

# **Soldiers, Sinkers and Pie**

World War I Memoir

By: Signa Leona Saunders  
Captain, The Salvation Army

Signa Leona Saunders (also known as my Aunt Peggy) was a sister of our mother, Florence.  
Richard Saunders







There was a subdued excitement among the passengers crowding the decks of the *S.S. Rochambeau* that sunny March afternoon in 1918, for the ship was headed toward France where battles raged, and every passenger on board – K.C., Y.M.C.A., Salvation Army and Red Cross workers, as well as the American and Polish soldiers, had but one goal in mind, to “help win the war.” Already, the pier had slipped away, the Statue of Liberty was fading out in the distance, the throng of handkerchief-waving Bon Voyage wishers was but a mere moving speck on the far horizon. Only the echoes of “*Goodbye Broadway, Hello France*,” played by a serenading band, still lingered in our ears.

A group of seventeen made up the Salvation Army party. I was among them, and now and then had to pinch myself to realize it was no dream, but actually I, Capt. S.L. Saunders, a mere slip of a girl, was on my way to France. Not so many years before, I had resolved, after reading the part women played in the Civil War, that if ever war occurred in my lifetime, I would have a part in it, ministering to the needs of those who must fight. And now, I was headed toward the fulfillment of that purpose.

When the Salvation Army asked for volunteers for overseas service soon after America entered the war, I was among the first of its officers to apply. Already the war had become a reality to me, for my three brothers, Cyrus, Felix, and “Jap,” as my kid brother was known, were training for transport service in the Navy. I’ll never forget the time, the evening of April 6, 1917, when the telegram came announcing their enlistment. It was a moment or so before I grasped the full meaning of it. Prior to that, war had been only history. It became a dread reality from which none of us who were, or became affected by it, would wholly recover.

Strange the things one remembers at a time like that – memories of childhood days crowded into my mind, song fests on the lawn in the evenings of long ago – where all the neighborhood gang joined in the singing, led by Cyrus who had a grand voice. Felix and I laughing together whenever we met over our hair-pulling contests when we were three and five respectively. Of the time when we lived on the Mesabi range, when Jap caused a cave-in to the mine he, Felix and I had so painstakingly built. Jap started running and stumbled and fell. For a few minutes we let him yell, then noticing a red spot on his dirty bare foot, we immediately forgot our anger and, muttering word of sympathy, together carried him in to Mother. When she had washed the foot, there was no sign of a “hurt” – just the remains of a crushed strawberry adhering to the washcloth. All our tears and sympathy wasted! That seemed but yesterday. How life does change.

The original plans were that I sail with the first S.A. contingent early in Dec., 1917. I had made the rounds, said goodbye to family and friends, consoling my younger sisters, Lillian and Florence, who also wanted to do war service, that by being a part of two armies, I would try and do their share, too. All preparations for my leaving were made and my baggage on dock when a cable-gram came announcing that Pauline Swartz and I were rejected because our names were pro-German. What a shocking disappointment, but neither of us gave up and eventually won out – my argument with the “powers that be,” being that if three brothers with the same name could serve Uncle Sam, I, too, should be allowed to do so. A telegram finally came to Camp Logan, Houston, Texas, early one morning in March, where I was working with the 5<sup>th</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> divisions, telling me “get ready for France immediately.” I needed no second bidding. The work at the camp had been enjoyable, the soldiers a grand lot and the experience invaluable as I was later to discover, having learned particularly, how little it took to put courage into the heart of a soldier: A smile, a cheery word, a joke if the occasion demanded it, sometimes just a sympathetic touch of the hand, and they were lifted out of the slough of despond.

But sometimes I wished, ever so heartily, that I had been born a woman named Smith, in the months I waited for the telegram.

An infantry band that held rehearsals in the S.A. hut surprised me with a beautiful farewell concert on my last morning at the camp. I was deeply touched by their thoughtfulness.

Then, at last, Camp Logan, Chicago, and New York were but memories. All details had been taken care of and farewells said. We were resplendent in new uniforms, our minds filled with countless lectures on our duties “over there,” these duties not very clearly defined by any of the lecturers, but the gist of all summed into the theme – “As S.A. officers be ready at all times, in every emergency to so your bit for God and country.” We all felt the solemnity of this commission as we started for “*over there*.”

The wishes of hosts of friends for a “*bon voyage*” were realized. The trip was glorious, and though two of the S.A. party were Scotch, none of us “fed the fishes.” We spent our days promenading the decks or gathered in groups to study French. It was fun to try our newly-acquired French on fellow passengers, and one morning I encountered a jolly, fat Y.M.C.A. secretary profusely perspiring from too many turns around the deck with the query, *Et vous fatigue?* “*Oui, oui, Mlle.*” (Sum total of his French) “I am both fat and gay,” was his reply.

Each evening we went down to the steerage deck and held services for the soldiers. The Y men helped, and everyone enjoyed the services, particularly the last one before we reached quarantine. We sang “*God Will Take Care of You*,” and not knowing what the future had in store for us, it gave us confidence.

Spent my birthday on sea (April 4). Gifford gave me a can of chocolates and some ginger ale, so we ate, drank and made merry.

April 9 we landed in Bordeaux, and long before we reached its shores, we could see it raining; so sunny France greeted us with tears. Col. Barker met us and hustled us off to a café where we partook of meat that none of us cared for, and Gifford declared was “consumptive horse meat.” When we finished our repast, Col. Barker rushed us off to the depot just in time for the Paris Express. Seven of us were piled into a compartment to sleep, saith the Colonel, but that was impossible. Did he mean it?

Morning found us in *Gay Paree*, but a Paris so different from what we had imagined. War had left its mark, and in place of the gaiety, one saw only somberness. Everyone in black, and so many crippled on the streets.

Lieut. B. took us sightseeing – war relics, Napoleon’s tomb and the Eiffel Tower were points of interest, as well as the Arc de Triomphe and the Champs Elysses. When we went to the cafes to dine, we carried our own tea and sugar.

Our stay in Paris was brief, just long enough to get our initiation lecture and a lot of “thou shalt and thou shalt nots” and General Orders, particularly for girls. “No correspondence with soldiers, no showing of partiality, no infatuations, etc. We were supposed to be “model soldiers.”

After the A.P.M.P. had been notified of our arrival, we were off for Ligny, our base H.Q., and shortly we arrived.

The H.Q. was in a delightful chateau, and Adj. Hammond, one of the first S.A. party, was in charge. We had a delicious French meal, after which Adj. H. told us rookies some thrilling war stories and demonstrated the putting-on of gas masks in six seconds. It can be done, we soon learned. In the morning we were to be sent to our respective huts.

