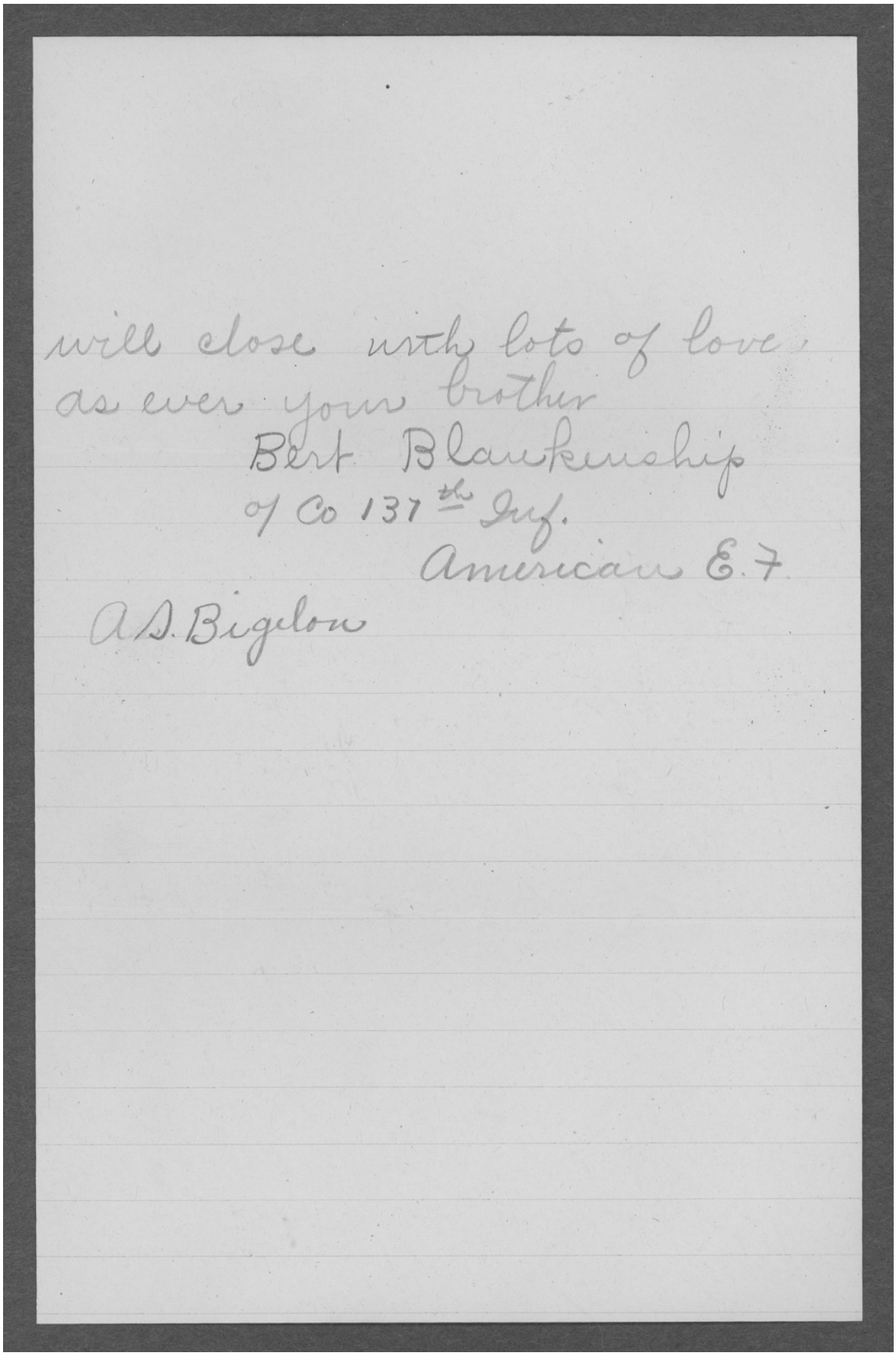
to eat and having a good time even if it is hard work. We have a big hill to climb every day to go to drill we are having a lot of target practice we have a new gun and are learning it.

I hope we get to go up on the lines right away and get it over with and get home we can't win the war drilling back of the lines.

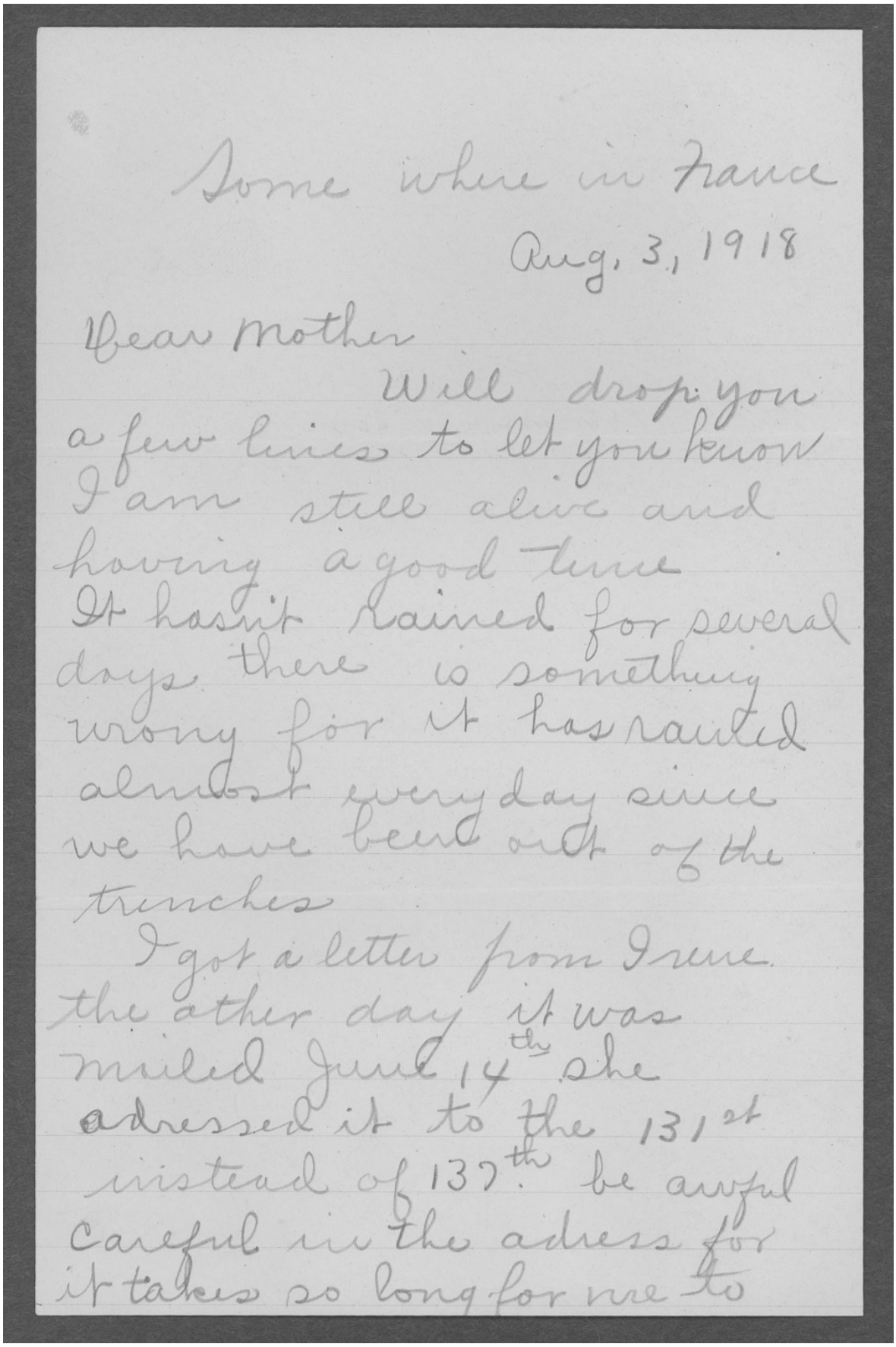
I have saw several German airplanes but none has bothered us yet.

Kid do not worry about me if you do not hear from me very often. If anything happens to me you will be notified I will write when ever I can.

It is drill time so I



will close with lots of love,
as ever your brother
Bert Blankenship
of Co 137th Inf.
American E.F.
A.D. Bigelow

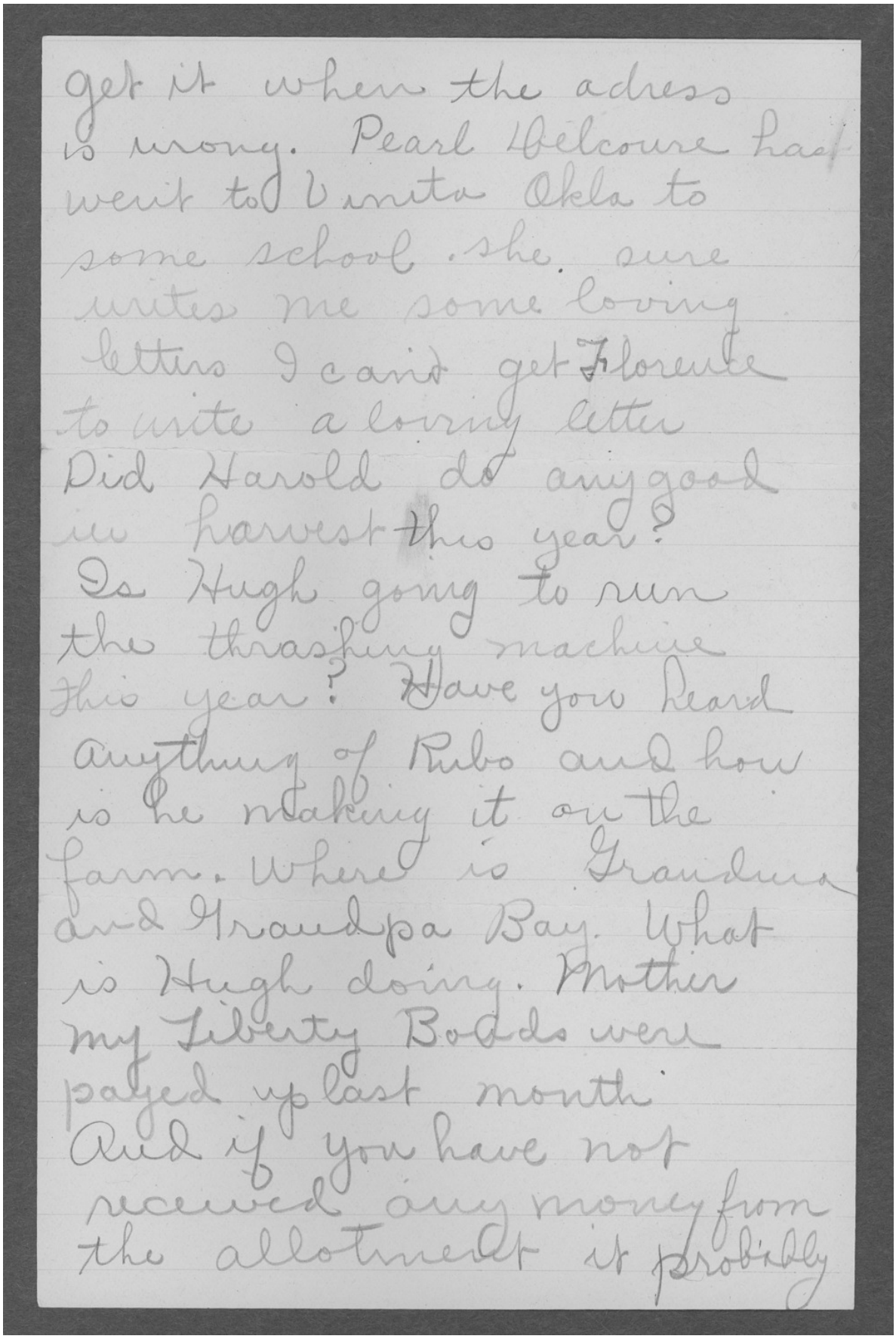


Some where in France
Aug. 3, 1918

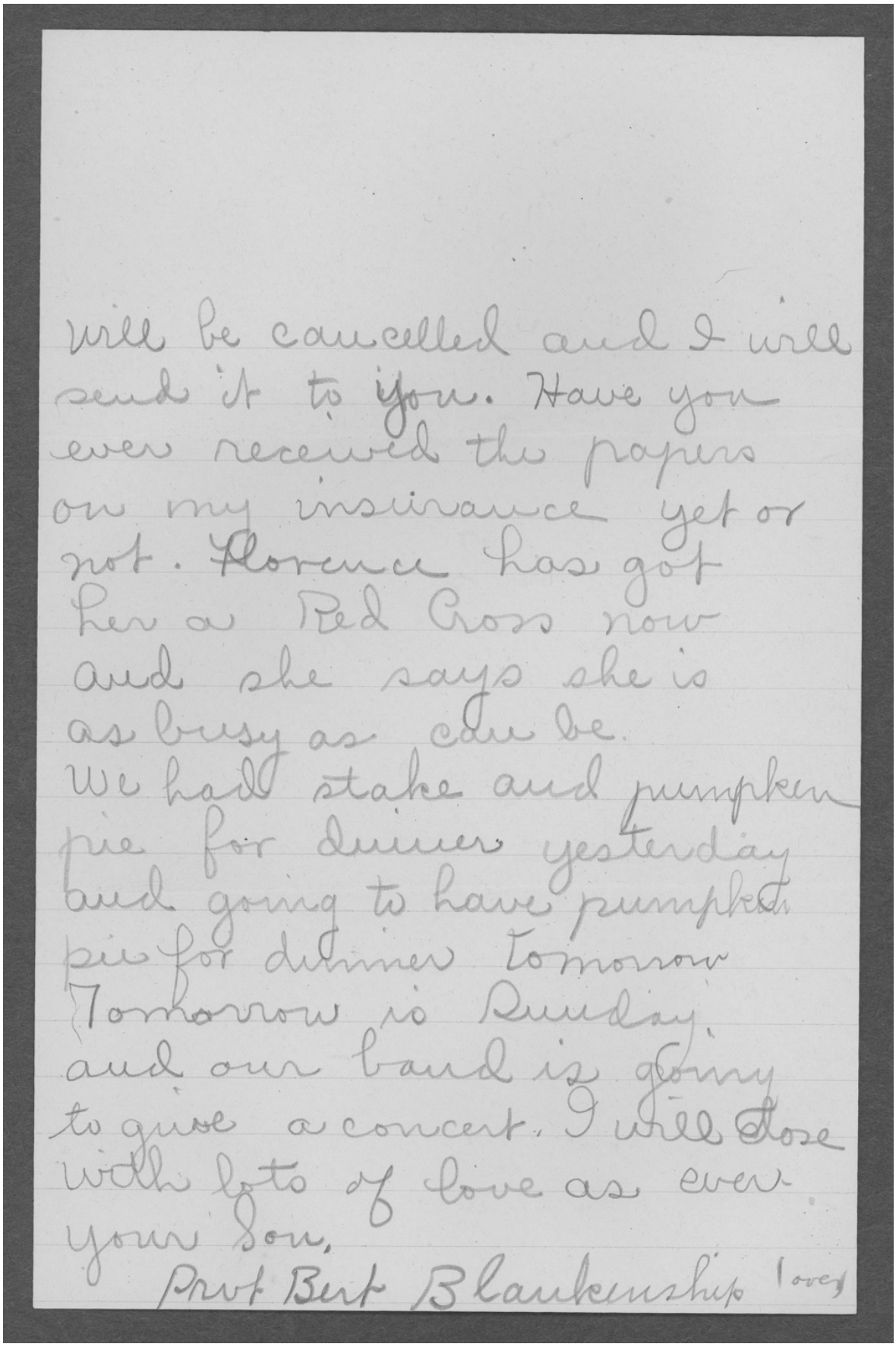
Dear Mother

Will drop you a few lines to let you know I am still alive and having a good time. It hasn't rained for several days there is something wrong for it has rained almost everyday since we have been out of the trenches.

