

Eugene Prall, 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 Eugene Prall, Company H, 139th Infantry, 35th Division.

Creator: Prall, Eugene

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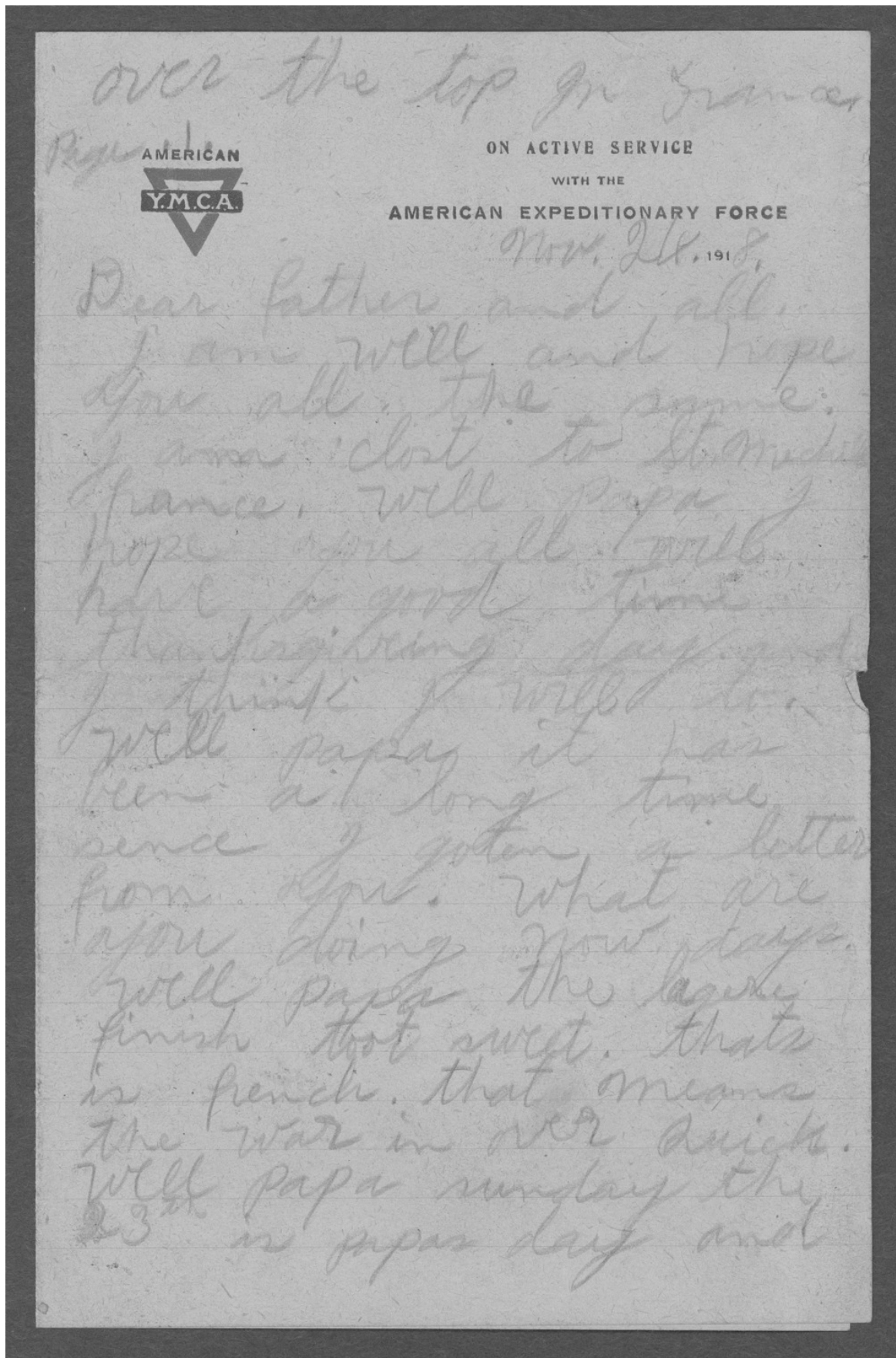
KANSAS
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



Caplin Mo
Dec 29th 1918
Mr William McConnelly secretary
of the Kansas state Historical
society at Topeka Kansas sir
I will send you a letter written
by my son Eugene Prall he
belongs to the 35th Division and
wish you to publish it in
your history I may get more
news from him in a short time
how long will your publication
be open I hope till April then
you could get much more news
from these soldiers I will send
you two letters and please return
when through with them and oblige
yours truly G B Prall
726 Murphy ave
over Caplin Mo