### **Toul sector, 1918**

Lagny was the first stop, and I was dumped off here, bag and baggage. Bushnell and Scofield were glad to see me. Went for mess to the officers’ billet with the girls. I immediately decided these officers knew how to select good cooks.

So tired from the trip and the strangeness of everything. Only a few boys in the hut this afternoon, so I have put in my time mastering francs and centimes.

### Eve

The news has spread, a new American girl has arrived, and quite a gang collected to greet the newcomer. Before the evening was over I was one of them. Adj. B had a meeting scheduled for tonight, and I had to sing. The boys (cheerful liars) declared it was great.

The Motor Mechanics and Truck Co., 2 of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Engrs, are here, and I just know I'll like it – and now for bed – Bon Nuit.

### May 15, 1918

This beats me. A whole month since I've opened these pages. Such gross neglect.

April was half-gone before we got our field range and started making doughnuts. They proved such a treat that even yet we can't supply the demand.

Our stove smokes terribly, and being in a small tent makes it worse so Scofield and I weep many bitter tears over the doughnuts, particularly on rainy days. But "cest la guerre." There's a lot of pleasure in making the sinkers, and the tears give 'em flavor.

Lieut. Schaffer told me this A.M. that his orderly was eating a doughnut last night and finding a tiny hole in it said, "I do decleah, if it ain't a teah." Mebbe so! Mebbe so!

The Motor Mechanics left us recently, and now we miss them. They appreciated the religious services and enjoyed the singing. Their officers thanked us for the good influence we had over the men.

By the way, our billet is located in "mess-kit" alley and our room, though damp, is comfortable (even the feather bed).

Under the same roof with us abide the French family, a horse, cow, cat, rats, chickens and a pig that graciously grunts what to me sounds like "bon jour" whenever I pass his way. And what beautiful tulip beds in the backyard, and such a view in front!

We are seven kilos from the front. We can hear the guns plainly, and during the barrages, can feel the vibrations.

Took gas-mask drill with the Engineers this P.M. Unique experience. Symmond and Williams visited us recently. There were chased our of Aunsauville during the Siechprey affair.

The town crier passed our hut today beating his snare drum – that called all the inhabitants to the public square, where he told them the current news. What a queer way of doing things. This village seems like a page out of medieval history.

Had a "do your bit" program recently on our social night. Great time had by all. The darkies also entertained us with the minstrel acts and buck and wing dances one night. A Lieut. Chilos marched them into the hut, and they were so still and formal that they made me nervous. I asked him to tell them to be at ease but he "passed the buck" to me, and it was then I make the famous speech that broke the ice. I perspire every time I think of it. But the darkies liked me for it.

Yesterday Bushnell and I took a hike to Evac. Hospital #1, and visited four wards. We gave each patient a tulip. It seemed awful to see so many boys wounded and crippled; but they were game sports and all seemed anxious to get back on duty. In ward E, talked to two youngsters of sixteen, both had shrapnel wounds. In another ward, saw a man much emaciated who had lain in a trench for three days before getting into the hospital. The boy in the next bed had supplied blood for a transfusion for him and that it was appreciated is putting it mildly.

We then visited the Y.M.C.A hut, a dandy place, but the secretary was not very cordial.

Before starting back, went to the cemetery and while looking at the names on the crosses, a truck came up bearing a flag draped casket containing the body of Corp. Gould. The funeral was impressive, and naturally, saddened us. The grave was partly filled with water and the boys who lowered the casket wore boots. After Taps was sounded, we returned to Lagny with aching hearts to ponder over the afternoon's events, in that small corner of wartown France.

Made several hundred doughnuts today. None left. Last Sunday was Mother's Day. Two 23<sup>rd</sup> engineers came to me and said, "Capt. will you take Mother's place for today and accept these flowers?" How willingly I complied; so glad the boys feel that way.

### **May 16, 1918**

Early last evening M.B. and I were sitting in front of the hut, which was in reality a large hospital tent, equipped with crude tables and benches, a victrola and a piano and shelves for canteen supplies, talking in desultory tones about the strangeness of everything over here, when we were startled by the sound of the village church bell. Since it also served as a gas alarm, we looked up to see what it was all about. None of the soldiers around us seemed excited so we knew it was not gas. Then as we continued our conversation, we unconsciously looked out across the field where our stooped old landlord and his wrinkled wife and their grandson, Jaques, had been tilling the soil in their "postage stamp" sized farm since early morn, and we noted there was something unusual in their attitude. They were standing with bowed heads, their hands clasped. 'Twas then I realized it was the hour of the *Angelus*, and before the last note had died out, in the distance, I too had breathed a wordless prayer, and "reached my hands across the mist and touched the hands" of those dear to me, and for the momentary telepathic communion I was better able to cope with the future.

This afternoon a remnant of a company of the famous Alpine Chasseurs passed through our village; their uniforms were faded and worn. They looked tired, a few tried hard not to limp as they marched by. Their silver bugles glistened in the afternoon sun as they waved them to and fro singing their pep song "Madelon" as they continued their march. Did I only imagine it or was the cheerfulness in their voices forced?

Good service last night. The "colluhed breddern" sang heartily.

Doughnuts again today. A German plane overhead today; got a glimpse of it when it was being fired on.

Very warm today, but a welcome change from the cold and rain.

### **May 17, 1918**

No wood today, so no baking. Scrubbing bee instead. Adj. B. cross as two sticks. Maybe "Gree ink" didn't write.

This afternoon Sgt. La Victor, whom I knew in Minot, N.D., called. Reported several Minot boys had been killed.

As American aviator killed near here today.

### **Hotle Beau Rivage, Nice, France, Oct. 9, 1918**

It scarecely seems possible that I have been in France over half of a year. How fast time has flown, but thanks to God, it hasn't been wasted.

Spent three weeks in Jouey-La-Cote, after leaving Lagny, (5/18/18) with Mrs. Riley and Jean Robinson. They were pleasant associates and enjoyed working with them, doing our best with doughnuts, pies and cheery words, as well as religious services, to make the war a little easier for the 26<sup>th</sup> Division boys there. What a grand lot of Yankee lads they were and how well they could sing.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> of June read about the S.S. President Lincoln being sunk and, as my brother Felix was on it, put in some anxious hours, until I heard that he was among the survivors. How good God has been to me and mine.

