

Kansas Memory



Walter Vernon Pirtle collection

Section 13, Pages 361 - 390

Letters written by Walter Vernon Pirtle to Louise Covey, Cullison, Kansas. The letters dated August-December, 1917, were written in Pratt, Kansas, where Walter was working for the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad. His letter of January 20, 1918, first mentions joining the U. S. Army and World War I. The March 3, 1918, letter was written from Camp Funston where he belonged to the Machine Gun Company 353rd Infantry, 89th Division. By June 5, 1918, he was on his way across the Atlantic Ocean to France. His letters written from July 1918 through April 1919 contain information about the war. After hostilities ceased on November 11, 1918, Walter's company assumed guard duty in the occupation force near Trier and Cologne, Germany. His last letter written from Germany is dated April 30, 1919. The 89th Division returned to America in the spring of 1919. Walter was mustered out on June 2, 1919, after fifteen months of service. Also included with the letters are postcards of Trier, Germany.

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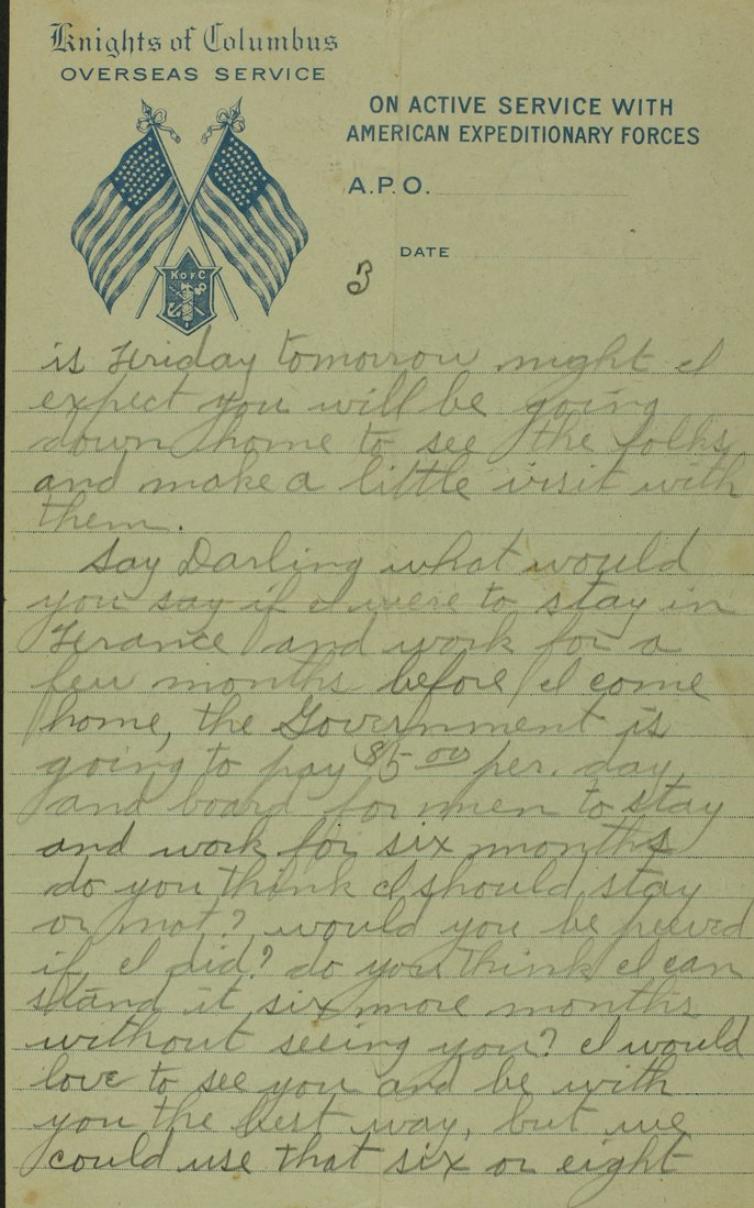
And I can tell the world there
was not one boy in France
who was as proud of it as
I was when those guys quit
thier deadly roar, now what
I wonder is how soon we
will be at home will it be
soon or not that is sure a
hard matter to for-tell but
no doubt it will not be
a great while now until
we will be in America
once again, and a proud
boy I will be to be with you
once again and maybe it
will be a long time before
we are parted on account
of a war in Europe, I sure
wish that we were in U.S.
for the trip across that water
is not at all a nice one.
What are you doing today
are you working hard this

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hundred dollars pretty good
don't you think we could and
I don't know how we could
get hold of ~~sixes~~ easier or
more quickly than that do
you? what do you say about
it? how I wish I was there
so I could talk to you about
it, and see what you would
say about it. but I can't so
you write me a letter real
soon and tell me what you
think of it. probably I can get
the letter before we start
to America I hope so for I
would love to know what you
would say before I decide on
staying, tell me in the next
letter what you are thinking
about it Dear.