I got a letter from Irene the other day it was mailed June 14th she adressed it to the 131st instead of 137th be awful careful in the adress for it takes so long for me to

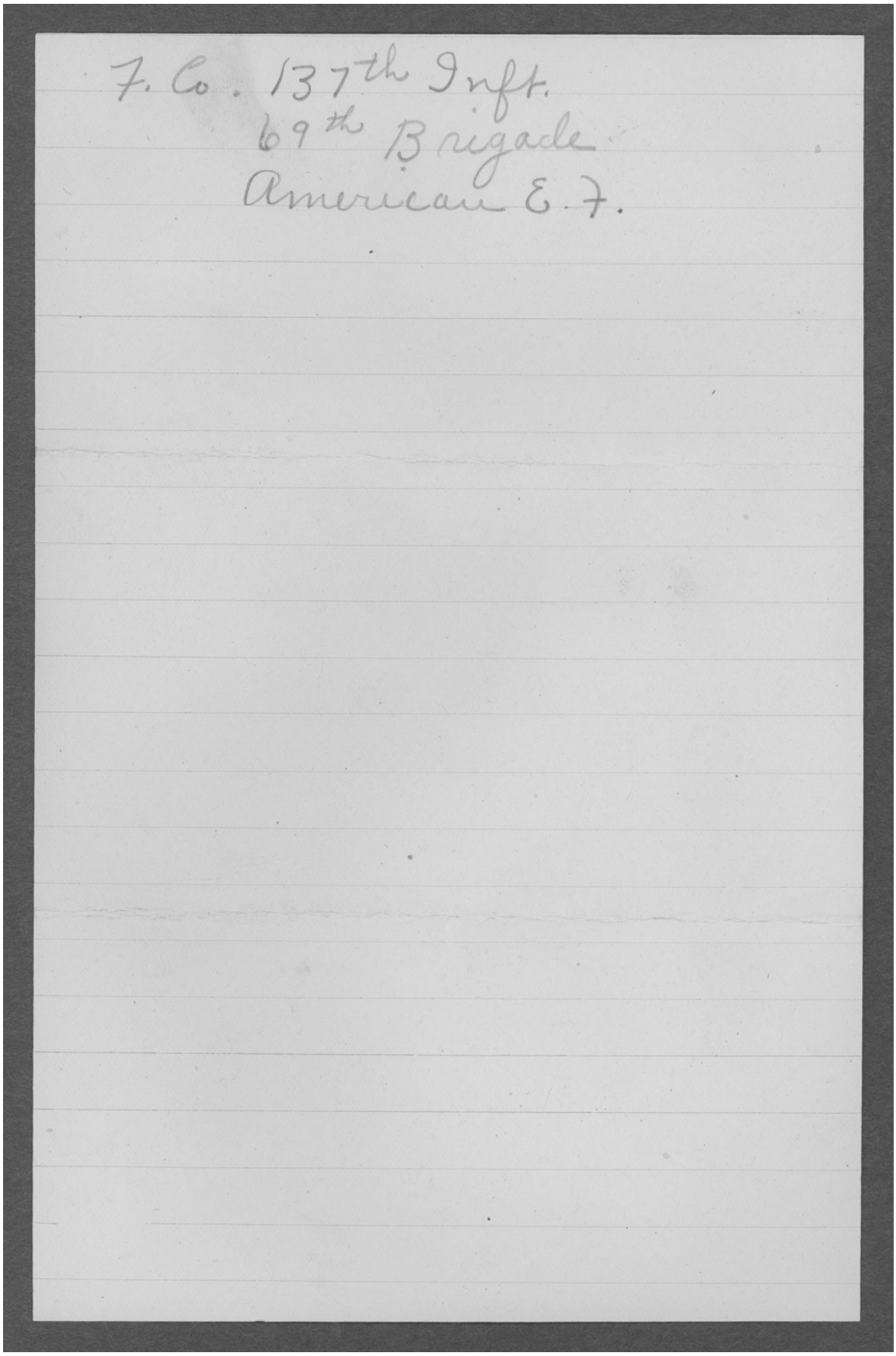


get it when the adress is wrong. Pearl Belcourt has went to Vinita Okla to some school. She sure writes me some loving letters I cant get Florente to write a loving letter Did Harold do any good in harvest this year? Is Hugh going to run the thrashing machine this year? Have you heard anything of Rubo and how is he making it on the farm. Where is Grandma and Grandpa Bay. What is Hugh doing. Mother my Liberty Bonds were payed up last month And if you have not received any money from the allotment it probibly



will be cancelled and I will send it to you. Have you ever received the papers on my insurance yet or not. Florence has got her a Red Cross now and she says she is as busy as can be. We had stake and pumpkin pie for dinner yesterday and going to have pumpkin pie for dinner tomorrow Tomorrow is Sunday and our band is going to give a concert. I will close with lots of love as ever your Son,

Prvt Bert Blankenship Iowa


F. Co. 137th Inft.
69th Brigade
American E.F.

American Y.M.C.A.

On Active service with the American Expeditionary Forces

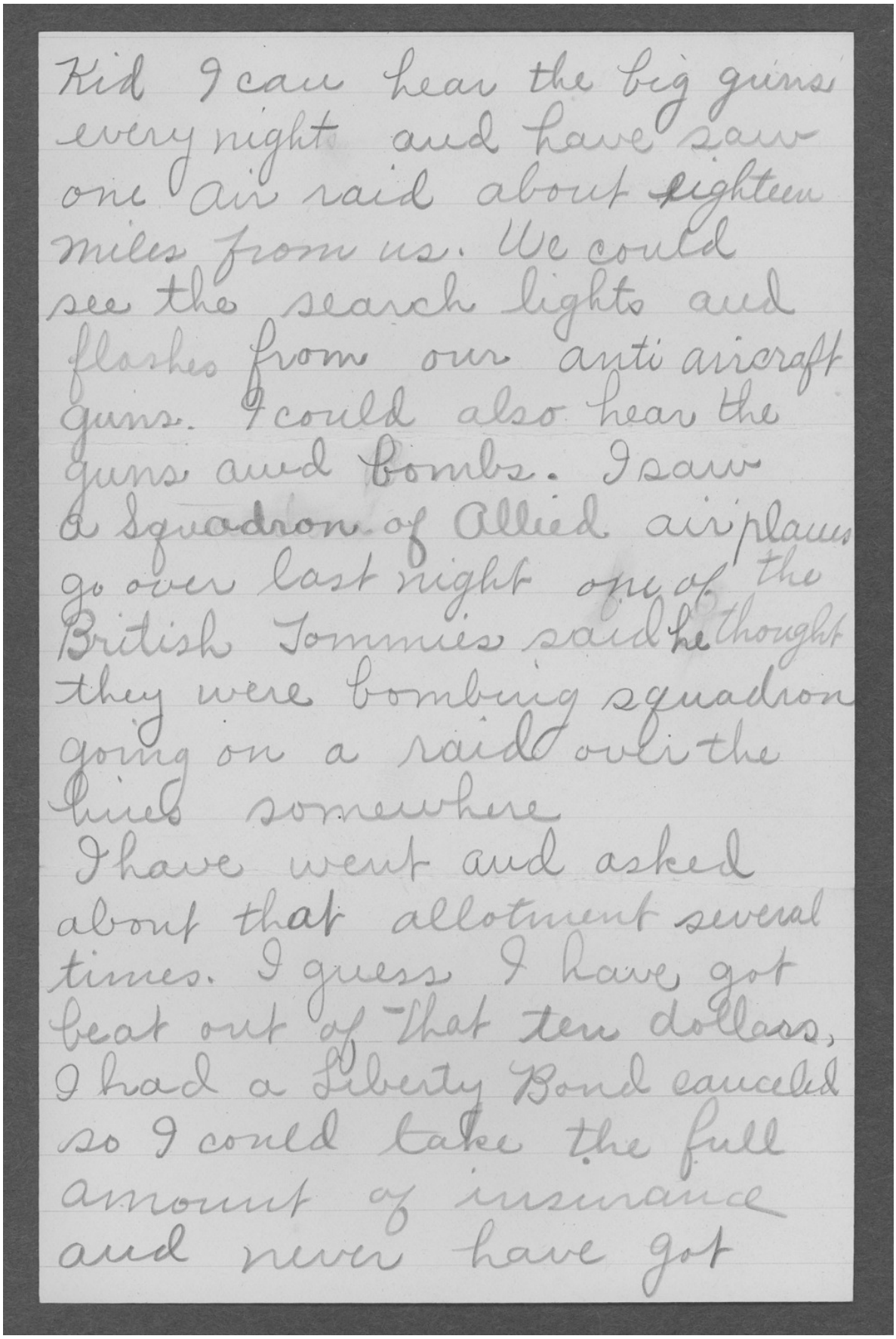
May 30, 1918

Dear Brother.

Received your letter the 28th of May and sure was glad to hear from you. It had been a month and a half since any of us had got any mail.

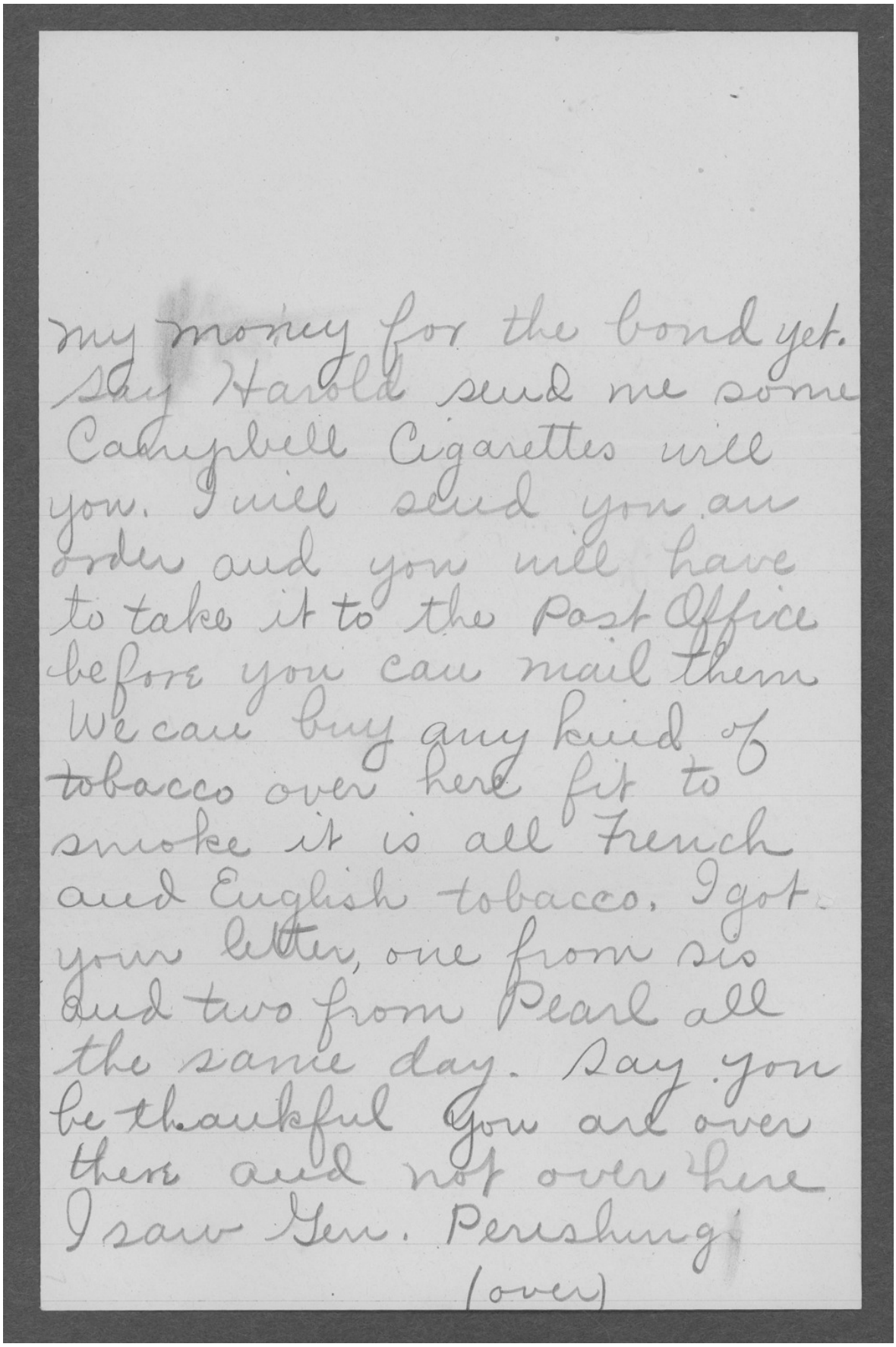
We are sure having fine weather over here it hasn't rained but once.

Today is a holiday it is memorial day. Our Chaplin gave us a short talk about our fourfathers. and the band was over we sang a few old National hymns. (over)



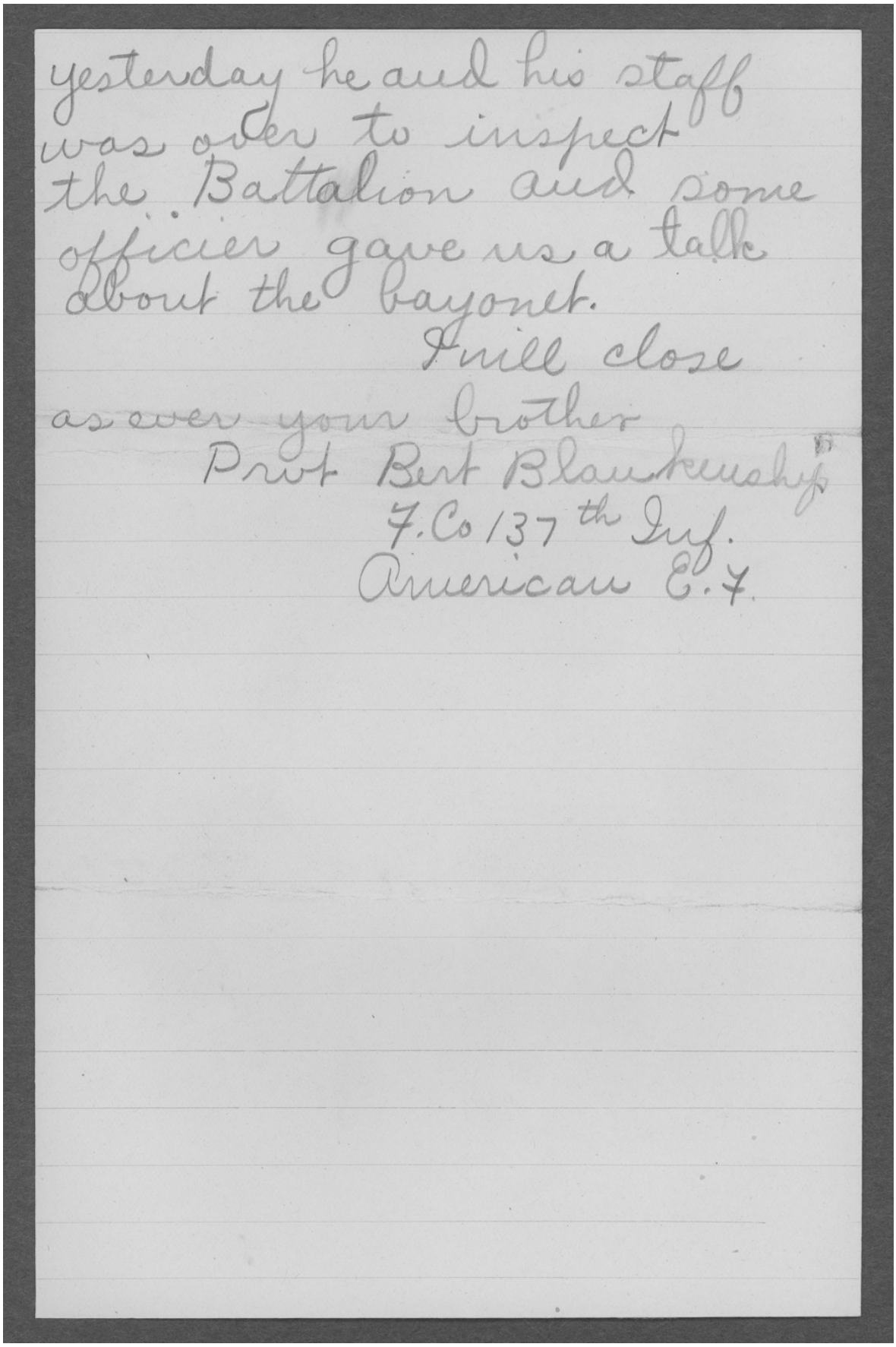
Kid I can hear the big guns every night and have saw one air raid about ~~eighteen~~ miles from us. We could see the search lights and flashes from our anti aircraft guns. I could also hear the guns and bombs. I saw a squadron of Allied airplanes go over last night one of the British Tommies said he thought they were bombing squadron going on a raid over the lines somewhere