A few days later Major Halpin came along in his old Ford with orders for me to move immediately. The fact that I was in the midst of a batch of doughnuts didn't phase him at all. But "orders is orders" in all armies, I guess, so in a little while was on my way, after bidding the boys and my co-works on a hasty farewell. Getting to L'Ermitage, Rehanne Woods (my new destination) was some task, for we got on the wrong road once and into the ditch three times and to cap the climax, I held onto a mule in the middle of the road while the driver helped our Zone Major get "Lizzie" on to the road again. It's a great life this! – Leaping from billow to billow, and poor Halpin knows much more about concertinas and slide trombones than chauffeuring.

Major Halpin is a grand old man, resembling somewhat in features a beloved character "Foxy Grampa" in the comics of my childhood days, and possessed of a heart of gold. His husky baritone voice, when lifted in song, has a quality that touches a responsive chord in the hearts of all who listen, and he is an accomplished musician. Turk and I are fond of this grand old man.

L'Ermitage Woods was a corner of Paradise and the hut, a large hospital tent, covered with camouflage to blend into the foliage, was set in the midst of trees and flowers. On sunny days we dined in our "fest hall" under the trees and listened to a featured orchestra.

The kitchen was outside – tables and field range set up under a tarpaper roof that leaked when it rained, and when the stove smoked, we would often wear a slicker and gas mask while making our doughnuts and pies. The kitchen was well-equipped.

For the first few days there were four of us, Ensign Price, Lieutenants Turkington and S. Young and I, and we had such a good time together. It was too good to last. Price was sent to Aunsauville and Yount to Menil-la-tour and "Turk" and I, the babes in the wood, remained to carry on, in that "hut among de bushes, one dat I love."

The 26<sup>th</sup> Division was there first, and what splendid fellows they were. We adopted some of the "kids" who needed mothering. Quinby was one, and he was fond of me because I had given him pie, and promised to pray for him when he made the trip to the front lines with rations. He had a close call going round Dead Man's Curve, but said he remembered our song "*God Will Take Care of You*" and was not afraid. His favorite expression was "pas cigarettes."

"Hawky" o'Brien was Quinby's friend and a dandy youngster who often helped do dishes. There was Malcom Russell, a handsome lad who called me "Little Mother," because I looked like his own mother. Even as I write, I can see him coming toward me, his face lighted by a smile saying "Kis-ke de Mother" (Dough boy French). Then there were the Crosby brothers (one wounded later) and Hughie and his friend for whom Turk made lemonade, and our escort, Lanforth, Ryder and Nester.

The meetings held with those boys were wonderful, and how they loved to sing. Crowds we never lacked, and the boys appreciated our effort to help them. Some have since made the supreme sacrifice. Others will be cripples and some will be sightless, until that day when the blind shall see. How glad Turk and I are for the privilege that was ours to minister to spiritual and temporal needs.

Along the middle of June, the 26<sup>th</sup> Division left us and we felt so badly. The boys all came to say goodbye and so did General Traub. We missed his fatherly interest in us and that of all our boys.

The Germans put over a heavy barrage early one morning while the 26<sup>th</sup> was still with us – gas shells along with the rest, and Turk and I, hearing the pistol shots and the Klaxon, hurriedly put on our masks and what misery! When things quieted down, we started from our billet to the hut, anxious to see if any damage was done and to know if Malcolm, our guard, was alright, but General Traub stopped us and urged us to wait awhile longer in his office until he was sure the shelling was

over. After a little while, we left and found our guard rather frightened and shaky – all of us were. It was our first experience having shells zoom over us. Some of the machine gunners were very indignant because one of their officers, a mere youngster, had run for a dugout when our woods were being shelled and dubbed him “Bug-out-Pinky.”

The day before the Yankee Division left us, we heard the rattle and sputter of our Zone Major’s Lizzie and were pleased, for his coming meant news for our world, letters (priceless things) and supplies, but along with all these desirables, Major Halpin brought along a sack of lemons and two dozen eggs and orders that I make lemon pies for General Traub and his staff as a farewell gift. Never have made a lemon pie in my life, I tried to beg off; why inflict my first ones on a nice, friendly general, but “orders is orders,” so I made them, and with humble apologies, had them sent over for the staff’s farewell dinner. Secretly I hoped that someday I could explain to the general the reason for this gift of pies. I have.

The 82<sup>nd</sup> Division then moved in, and we soon learned to like these men who came from every state in the union. General Lindsay and his staff were very kind and cordial, and the general said one day, “We appreciate you girls,” our legacy handed us from the 26<sup>th</sup>. Going to my billet one day, I passed the general’s aid on the narrow duckboard walk. He was a southerner, extremely fine looking. After I had passed, he called back to inquire where did I get his mask (it was customary to wear one’s mask constantly). Much surprised, I said, “I’m sorry, Lieut., but I’m wearing my own.” “Of course,” he replied, “but seeing Saunders on it, and my name being Saunders Jones, we ought to get acquainted.”

The 82<sup>nd</sup> Divisioners surely enjoyed our religious services and often, on evenings after our serving was done, someone would suggest we hold church and sing hymns, like they did at home. We always complied. Often some of the men would rise up and say they believed in God and knew that if they never saw home again, they would meet the ones they loved “in the sweet by and by.” Many of these men were later killed, scores of them wounded and mutilated for life, but we were glad, Turk and I, that we had helped them keep their faith in God.

One Sunday night, an Army chaplain chanced to pass our way and stopped to preach for us. The hut was crowded as usual, and above its camouflaged top, an observation balloon hung in the air. There was the distant rumble of guns reminding us that “in the midst of life, we were in the midst of death.” Turk and I conducted the singing, also singing one of our duets. The chaplain was amazed at the interest manifested by the soldiers and on leaving, remarked, “Truly, we have been in the house of God.”

Col. George Davis and a Dr. Wheeler also held services for us once.

The 82<sup>nd</sup> Div. left the woods after six weeks stay, and again came the hard task of saying good-bye to the boys and their officers. Often we thought of them all in the grim fighting days that followed.

We received a lovely letter from the Brigade Hdq. complimenting us on our work, but Z. M. took it. Both Turk and I felt it really belonged to us, but that’s the Army way, I guess.

Besides the Divisions that moved in and out of the woods were two batteries of the 57<sup>th</sup> C.A.C. with their camouflaged guns and Co. A of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Engrs. We had good times with all these boys, and it would take volumes to tell the nice things about them.

