Henry J. Allen, World War I correspondence

Section 8, Pages 211 - 225

This series of fifteen letters was sent by Henry J. Allen to his wife Elsie Jane Allen and his daughter Henrietta Allen. Subjects broached in the letters concern family, friends, Wichita community news, the Allens' new home at 225 Roosevelt, the horrors of war, innocence of youth, France and Italy. Allen was strongly affected by the horrors of the battlefields of World War I.

Creator: Allen, Henry Justin, 1868-1950

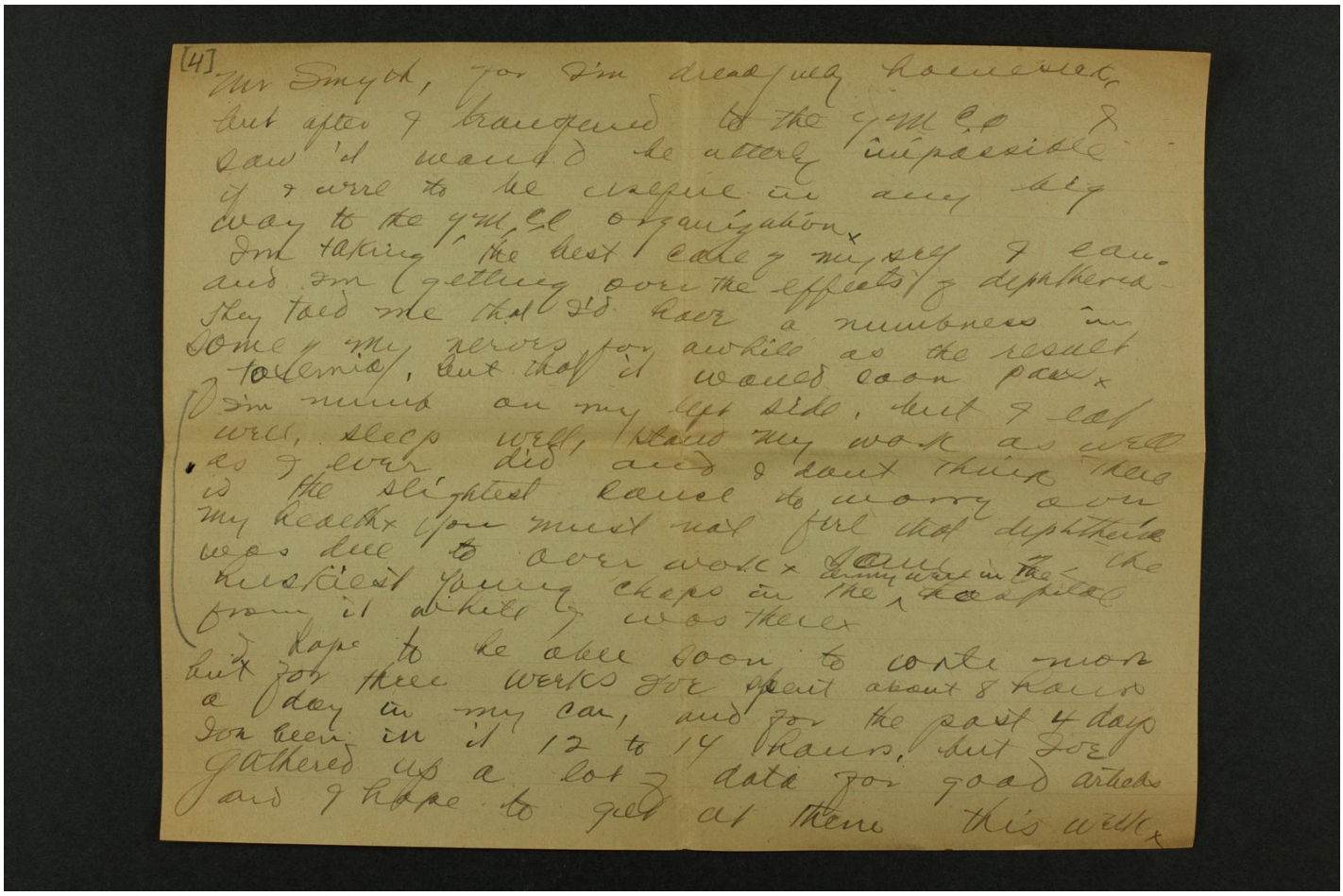
Date: September 20, 1917 - October 11, 1918

Callnumber: Holmes-Allen Coll. #883, World War I correspondence

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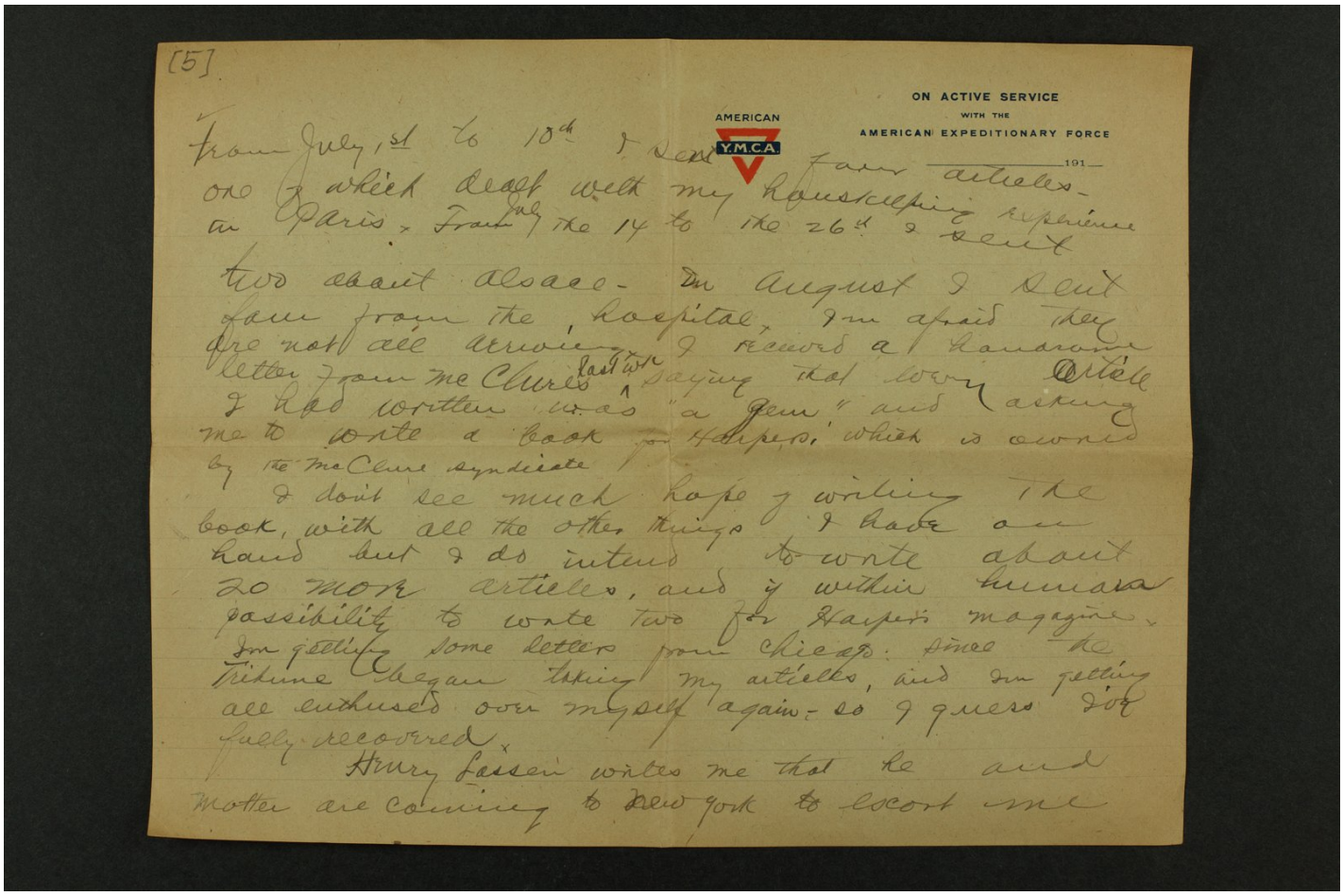
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[4]