The soldier with the
mark over the head
is my son Eugene Prall





all boys in France write
home to their Papas.
and so I am going
to write a short letter
to you about my
first trip over the top
in France. in the
Argonne forest. Well
the drive I was in
reached from the Flanders
to the North sea. and
I was in the hardest
battle at all. I was
in it for five days.
Well here it goes.
read it with pride.
Well we went to a
thick woods on Sep.
the 19th and it was
about six miles from
the front lines. and
on Sep the 25th at 9



oclock p.m. we started
to the front. we had
habber sacks which
wasnt half. I had
one box of hard tack
and six raw potatoes
and a can of corn
beef. witch I had
to live three days
on. and I had my
to hundred rounds
of ammunition hang
on me. well we started
out after it got dark
to the front. well we
got to the front about
three oclock in the
morning on sep the
26th and the American
Artillery was shure
sending the dutchmans
these iron rations.



and fire works of
all kinds witch
flayed around in the
air. and it was
mighty foggy that
morning. and at
5³⁰ o'clock in the morning
on sep the 26th. we was
ordred to fix baynets
and move forward. and
befor I moved I said
good by dear mother
I hope I will get
out of this battle
alive and come home
some day and see
you all. Well we
moved out in the
mist of fog and in
shell holes and over



AMERICAN



ON ACTIVE SERVICE

WITH THE

AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

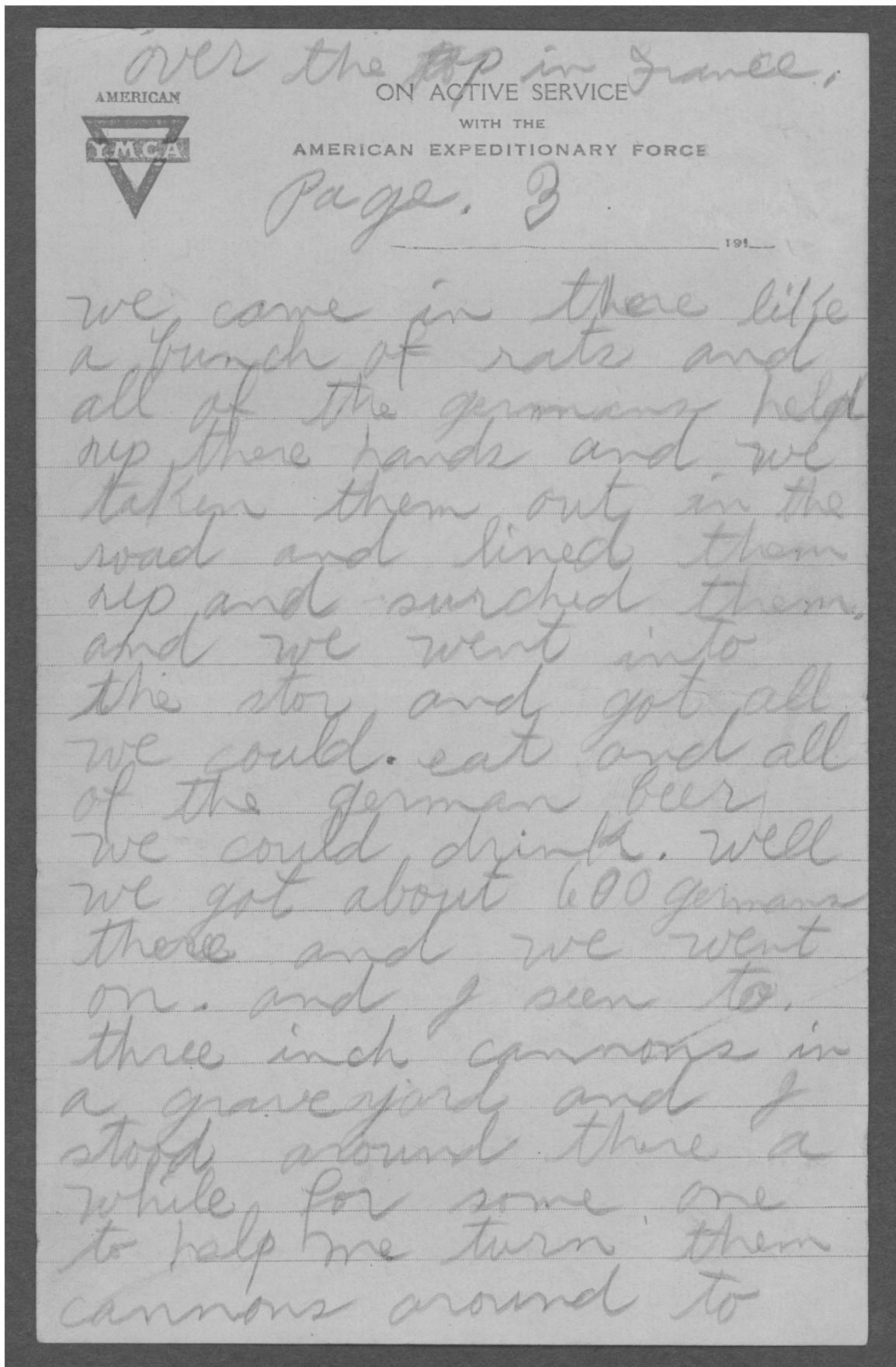
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barb-wire intanglement
and went on about an
half a mile and
seen three big steel
tankers creeping along
the field. well the tank
was to slow for us and
we passed them. and in
the german trenches
we went and got one
big german and one
boy stood and over
him while we went
on. and the sun came
up nice and bright
and we came to
a thick woods and
there was lots of dug
outs there. and I seen
to germans standing
by a machine gun and