The C.A.C. detailed Bittner to us, a dandy kid, but one who had to be reminded often that life was work as well as play. The poor fellow got saucy one day with an officer and was sentenced with several others to Hard Labor Punishment on the rock pile. Poor B. was heartbroken. Much later we heard he had been killed. The C.A.C. officers, Reeves, Patterson and McMillen were dandy scouts and visited us frequently. We often made pies for them for their evening repast. One evening they came to get their apple pies and we discovered that the hornets, that had been such a pest, had moved

into the pies through the “air holes.” So they went “pieless.” About the some time, we heard that our friend S. at Stanzey had been at breakfast one morning, talking hard and fast as usual, so had failed to notice that a hornet was in the jam she put on her toast. Result – a whole week of quietude for the gang and a much swollen tongue for S. Wonder if she stopped her everlasting tapping on the portable typewriter while she was “malade.”

Two of the C.A.C. men were killed by a bomb one night, so Turk and I made wreaths bearing the inscription, “For Mother’s Sake,” on them for their graves. The men were much impressed, and even stern old Major Spurgeon came down in person to thank us. Bittner and Cole had gathered the leaves and daisies in a pouring rain so I told the Major they deserved most of the credit.

We ate with the 23<sup>rd</sup> Engineers, and if there was a more splendid outfit in the A.E.M., we had failed to meet them. They treated us royally, and we made so many friends among them. However, we did think them rather stingy when they announced that the company cat had presented them with a “squad and Sergeant,” and they didn’t offer us nary a one. Perhaps they thought girls weren’t “catty” enough.

Sgt. A. was a splendid fellow and believe it or not, polished our shoes one day with a real shine. McCormick was a good cook, and I don’t ever expect to eat better. McC. often helped me bake. Sergeants V. and D. ate 4<sup>th</sup> of July dinner with us and helped fry doughnuts. D made the day memorable by citing “first impressions” and continuing ones, but these infatuations were all part of the game.

Stacke, Jones and Thompson were good scouts, too, and there was an engineer from Alaska, who fixed our field range so it would work, whom we thoroughly enjoyed. Think his name was Peterson.

Had beaucoup visitors the 4<sup>th</sup>. Lt. R took a picture of us making doughnuts.

By the way, forgot to mention our billet, the little shack where we slept. It being close to brigade H.Q., we were well-guarded. The shack was comfortable, except that as usual, rats were plentiful. One night had the pleasant (?) experience of having a trench rat walk over my mouth. Memories. Our room was a sight to behold in the mornings from the shoe and helmet barrage aimed at the rats.

Along the middle of the summer, the 89<sup>th</sup> Division moved into the woods and General Hanson Ely gladly accepted us as their legacy. We liked these fellows, too, men mostly from the middle west.

The 355<sup>th</sup> Regiment was a great gang, the men of Company K and D were especially friendly to us, and we enjoyed the music and songs of some of the Company K’s men; two or three vaudeville performers were in the group.

The First Battalion was badly gassed the first time they went into the trenches, and many of the men died from the effects of gas.

The machine gun battalion was located across the road from our hut; they had become especially good friends of ours because we had stayed up one whole night preparing sandwiches, coffee and hot doughnuts for them when they came off the front. No lights of course were allowed in our outdoor kitchen so John Hogan and Ray O’Brien, two grand bots from Chicago held a small flashlight over the table and stove so we could see what we were doing.

The officers of this M.G. battalion furnished a guard for our hut during their sojourn in the woods. They had a lot of fun appointing these guards, a different one for each night. The officer would tell the guard to report to Capt. Saunders at the S.A. camp across the road. Very few of the soldiers knew our names, especially in the first few days, so the guard would report for duty expecting Capt S. to be a man and their consternation at finding out their mistake was often pathetic. They were not sure if I rated a military salute or a mere tip of the cap, but I always managed to put them at ease, and their embarrassment was soon forgotten when they saw the pie or doughnuts that were put aside for a midnight snack.

We had many impressive religious meetings in the “hut among de bushes” but, one held on a rainy Sunday night during the middle of August stands out as the most impressive. The men were on the alert, expecting shortly to go out on raids, and already there was a tenseness in the air, coming events casting their shadows before them.

The hut was jammed as usual, everyone in solemn mood. Long before the service was to begin every seat was taken even the “box seats” (lard cases), occupied by the officers were filled and men were standing wherever they could squeeze in. Incidentally, while we generally reserved these box seats for the officers (they were usually the last to come in), no one ever accused us of catering to officers.

Don’t believe I shall ever forget that scene, the flickering candlelit tent, the sea of earnest faces lifted up in song, in the songs like “*Nearer My God to Thee*” and “*Where the Roll is Called,*” that the folks back home were also singing, and somehow they seemed not so far away then.

I talked for a few minutes on the works of Joshua, “Be strong and of good courage,” and we closed with the old standby, “*God Will Take Care of You,*” which we sang very fervently.

There were so many nice boys among the soldiers camped in the Rehanne Woods, so can only mention a few whom we got to know the best; Jennings was another of our family, always on hand to lend his services whenever he was free to do so – a good scout was he. Also, Holden from the balloon company; he was a comedian and furnished us a lot of fun, as did little Austin of Tennessee whose favorite expression was “That beats me, I do declare” when he was baffled.

One day my buddy Turk went to Sanzoy with our Zone Major. She failed to return until midnight, and I was worried about her and imagined all sorts of things (partially because Halpin’s night driving was not so good) and was much relieved to have her return safely at last. The following morning, Austin, who had shared some of my anxiety over her, came along, and with the solemnity of a judge, preferred the following charge against the lady:

1. A.W.O.L. (absent without leave).
2. Drunk (over the ecstasies of a real bath and shampoo) and disorderly on the streets of Nancy.  
Penalty: Restricted to camp for 90 days without pay.

We laughed and laughed, and he teased her also about a Connecticut farmer, the details of which she’d never confided to me. (Now Turk, what occasion demanded that Austin became your confidant? Was it the raisin pie flavored with lemon juice that you made for a friend that made “waxing confidential” necessary?)

A number of C.A.C men whom we knew in these woods were later killed; among them Smithey, Donahue and Jolly, who was a mere child. Also heard rumors that Bright from Indiana was among the missing. How we loved to hear him sing “*Back Home Again in Indiana.*” Oh, the irony of fate!

Toward the end of August, things became exciting and, uppermost in the minds of all, was the coming drive. Heard a lot of talk of Mont. Sec. and the hope that since it provided the enemy with a view of the French line, and because the Germans could watch the movements of troops from it so easily, that it would be taken and held. If that could be accomplished, it would prove a big military victory for the allies.

The roads were very congested, no traffic allowed in the day time. Consequently, for miles the roads were filled with troops, horses, guns and ammunition, moving by night into position. We sent doughnuts to our 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion men at the front, and judging from the letters of appreciation we got, they touched the spot. Also made doughnuts for a battery of artillery that moved into the woods.