I have went and asked about that allotment several times. I guess I have got beat out of that ten dollars. I had a Liberty Bond canceled so I could take the full amount of insurance and never have got



my money for the bond yet. Say Harold send me some Campbell Cigarettes will you. I will send you an order and you will have to take it to the Post Office before you can mail them We can buy any kind of tobacco over here fit to smoke it is all French and English tobacco. I got your letter, one from Sis and two from Pearl all the same day. Say you be thankful You are over there and not over here I saw Gen. Pershing

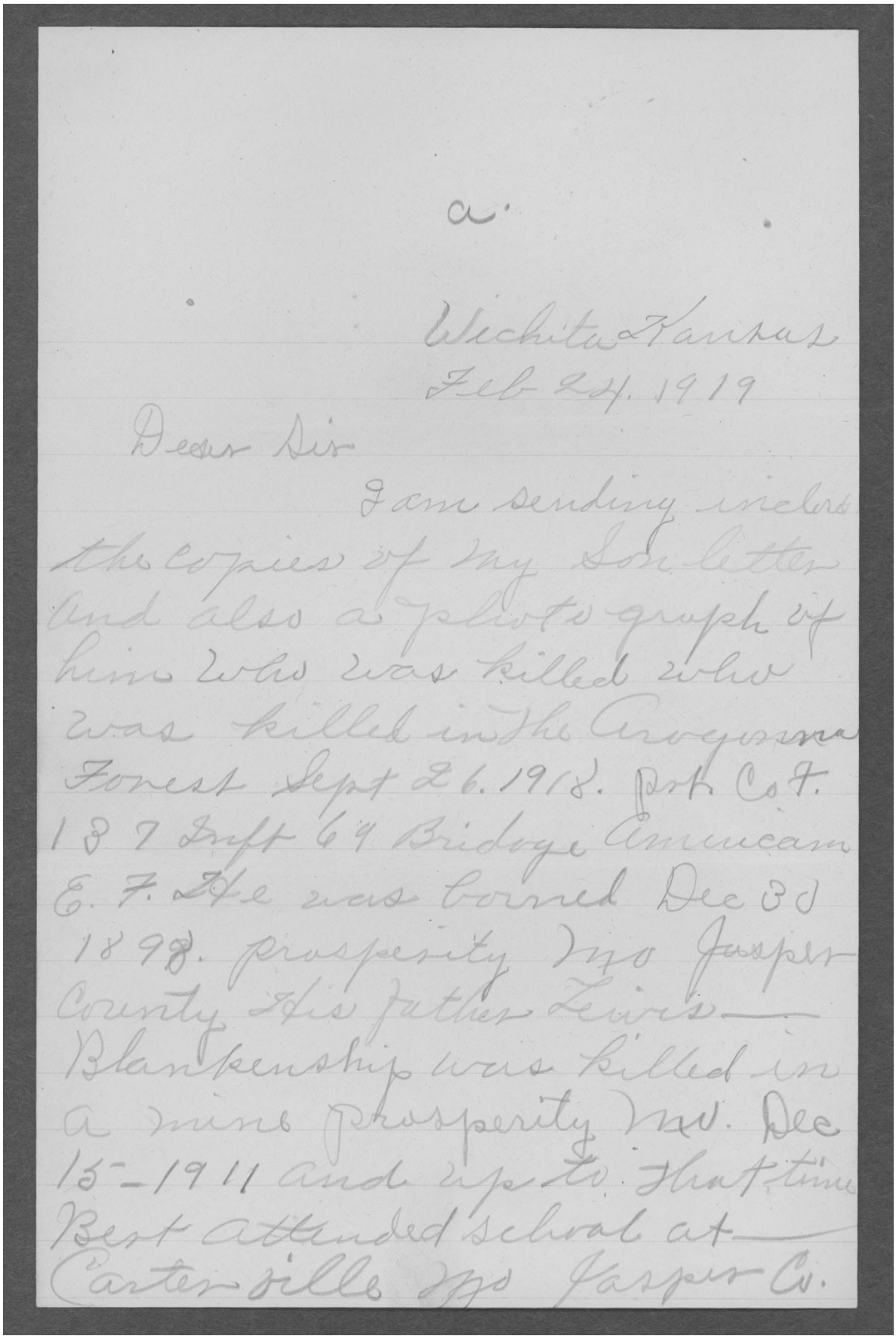
(over)



yesterday he and his staff was over to inspect the Battalion and some officier gave us a talk about the bayonet.

I will close as ever your brother

Prvt Bert Blankenship
7. Co 137th Inf.
American E.F.



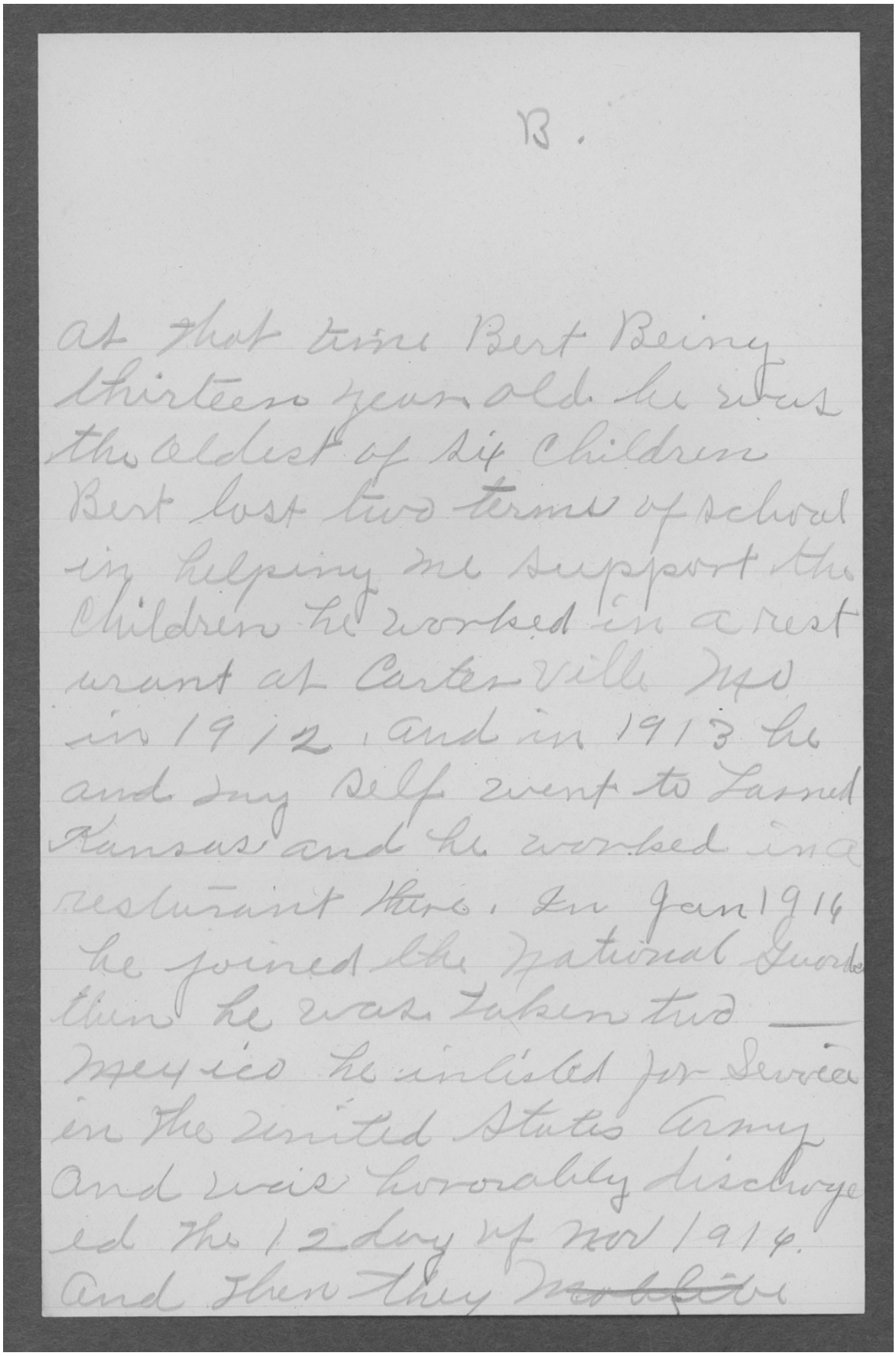
a.

Wichita Kansas
Feb 24. 1919

Dear Sir

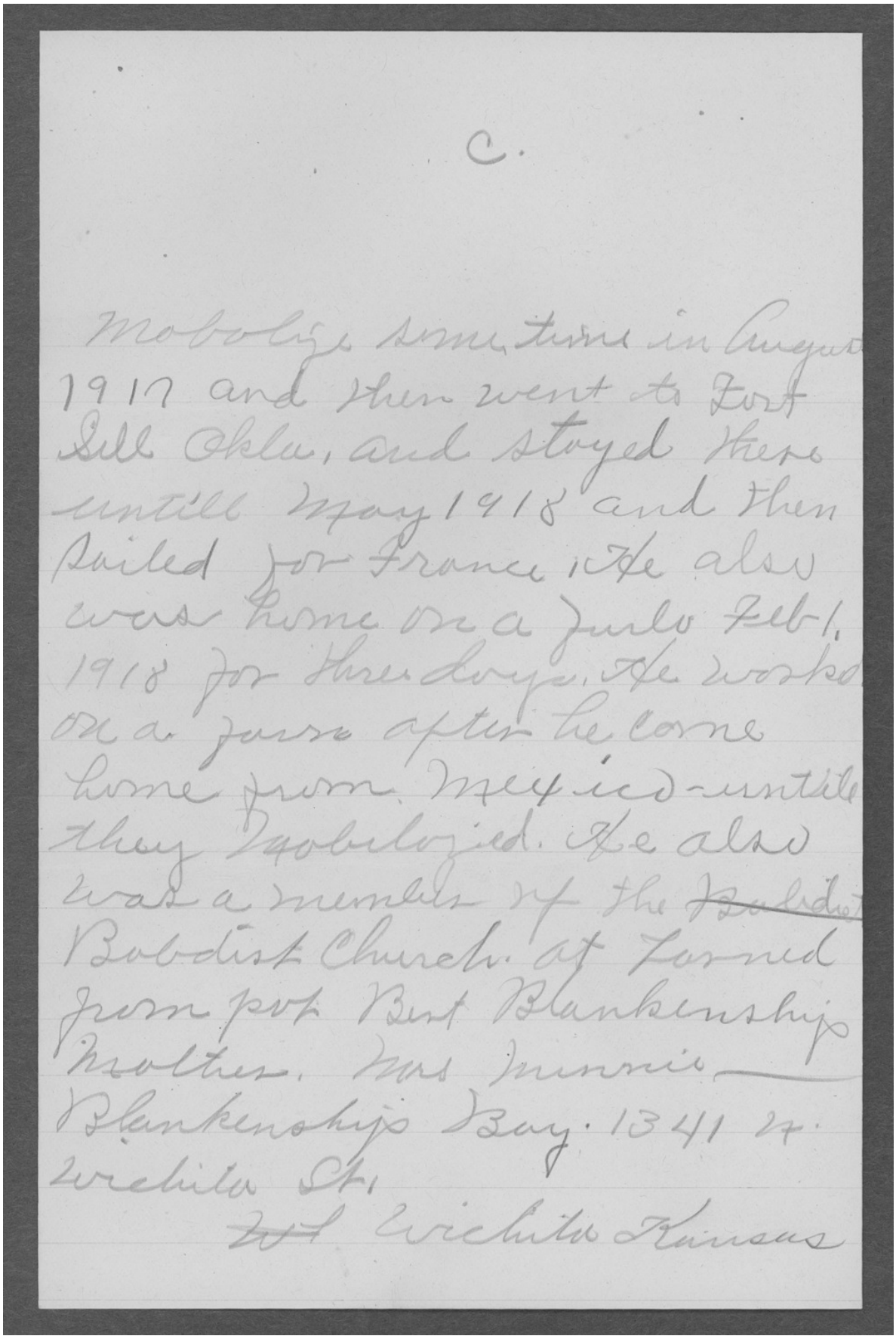
I am sending inclosed the copies of my Son letter and also a photo graph of him who was killed who was killed in the Argonne Forest Sept 26. 1918. Pvt. Co. F. 137 Inft 64 Bridge American E. F. He was borned Dec 3d 1898. prosperity Mo Jasper County His father Lewis Blankenship was killed in a mine prosperity Mo. Dec 15 - 1911 and up to that time Bert attended school at Carterville Mo Jasper Co.