I pointed my rifle at them ready to shoot them and they held up there hands and Hollard hammered and I held them there till the captian came and I turned them over to him. and I picked up his machine gun and slammed it down on a rock and tried to break it. and I got his Automatic Pistle off of him and hung it around my neck. and we advance through machine gun fire to a little village named sheppy. and we jumped over the trenches and into the buildings where the germans had a store selling stuff to the german soldiers and





shoot at the Germans.
but nobody came and
I went on. and it
began to get dark
and we and Robert
loader went to a shell
hole and layed down
to sleep for the night,
and in the morning
there were more soldiers
on the hill than I
ever seen at a picnic,
and the Germans was
shure sending over
the shells and me
and Robert loader went
to a ditch and just
as soon as we got in
there a big shell came
and busted wright
above our heads and
down next to us
crazy I lost my pipe
but I didnt care any
thing about that all I



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Wanted is to git away
from there as quick as
I could. and believe me
it didnt take me
veray long to git away.
I went to another
shell hole and stayed
there for a while.
and the captian told
me to move to are left
with was about four
oclock in the eving
on sep. 27 and dig
in. well I didnt
have any shovel and
so I took my baynet
and dug in and
got my hole about
haff done till we
were ordered to go
over the top, and
it was a nice day
to fight that day.



and it was 530 o'clock
in the evening. We
got out of our holes
and went after the
dutchmans like wild
indians. and after we
had gone 200 yards
the major said take
up firing and my
god you got out to hear
the firing of rifles
and the boys hollard
like wild indians
and the germans
run like jack
rabbits and they
couldnt run faster
enough with there
packs on and there
overcoats on and you
got to see them
through there pack
and overcoats away
and run like wild



dears. Well I runed
so long that I couldnt
run no longer. and
I layed down and
filled my rifle with
ammunition and a
german opened up a
machine gun on me.
but he shot to long
and plowed the dirt
from under me. and
I got up from there
and got away. I
couldnt run. and so
I walkee as fast as
I could. and wen
I got up to the top
of a hill I seen are
airplains dropping bombs
on the germans. and
after while are airplains
left and the dern
german airplains dropped
bombs on us. Well



We drove them back
till dark and we
stoped and dug in
for the night. We
had shot a german
and he had fallen
in a shell hole.
and while I was
digging in I heard
him call commrade.
but I didnt care
what he said. and
I said. all commrade
you if you come
any closer to me.
well after I dug
my place to sleep
one of my friends
asked me if he
could stay with
me for the night.
and I said yes
but you will haft
to dig the hole a



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little bigger. his name
was ~~hard~~ ^{not} ~~not~~ ^{not}. well
he was a bigger
fellow then I was.
and we couldn't
sleep any that night
because the damn
german ^{rep} ~~rep~~ ^{hollaring}
all night. next
morning I was
mad and I was
going to ~~go~~ ^{go} ~~my~~ ^{my}
bassnet in him and
I seen he was ded.
and we got released
just at day break
and we went back
to a trench for
the day. well I
seen my friend
rober ~~boater~~ ^{boater} smoking
a cigarette and I
pulled out one and