We were so handicapped those few days before the drive. Our supplies were low and not much chance of getting more, and with the rain and the smoke from the green wood smoldering in the stove, baking was a difficult task. However, we did our best but could not make enough pies of doughnuts to supply everyone. We did hate to turn them down but sometimes had to.

The Sunday evening before the St. Mihiel drive, had another impressive service. Spoke on "God's Service Flag." Big crowd as usual.

Late in the afternoon of Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division moved into the woods, and when General Buck heard that girls were there, immediately ordered us out. It took some tall arguing to convince him that we could not – or *would not* – move until we got our orders from our own Z.M. and finally gave in, telling us he wouldn't be responsible for us. Thus, we were there for the show.

Never shall I, or anyone else that was there, forget that night. For days it had been raining, and it was cold and muddy, but shortly before midnight, the skies cleared and the stars came out one by one, as if to smile their approval upon the drive that would mark the beginning of the end of the war. Neither Turk nor I could sleep, although we had returned to our billet early in the evening. Like the soldiers, we were on the alert and all keyed up, wondering when the drive would open up.

Everything was quiet – that calm before the storm – until around one o'clock on Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>, and then the whole front opened up and the firing continued for hours.

Such a night! Our billet swayed as from a big wind, and the thunder of the heavy artillery in the woods nearly deafened us, and the bright lights from the signals and gun flashes all seemed like a big 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration and earthquake combined.

During the next 24 hours, the lines advanced into enemy territory, and we later learned that more actual territory was covered by men than in any battle in the history of the war.

In the morning when we went to our hut, found the place deserted, for the Americans had advanced several kilos beyond Mont. Sec., and thousands of prisoners had been taken.

Major Halpin took us to Menil-la-tour Wednesday morning. Later in the day, took Turk to Sanzy and in the evening he took Parsons and me to Aunsauville to help in the field hospital. We passed troops going up, and a lot of Herman prisoners being taken to Menil-la-tour. Also watched an ammunition dump being blown up.

Capt. Barnes had converted his hut into Field Hospital #166 (42<sup>nd</sup> Div.), and he and Pettis had worked hard all day helping bring in the wounded. The hospital staff was great. Major Speilman and Captains Nutz and Campbell were especially nice. Capt. Nutz persisted in calling me "Little Miss Wonderful" Wonder why?

Aside from our duties, we made doughnuts and cocoa for the patients, ambulance men and doctors and served hot cocoa night and day to the wounded that were brought in. Visited the men in shock ward the first evening, and one asked for a doughnut. In the morning after they were ready, asked the doctor if I could take him one, and learned the poor fellow had already "gone west."

Quite a number of boys we had known went through there. Besides the patients, we took care of German prisoners and a lot of refugees and a few wounded French soldiers.

The experience did me a world of good, and I learned to appreciate our boys as never before. We heard no complaints, regardless of what they suffered.

One night several wounded were brought in, and we girls were busy giving them hot drinks when I noticed a youngster on one of the stretchers shaking as from a chill and obviously trying to say something. I asked the doctor for permission to go to him, and when I bent over him, the message he gave was, "We - - got - - the - - village."

That one incident will always stand out in my mind as typical of the American soldier's unselfish spirit in which he served in the war.

Visited the gas ward in the church every day. Met a boy who had been in our meeting the Sunday before; cheered up a Lieut. Carson who had been gassed and wounded and blinded (temporarily I hoped).

Capt. Barnes and I were asked by the hospital staff if we would officiate as chaplains and bury five men. Of course we consented. We rode to the cemetery at Aunsauville in the truck that carried

the bodies, and when we got there we found several soldiers digging a large trench. I wondered if it meant that all five would be buried in it. Soon found that such was the case, for when the grave was large enough, the soldiers carried the blanket-wrapped bodies of their comrades and laid them side by side in the common grave. I sang "When the Roll is called," after which Capt. Barnes read the committal service. I shall never forget that experience. It was late afternoon when we reached the cemetery and the sun just going west. Because we had learned to think of the soldier dead as having gone west, it seemed more impressive that we came to bury them at the sunset hour. And, except for the buzzing of the enemy plane high above us and the twittering of a sparrow in a lilac bush that stood near us, there was a silence such as we associate with death. We watched the soldiers filling up the grave, and as we did so, we thought of those brave boys lying so still before us. How each had filled a niche in some community or life that would never know again; yet, over here, where battles rage, they were but so many names and numbers added to the casualty lists. Our hearts ached for those left behind, and we hoped they would be comforted to know that we, people from their own land, had been near in that final hour when their sons were given back to the earth. And, as we turned to leave, the cemetery twilight was upon us for the sun, too, had gone west.

Capt. Nutz had thanked us for that service. His Sergeant had told him it was the most impressive he had attended.

Was sorry to leave there when the time was up. I had made so many friends but glad to see Turk again, and she and I went back to the woods. We were dumbfounded when we reached L'Ermitage and found the grounds covered with pup tents and soldiers (9<sup>th</sup> Inf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Div.). Our billet had been taken so applied to General Ely for a place to sleep. He gave us a room in a barracks and invited us to dinner, and we enjoyed swapping experiences with him. The dinner might well have been called a "Thiaucourt Special," most of the food on the menu having been salvaged from German officers' mess hall. (Thiaucourt). We had condensed milk that had been sent over to the Belgians. Strange how it got lost, eh?

Did a lot of cleaning up at the hut then next day, and in the afternoon held a meeting with the boys. The following day, being very low on supplies, having practically nothing but flour, sugar and baking powder on hand, would not make doughnuts, so let the boys make flapjacks. There was a steady line of fellows each waiting to bake his own. When they left us rather suddenly, practically all they left behind in line of food were a few cans of canned "Willy" and dog biscuits, but the grounds were covered with blankets, shelter halves and souvenirs of all kinds, but neither of us cared for souvenirs.

Very few soldiers came back through the woods. Only an occasional M.P. stopped in for a chat and for food. Among them, a Kenneth Williams of Rogers Park, Ill., and how happy he was when we presented him with a safety razor, out of our supplies for a much-needed shave.

On Sunday morning, a salvage truck, laden with soldiers and an officer came to pick up the discarded blankets, canteens and what-nots off the grounds. The officer persuaded Turk and me to ride to Menil-la-tour with them, and it did not require much urging. We were lonely, deserted and hungry. Canned Willy and dog biscuits ceased to be appetizing after a couple of days. The Major (bless his heart) and the girls treated us royally; fed us roast chicken and lemon pie – a feast for the gods.

