

Nov 1, 1918

Dear Bess:

I have just finished putting 1800 shells over on the Germans in the last five hours. They don't seem to have had energy enough to come back yet. I don't think they will. One of their aviators fell right behind my battery yesterday and sprained his ankle, busted up the machine, and got completely picked by the French and Americans in the neighborhood. They even tried to take thier [sic] (there were two in the machine) coats. One of our officers I am ashamed to say took the boots off of the one with the sprained ankle and kept them.

The French, and Americans too for that matter, are souvenir [sic] crazy. If a guard had not been placed over the machine, I don't doubt that it would have been carried away bit by bit. What I started to say was that the German Lt. yelled "La guerre finis" as soon as he stepped from the machine. He then remarked that the war would be over in ten days. I don't know what he knew about it or what anyone else knows but I am sure that most Americans will be glad when it's over and they can get back to God's country again. It is a great thing to swell your chest out and fight for a principle but it gets almighty tiresome sometimes. I heard a Frenchman remark that Germany was fighting for territory, England for the sea, France for patriotism and Americans for souvenirs [sic]. Yesterday made me think he was about right.

I got a letter of Commendation, capital C, from the Commanding General of the 35th Division. The Ordnance Repair Dept. made a report to him that I had the best conditioned guns after the drive that he had seen in France. The Gen. wrote me a letter about it. My chief mechanic is to blame not me. He knows more about guns than the French themselves. As usual in such cases, the C[ommanding] O[fficer] gets the credit. I think I shall put an endorsement on the letter stating the ability of my chief mechanic and stick it in the files anyway., I am going to keep the original letter for my own personal and private use. It will be nice to have someday if some low browed north end politician tries to remark that I wasn't in the war when I'm running for eastern judge or something. I'll have the "papers" and can shut him up. If ever I get home from this war whole (I shall), I am going to be perfectly happy to follow a mule down a corn row the balance of my days - that is always providing such an arrangement is also a pleasure to you. I think the green pastures of Grand Old Missouri are the best looking of any that I have seen in this world yet and I've seen several brands. The outlook I have now is ,a rather dreary one. There are Frenchmen buried in my front yard and Huns in the back yard and both litter up the landscape as far as you can see. Every time a Boche shell hits in a field over west of here it digs up a piece of someone. It is well I'm not troubled by spooks.

I walked out to the O[bservation] P[ost] the other day (yesterday) to pick an adjusting point and I found two little flowers alongside the trench blooming right in the rock. I am enclosing them. The sob sisters would say that they came from the battle-scarred field of Verdun. They, were in sight and short range of Heinie and were not far from the two most famous forts of this line of defense. You can keep them or throw them away but I thought they'd be something. One's a poppy, the other is a pink or something of the kind. A real sob sister could write a volume about the struggle of these pretty little flowers under the frowning brows of Douarmont the impregnable.

Please keep writing, for I look for letters eagerly even if I don't write them as often as I should.

I love you

Always

Harry

Harry S Truman
Capt. 129 FA
American E.F.