

(Aug. 19, 1918)

Copy of letter received by Mr. Charles Alexander (9-7-18)

My Dear Mr. Alexander;-

Just received a dandy letter from Dad, in which he states you would appreciate a letter from me, well here it is. Tonight we go into the lines, so I can't tell when this letter will be mailed, I even have not an envelope to mail it in, so will send it, when possible. Our company has been in the line three different times and, each time were placed at a badly pressed place, in the last big German offensive, when the Germans broke our line and crossed the Marne, that was where we held them for four straight days and nights, they gave us Hell in every form, Gas, Machine Guns, Snipers, and Heavy Artillery, if there is a Hell on earth, we went through it. There is nothing so terrifying as shrapnel and high explosives, using anywhere from three inch up to sixteen. I had shells break so close, that they knocked me off my feet, and one time made me spill a perfectly good bean dinner, which we had just carried up to the men, nearly a four mile walk over a mountain, where our cooks were stationed. We also have had our share of airplanes, they wait till our planes are out of sight, then they sweep down and rain machine gun bullets and small aerial bombs on those below, there is no get-a-way, just stand and take your medicine, or pop away with machine guns if you can. One of the bombs dropped so close to me, that I nearly had indigestion. I don't waste any meals on account of these things. Several times I have slept in German made dug-outs, and have used their helmets for wash basins, and their bayonets to cut either firewood, or tent pegs. We just passed through a territory, in which the Germans had been driven out, they left tons of good equipment and shells, which they could not carry along.

Although we are near water now, I can't go down on account of shelling and of leaving my Company. I just finished up a dry wash, which consists of a half cup of water, to Shave, wash Neck and Face and Feet. This sounds awful in view of the abundance of water you have, but we are getting used to it and don't mind it at all.

When we are near our Cooks, or field kitchen we eat fine. It is quite some problem to get the stuff up to the men on the line, owing to the heavy shell fire, the Germans sure do lay for Supply trains and Water Wagons.

Up in the lines, I don't use my Bugle, but am a Runner or Messenger. My four best friends over here are "45 Automatic" Gas Mask, Trench Shovel, and Steel Lizzie, or Helmet, which is wonderful protection against flying pieces of shell and stones, thrown up by shells.

To-day is a peach, the sun being out nice and warm, for the last four weeks, we have had nothing but incessant rains, they cause a lot of suffering and extra hardships.

Since it is near mess-time, I am going to close.

AS over,

Sincerely,

Signed;- Bugler Howard W. Munder,

Company G. 109th Infantry,

American Expeditionary Forces.

Write soon and often.