Mr Smyth, for I'm dreading homesick, but after I transferred to the 91st C.D. I saw it meant be utterly impossible if I were to be useful in any big way to the 91st Div. organization. And taking the best I could of myself I came and I'm getting over the effects of diphtheria. They told me that I'd have a numbness in some of my nerves for awhile as the result of toxemia, but that it would soon pass. I'm numb on my left side, but I eat well, sleep well, have my work as well as I ever did and I don't think there is the slightest cause to worry over my health. You must not feel that diphtheria was due to over work. Some of the huskiest young chaps in the army have had it & died from it while I was there. I hope to be able soon to come over but for three weeks I've spent about 8 hours a day in my car, and for the past 4 days I've been in it 12 to 14 hours. But I've gathered up a lot of data for good articles and I hope to get at them this week.

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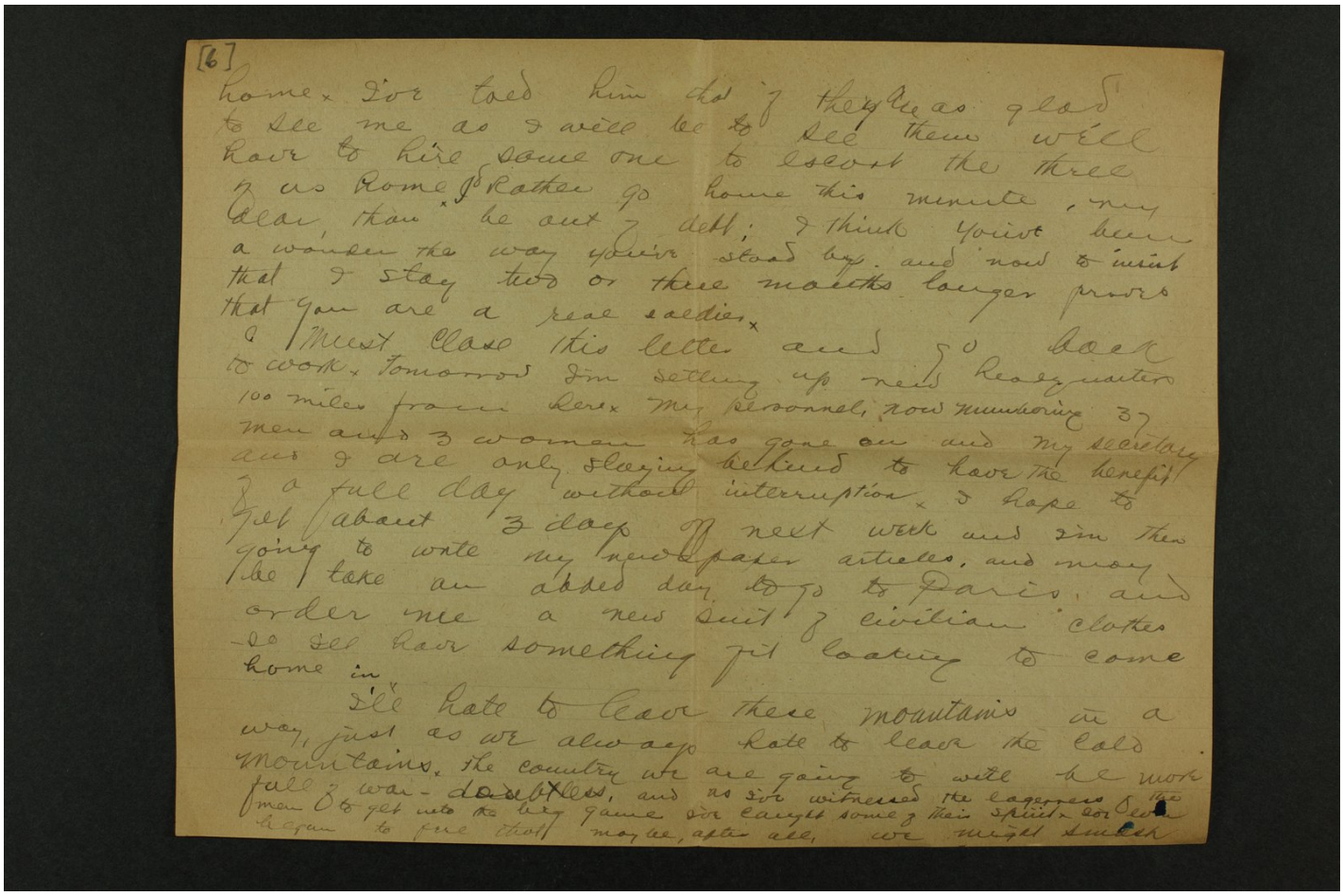
[5]

AMERICAN Y.M.C.A.
ON ACTIVE SERVICE WITH THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
191—

From July 1st to 10th I sent four articles- one of which dealt with my housekeeping experience in Paris. From the 14 to the 26th I sent two about Alsace- In August I sent four from the hospital, I'm afraid they are not all arriving. I received a handsome letter from the McClures last week saying that every article I had written was "a gem" and asking me to write a book for Harpers, which is owned by the McClure syndicate.

I don't see much hope of writing the book, with all the other things I have on hand but I do intend to write about 20 more articles, and if within human possibility to write two for Harpers magazine. I'm getting some letters from Chicago since the Tribune began using my articles, and I'm getting all enthused over myself again- so I guess I'm fully recovered.