Bert Blankenship, World War I soldier



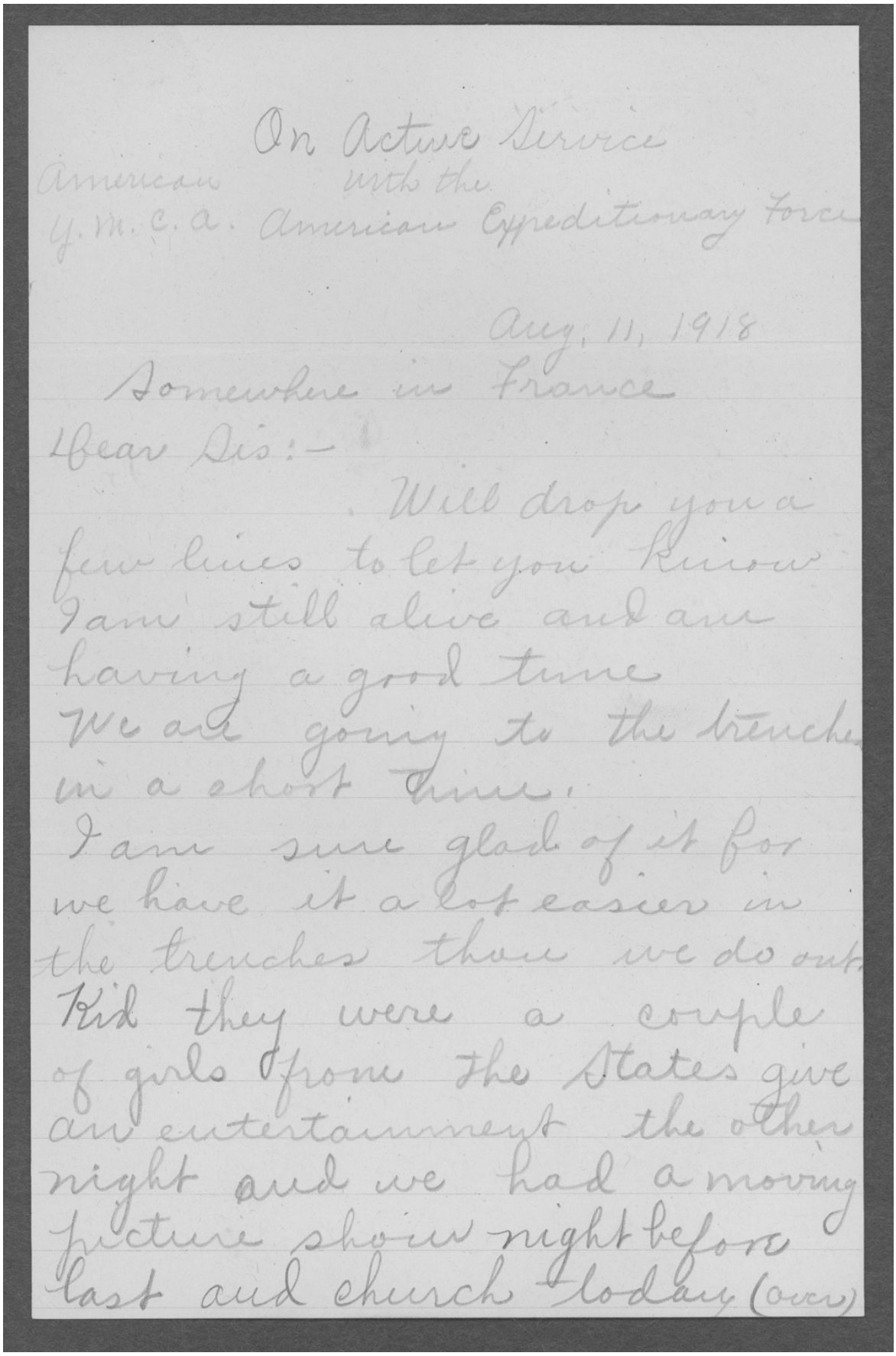
B.

at that time Bert Being
thirteen years old he was
the oldest of six Children
Bert lost two terms of school
in helping me support the
Children he worked in a rest
urant at Carterville Mo
in 1912, and in 1913 he
and my self went to Larned
Kansas and he worked in a
resturaint there. In Jan 1914
he joined the National Guards
then he was Taken into ___
Mexico he inlisted for Service
in the United States Army
and was honorably discharge
ed the 12 day of Nov 1914.
And Then they ~~Mobilize~~



C.

Mobolize sometime in August 1917 and then went to Fort Sill Oklu, and stayed there untill May 1918 and then sailed for France. He also was home on a furlo Feb 1, 1918 for three days. He worked on a farm after he come home from Mexico untill they Mobilozed. He also was a member of the ~~Baptist~~ Bobdist Church. at Formed from pot Bert Blankenship Mother. Mrs Minnie Blankenships Bay. 1341 N. Wichita St. Wichita Kansas



On Active Service
American with the
Y. M. C. A. American Expeditionary Force

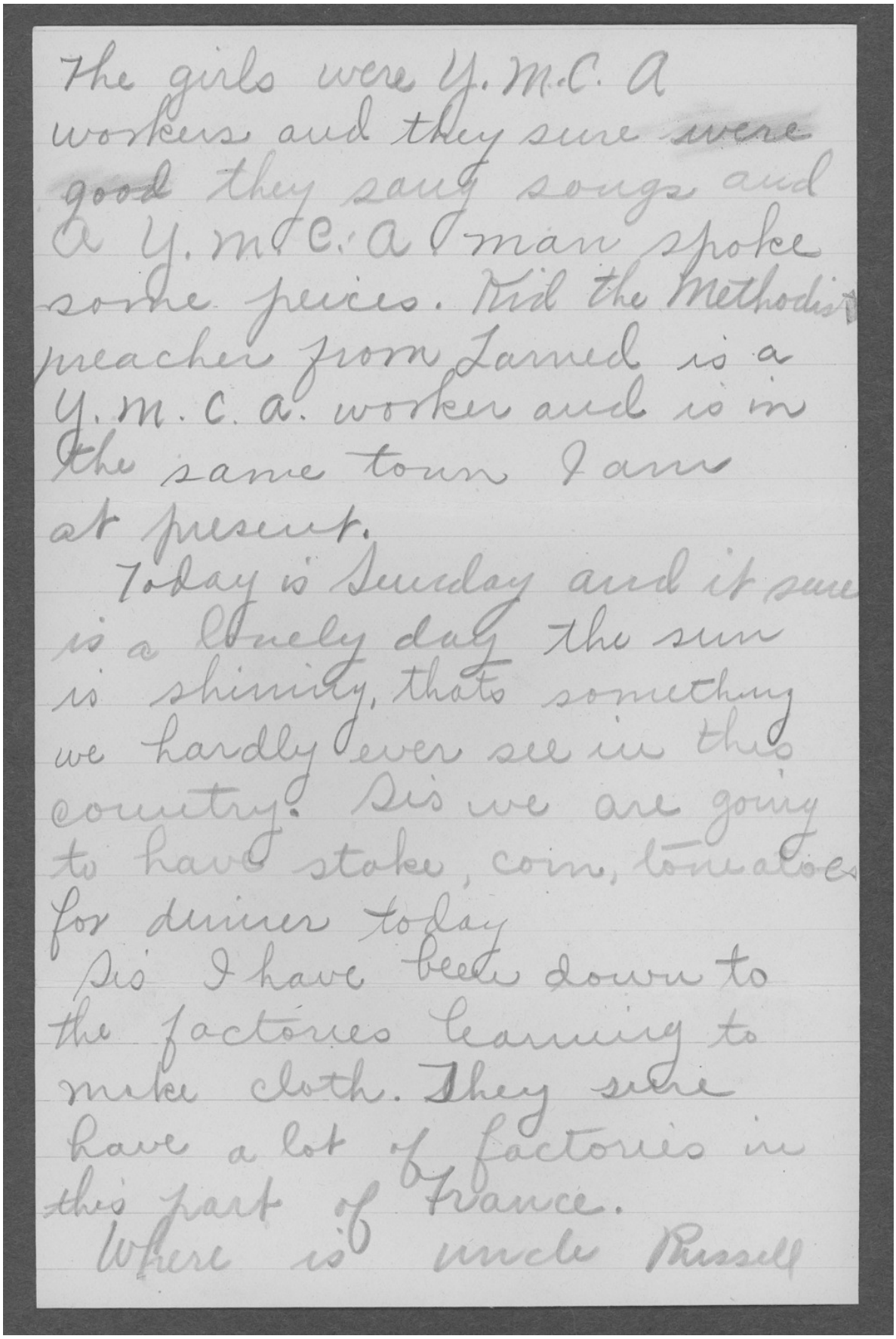
Aug. 11, 1918

Somewhere in France

Dear Sis:-

Will drop you a few lines to let you know I am still alive and am having a good time. We are going to the trenches in a short time.

I am sure glad of it for we have it a lot easier in the trenches than we do out. Kid they were a couple of girls from the States give an entertainment the other night and we had a moving picture show night before last and church today (over)



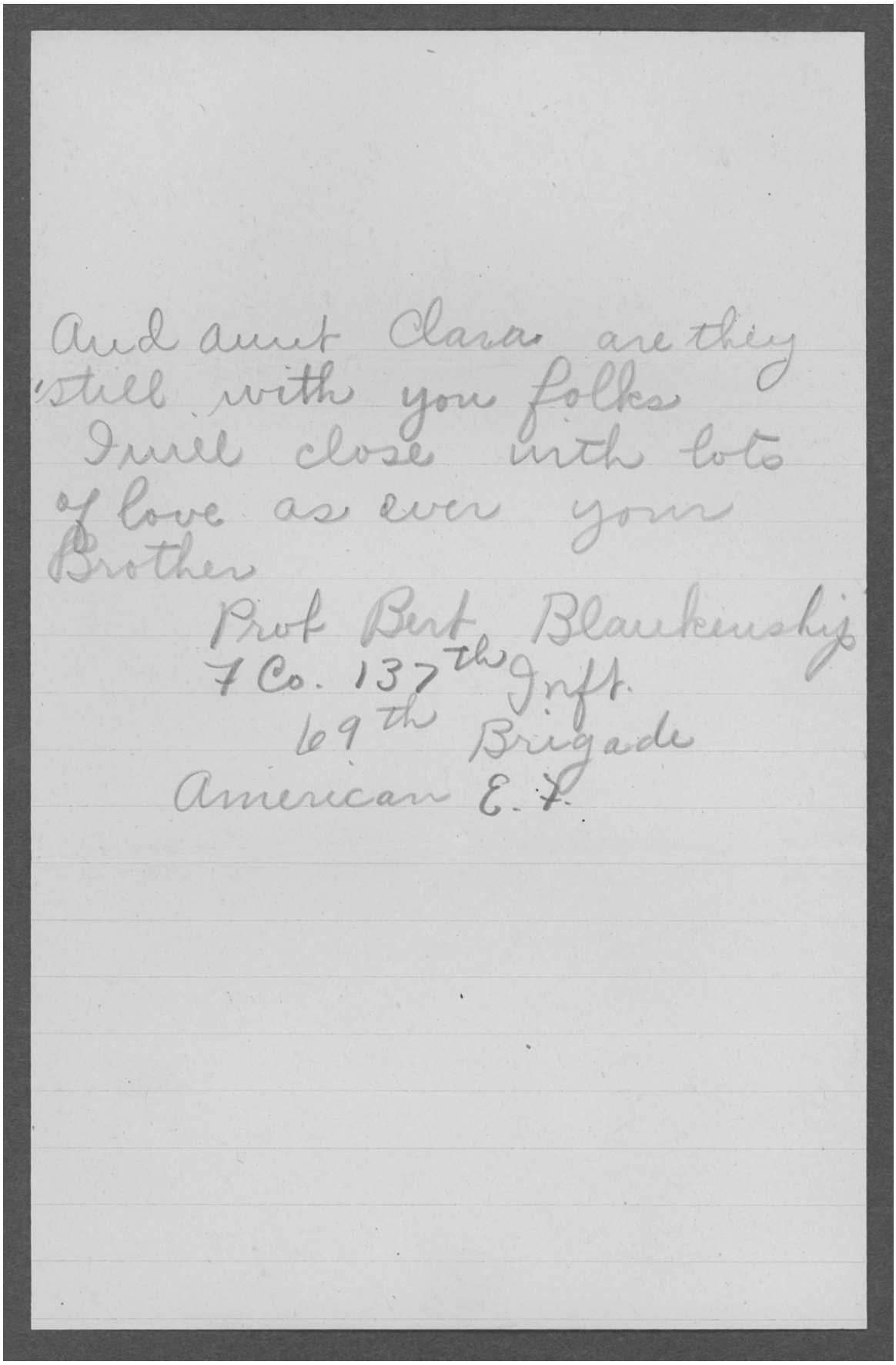
The girls were Y. M. C. A
workers and they sure were
good they sang songs and
a Y. M. C. A man spoke
some peices. Did the Methodist
preacher from Zamed is a
Y. M. C. A. worker and is in
the same town I am
at present.

Today is Sunday and it sure
is a lonely day the sun
is shining, thats something
we hardly ever see in this
country. Sis we are going
to have steak, corn, tomatoes
for dinner today

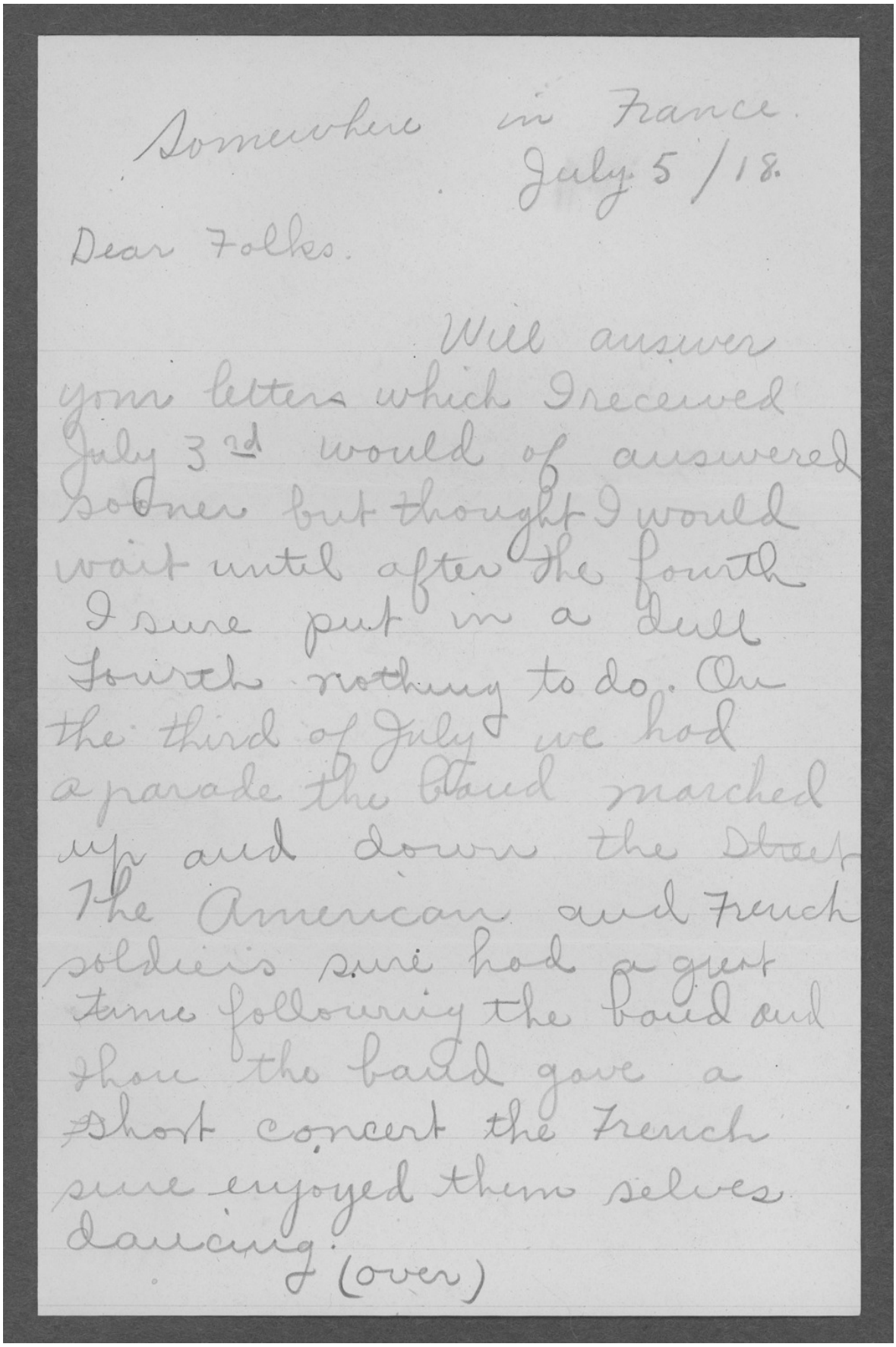
Sis I have been down to
the factories learning to
make cloth. They sure
have a lot of factories in
this part of France.