That afternoon, he took all of us girls (his personnel included) for a long ride in Lizzie, the dilapidated ambulance, and in the evening we visited other huts, ending up at Boucq where a S.A. meeting was in progress. It was great to hear the McCallister sisters sing again.

Early the next day, Major Halpin took us up front. Both Turk and I thrilled at the prospect of joining the troops in advanced territory but felt some sort of plans might have been made first, but

our Z.M.'s thoughts were not our thoughts, so we went blithely along, bumping our way through muddy roads and shell holes.

It was raining as always and mud everywhere but the trip proved most interesting and we were quite excited as we rode over the shell torn road and the part of "no man's land" around Flirey and later on to territory taken in the St. Mihiel drive. A feeling mere words cannot describe went over us as we rode over the ground our boys had fought on and where many of them lay buried. For a few moments we paused and viewed the desolation around us, the yawning cavities in the fields that should have been ripe for harvest and the trees bare of leaves and blackened, standing like silent sentinels watching those who passed by. One can easily understand Sherman's definition of war, without even looking at the crude graves, scattered here and there - - graves of heroes who died that the world might be made safe for democracy. These at least will be honored, but will the others, whose wounds will never heal be remembered as heroes, or thought of as human derelicts when the halo that now surrounds them has disappeared?

Finally, we reached Bouillionville, known as "Souptown" and appropriately so, for the sun's rays seemed never to penetrate deep enough into this valley to dry up the streets. Here we decided to park.

The officers at H.Q. were delighted that we were going to establish a hut in B, but the town was overcrowded, and it was with difficulty that they found us a location in a shell-wrecked old building, windowless (without glass in windows) and dreary with rats scurrying around. But "*cest la guerre*," we handed what supplies we could get and make through one paneless window to the accompaniment of shells passing overhead, for every day the town was shelled. Capt. Barnes kept insisting we run for a dugout when the shelling became heavy, but Turk and I refused, and Capt. Edmunds and Lieut. Franklin (89<sup>th</sup> Div.), old friends from the woods, were on our side when we protested. Both of us, like the soldiers, after months of living in the uncertainty of close proximity to shellfire, had learned that we must not fear the worst, and somehow there was a feeling that we would come out safe, but had we not, well, again, *cest la guerre*.

When the news spread abroad that we girls had followed the men up front, they came from all sides, grimy, muddy and unshaven, in twos, threes and groups, to see us, to shake hands and tell us their experiences and of the buddies who were "bumped off." Not the same boys, we knew in the woods, but men in whose eyes the tragedy and suffering of war lay deep.

Even the general called to pay his respects and John Hogan gave me a purse he had taken off a German soldier he had captured. His platoon with John at the head had taken 52 prisoners and he was later cited for bravery.

We ate with an Engineer Co. across the road and stood in chow line like the rest. The food was good but I never could learn to drink coffee out of a tin cup without burning my mouth.

There was absolutely no way of being comfortable in B because of congested conditions. The water was terrible, and we had to be pretty thirsty before we could drink it after seeing the worms wiggling around.

We were at B only a few days when Major Halpin sent word that we were to take our leave now or never, so on Saturday afternoon, while busily engaged in covering Lieut. Franklin's steel helmet with a piece of O.D. blanket and putting an artistic boy on each side, "along came Ruth" in the form of S.A. truck and hustled us off. It seems characteristic of both armies to hustle us off, just when were the busiest.

We stopped at Pannes for Florence Turkington, who also was going to leave. We went by way of Mont. Sec. And got off there and explored that stronghold of the Germans, the dugouts and caves and the comfortable billets. It was wonderful how easily Mont. Sec. was taken in the St. Mihiel drive. We had been told that at one time, the French had held it twenty minutes and lost 30,000 men.

Reached Sanzey quite late in the evening, very tired and hungry. Miss S-- was peeved because we were dumped off there without advance notice and she wasn't in a particularly hospitable mood. Miss S—woke up an old French woman to prepare lunch for us, whereas we could have done it ourselves had she let us. After we had eaten, we took up our beds and walked to the billet, where we hastily made them up and retired – glad of the chance to rest our weary limbs.

On Sunday morning went to Ligny and there found Adj. Case and Ensign Price also going to leave. Their plans coincided with ours, so we decided to make a party of five. At least it looked more dignified for us three girls to be chaperoned by two elderly men. Stopped off at Paris and there met Gladys McIntrye. She's a peach.

Did some shopping and had a shampoo and marcel. We left on Wednesday night Aix-les-Bains. Two Australian officers travelled with us and told interesting stories of the British front.

We stopped at Hotel Dauphines at Aix-Les-Bains and while there, took the trip to Mt. Rivard, from the top of which we had a good view of the Swiss and Italian Alps. The trip up the mountains was interesting and the scenery glorious and gazing at the majestic splendor of God's handiwork, made me wonder how anyone could doubt the existence of God.

We enjoyed the sulphur baths and one day took a boat-ride on Lake Bourjat. We girls rowed – twas a lot of fun. Also visited the Abbey of Houtecombe. While there, broke out all over with the hives and wasn't I a beauty! However, Case and one of the girls followed suit so there was some consolation in that!

One night while in Aix, retired early as I was tired and had just nicely settled down when the concierge rapped and announced "A gentleman to see you." The idea of bringing a man to a girl's boudoir! I did not get up but asked Lieut. Richmond to call again.

Sunday we spent at Lyons. Visited the Cathedral and observatory and went for dinner to a place famed for serving delicious chicken – each table served with a whole chicken. That "feed" set us back considerably financially, but was well worth it. We were shocked by the actions of the French girls dining with French officers there.

Marseilles was our next stop, and we took rooms in Hotel Splendide. We took a street car ride along the shores of the Mediterranean which was not a pleasant one as I was terribly seasick.

The trip to Nice was full of interest. Ens. Price was at his best and kept us entertained and amused with his delightful humor and spontaneous philosophy. We rode to Beau Rivae hotel in a victorian hack. It seemed so funny and slow. We did a lot of shopping – mostly table linens and expensive boudoir caps perhaps we will never wear.

Visited the famous Monte Carlo but lost no money. Also did the oceanic museum and lunch at Monaco, where we visited the Prince's palace and Turk occupied the throne – momentarily. Then crossed the border into Italy and sent post cards from there.

Reached Paris the following Sunday awfully tired from the discomforts of the trip. Found a bunch of letters awaiting me. One telling of Ina Grenner's mother's death. How I longed to be with her to comfort her.

Attended a French S.A. meeting in the evening but to me it seemed extremely noisy.