Henry Lassen writes me that he and mother are coming to New York to escort me



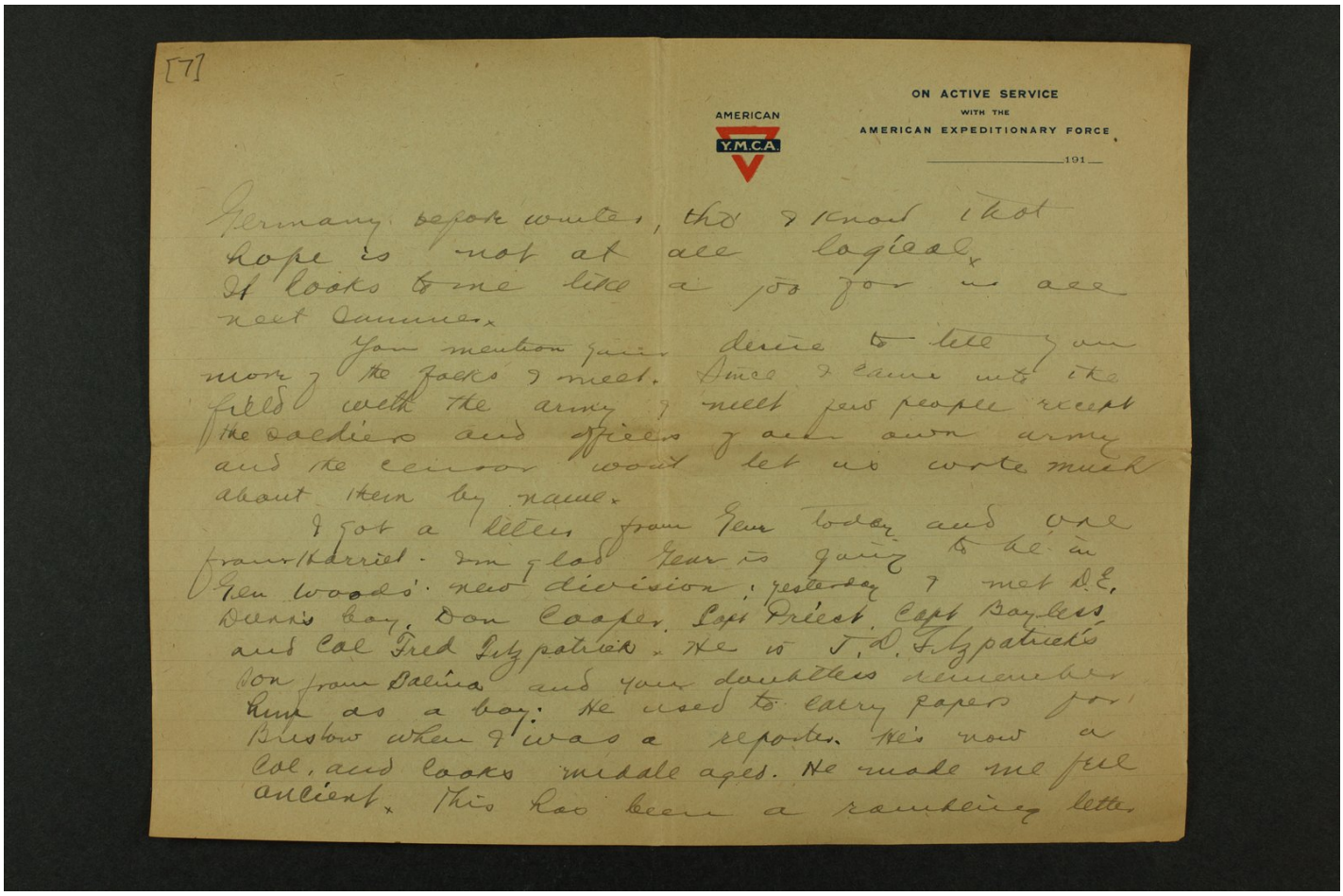
[6]

home x For told him that I they was glad to see me as I will be to see them WELL have to hire some one to escort the three I as Rome x Rather go home this minute, my dear than be out 7 debt; I think you've been a wonder the way you've stood by. and now to insist that I stay two or three months longer proves that you are a real soldier x

Must close this letter and go back to work x Tomorrow I'm setting up new Headquarters 100 miles from here x My personnel, now numbering 37 men and 3 women has gone on and my secretary and I are only staying behind to have the benefit of a full day without interruption x I hope to get about 3 days of next week and I'm then going to write my newspaper articles, and may be take an added day to go to Paris, and order me a new suit 7 civilian clothes - so see have something fit waiting to come home in x

I'll hate to leave these mountains in a way, just as we always hate to leave the cold mountains x the country we are going to will be more full 7 war - doubtless, and as I've witnessed the eagerness of men 8 to get into the big game I've caught some 7 their spirit x so I'll again to fire that - maybe, after all, we might smash

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[7]

AMERICAN Y.M.C.A.

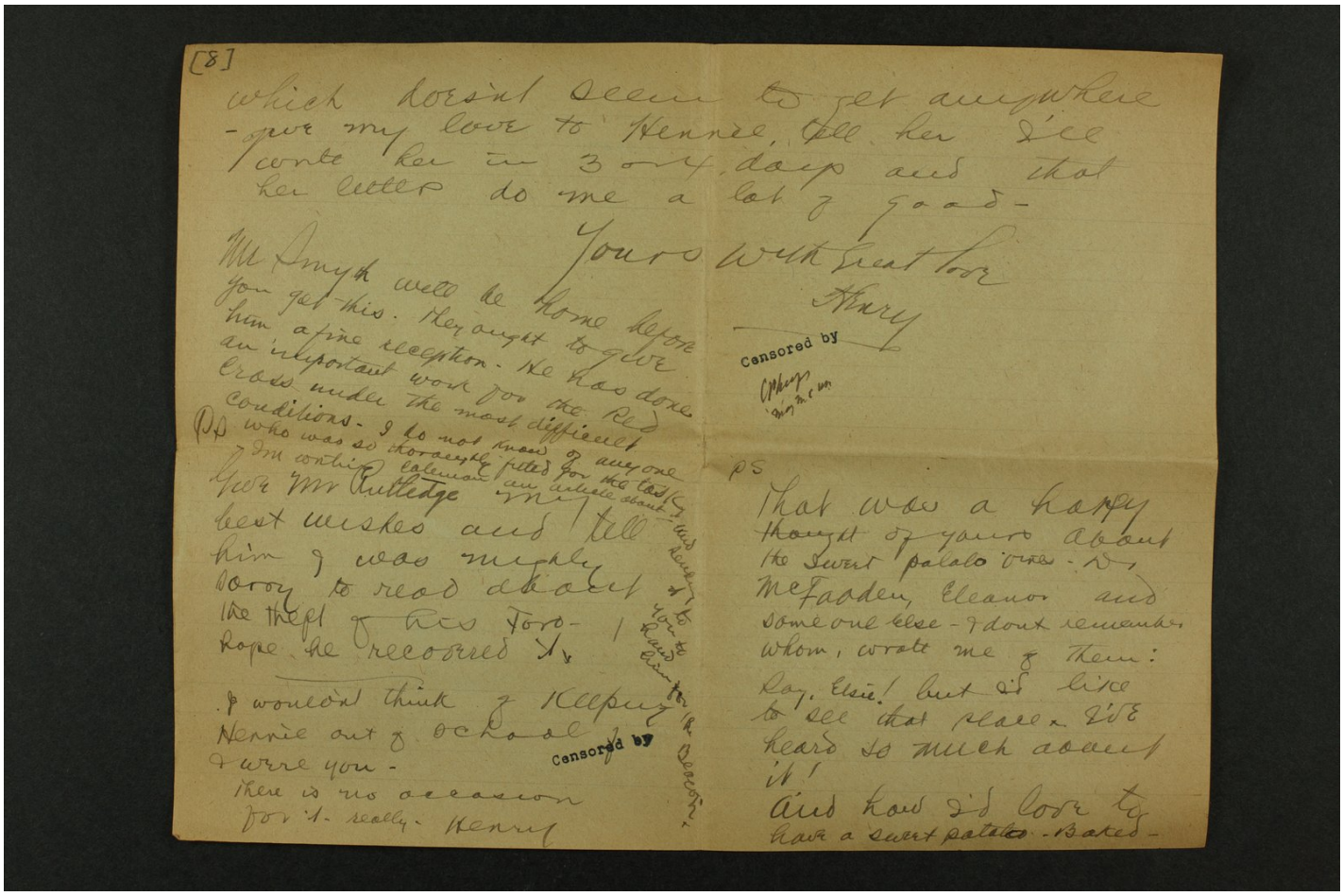
ON ACTIVE SERVICE
WITH THE
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
_____ 191__

Germany: before wrote, this I know that hope is not at all logical. It looks to me like a job for us next summer.

You mention your desire to hear more of the jacks I meet. Since I came into the field with the army I meet few people except the doctors and officers of our own army and the censor won't let us write much about them by name.