Where is uncle Russell

Bert Blankenship, World War I soldier



And aunt Clara are they still with you folks
I will close with lots of love as ever your Brother
Prof Bert Blankenship
7 Co. 137th Inft.
69th Brigade
American E. F.

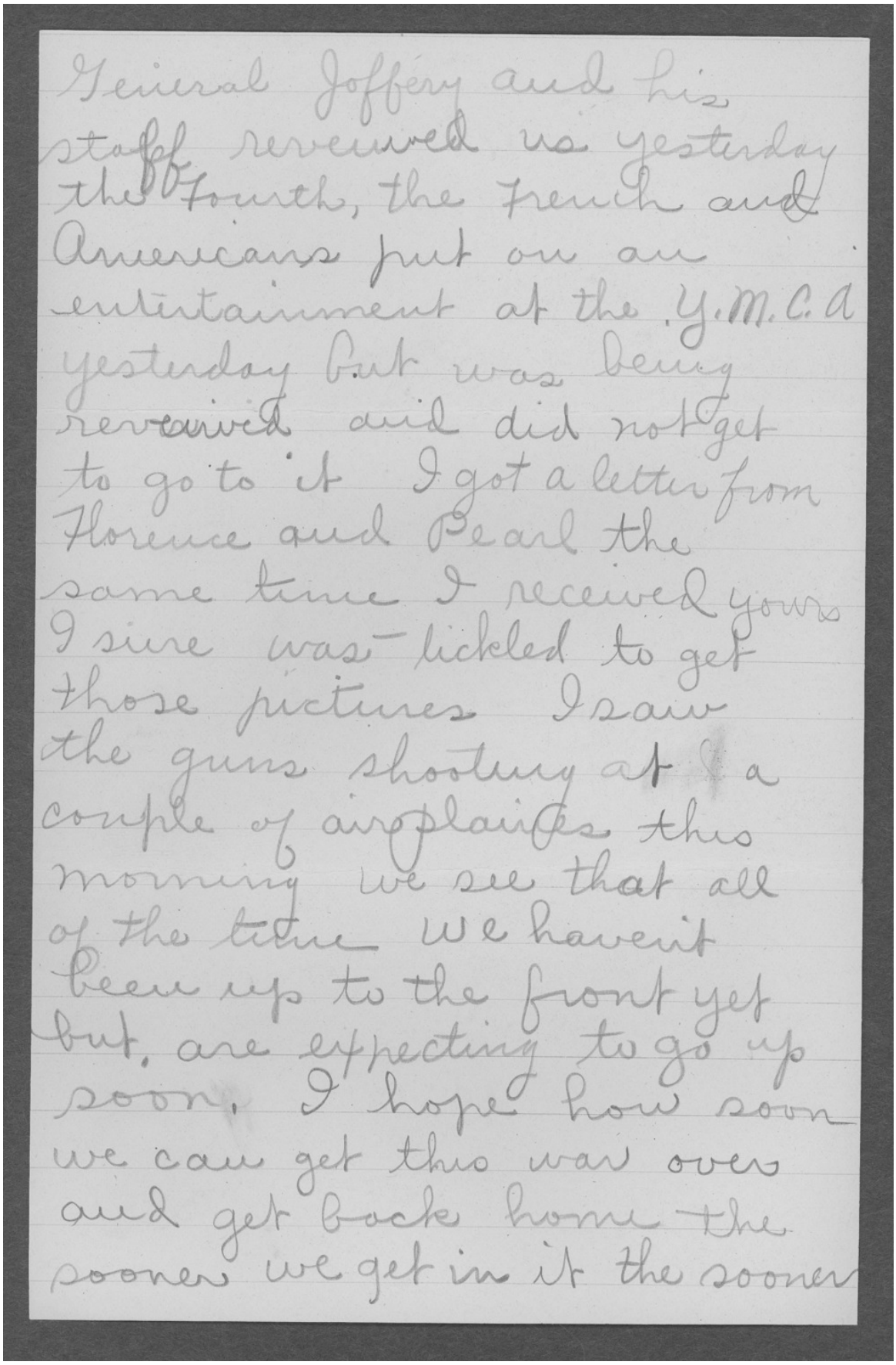


Somewhere in France.
July 5/18.

Dear Folks.

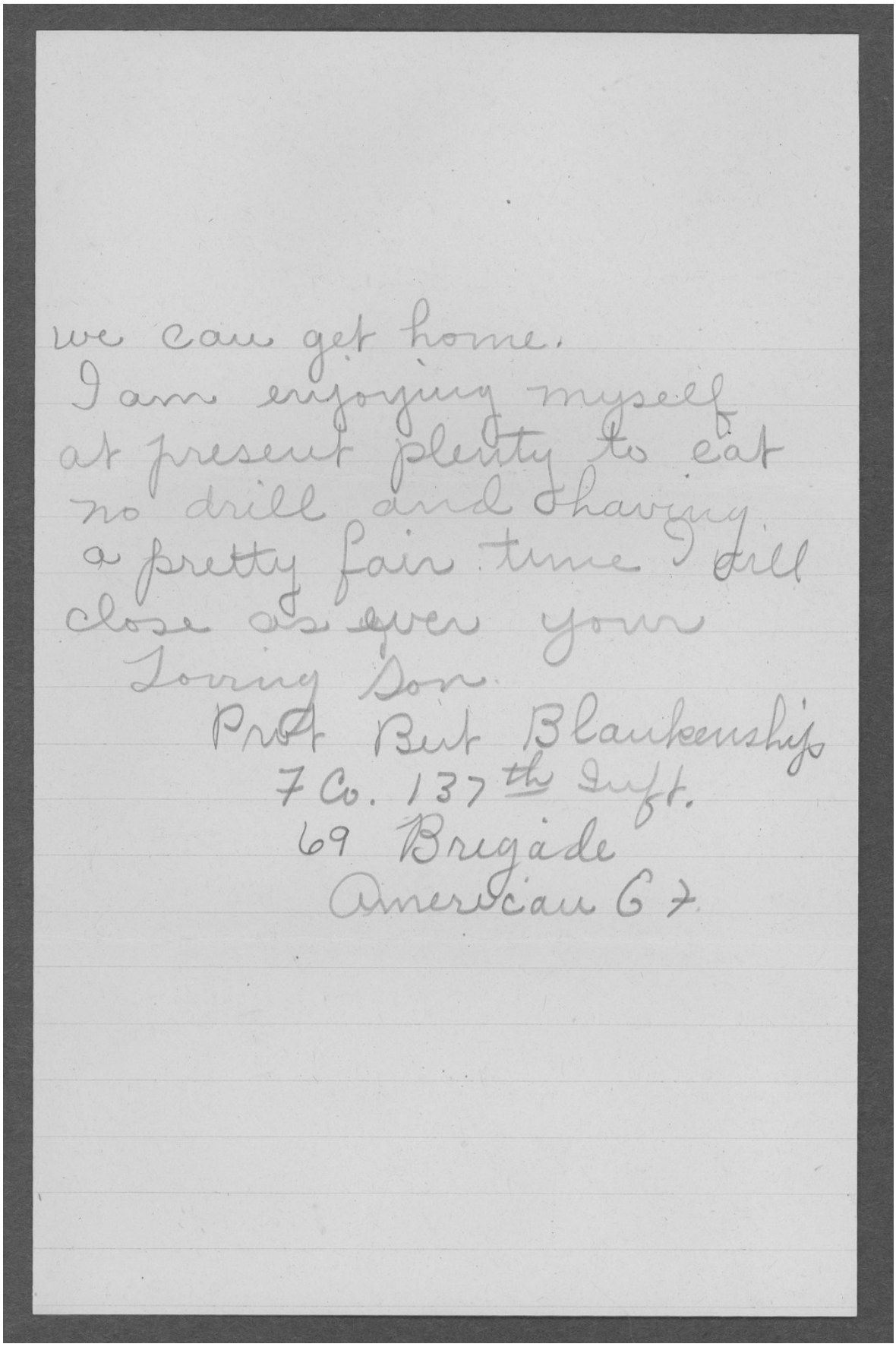
Will answer your letters which I received July 3rd would of answered sooner but thought I would wait until after the fourth I sure put in a dull fourth nothing to do. On the third of July we had a parade the band marched up and down the Street. The American and French soldiers sure had a great time following the band and then the band gave a short concert the French sure enjoyed them selves dancing.

(over)

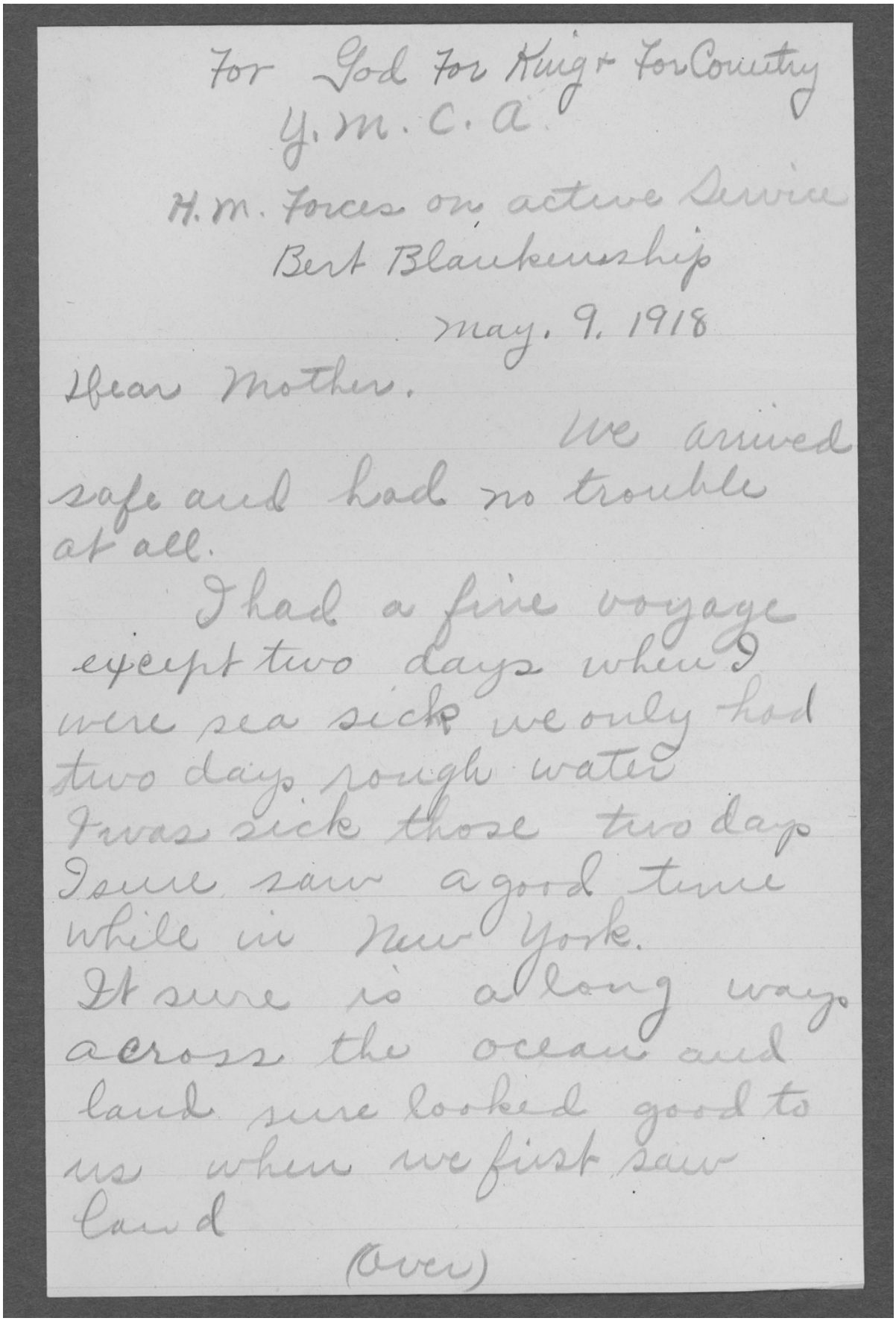


General Joffery and his staff reviewed us yesterday the Fourth, the French and Americans put on an entertainment at the Y.M.C.A yesterday but was being reviewed and did not get to go to it I got a letter from Florence and Pearl the same time I received yours I sure was tickled to get those pictures I saw the guns shooting at a couple of airplanes this morning we see that all of the time We haven't been up to the front yet but are expecting to go up soon. I hope how soon we can get this war over and get back home the sooner we get in it the sooner

Bert Blankenship, World War I soldier



we can get home.
I am enjoying myself
at present plenty to eat
no drill and having
a pretty fair time I will
close as ever your
Loving Son.
Prvt Bert Blankenship
7 Co. 137th Inft.
69 Brigade
American E.F.



For God For King + For Country
Y. M. C. A.

H. M. Forces on active Service
Bert Blankenship

May. 9. 1918

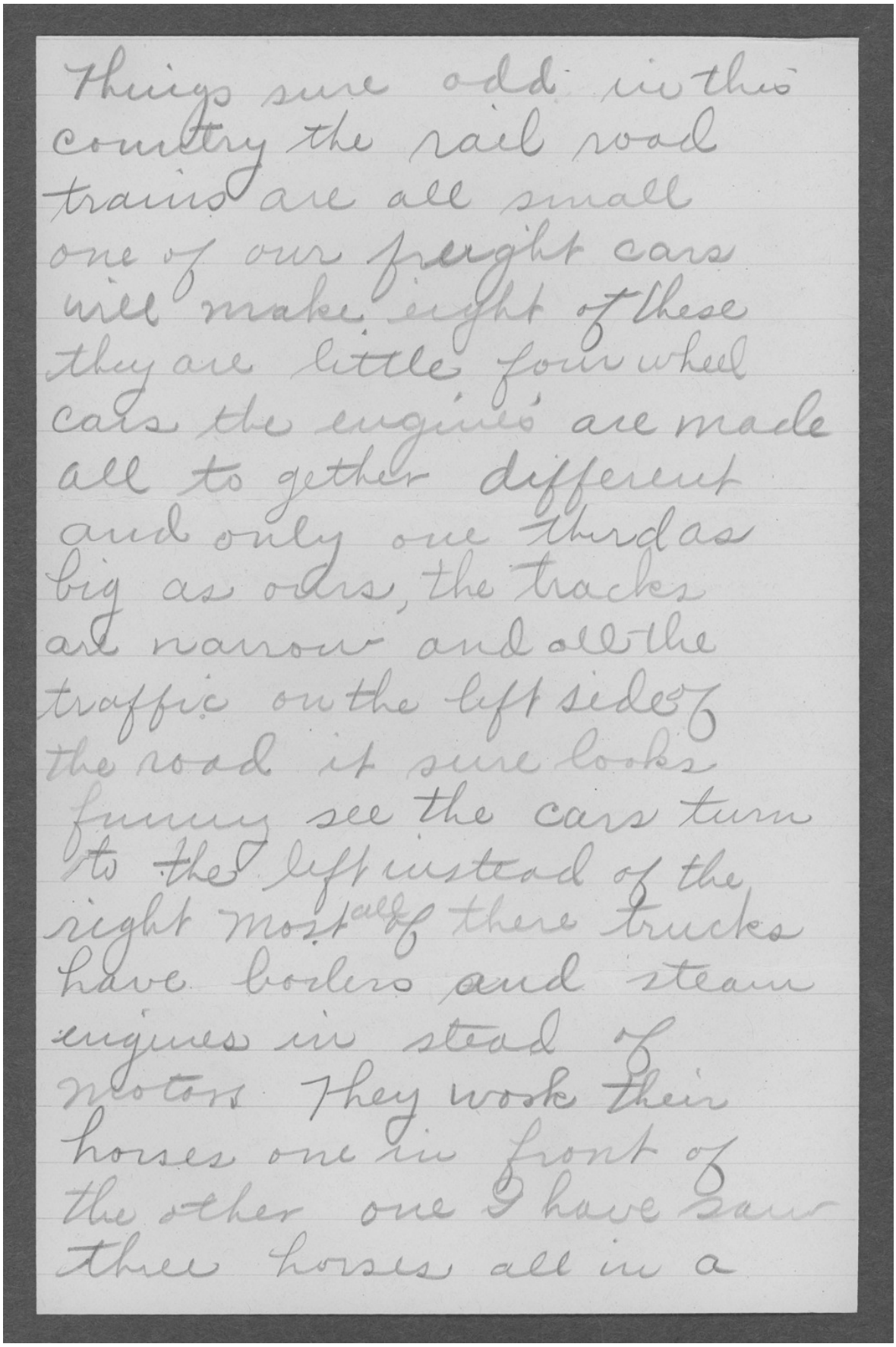
Dear Mother.