I went and beat a soldier
out of some more paper so
I will write you a few more
lines here, for it has been
so long since I wrote you

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I recd two letters from
you last night / and
I was indeed glad to
get those letters of love
They are worth all of France
to me your letters of
Love dear keeps me in
pretty good humor so
long as I get those letters
your letters were dated
Oct. 6 and 7th. one of them
was numbered 10th but the
other was not numbered
you must of forgotten to
number it but is no
doubt 11th.

How are all the sick ones
has the ~~same~~ desease spread
any more in America

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we have it here also.
I guess I did not know
Devose who died. I am
hoping that it is checked
before now.

Say you ask me if
I had the same job in
this Army, no I am
now helping to care
for the family, I have
only been at it a short
time, I was at the other
job until only a few
days ago. You know
I had that Grippe and
quite a cough with it
and that is a bad thing
to have you know.

Did I ever answer that
question that you ask

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me about the paper, the
writing paper if not
I will now tell you that
paper is sure hard to
get to write a letter
and if you can slip me
a few sheets into each
letter it will be a great
help, but now that the
war is over maybe I
can get paper easier
I hope I can.

And you lost our
ring did you, and found
it again so that not so
bad, but real hard luck
at best, but we can't
help such things they
are sure to happen to

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all of us, so we wont
worry about it at all
and Lee spread the news
until the folks all found
it out, that is the way
it goes.

I will quit here for
today, the war is over so
now I will tell you all
about it when I get there

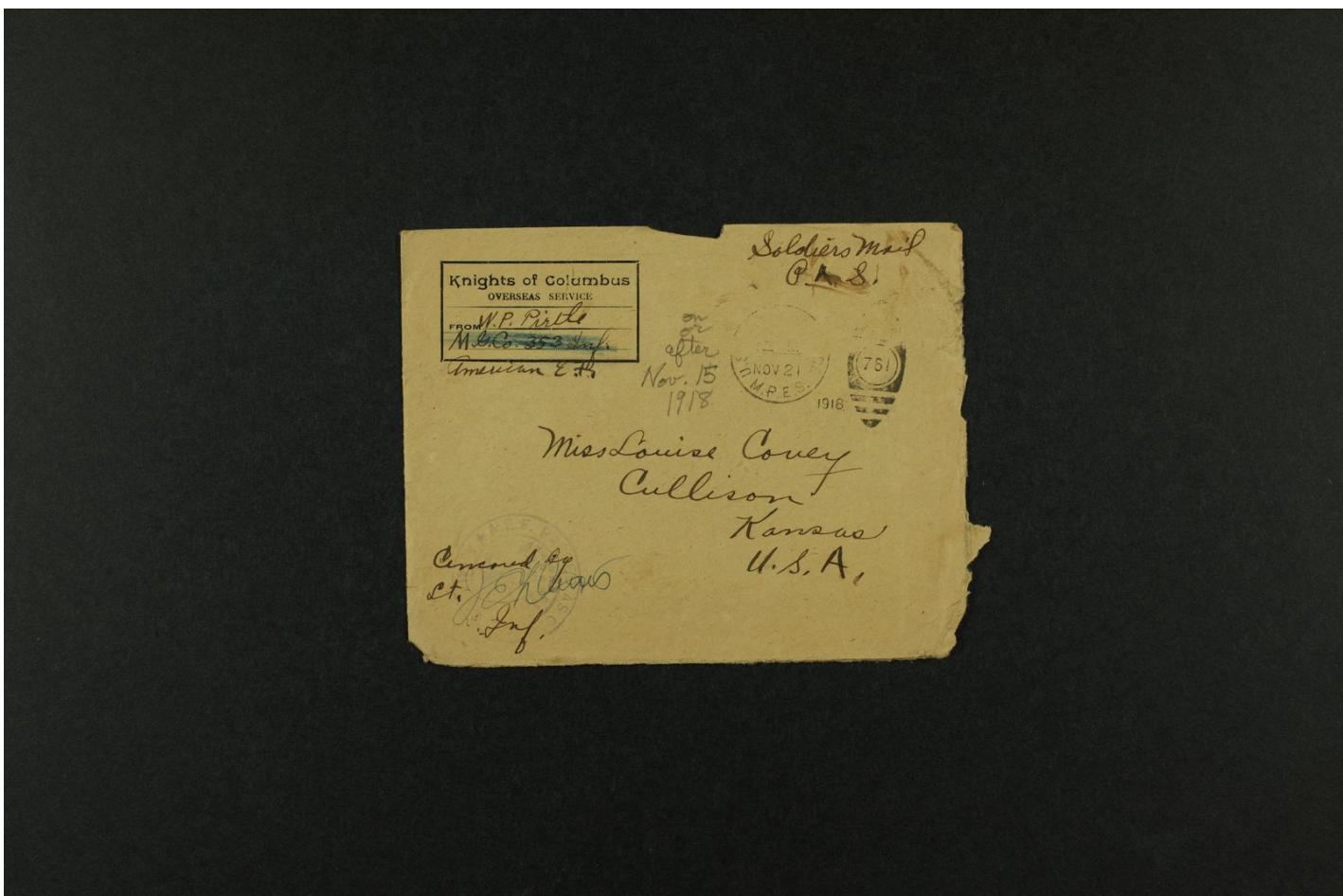
GoodBye DarlingXXXXXX
All my Love is yours