I got a letter from Jean today and one from Harriet. I'm glad Jean is going to be in Ben Woods' new division; yesterday I met D.E. Dennis boy, Don Cooper, Capt Priest, Capt Bayless and Col Fred Fitzpatrick. He is T.D. Fitzpatrick's son from Salina and your doughtless remembers him as a boy. He used to carry papers for Bristow when I was a reporter. He's now a Col, and looks middle ages. He made me feel ancient. This has been a rambling letter

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[8]

which doesn't seem to get anywhere
- give my love to Hennie, tell her I'll
write her in 3 or 4 days and that
her letter do me a lot of good -

Yours with great love
Henry

Censored by

Mr Smyth will be home before
you get this. He ought to give
him a fine reception. He has done
an important work for the Red
Cross under the most difficult
conditions. I do not know of anyone
who was so thoroughly fitted for the task
I'm writing Coleman an article about -
Give Mr Rutledge my
best wishes and tell
him I was mighty
sorry to read about
the theft of his Ford - I
hope he recovered it.

I wouldn't think of keeping
Hennie out of school
I were you -
there is no occasion
for it really. Henry

Censored by

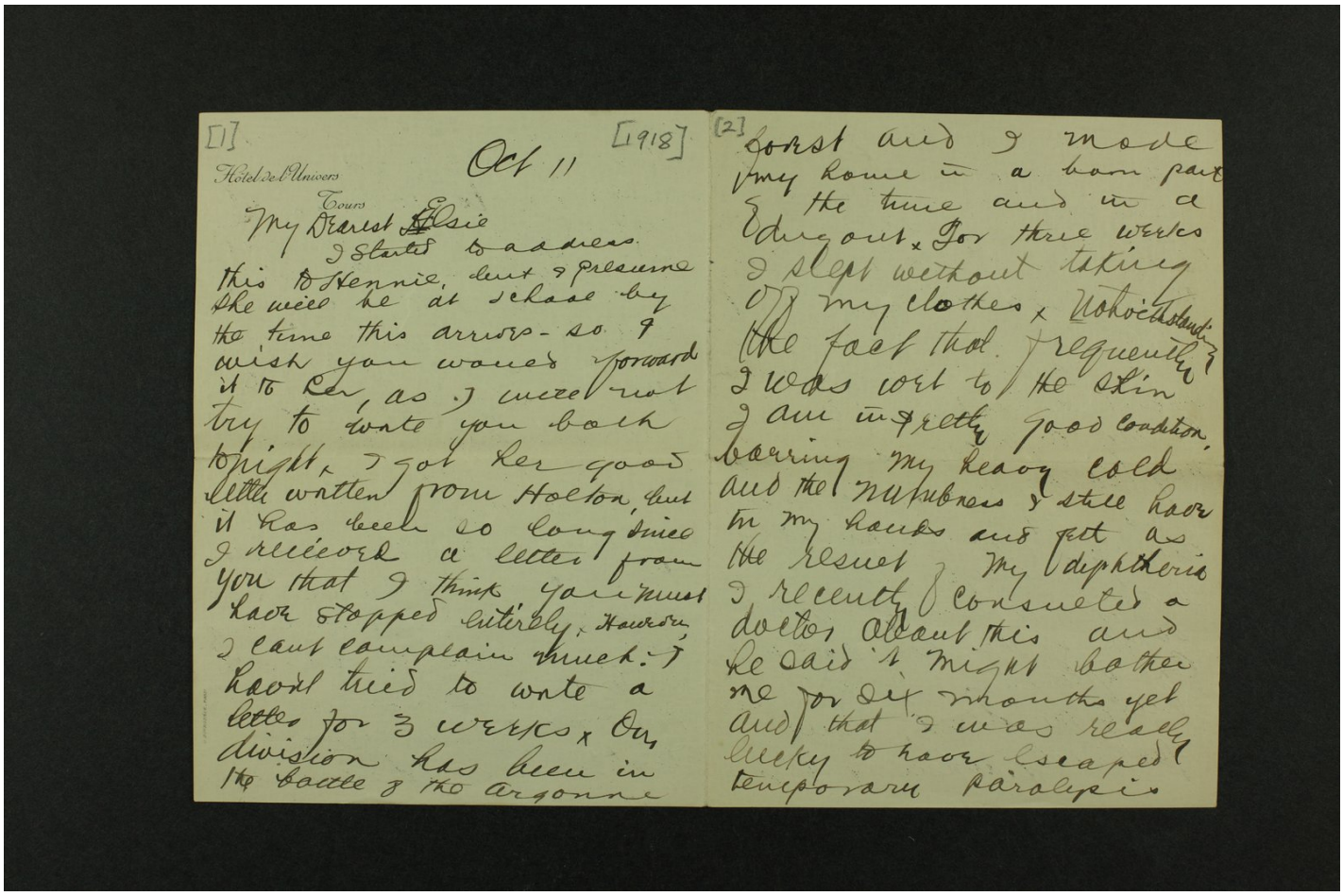
PS

That was a happy
thought of yours about
the sweet potato vines - Mr
McFadden, Eleanor and
someone else - I don't remember
whom, wrote me of them:
Say, Elsie! but it's nice
to see that place - I've
heard so much about
it!
And how I'd love to
have a sweet potato - Baked -

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[1]

[1918]