### **Oct. 1918**

On Monday, Ens. Rice, the Rileys and I went to Ligny and waited for the Turks. Then on Wed. we were off again for our respective huts. Ens. Price was going with Turk and me to Boullionville again.

An Adj. Platt was there and stayed with us a few days. Everything was so upset that we spent most of our ten days stay cleaning up. Finally the place was really home-like and I had salvaged a

potted geranium among the refuse that, with care, started growing. How much that little plant added to the cheeriness of that desolate place.

We were sick the first day – indigestion and kidney trouble. The girls called Dr. Boger and I threw the medicine he gave me out the window. Independent? That’s me all over, Mabel! He was flabbergasted when I told him what I had done.

Had a gland infection that caused considerable pain, so had it lanced by Dr. Van Kirk and all the other doctors dressing it. It required considerable care and had to be lanced more than once. Major Schaffer (Med. Corps.) became quite a friend of mine and thought I should apply for a wound stripe, seeing I didn’t faint. Ha! Ha!

We enjoyed our stay with 28<sup>th</sup> divisioners. Capt. Barnes wanted to come back to Boullionville, so our Trio (Price, Turk and I) went up the line and opened up a hut in the interesting town of Thiaucourt. This town had been captured during the St. Mihiel drive, after being occupied by Germans for four years. There wasn’t a building that hadn’t been hit by shells, and no one was allowed on the streets after dark. Our first evening there (middle of October), we were invited for supper to an officer’s mess in the basement of one of the houses. The vegetable soup had nearly as many dead flies in it as whole peppercorns. But, *cest la guerre!*

The soldiers there salvaged among the ruins and found some lovely furniture and dishes. Our hut had been a German officers’ club and our dugout a German officer’s billet. This billet was in a basement room of a shell-wrecked Chateau and the soldiers put in a dressing table and mirror, besides our cots so we felt quite elegant. It seemed rather strange to sleep in this billet so recently occupied by German officers. Rats, as usual, are nocturnal companions.

A couple of days after our arrival in Thiaucourt, I chanced to be shaking a dust cloth from one of our paneless windows and glancing up in the street, saw a 7<sup>th</sup> Div. “medico” coming up the street, who at once hurried up to speak ere I disappeared. He was very pleased to know that honest-to-God American girls would be located near them. Introduced himself as Lieut. W. from Holland, V., and what a good scout and friend he proved to be. He spent a lot of time in our hut and he and Price were priceless for their delightful humor and spontaneous philosophy. We laughed a lot at the “Loots” expense. Our first evening there he was so carried away by having girls to talk to that he forgot his mask, and when gas shells intermingled with rest over the town, he had to “parte toot sweet” and get it.

Had a Halloween party of sorts – Lieuts. W- and T- (59<sup>th</sup>) made fudge and we told ghost stories making them as weird and eerie as possible, until Turk and I were actually getting frightened.

Thiaucourt is a hard place in which to accomplish much. We make as many doughnuts and pies as possible and try to contact new groups of soldiers each day, so they will know we’re here to be of service.

The bombing planes go over the town each night and we hold our breath wondering where the next bomb will land. In the vegetable garden at the rear of our place I spotted some heads of cabbage the day of our arrival and had visions of a cabbage salad to add to the interest of a meal or two, but among the cabbages lay a “dud” dropped from a bomb and I decided it was wiser to forego the salad and “let sleeping dogs lie.”

### **Nov 10. 1918**

All of us worked in the canteen – Turk, Price and Irene McIntyre who joined us, all morning dispensing canteen supplies to the men who were moving up front. Lieut. Woff came to say goodbye. He and his ambulance company were moving to Joulney. We would surely miss him, and we knew also the few civilians who had moved back into the vicinity would also miss him, for he had given them medical aid.

This afternoon, we four walked up to Beney to see Florence Turkington. Shells came over thick and fast all afternoon and on the way back we nearly sneezed our heads off from the gas.

This evening an Engineer Major and Lieut. stopped in for a chat. All of us were quite keyed up over a possible armistice within the next 24 hours. Shortly after they left, the G.I. canteens broke up our correspondence party and when shrapnel landed by our door, we decided we'd better get to the dugout. Then the shelling ceased. Such is life in war.

### **Somewhere in France. Nov. 11, 1918**

It is strangely quiet tonight in our dugout. In a neighboring one, a soldier is suggesting a charivari to help everyone relax. Were we in the mood, we could write letters. The glowing candlelight will no longer draw enemy fire.

Today was a Great Day in American history. The Armistice was signed at 11 A.M. in a box car in Compiegne Forest. The guns all over France were silenced and like a benediction, peace settled over the land.

A huge bonfire was built on the village square. We girls joined innumerable soldiers gathered around it. We sang for a while – “*Over There*,” “*The Long, Long Trail*” and “*Memories*,” but not enthusiastically. We agreed that the silence had fallen too suddenly for us to appreciate its full significance. That, like the ticking of a clock that you're not aware of till it stops, so had we become inured to battle noises. Besides, all of us were beset by memories.

We girls, though not in the fighting lines, were accustomed to heavy barrages, whining shells, and the acrid odor of gasses. We'd become used to having trench rats for neighbors. We had learned to wear steel helmets and had been trained to wear gas masks in the alert and to recognize gas alarm warnings.

This afternoon, Dr. W. suggested we take a walk to the front lines. We hiked with a machine gun battalion as far as R. We climbed to the top of a hill and learned from an M.P. that the last battle on this front was fought from this hill.

We walked across a stretch of No Man's Land and found the bodies of eight German dead and a German boot mangled knee cap protruding from it. In the midst of the German **det**, we found the body of an American Marine lying with his face toward the enemy's lines. Later we learned he had been a sniper. He had fallen face down on his rifle. We stopped for a moment near the body (most of his face had been shot away) and breathed a prayer for the folks left behind. In one hand was clutched a letter from Ohio addressed to Lester C. Nutting 4<sup>th</sup> Co., M.C., Paris Island, S.C. I picked the envelope in the hope that some day back in God's country, I would find some relative whom to send it to. We wondered, “did the letter in his hand suggest that his last thoughts were of those he loved and would see no more?” I wondered if he had been killed instantly or had he lain for hours, suffering, alone and forsaken except for the God who watches over all.

We also saw the lonely grave of Jonathan Anderson who fell a few minutes before firing ceased.

We saw soldiers climbing up from trenches and leaving gun positions, and on the other side, Germans doing the same. Some of them eyed me with curiosity. Tonight we heard that by late afternoon there were friendly overtures from both sides, timid handshakes, exchanges of smokes. The war was over. No need for enmity any more.

Since neither Turk or I could sleep, we reminisced far into the night.