Pvt. Walter V. Pirtle
Dr. G. Co. 353rd Inf.
American E. A.

censored by
J. C. Smith
2nd Lieut 353rd Inf

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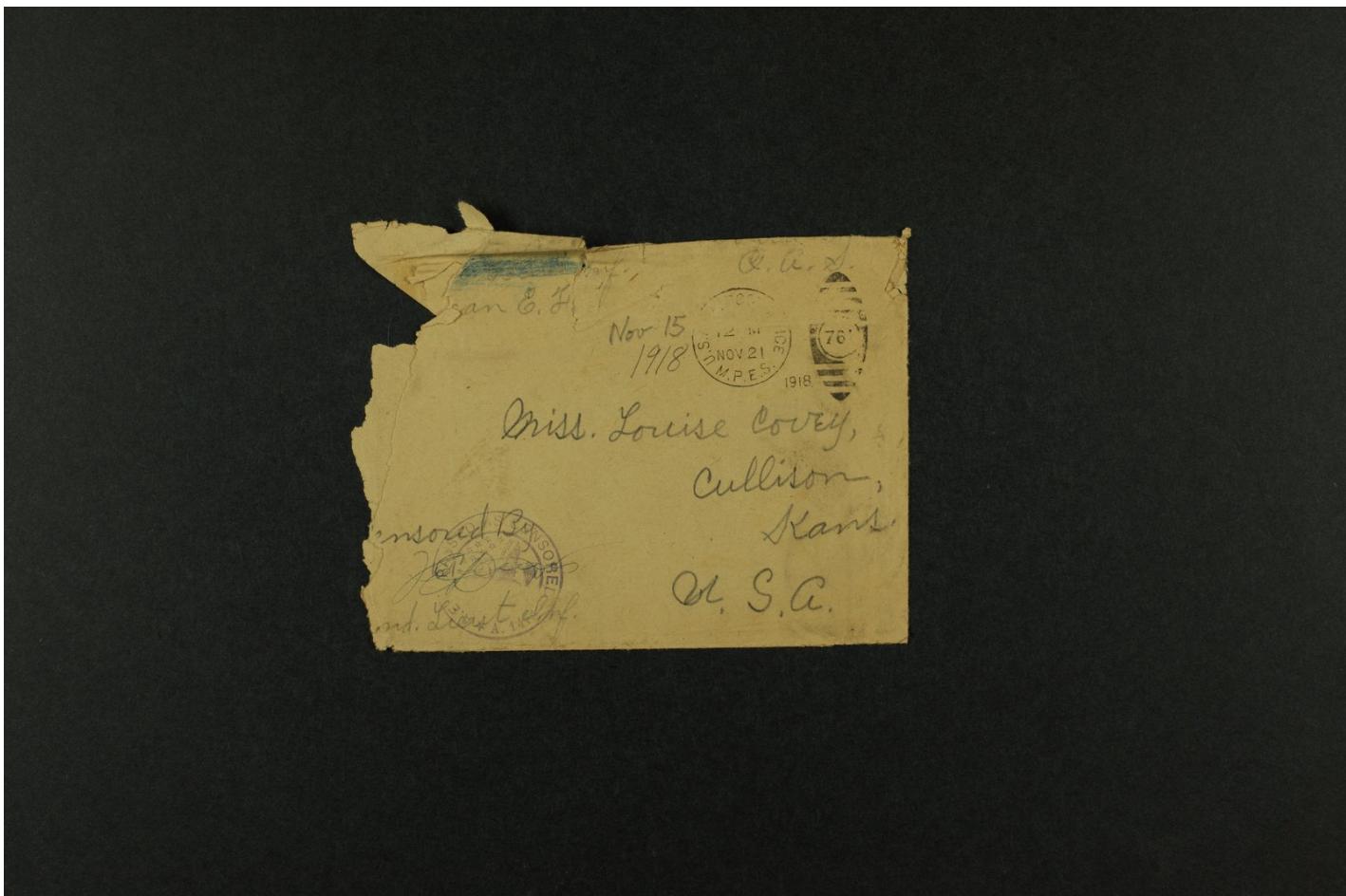
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Dec 22-1918
Prum. Germ.