Hotel de l'Univers

Tours

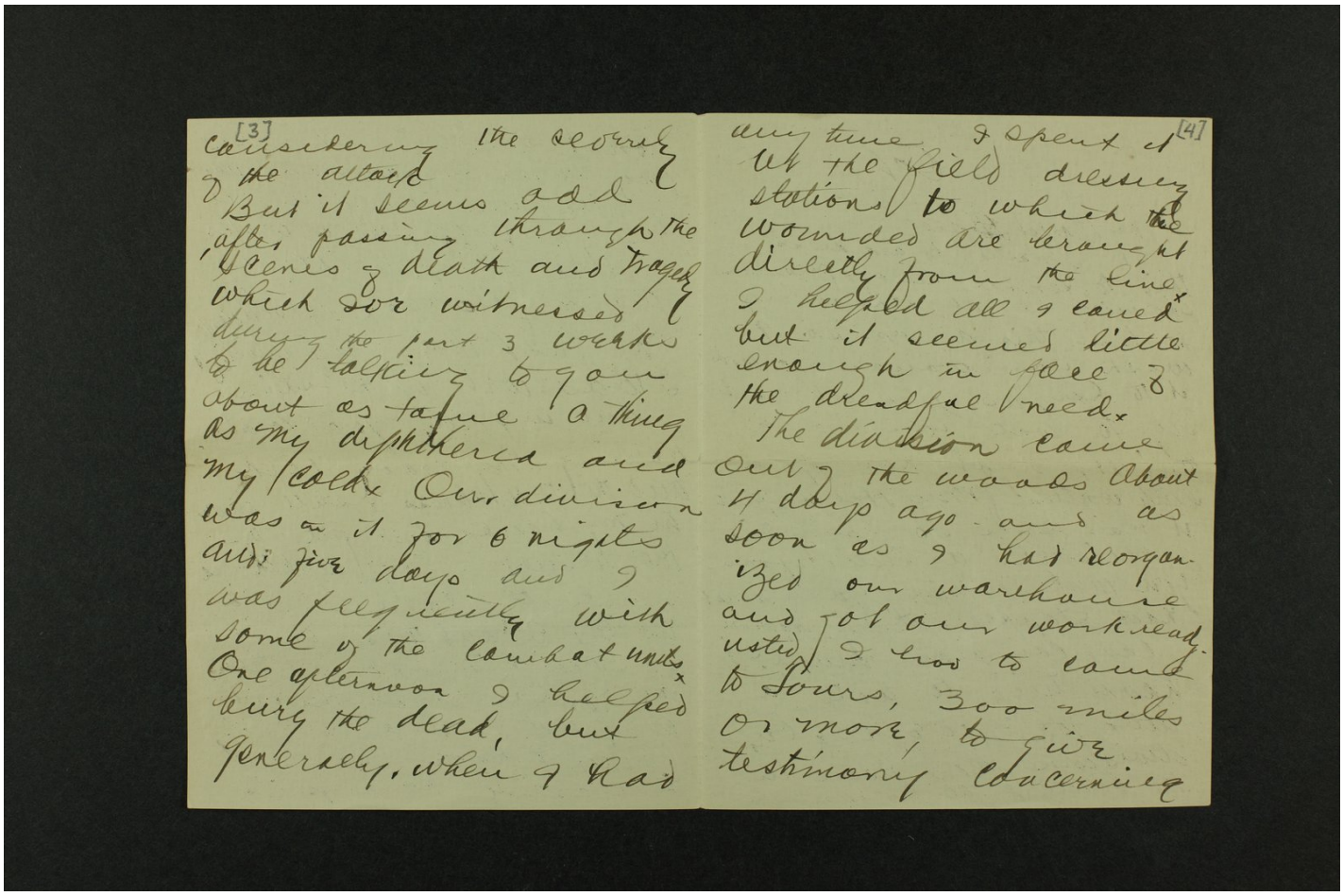
Oct 11

My Dearest Elsie

I started to address this to Kennie, but I presume she will be at school by the time this arrives - so I wish you would forward it to her, as I must not try to write you both tonight. I got her good little written from Horton, but it has been so long since I received a letter from you that I think you must have stopped entirely. However, I can't complain much. I have tried to write a letter for 3 weeks x Our division has been in the battle of the Argonne

[2]

forest and I made my home in a barn part of the time and in a dugout x For three weeks I slept without taking off my clothes x Notwithstanding the fact that I frequently was wet to the skin I am in pretty good condition, barring my heavy cold and the numbness & stiff hair in my hands and feet as the result. My diphtheria I recently consulted a doctor about this and he said it might bother me for six months yet and that I was really lucky to have escaped temporary paralysis



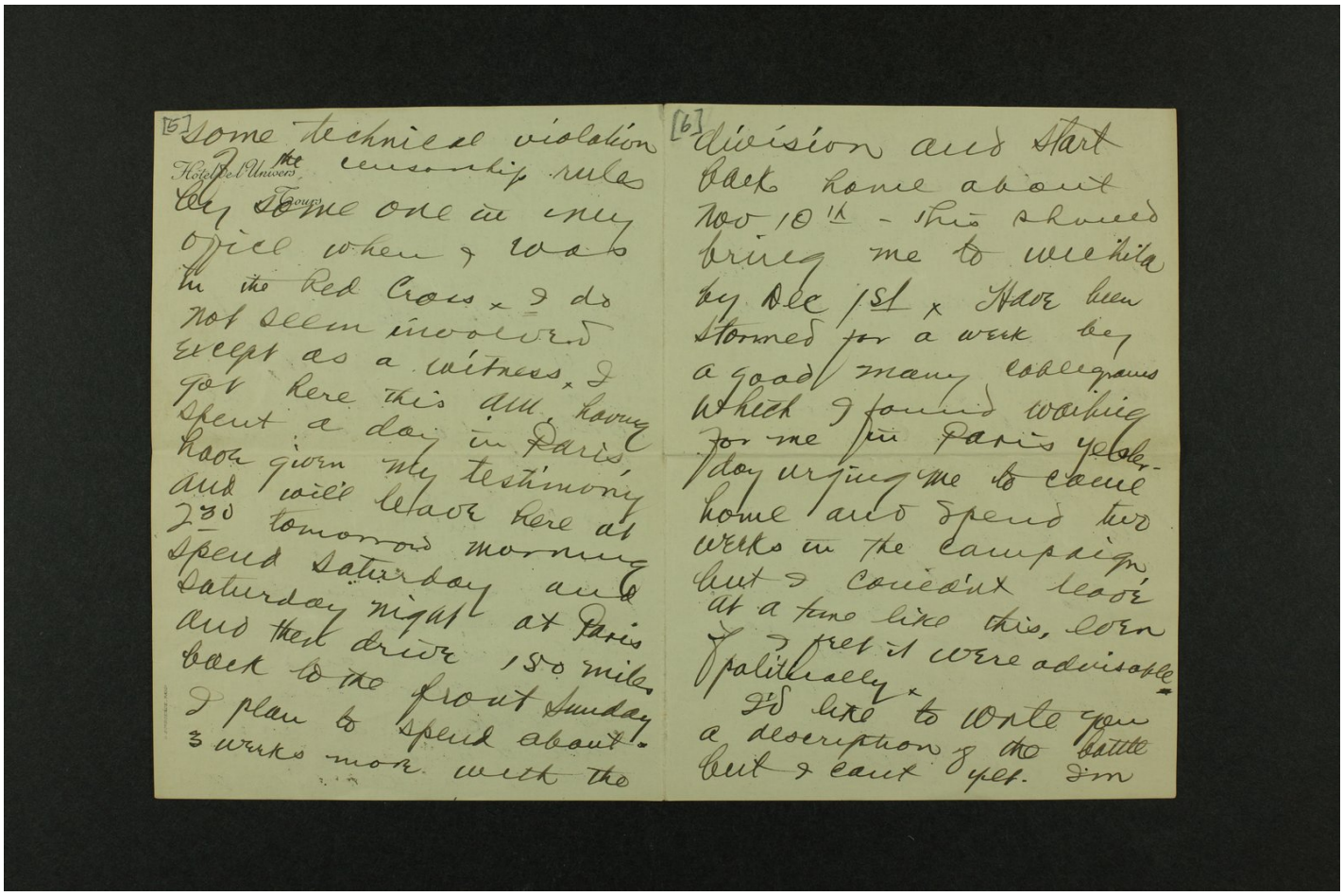
[3]

considering the scenery
& the attack
But it seems odd
after passing through the
scenes & death and tragedy
which I've witnessed
during the past 3 weeks
to be talking to you
about as tame a thing
as my diphtheria and
my cold. Our division
was in it for 6 nights
and five days and I
was pretty busy with
some of the combat units.
One afternoon I helped
bury the dead, but
generally, when I had

[4]

any time I spent at
the field dressing
stations to which the
wounded are brought
directly from the line.
I helped all I could
but it seemed little
enough in face of
the dreadful need.
The division came
out of the woods about
4 days ago and as
soon as I had reorganized
our warhouse
and got our workhead-
quarters I had to come
to Tours, 300 miles
or more, to give
testimony concerning