I said old friend
give me a light.
and he said all
wright Prall come here,
and I went there
and got a lite and
he said why didnt
you sleep with me
last night. and I
said I couldnt find
you. and I happen
to look down on
the ground and saw
a german pack.
and I open it and
got out to blankets
and me and Robert
loader dug us a
hole and layed
on one of them
and covered up
with the other one.
and Robert loader
said have a smoke



on me prall. and
I said all right
and we both sit
together an a roll
like friends will
do and smoked
are cigarettes like
solders. and we
seen a bunch
of solders coming
over the hill and
the germans seen
them coming
and begin to send
the whizzbang at
them and other
large caliber pop
guns. and as they
was coming down
the hill I see a
shell drop at the
feet of five solders
and killed to and
wounded three. and



that was a terrible
sight to see. and
the german was
sure sending there
shells over us.
and after while
7 or 8 tanks came
along right by us
and then tanks
sure drove the
artillery fire. Well
that evening at
four o'clock we
moved up in the
woods and was
told to dig in for
the night. Well me
and Robert Loder
dug in together for
the night. Well dear
father thats all till I
see you. Well good by
Write soon from your
loving son E. Prall Co. H. 139. Inf
35 Div. A. E. F. France.



Eugene Prall, World War I soldier

over the top in France

Nov 21 1918

Dear father and all.

I am well and hope you all the same. I am clost to St. Mihiel france. well papa, I hope you all will have a good time thanksgiving day. I think I will to. well papa it has been a long time since I goten a letter from you. What are you doing now days well papa the lagere finish toot sweet. that is french. that means the war is over quick. well papa sunday the 23rd is papa day and all the boys in france writes home to there papas. and so I am going to write a short letter to you about my first trip over the top in france, in the argonne forest. well the drive I was in reached from the flanders to the north sea, and I was in the hardest battle of all. I was in it for five days. Well here it goes. read it with pride. well we went to a thick woods on sep the 19th and it was about six miles from the front lines and on sep the 25th at 9 oclock p.m we started to the front. we had habber sacks witch wasent heavy. I had one box of hard tack and six raw potatoes and a can of corn beef witch I had to live three days on. and I had my to hundred rounds of ammunition hung on me. well we started out after it got dark to the front. well we got to the front about three oclock in the morning of sep the 26th and the American Artillery was shure sending the dutchmans there iron rations. and fire works of all kinds witch played around in the air. and it was mighty foggy that morning and at 5 30 oclock in the morning on sep the 26th we was ordered to fix bayonets and move forward and befor I moved I said good by dear mother I hope I will get out of this battle alive and come home some day and see you all. well we moved out in the mist of fog and in shell holes and over barb wire intanglements and went on about an half of a mile and I seen three big steel tanks creaking along the field. well the tanks was to slow for us and we passed them. and in the german trenches we went and got one big german and one boy stood gard over him while we went on. and the sun came up nice and bright and we come to a thick woods and there was lots of dug outs there. and I seen to germans standing by a machine gun and I pointed my rifle at them ready to shoot them and they held up there hands and hollered Kammered and I held them there till the captain came and I turned them over to him and I picked up his machine gun and slamed it down on a rock and tried to break it, and I got his Automatic pistle off of him and hung it around my neck. and we advance through machine gun fire to a little vil-lage named sheppy. and we jumped over the trenches and into the buildings where the germans had a store selling stuff to the german soldiers and we came in there like a bunch of rats and all of the germans help up there hands and we taken them out in the road and lined them up and surched them and we went into the stor and got all we could eat and all of the german beer we could drink. well we got about 600 germans there and we went on. and I seen to three inch cannons in a graveyard