civilians of this town
and one lad and I
are living in this
place, it is a real
nice room and in
it we have a real
bed to sleep in and
I guess the last bed
I slept in was before
I left Pratt, a long
time, and nobody you
think I wasn't surprised
when I saw we were
to really sleep in a
bed, we went to
bed early last night
and stayed as long.

My Darling One:-
Dear Girl I am once
again going to write to
you a few lines,
This is Sunday, I
wonder what you can
be doing this morning
I guess you are just
about getting up now
as it is 11:00 nearly time
for dinner, I wish
that I could take dinner
with you today but
I guess that I cannot
but I think that in
a short time I will

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be there to take dinner in another envelope
with you some Sunday I am sending you
may it be soon, for some views of the town
I am now dying to I am in, they are the
get back to America best views that I could
and you just think get of this place,
it will soon be time We moved to this
to celebrate the new city yesterday A.M. we
Years Day, and almost have things a little
a year since I last better here for at the
saw you and a long last place we had
hard year it has been to walk four miles to
but the next one will get our meals, and
be a great deal different say just listen I
I will spend it on have a real bed to
that side of the Ocean sleep in too. We are
with you my Darling Billed among the

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food, that rule don't affect about 95 percent of the boys, for they are all broke, and I will be also if we don't get a pay day real soon. It is five months Jan 1st since we were payed a cent, that is a long time to go without any pay at all.

We are with a family of mighty fine people they can't do enough for them us, and I sure do appreciate it mighty well, if I could only speak German so I could tell them what such nice treatment means to a soldier.

They say they like to have the Americans with them, but they don't like the French at all. That is what the boys who can talk to them tell me.

One boy who lives in this house was in the Army of the Crown Prince in France. They seem to realize that America