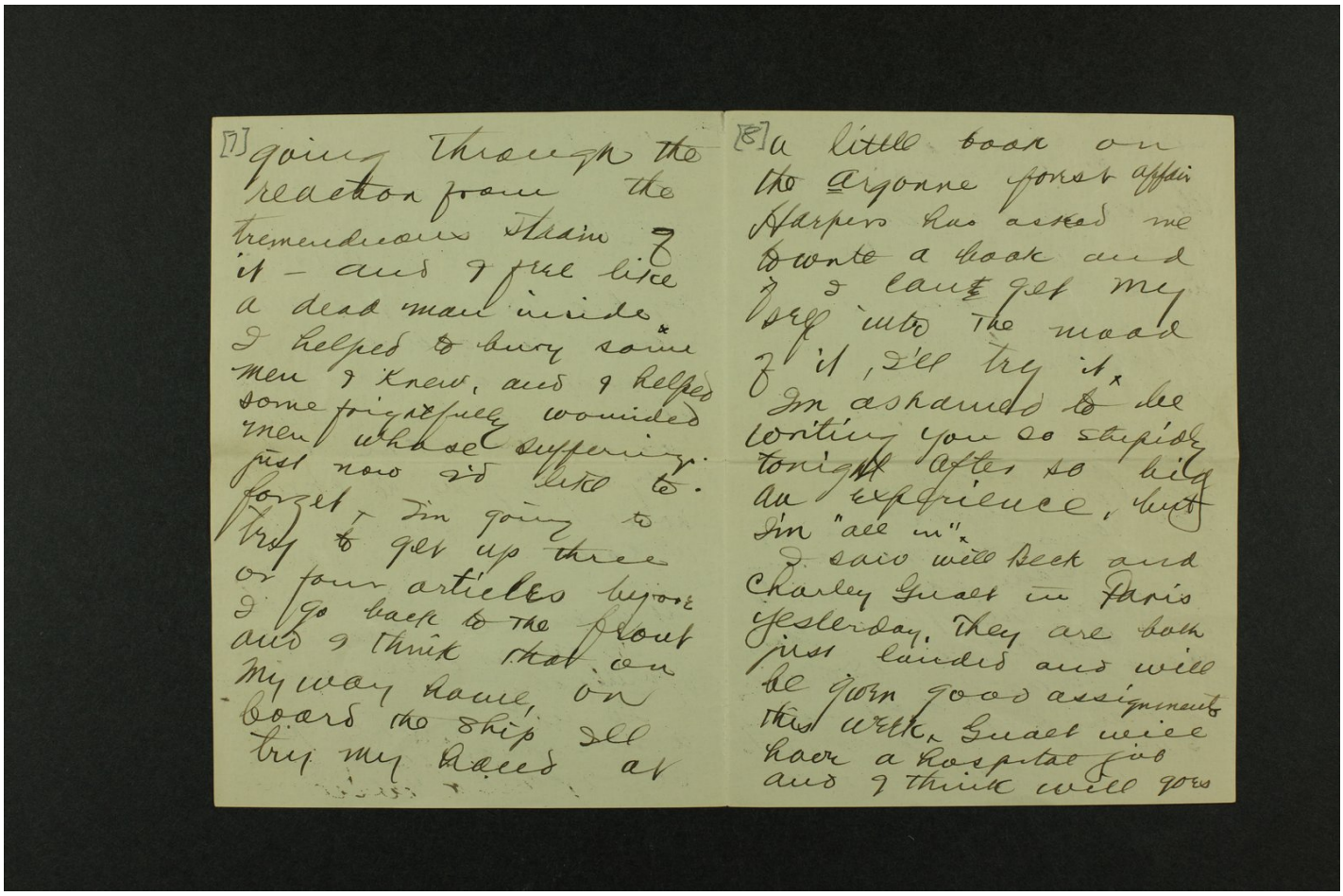
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[5] Some technical violation of the censorship rules by some one in my office when I was in the Red Cross & I do not seem involved except as a witness & I got here this AM, having spent a day in Paris & soon given my testimony and will leave here at 2:30 tomorrow morning & spend Saturday and Saturday night at Paris and then drive 180 miles back to the front Sunday. I plan to spend about 3 weeks more with the

[6] division and start back home about Nov 10th - this should bring me to Wichita by Dec 1st & Have been stormed for a week by a good many colleagues which I found waiting for me in Paris yesterday urging me to come home and spend two weeks in the campaign but I consider I can at a time like this, even if I felt it were advisable politically. I'd like to write you a description of the battle but I can't yet. Jim

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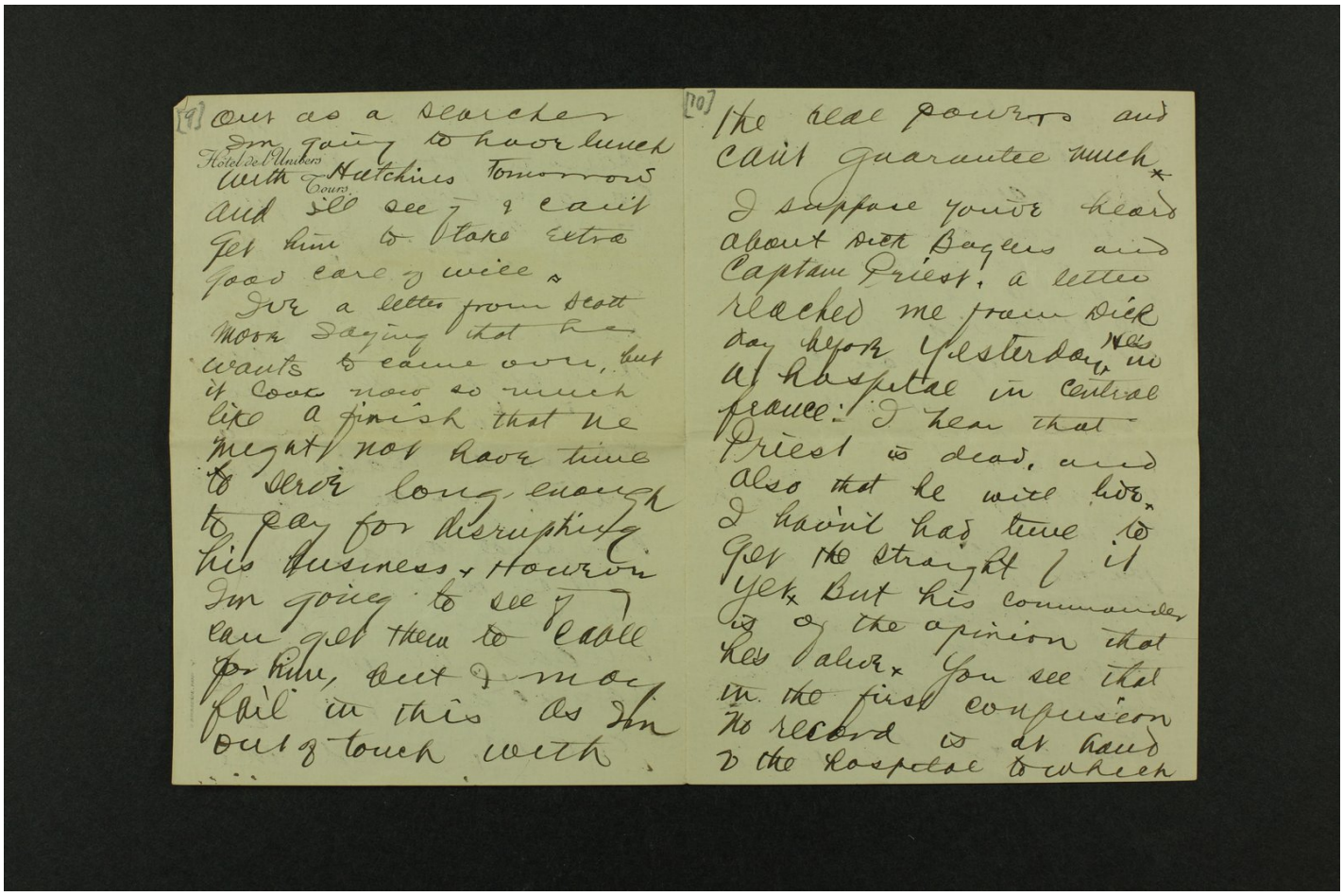


[7] going through the reaction from the tremendous strain of it – and I feel like a dead man inside. I helped to bury some men I knew, and I helped some frightfully wounded men whose suffering just now is hard to forget. I'm going to try to get up three or four articles before I go back to the front and I think that on my way home, on board the ship I'll try my hand at

[8] a little book on the Argonne forest affair. Harpers has asked me for one and I can't get my self into the mood of it, I'll try it. I'm ashamed to be writing you so stupidly tonight after so big an experience, but I'm "all in".