We arrived safe and had no trouble at all.

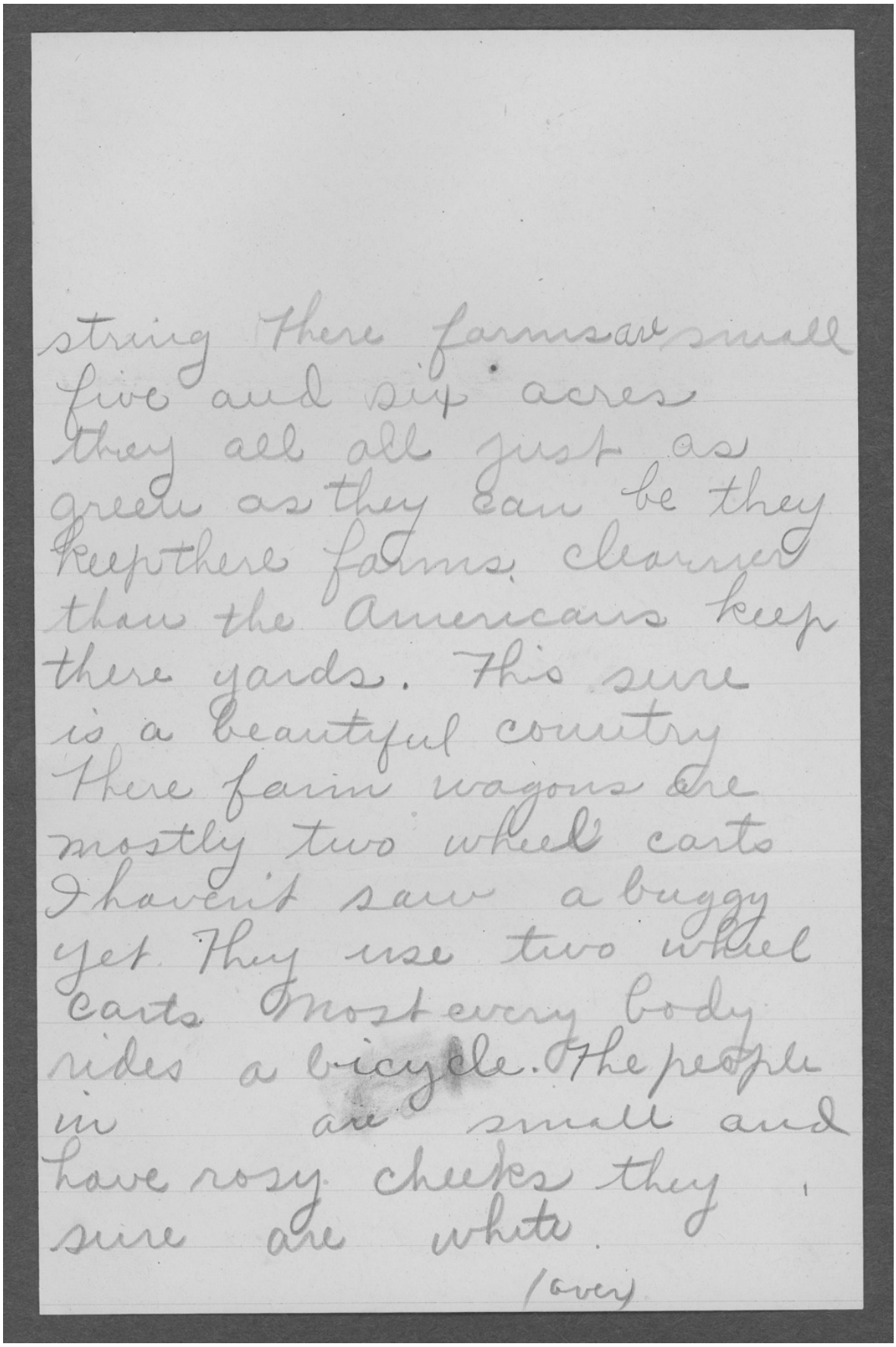
I had a fine voyage except two days when I were sea sick we only had two days rough water I was sick those two days I sure saw a good time while in New York.

It sure is a long way across the ocean and land sure looked good to us when we fist saw land

(Over)

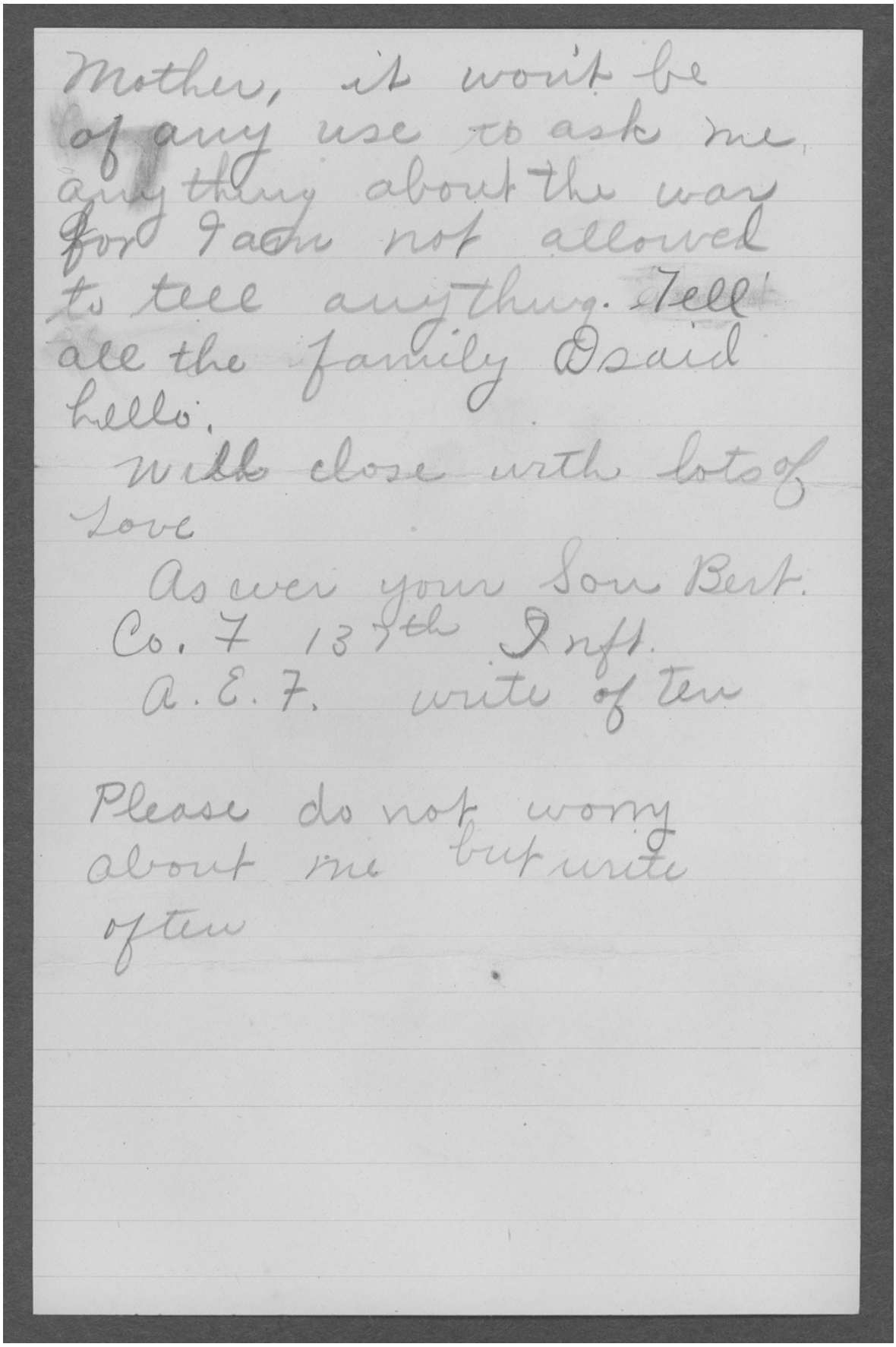


things sure odd in this country the rail road trains are all small one of our freight cars will make eight of these they are little four wheel cars the engines are made all to gether different and only one third as big as ours, the tracks are narrow and all the traffic on the left side of the road it sure looks funny see the cars turn to the left instead of the right most all of there trucks have boilers and steam engines in stead of motors They work their horses one in front of the other one I have saw three horses all in a



string there farms are small
five and six acres
they all all just as
green as they can be they
keep there farms cleaner
than the Americans keep
there yards. This sure
is a beautiful country
there farm wagons are
mostly two wheel carts
I haven't saw a buggy
yet. They use two wheel
carts. Most every body
rides a bicycle. The people
in are small and
have rosy cheeks they
sure are white.

(over)



Mother, it wont be of any use to ask me anything about the war for I am not allowed to tell anything. Tell all the family I said hello.

With close with lots of love

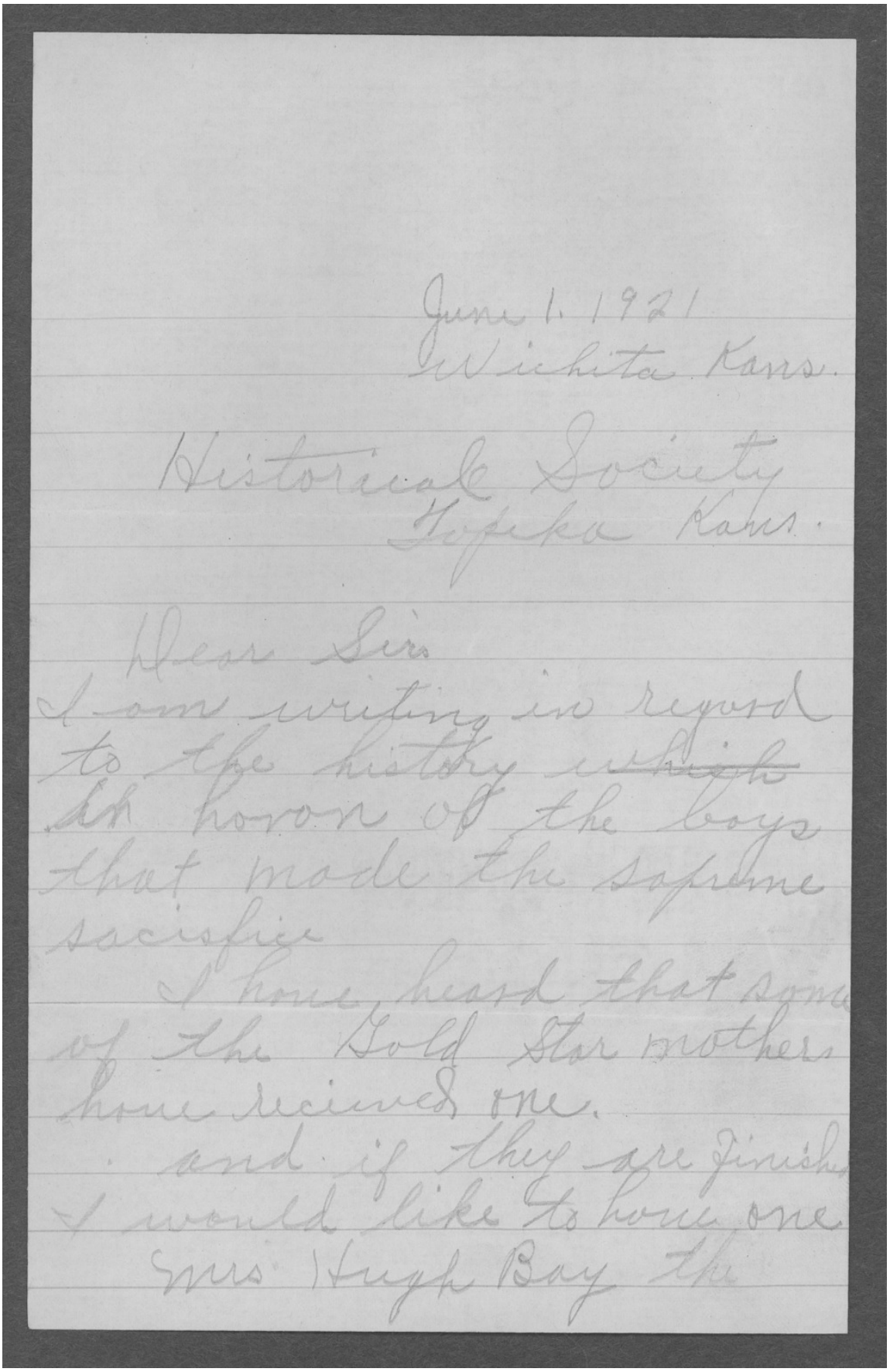
Answer your Son Bert.

Co. 7 137th Inft.