Eugene Prall, World War I soldier

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and I stood around there a while for some one to help me turn them cannons around to shoot at the germans but nobody came and I went on. and it began to get dark and me and Robert loader went to a shell holl and layed down to sleep for the night. and in the morning there were more soldiers on the hill then I ever seen at a picnic. and the germans was shure sending over the shells and me and Robert loader went to a ditch and just as soon as we got in there a big shell came and busted wright above are heads and darn near knocked us crazy I lost my pipe but I didnt care any thing about that all I wanted is to git away from there as quick as I could and beleve me it didnt take me very long to git away. I went to another shell hole and stayed there for a while. and the captain told us to move to are left witch was about four oclock in the evning on sep. 27 and dig in. well I didnt have any shovel and so I took my baynet and dug in and got my hole about haff done till we was ordered to go over the top. and it was a nice day to fight that day. and it was 5 30 oclock in the morning. we got out of are holes and went after the dutchmans like wild indians. and after we had gone 200 yards the magor said take up firing and my god you ort to hear the fireing of rifles and the boys hollered like wild Indians and the germans run like jack rabbets and they couldnt run faster enough with there packs on and there overcoats on and you ort to seen them through there pack and overcoats away and run like wild dears. well I runed so long that I couldnt run no longer and I layed down and filled my rifle with Ammunition and a german opened up a machine gun on me. but he shot to low and plowed the dirt from under me. and I got up from there and got away. I couldnt run and so I walked as fast as I could. and wen I got up to the top of a hill I seen the airplanes dropping bombs on the germans and after while are airplanes left and the durn german airplanes dropped bombs on us. well we drove them back till dark and we stoped and dug in for the night. we had shot a german and he had fallen in a shell holl. and while I was diging in I hurd him holl commerad. but I didnt care what he said. and I said Ill commerad you if you come any closer to me. well after I dug my place to sleep one of my friends asked me if he could stay with me for the night and I said yes but you will haft to dig the hole a little bigger. his name was hurb Noton. well he was a bigger fellow then I was and we couldnt sleep any that night because the durn german kep hollering all night. next morning I was mad and I was going to jab my baynet in him and I seen he was ded. and we got releaved just at day break and we went back to a trench for the day. well I seen my friend rober loader smoking a cigarette and I pulled out one and I said old friend give me a light and he said all wright Prall come here, and I went there and got a lite and he said why didnt you sleep with me last night. and I said I couldnt find you. and I happen to look down on the grown and saw a german pack and I open it and



Eugene Prall, World War I soldier

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and got out to blankets and me and robert loader dug us a holl
and layed on one of them and covered up with the other one and
Robert loader said have a smoke on me Prall. and I said wll
wright and we both sit togeather like friends will do and smoked
are cigaretts like solders. and we seen a bunch of solders
cumming over the hill. and the germans seen them comming and
begin to send the whizzbang at them and other larg caliber pop
guns and as they was comming down the hill I see a shell drop
at the feet of five solders and killed to and wounded three.
and that was a terble sight to see. and the germans was shure
sending there shells over us. and after while 7 or 8 tanks
came along wright by us and them tanks shure drowned the ar-
tillery fire. well that evening at four oclock we move up in
the woods andwas told to dig in for the night. well me and
Robert loader dug in togeather for the night. well dear father
thats all till I see you. well good by write soon from your
loving so E. Prall Co. H 139tn Inf.
35 div A.E.F. france

Eugene Prall, World War I soldier

In Great Verdun Fight.

Eugene Prall, Co. H, 139th infantry, wrote an interesting letter to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. V. Prall, No. 762 Murphy avenue, just after he was in the battle of Verdun.

He began his letter with an apology, which was accepted by the home folks. They are not cherishing a grouch against their boy, who wrote:

"Say, papa, I couldn't write home for a week because I was in a battle. I was fighting on the Verdun front, which they say was the hardest battle that was ever fought in France, and I was in the front line. I saw terrible sights in that battle.

"I can tell you more about battles than you can tell me."

An incident of the fight which made an impression upon the Joplin soldier was the raiding of German stores where the Yanks ate as much as they wanted and drank of the German beer.

"When we American boys ran onward with our guns and bayonets and hollered like wild Indians," Prall wrote, "the Germans ran like hell. But our bullets could go faster than they could run. Their machine guns and cannon couldn't stop us. The more they shot the faster we went into them.

"The Germans ran as fast as they could and on the way they threw off their packs and overcoats.

"We went so fast that our cannon couldn't keep up with us."

The Joplin soldier related an impressive incident in connection with the fight and a German soldier who was left doubled up in the weeds on the battlefield, because the Yanks at

the moment had no time to "fool with prisoners."

This boche, who is now a "good German," jumped out of the weeds with his hands up, the Joplin soldier wrote, shouting "kamerad."

"Well, we didn't have time to take any prisoners, and so we shot him down."

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