I saw Will Beck and Charley Guest in Paris yesterday. They are both just landed and will be given good assignments this week. Guest will have a hospital and I think will go to

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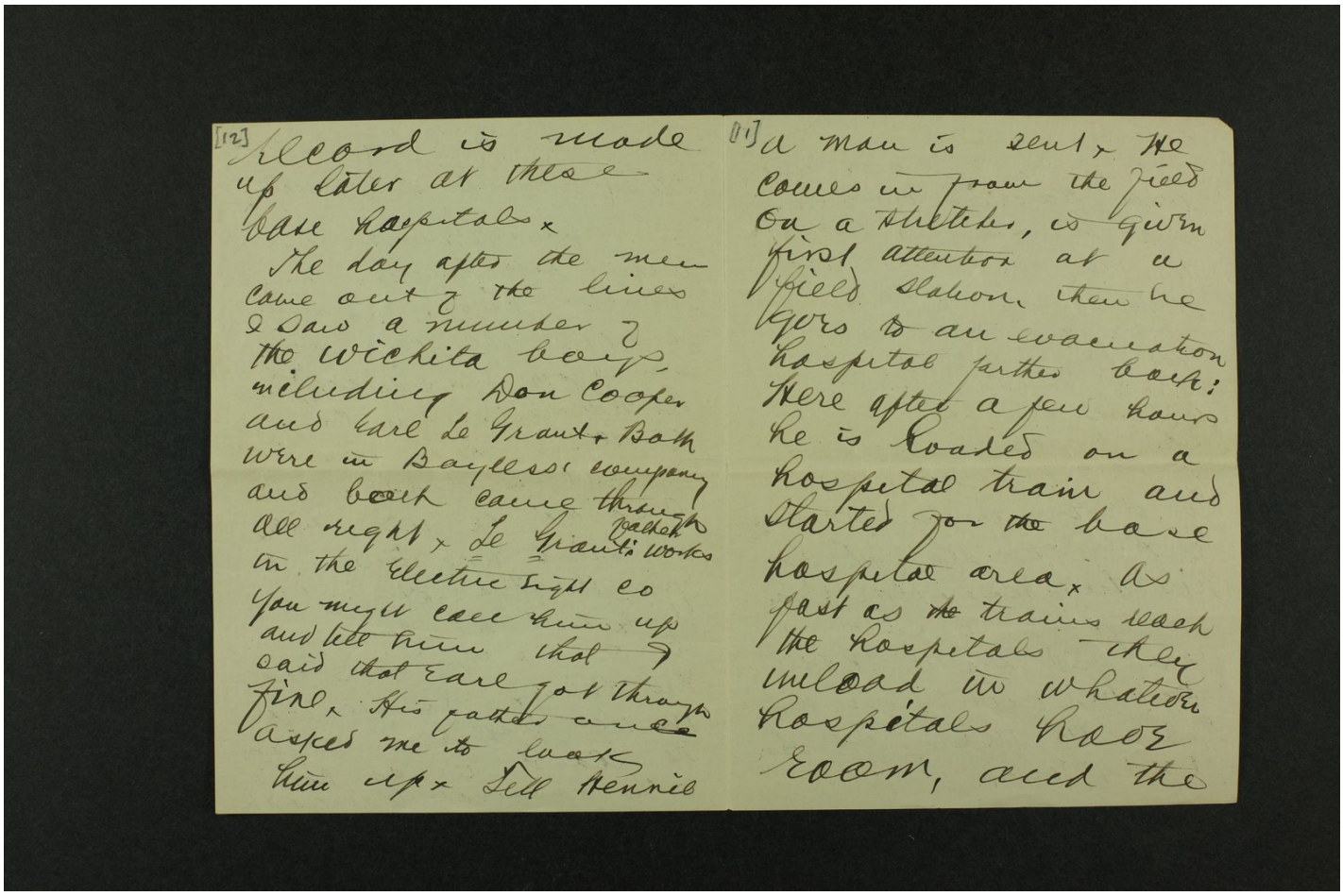
[9]

our as a searcher
Im going to have lunch
Hotel de Univers Cours
with Hutchins tomorrow
and Ill see if I can
get him to take extra
good care of mice.
Ive a letter from Scott
Moon saying that he
wants to come over, but
it looks now so much
like a finish that he
might not have time
to serve long enough
to pay for disrupting
his business. However
Im going to see if I
can get them to call
for him, but I may
fail in this as Im
out of touch with

[10]

the real powers and
can't guarantee much.
I suppose you've heard
about Dick Bagley and
Captain Priest. A letter
reached me from Dick
day before yesterday. He
at hospital in Central
France. I hear that
Priest is dead, and
also that he will lose
I hadn't had time to
get the straight of it
yet. But his commander
is of the opinion that
has valor. You see that
in the first confusion
no record is at hand
to the hospital to which

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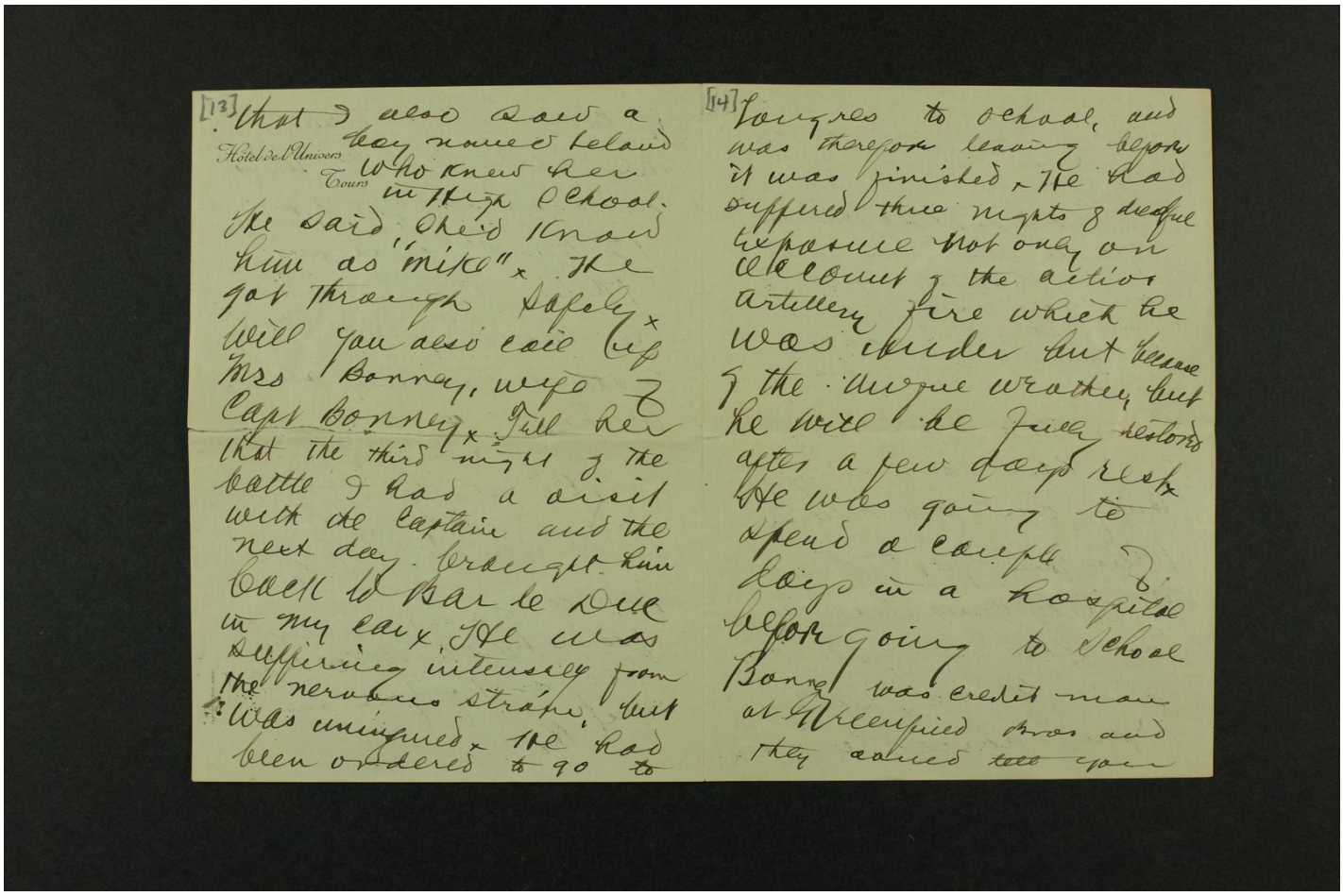