A. E. F. write often

Please do not worry about me but write often

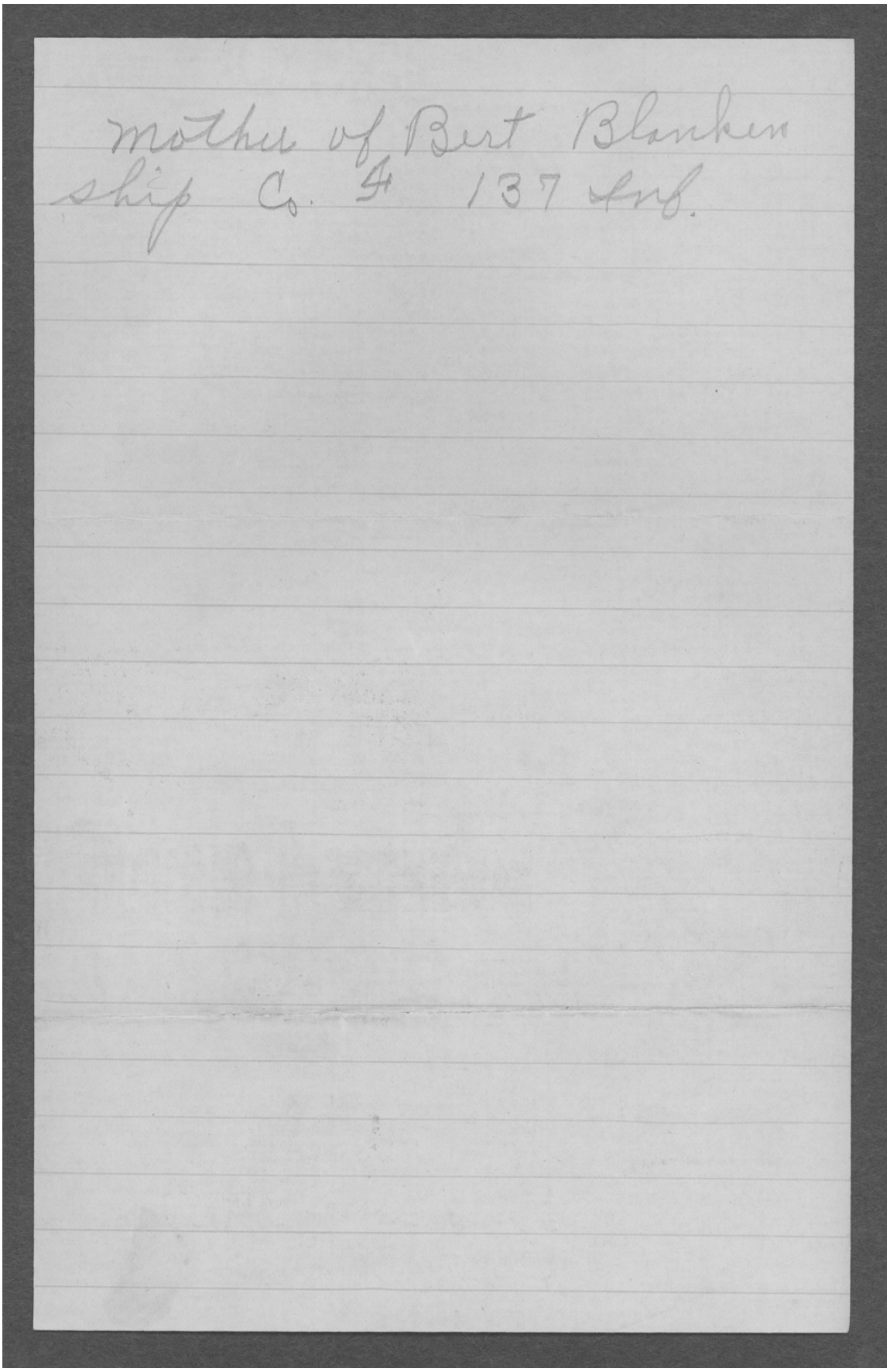
Bert Blankenship, World War I soldier

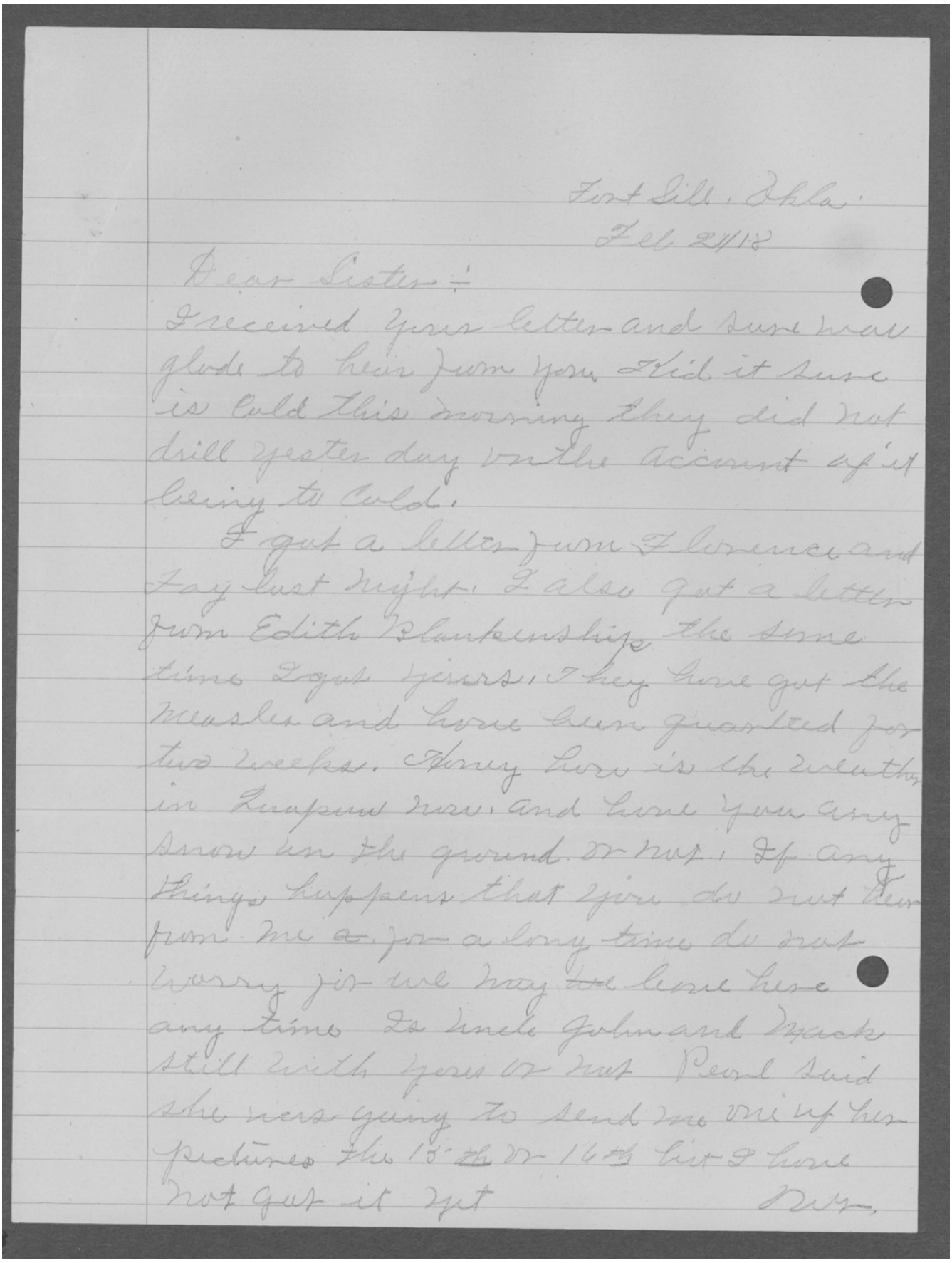


June 1. 1921
Wichita Kans.

Historical Society
Topeka Kans.

Dear Sirs
I am writing in regard to the history ~~which~~ in honor of the boys that made the supreme sacrifice
I have heard that some of the Gold Star mothers have recived one.
and if they are finish I would like to have one
Mrs Hugh Bay the


Mother of Bert Blanken
ship Co. H 137 Inf.



Fort Sill, Okla.
Feb 24/18

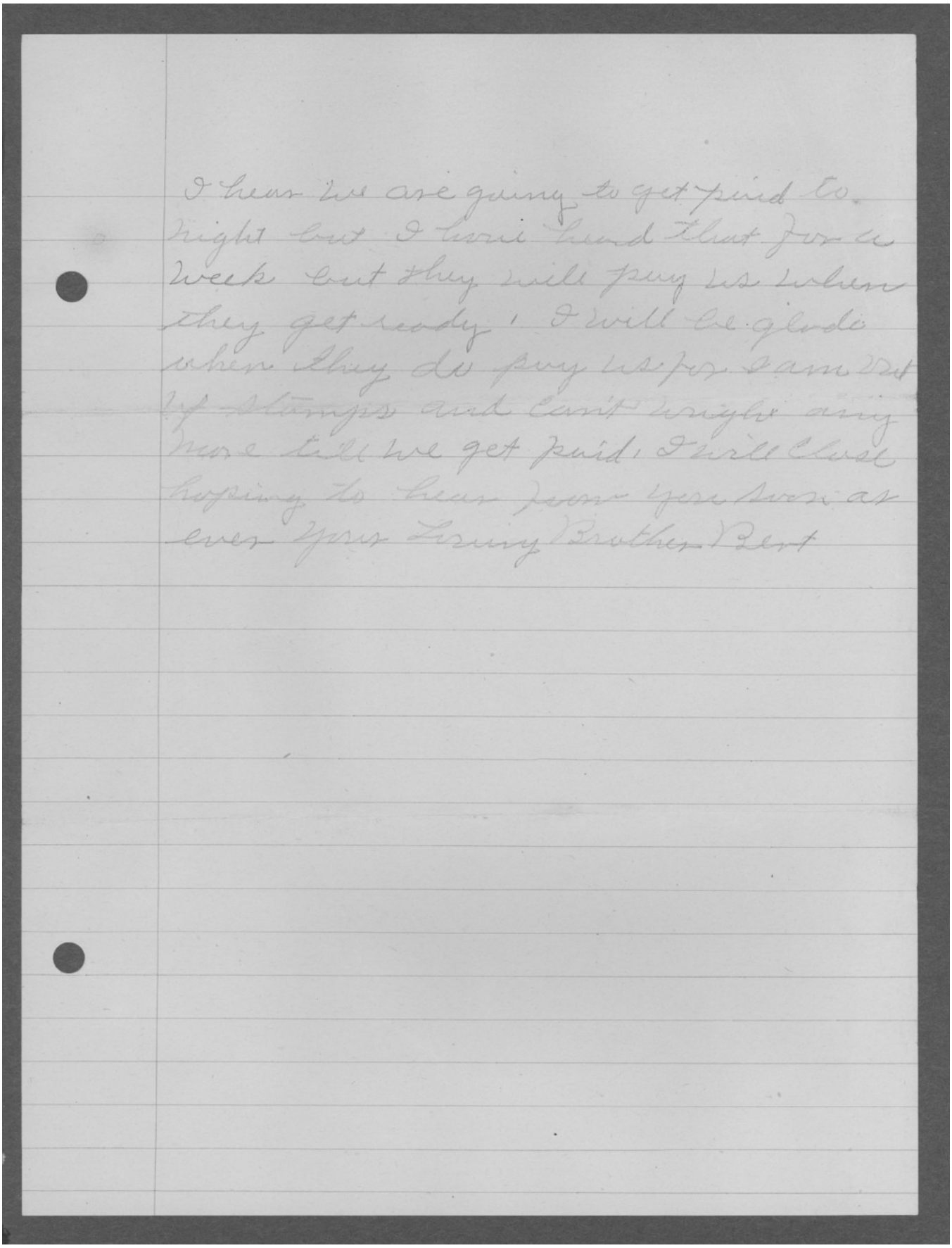
Dear Sister:

I received your letter and sure was glade to hear from you. Did it sure is cold this morning they did not drill yester day on the account of it being to cold.

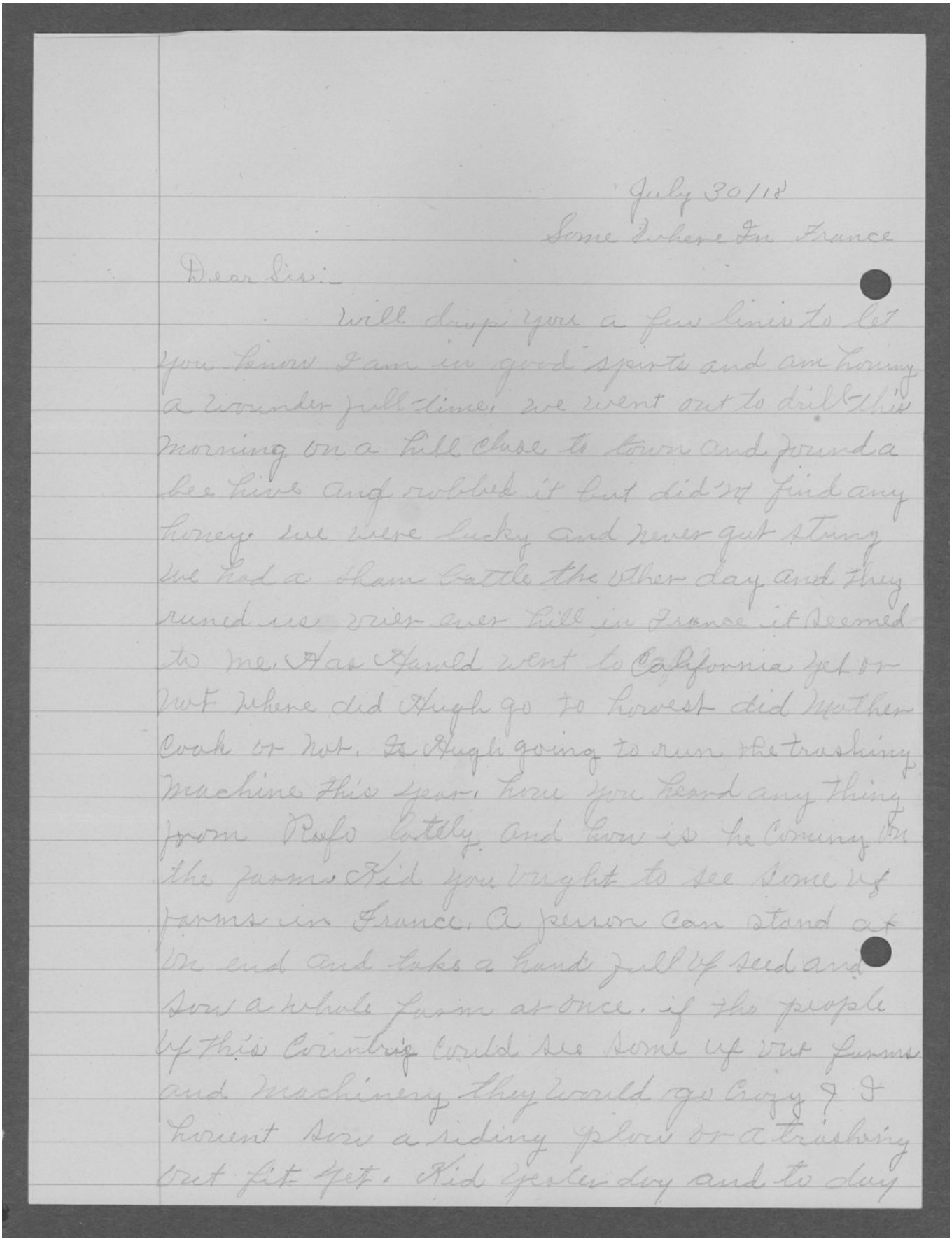
I got a letter from Florence and Fay last night. I also got a letter from Edith Blankenship the same time I got yours. They sure got the measles and have been quarted for two weeks. Henry how is the weather in Iowa now and have you any snow on the ground or not. If any thing happens that you do not here from me or for a long time do not worry for we may be home here any time. Is Uncle John and Jack still with you or not. Pearl said she was going to send me one of her pictures the 15th or 16th but I have not got it yet.

Bert.