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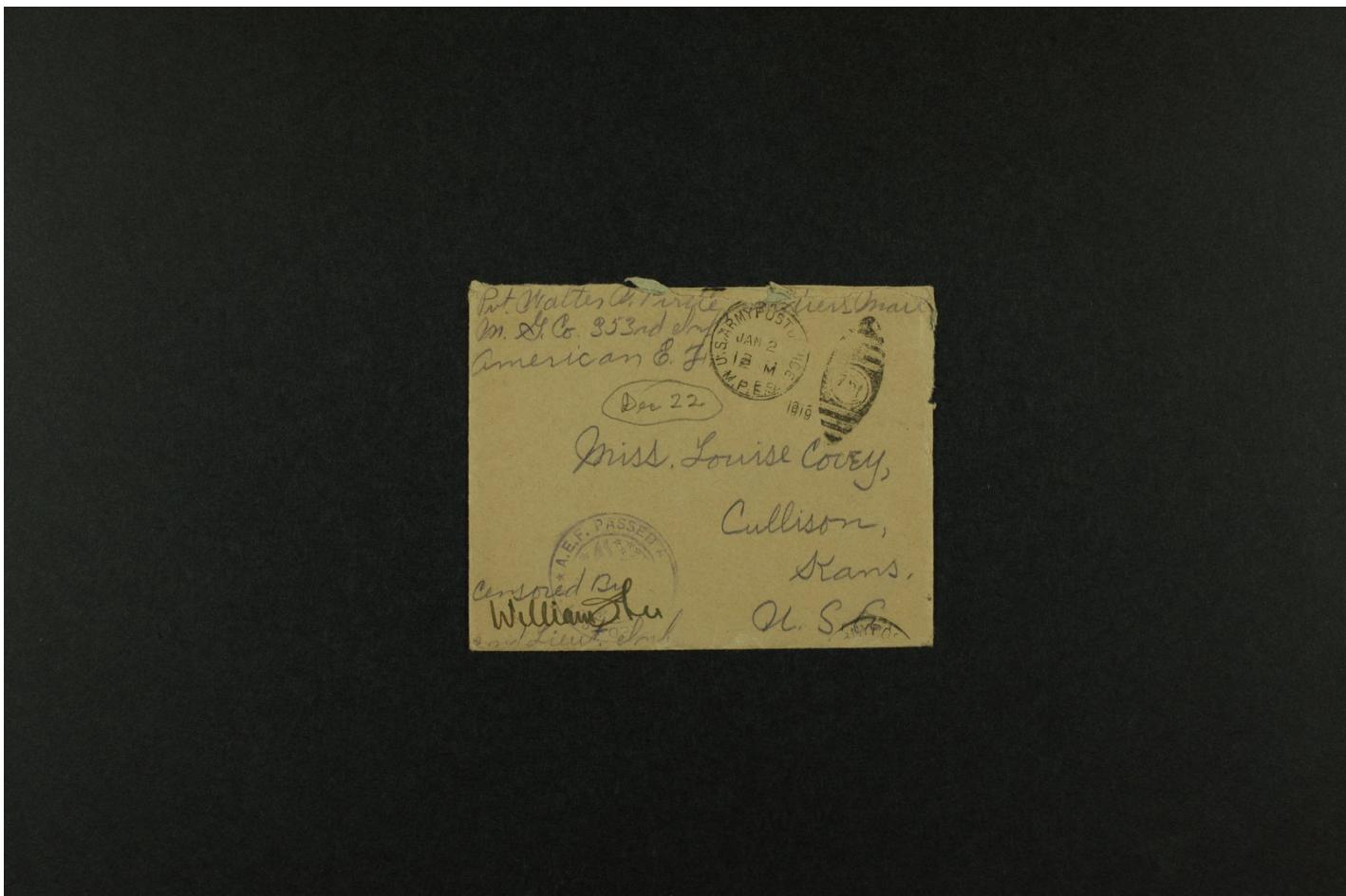
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did them a favor as we could this A.M.
by running the Kaiser off the Throne some bed it was, and
I must close now it was the best treat
and get my poor day that I have had since
Miss. I wish I was I have been away
in U.S. so I could from Pratt. I am
get a real Sunday going to bed early tonight.
dinner once more. This is a fair
Good Bye S. H. ^{xxxxxx} size town about like
Your Soldier Boy Pratt I guess.
Pvt. Walter V. Pirtle We could buy our
B. G. Co. 353rd Inf. selves something to
American S. F. eat in this town but
Censored By we are not allowed
2nd Lieut. 353rd Inf. to buy anything that
is eatable, so we don't
eat any of the German

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Brunswick, Kansas
Dec. 22 - 1918.

Dear Girl - There are
only a few card views
of the town I am know
in. The town is about
the size of Pratt.
I am sending a letter
today also. Bye
P. S. Walter V. Pirtle
On Lt Co. 35 3rd Inf
Concord Bay
Cameran B. F.
and Lieut. 252nd Inf.

Miss. Louise Corry
Cullison

Pratt Co.
Kans.
U. S. A.

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one who tries to talk all the joy
out of life,

I rec'd a letter from Sis.
Mary tonight and one from cousin
Gladys who was telling me
about Laura's death. She wrote
a real nice letter but it makes
my blood boil to think how they
did those old folks.

She also said she was going
to quit her job in her father's
office Dec 1.