[12] Record is made up later at these base hospitals x

The day after the men came out of the lines I saw a number of the Wichita boys, including Don Cooper and Earl Le Grant. Both were in Bayless' company and both came through all right x Le Grant's father works in the electric light co You might call him up and tell him that I said that Earl got through fine x His father once asked me to look him up x Tell Hennie

[13] a man is sent x He comes in from the field on a stretcher, is given first attention at a field station then he goes to an evacuation hospital further back: there after a few hours he is loaded on a hospital train and started for the base hospital area x As fast as the trains reach the hospitals they unload in whatever hospitals have room, and the

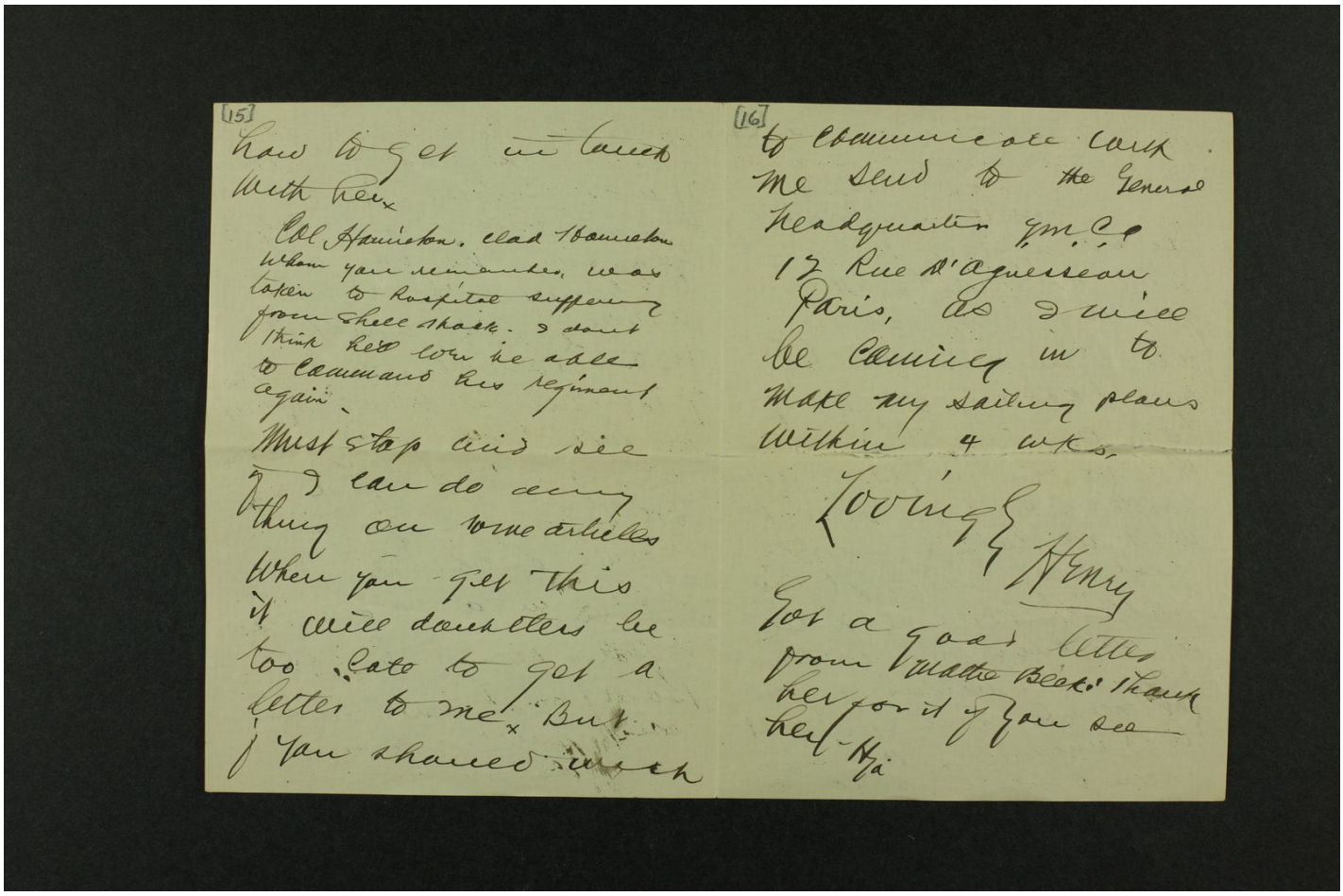
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[13] that I also saw a boy named Leland Who knew her in High School. He said, She'd know him as "Mike" x He got through safely x Will you also call up Mrs Bonney, wife of Capt Bonney x Tell her that the third night of the battle I had a visit with the Captain and the next day brought him back to Base Hospital in my car x He was suffering intensely from the nervous strain, but was uninjured x He had been ordered to 90 to

[14] Langres to school, and was therefore leaving before it was finished x He had suffered three nights of deadly exposure not only on account of the action artillery fire which he was under but because of the inclement weather but he will be fully restored after a few days rest x He was going to spend a couple days in a hospital before going to school Bonney was credited man at Recruiting Office and they asked too you

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[15]
how to get in touch
with her.

Col Hamilton, dad Hamilton
whom you remember, was
taken to hospital suffering
from shell shock. I don't
think he'll be able
to command his regiment
again.

Must stop and see
if I can do any
thing on some articles
when you get this
it will doubtless be
too late to get a
letter to me. But
if you should write

[16]
to communicate with
me send to the General
Headquarters A.P.O.
12 Rue d'Agueseau
Paris, as I will
be coming in to
make my sailing plans
within 4 wks.

Loving
Henry

Got a good letter
from Walter Beck. Thank
her for it if you see
her. Hja

Henry J. Allen, World War I correspondence