Bert Blankenship, World War I soldier



I hear we are going to get paid to-
night but I hope I hear that for a
week but they will pay us when
they get ready. I will be glad
when they do pay us pay. I am out
of stamps and can't write any
more till we get paid. I will close
hoping to hear from you soon as
ever. Your Loving Brother Bert

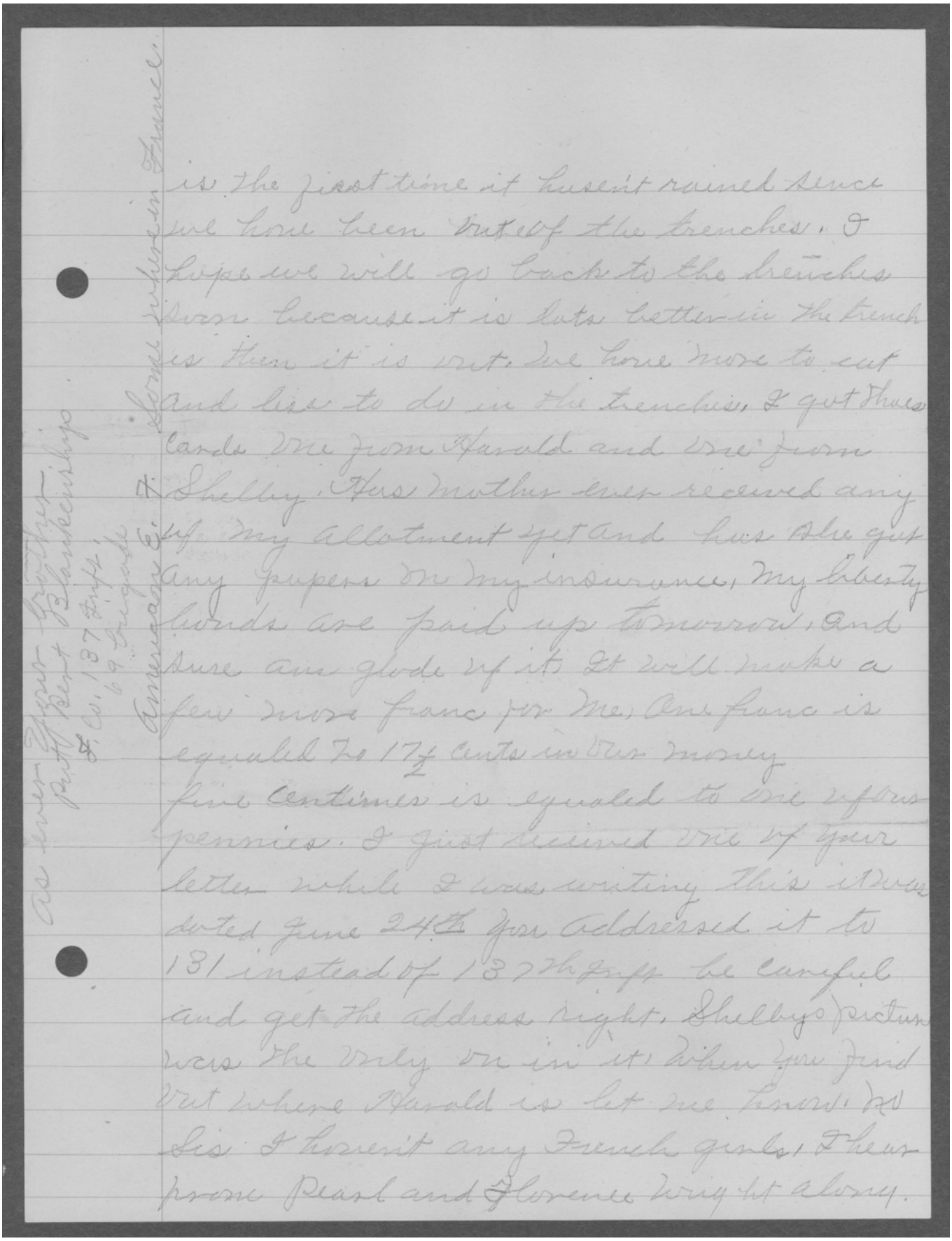


July 30/18

Some Where In France

Dear Lisi:-

Will drop you a few lines to let you know I am in good sports and am having a wounderfull time. we went out to drill this morning on a hill close to town and found a bee hive and robbed it but did'nt find any honey. we were lucky and never got stung we had a Ham battle the other day and they runed us over hill in France it seemed to me. Has Harold went to California yet or not where did Hugh go to Howest did Mother cook or not. Is Hugh going to run the trashing machine this year. Have you heard any thing from Rufo Cately. and how is he coming on the farm. Kid you ought to see some of farms in France. A person can stand at the end and take a hand full of seed and sow a whole Lasin at once. if the people of this Country could see some of our farms and machinery they would go crazy? I havent seen a riding plow or a trashing out fit yet. Kid Yesterday and to day



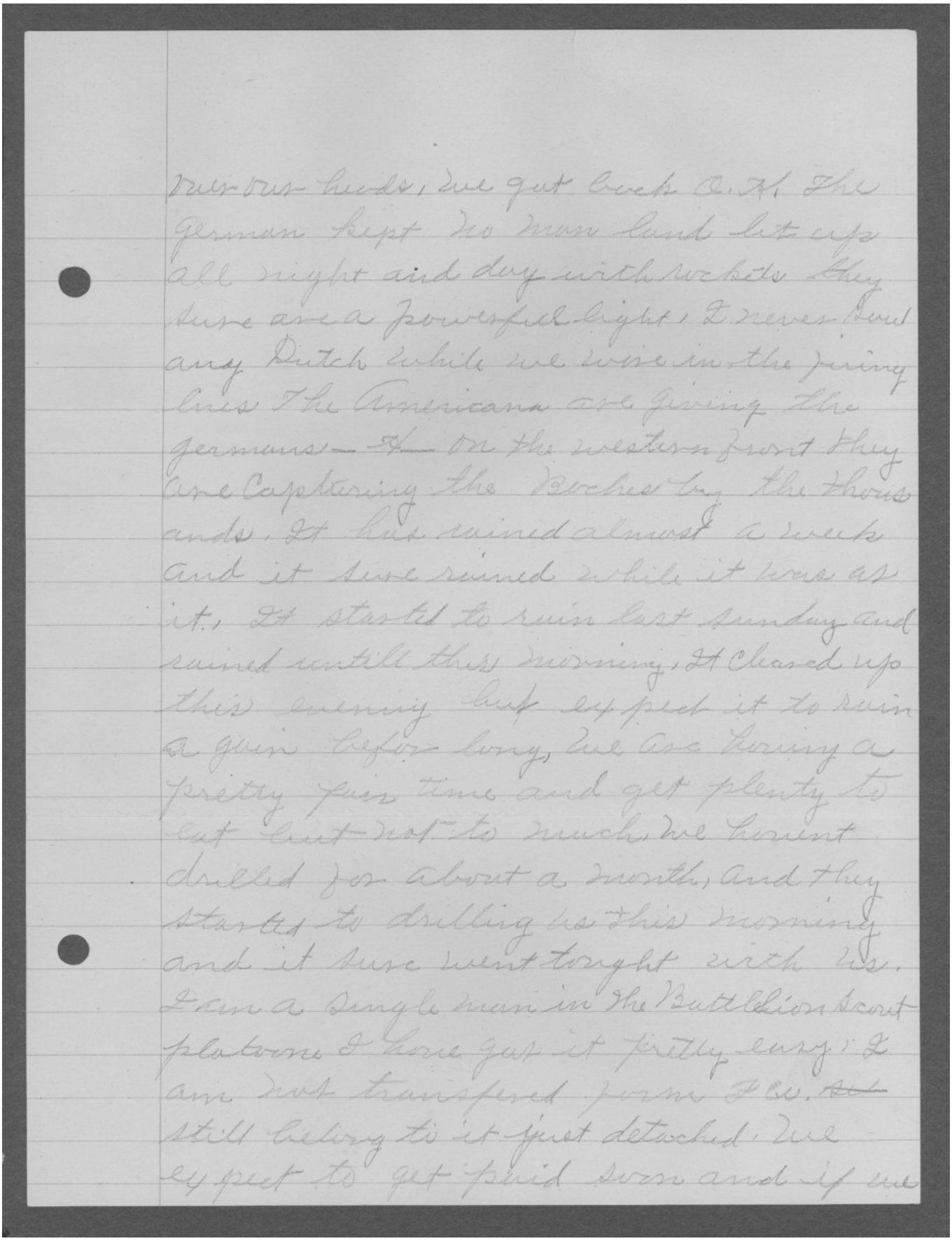
Somewhere in France.
Dec 6th 1918

Pvt Bert Blankenship
Co. 137 Inf.
A.E.F.
To Pringle

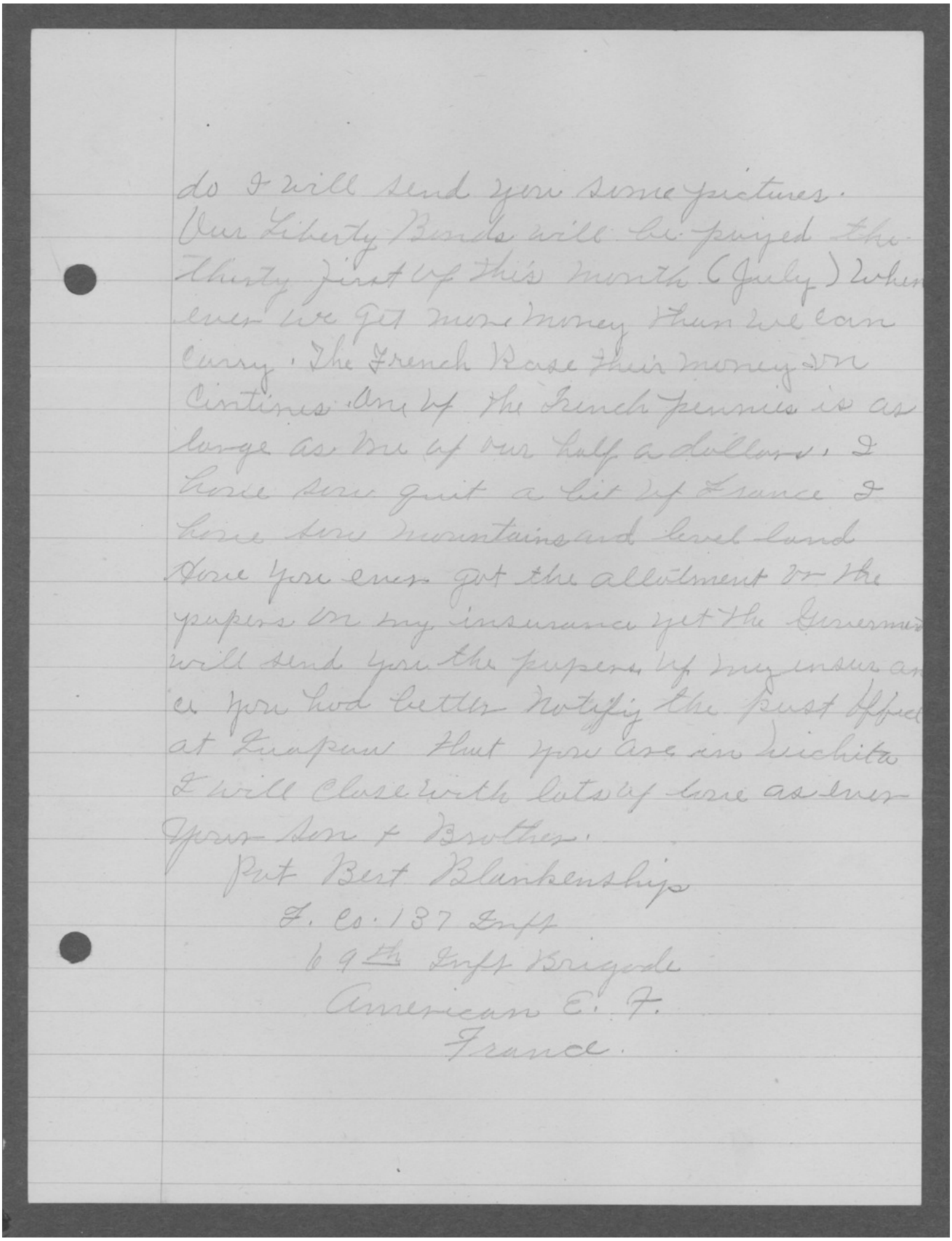
is the first time it hasn't rained since we have been out of the trenches. I hope we will go back to the trenches soon because it is lots better in the trench es than it is out. We have more to eat and less to do in the trenches. I got those cards you from Harold and one from Shelby. Has mother ever received any of my allotment yet and has she got any papers on my insurance. My liberty bonds are paid up tomorrow, and sure am glade of it. It will make a few more francs for me. One franc is equaled to 17½ cents in our money. Five centimes is equaled to one of our pennies. I just received one of your letters while I was writing this it was dated June 24th you addressed it to 131 instead of 137th Inf. be careful and get the address right. Shelby's picture was the only one in it. When you find out where Harold is let me know. I'll do so. I haven't any French girls. Those pose Pearl and Florence will let along.

Some Where In France
July 30/18.

Dear Folkis:-
Will Answer Your letter I received while in the trenches. I Received Mothers Harolds And Sises all the time we had a great time while in the Trenches we were on a quit Sector while there wasent much doing, one Camp in our Regiment made a rode while we were in the trenches They killed a few and Captured Several Germans. The morning they made the rode Our big guns opened fire on the Bush Trenches (we were about a Kilometer-(⅝ mile) from them) all we could see was the shells bursting and the smoke and dust we could not see our boys when they went over the top. I was between our front lines and the Bushes front line trenches the third night we were in the trenches we went threw three Barbwire intanglements. I tore my clothes all to pices, we were about to turn back, a machine gun opened up and just was shooting



nurs-hurs- heads, we got back A. H. The German kept his man land lit ups all night and day with rockets they sure are a powerful light, I never heard any Dutch while we were in the firing lines The Americans are giving the germans — H — on the western front they are Capturing the Boches by the thousands, It has rained almost a week and it sure rained while it was at it, It started to rain last Sunday and rained untill this morning, It Cleared up this evening but we pect it to rain a gain before long, we are having a pretty fair time and get plenty to eat but not to much, we havent drilled for about a month, and they started to drilling us this morning and it sure went tought with us, I am a Single man in the Battelion Scout platoons I have got it pretty easy, I am not transfered from F Co. ~~but~~ still belong to it just detached, we ey pect to get paid soon and if we



do I will send you some pictures.
Our Liberty Bonds will be paied the
thirty first of this month (July) Whn
ever we get more money than we can
carry. The French Base their money on
Cintins. One of the Kinch pennies is as
large as one of our half a dollars. I
have seen quit a bit of France I
have seen mountains and level land
Have you ever got the allotment or the
papers on my insurance yet the Governm
will send you the papers of my insur an
e you had better Notify the post offic
at Enapaw that you are in Wichita
I will close with lots of love as ever
Your Son & Brother.

Pvt Bert Blankenship
F. Co. 137 Inft
69th Inft Brigade
American E. F.
France.

June 1, 1921

Mrs. Hugh Bay,
Wichita, Kansas.

Dear Madam-

I received your favor of the 31" of May. The book you inquire about was published by the Adjutant General whose office is here in Topeka. It was no history of the Kansas soldiers but a list of those who lost their lives and the names of the next of kin. It is inaccurate and really of very little value. The book we are gathering the material for has not been published and we do not know when it will be published, but the state will some time publish a complete list of the soldiers from Kansas and an account of each one.

We have here copies of some of the letters of your son and a photograph of him but we have no biographical sketch. I should like to have such a sketch for the book the state will publish at some time in the future. I should like to know when and where he was born, the names of his parents, maiden name of his mother. when he came to Kansas if he was not born here, what education he had, what trade or profession he learned. what church and lodges he belonged to, and as much of his service as you can possibly give. That is the material which will be printed and be of value. I hope you can send us this sketch at once.

Sincerely yours,

Secretary