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Weaver, E. Elizabeth (Emma Elizabeth), 1878-1966.:

Journal of E. Elizabeth Weaver, Army Nurse Corps, World War I, 1917-1919.

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Jan. 22nd 1919 Coblenz, Ger.

“Yetz bin ich in Deuschland.” Well here we are at last, have been on duty the last two days. Was sent on duty on Ward A, the influenza & pneumonia Ward. It took us 6 days to travel from Chatel Guyon to Coblenz. The two days spent in Paris were also devoted to reequiment. We stopped off 4 hrs. at Chateau Thierry. In order to do this I had to get a permit from the Adj. Gen. in Paris. More red tape. Hill 204 is on the outskirts of Chateau Thierry & Belleau Woods just 5 kilometer

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outside the town. Chateau Thierry certainly was shelled. Some houses were blown down completely, others, only the walls remained standing. Window panes were shattered, whole ends of houses blown out. The bridge over the Marne was bombed & blown to pieces. We stayed at Nancy one night. Nancy is a beautiful French town. Have you ever heard of the golden gates of Nancy, well, we happened to sleep in a hotel, the Grand hotel, which was taken over the Red Cross, this hotel faces an open square, each corner of which has large golden, bronze gates under which one passes to enter. On leaving Nancy, the trains were again terribly crowded & we had to jump on & edge our way in. Just before boarding the train Miss Bretzler handed me a paper bag of oranges. I was delighted, as fresh fruit was scarce & I was so hungry for it. Just as I was jumping on the train the paper bag tore & all the oranges rolled under the train. I'm still grieving the loss of those oranges. The next stop was Metz in Alsasce Lorraine (sic). The journey from Paris to Metz was interesting. We passed thru “No Man's Land” All the villages were completely demolished, nothing but ruins remaining. Where once stood a town nothing remained but piles of mortar, bricks & stone. It was certainly desolate. In certain places the devastation was so great, that where once stood towns, little sign boards were erected saying; “Here stood -----,” or whatever happened to be the name of the village. Refugees returning after the battle could not find their street, let alone the location of the house. Thank God the war was fought on this side of the Atlantic. Wouldn't it be dreadful if our little town of Mountville were completely obliterated.

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It's dreadful. Many of the trenches run in this manner  & how any one can cross the barbed wire entanglements is hard to understand. Really, I don't know when

anything ever made me feel so badly as the sight of a civilian cemetery we passed. It was close by the rail-road (sic) track & the train happened to stop. The tombs (caskets) were standing on edge. Some shattered to bits & fragments, tombstones thrown in every direction big shell holes right in the center of the cemetery. It must have blown the dead out of their graves in every direction. It was raining, everything looked so dismal & desolate, no sign of life anywhere, but a little English sparrow perched on the church yard wall. For miles we passed thru (sic) devastated territory. Roofs blown off houses, big holes in the wall, others, nothing standing but bare walls. Foundries blown to pieces, bridges blown up, then miles of camouflaged rail-road (sic) tracks & rows & rows of camouflaged cannon, i.e. they were painted in all sorts of curious colors to blend with the landscape, the cannons having been captured from the Germans, & no end of motor trucks. Destruction of towns, houses & bridges was great around Chateau Thierry, Chalons, Bar-le-duc, Toul, Nancy. At Pagny sur Moselle I saw the cemetery blown up. Metz is in Alsace Lorraine (sic) which was taken by the Germans, from the French in 1870. In the large open square in Metz a statue of marble of Frederich, the Kaiser's grandfather, on horseback, was thrown down by the people of Metz & destroyed. I saw the shattered marble statue lying there. One week after the signing of the Armistice the French entered Metz. You can imagine how glad the people of Alsace Lorraine (sic) were to welcome their own people after 48 years of German rule. We spent another night a (sic) Treves, Ger. Trier ("Tre air") the Germans pronounce it. We were quartered in big barracks

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formerly occupied by the 29th German Infantry. It was also used as a Military school for German youths. Next day we proceeded to Coblenz on the Rhine. The Rhine River is perfectly beautiful. We are in a big German barracks at Coblenz. 1600 patients, mostly pneumonia & influenza. This is the coldest place we have encountered since leaving home. I can readily understand why the German women wear woolen stockings & flannel petticoats. We have old stoves, to heat these big, bare rooms. We were assigned to Evacuation Hosp # 2, but later the name of our hospital was changed to Evac. Hosp # 49.

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Evacuation Hosp # 2
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I often wear my sweater & big trench coat while sitting in our dormitory. It is so very cold. Miss Findlay, Miss Schmoyer & I occupy one room together. While Miss Clingman, Miss Bideaux & Miss Stephen occupy the next room. The rooms of these big bare barracks have nothing in them but Army cots & a table & also a little stove. These rooms were formerly occupied by the German officers. Scratched upon the table I found these word (sic) "Gott strafe England." There is some kindling wood in the cellar, old broken boxes & some coal. We build a little fire in our room when off duty, but the stoves are so tiny one cannot add coal & check the fire for several hours, as the stoves are too tiny, the fire goes out. We get up in the morning & dress without fire, but in the

evening we build a little fire. There is no other heat in the building. We have a large gallon tin pitcher in which we heat water to bathe. Our bath tub is a hand wash basin, but the C.O. is busy having showers installed then we need no longer resort to dry cleaning.