Did that horse of Arthur
get well? That you said was sick
and you say he lost one horse
he is sure an unlucky boy. He
has enough hard luck for the
entire neighborhood, he has
hard luck at every thing.

Prum, Germany,
Dec 27-1918

My Darling Louise:

Tonight I rec'd a letter from
you, it was not numbered but
was dated Dec 1. I surely did enjoy
that letter Darling One for each
letter is a message of love to me.
How are you tonight Dear One
if it is as cold there as it is here
I will guess that you are near
the stove for it really is a little
cold in Germany these days and
I expect it will remain cold
until spring.

How are Charley and Jim P.
are they well by now. It seems
that the "Flu" has taken a new
start in Kans. lately.

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You ask me if I had been in the Hospital while I had the Grippe, and I guess I better answer that about first. So I was not in the hospital at all, but I guess I should of been for I was sure a sick boy for about two weeks, and was in bed eight days, only got out to go to the Dr. two or three times each day, I did not want to go to the hospital if it was possible to stay out of it, and begged not to go and was not sent and am glad that I didn't go.

That was the worst siege of Grippe that I ever did have as well as the most peculiar, that I ever experienced, I guess if I had been in the States it would of been called "Flu" but I don't know whether it was or not so I prefer calling it Grippe* to be safe.

I did not write Anna anything about going to a hospital or anything that would cause her to think I was in a hospital, she just made that.

And who ever it was told Aunt about the letters from the Nurse is not a friend of mine that is sure, for not a nurse in France knows that there is a human on earth of my name, You know there is always some

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Say has that Harold got that com
out yet? he better have it out, for
it is time for him to move, el
am afraid he better be long gone
from there before I get back there
or I will throw a barrage over
on that lad, he better go down
and flirt with his own wife for
a few days,

Yes I will bet that Sherm is
some soldier, el would like to take
him for a trip across Pro-German-
Land tonight, I would see if We
Officers know any thing about war
And as for him knowing when the
Germans were going to quit, he
must of knew more about it than
General Pershing, or any of the other
main men, And when he wrote
over that stuff he showed a soft
spot on his brain, and the girl
I guess would believe it if he told
her that the moon was a ball of
green cheese, She is a long way
from being an officer, and the job
he now has he is sure welcome
to it, for el am sure el wouldn't
have it.

And they say el wont be home for
a year, well el think me will

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surprise them and come in in
a few ~~days~~ weeks, for just because
we are in Germany is no reason
that we will not be home for a
year, for we may be next, can't
tell anything about that, for no
one knows when we will be home
not even Sherm can tell that.

But if I were to make a guess
on it I would guess that I would
be in Europe for a couple of months
yet, but that would be only a
guess, you understand, but if we
are here one year then I will be
badly surprised indeed.

I believe that I will go to bed
it seems to me that it is getting late
my watch stopped about a week ago
so I have no idea how late it is.
I'll bet that Sherm can't hardly tell
time without a watch, and nobody
not with a watch, Well We Officers
don't tell every thing so I will quit and
go to sleep a while. Goodnight ^{xxxxx}

All my love to you
Pvt. Walter V. Pirtle,
Co. D Co. 353rd Inf.
American E. F.
N.Y. New York,

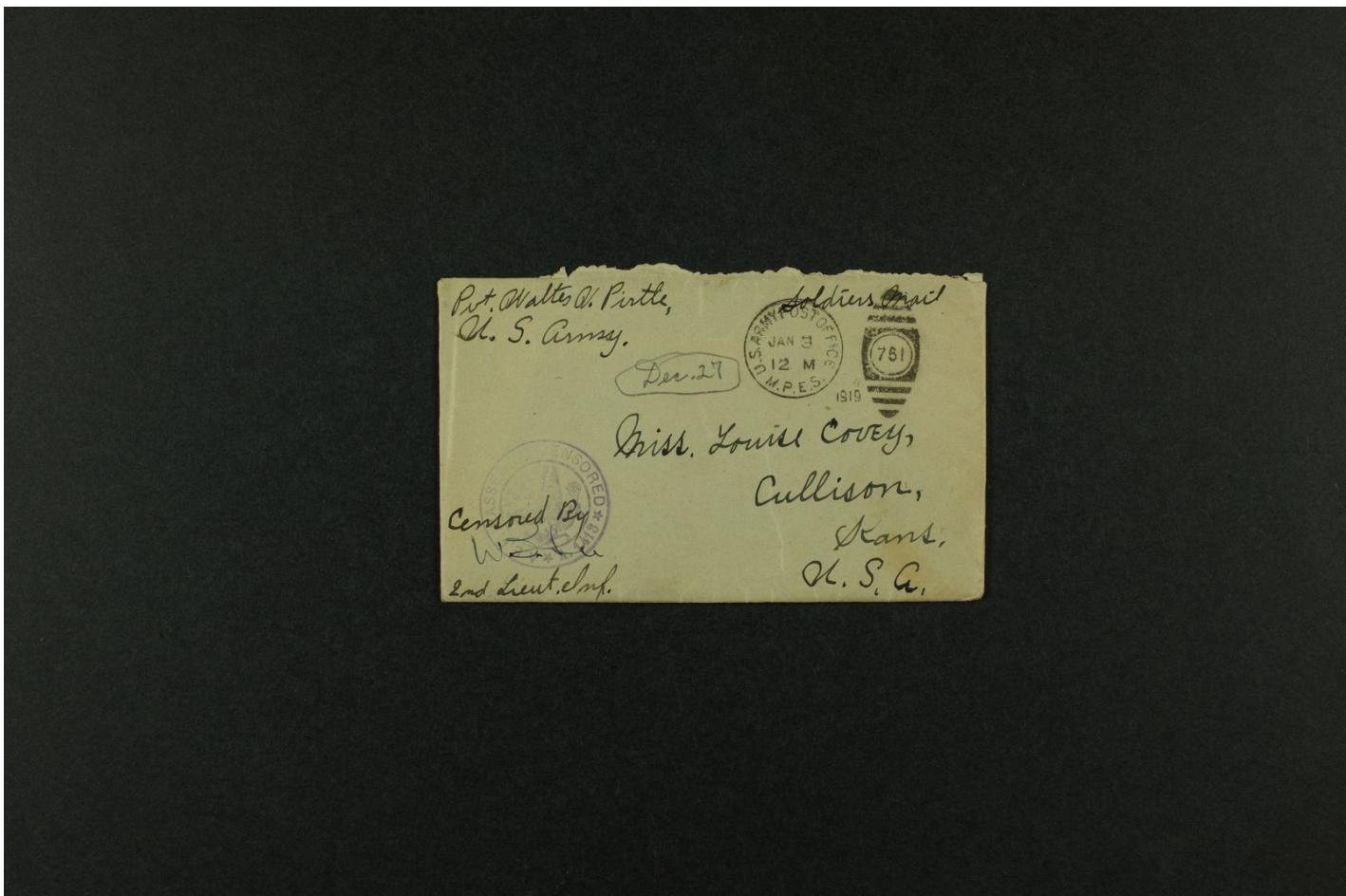
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Say I have something to
laugh about, but don't know
whether to laugh or not, for
yesterday I taken out of my
pocket the purse that has your
Photo in, I was taking out some
marks and cler says let me
see that Purse, I handed it over
to him, I knew it was the Photo
that he wanted to look at,
but after taking a good look he
handed it back and said, "I
thought that was a picture of
some one that I knew but
I guess it isn't" so he don't
know you at all does he or
else he was thinking of Mary C.
I told him that was a Photo of

Pirm, Germany,
Jan. 1, 1919.

My Darling:-

Happy New year, and a very
Happy year I hope this one will
be for you, I am sure that we
have not any danger of war
to face this year, and when we
are once more in our U.S.A.
and into civil life again, I am
sure that the remainder of
this year will be a happy one
for me, and I hope you will
enjoy the year even more than
I will, darling how do you
expect to spend this New Year
Day, Here is hoping you see a

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splendid day. can you recall the day and how you spent New Years last year, I believe that I taken \$1 out of Cullinan and was speeding down into New York and the hottest lad on that train there is no doubt of that,

When I study of the past year I see that we have had some great experiences, and considering the war it was the most exciting I have ever spent, and I know that you spent that time expecting any day to get a word that I had been knocked off (as the boys say) but you didn't get any such word and the prospects of a return home soon are sure good, so I think we will not be far into 1919 before we can meet again.

And God knows I will never be in Europe again, unless of course I have to help bring the "Flag" back and show it to some one over here like Kaiser Bill or King Charles, or some other beast of the Earth, You can come to Europe if you want too, but I can't come along, I have plenty of Europe, maby if it ever becomes civilized I will see it again.

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My wife and I guess you hardly know her he answered "I'll be d—"
I started this new year with doing four hours guard from 2 A.M. until 6 A.M. and I still have four more hours to stand guard today yet.

What is George doing, I guess he is begining to think of how he will split the dirt about April 1

And how about Harold and those bushels of corn has he got that crop out yet, he better make it fast for I will be there before he gets it picked, and shell his ears for him.

I should get a letter from you pretty soon for it is a week now since the last letter came.

Here I must close and get out on that Post to do that guard duty.

GoodBy S. H. xxxxx

Your Soldier,

Cpt. Walter V. Pirtle
Co. G. Co. 353rd Inf.
American E. L.

censored By

2nd Lieut. C. M.

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Prum Germany
Jan 5 - 1918 [1919]
Sunday P.M.

My Darling One:-

Now the day is rapidly passing away and I have not yet wrote to you I think that you have written to me before this late in the day, for it is soon time to be getting out for retreat you are one who dont retreat arent you. well we stand retreat each evening

I hope that you are not having to endure as much rain today as we are in Germany, it rains here almost every day & never saw so much rain since the winter I was in Ark.

How are you spending this day are you keeping it Holy (of course).

Now all that I have done today isn't a great deal I can tell all the world about that, for I have done nothing but sit in this room for the last four hours, doing nothing, until Paul (my Pal) taken up the paper and went to soaking his brain with what he could find in it, and it is some paper believe me, some real stuff in it by name, The Stars & Stripes, I like the name, but I guess there is

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some good in all things, in the last paper I read an article in it, and in speaking of apart of the Army in Germany, they used these words,

"They are living, some of them, in such elegance as they had never known before in all thier days, nor will again"

If this is realy true el sure feel sorry for those lads of whom they are speak, for they are to be pitied, the poor boys. How wouldnt that get your goat.

One hour later I am back again. One of the boys called in and we had a visit then Retreat taken place and it is now still nearer the end of the day. Did you have any visitors today? I hit that Papa & mamma were out to see you and George. What is that boy George doing these days el suppose he is busy at something.

How I would pull the lines over a team of mules for a few days, I mean if it was in U.S. I cant drive a team hee, you would sure laugh if you could see some of the outfits that are worked here. Even till yet I have to laugh when I see a man working one horse and

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one cow, most of them use no liner
and they have to go behind the wagon
to put on the brake, and on some of
these hills a brake is of great importance,
this city is built on a hill side and
when I get to the bottom of the hill
I sure hate to even think of the return
trip, and I don't go down there either
only for meals, I would go get those
meals if I had to wade the river to do it
for I eat just as hearty as ever, so you
know that I am always ready to eat,
so I never miss a chance to eat.
I see in the paper today that the
Regiment to which my cousin belongs
is going to America he is a lucky
boy he was in the Army 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ months
befor I was and I was in France
nearly two months befor he was now
he is gone home and never saw the
trenches at all now if that isn't
some real lucky, but that lad was
born lucky, I have no idea when
we will be home, but I hope it will
be soon indeed, but I guess we will
be here to see that the "Peace Terms" that
are handed to Germany are properly
signed and fulfilled, even that will
be better than fighting, ~~even~~ especially

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if they leave me in this room, to sleep.
And I am just lucky enough
to be the last one home, even after
the Peace is signed, but I won't do
any complaining just so the proper
Peace is signed and Pres. Wilson
gets "The League of Nations" into
working order, that is what interests
me at present that League of Nations.
How are those sick are they getting
well, I guess Jim and Charley are
over the Flu by now, And if you
ever hear how Oscar is write it to me
I inquired of some of the boys in
~~the~~ His Co. But they knew nothing
about how he is, I think he should
be home before long, if he did not
fully recover, for most of the sick and
disabled are being sent home first.

I must close and go to supper
or I will miss mess and I can't
afford to take to many chances on ~~too~~
missing supper. GoodBye Darling ~~xxxxxx~~
Your Soldier Boy,

Lt. Walter V. Pirtle,
Co. G. Co. 353rd Inf.
American E. F.

Censored By

2nd Lieut 353rd Inf

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