Early during the St. Mihiel drive, we were sent in a rickety ambulance to A—where a field hospital had been set up in the ruins of a chateau. Only those who had no chance of survival were kept there. We did all we could to make their last hours comfortable. By the next day, five had died.

Troops were on the move to the Argonne. The roads were congested with troop movements and prisoners being taken to prison camps. No chaplain or bugler available, so the S.A. Captain from a nearby hut was asked to preside at the graveside. He asked me to sing "*The Roll is Called.*" We followed the big Army truck that carried the dead to the cemetery. We found soldiers digging a huge trench. They laid their blanket-wrapped buddies in the grave, then covered it. Over each one, crude cross with the man's helmet and dog tags was tamped down.

Since, with the British, we had learned to think of our soldier dead as having "Gone West," it seemed appropriate that we bury them at the sunset hour. Except for the buzz of an enemy plane overhead, and the twittering of sparrows, there was a stillness such as we associate with death. Above us, an enemy observation balloon hung suspended in air, its occupants undoubtedly watching our every move.

We laugh about our first acquaintance with trench rats. Orders came late one night that we might have to make a quick move. So, "No one get undressed, keep gas masks in alert, keep flashlights doused." The swish of a tail across my face woke me. A trench rat sneaked off with our toothpaste. The next morning (11/12) the question in all our minds, "Where do we go from here? How will we adjust to ordinary civilian life? Will America appreciate the sacrifices that have been made now that the world is safe for democracy? Will those for whom this war will never be over, be forgotten." Ponderous thoughts. No wonder sleep will not come.

### **Nov. 12**

Yesterday was a great day in the world's history for the Armistice had been signed by a group of me who had met in the dining car of a train in the Senlin Forest at 5 o'clock in the morning went into effect at 11 o'clock, and now the war was ended.

All the world rejoices that the ruthless killing of men has ceased. We rejoice with them, but not hilariously as yet. To all of us who have lived close to the realities of war, the armistice came too suddenly to grasp the full meaning of the silence, that in a sense, (because we are not yet accustomed to it), is more potent than the constant bombardment. Like the ticking of a clock that one seemingly is not conscious of, until it has stopped. Heard some soldiers suggesting charivari so that we could settle down to sleep last night.

Pauline Swartz and a friend happened along so they went with Irene and Turk to take the doughnuts we had made in the morning to the men who were still in the trenches.

Price and I cleaned up the mess and while doing so, the Engr. Major called again. Wanted to know what I, who liked a mere school girl (his opinion, not mine) was doing in France. Told him among other things, that having worked with soldiers and Marines and belonging to two armies, I balanced up our family – the boys being in the Navy. He laughed.

### **Nov. 13**

Ens. Price and I started for a walk to the front line trenches this morning. At Joulney we chatted with W- then hiked as far as Rambecourt with a M.G. battalion. They told us where to find an outpost but winding through ankle-deep mud in the hills, we must have missed it so climbed a steep Hill #749 and were now on Mt. Pl. from where the last battle on this front was fought.

We went back by a different route. Saw German and American officers talking to each other – the German eyeing me rather curiously. We went through German and American trenches and barbed wire entanglements and "Over the Top" so who says I'm not a soldier. But, I seem to hear a whisper "One thing thou lackest – Cooties." Thank heaven I never ever had a speaking acquaintance with them.

We reached Thiaucourt about one o'clock – tired and much affected by the sights we had seen.

Tonight a big bonfire on the public square will be built by way of celebrating the Armistice and street lamps will be lit for the first time. It is expected that soldiers from surrounding territory will join in the celebration.

### **Thiaucourt Dec. 10, 1918**

Much of interest has happened in the month since I wrote last.

Had the flu after the hike with Price and spent many miserable nights coughing in the basement bedroom. We later moved into rooms over the hut that were more comfortable. We girls had a fireplace in our room. One night the adjoining wall caught fire. I awakened first to the crackling noises, and we called Ensign Price and he put it out.

One sunny morning the Engineer Major dropped in and asked me to go for a walk to explore the ruins of Thiaucourt. I hesitated because of G-O's but Price said rules were made to be broken and urged me to get out in the sunshine after my illness, so I went. Enjoyed the walk and the exchange of repartee with the major, but was puzzled over his putting me through the third degree as to family, education, aims in life, etc.

A couple of Sundays later he and an Engineer Captain took Turk and me to the Metz, the trip being arranged the evening before. An invitation from the Major being brought by special courier who had come several kilos by motorcycle and my reply in the affirmative returned by him. We had a puncture near Gavelotte so while it was being repaired we looked at the monuments erected there in honor of those who died in the Franco-Prussian War.

The visit to Metz was very interesting and the Kaiser's effigy of himself placed along with the saints in the crypts near the spires of the church was of special interest, particularly, because since the Armistice, the French of Metz had handcuffed the effigy and put on a placard reading "thus passeth all earth to glory." (translated)

We bought various souvenirs of Metz and the Major presented me with a beautiful picture of the Cathedral. Before we left, we went inside and as usual people were going in and out. We stood very quietly absorbing the religious atmosphere and trying to appreciate the vast splendor of the architecture and mosaics for several minutes. At last I cast a cursory glance at my escort (thinking we ought to be leaving) but he looked so solemn I refrained from suggesting it. Finally he turned and very solemnly proposed marriage "when this cruel war was over." I was speechless with amazement and like a flash, the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree came to mind. Evidently the verdict was in my favor, but with what graciousness I could muster up, I declined the offer.

We were to have opened a hut in Briey, but plans did not materialize. I had a relapse. Dr Waff came down from Jouleny to treat me and his medicine, though terribly nasty, finally cured me.

Ensign Price, Turk and Gladys McIntyre went A.W.O.L. to Metz this morning. Irene Mc and I stayed behind to keep things going. Our supplies of food, wood and water are nearly exhausted.

Took a walk this afternoon, raining and mud everywhere. Read the names of American soldiers on the crude cross in the Thiaucourt cemetery. Several of them, names of boys we'd known and sent to the front with a friendly hand clasp and whispered, "God bless you."

Visited the "Y" hut where entertainment was going on by the Herran Sisters. On returning to the hut found our candle supply had been salvaged, and we were in the dark.

### **Dec. 11**

This is Ensign Price's birthday. Wonder how and where he spent it. I made a huge rice pudding, rich in condensed milk and raisins (we have no eggs), and Irene made fudge by way of celebration but the prodigals have not returned. Lieuts. W- and C- dropped in tonight with a broiled steak for us that some good-hearted soldier had salvaged for the hungry lassies from some company kitchen.

We found the following on the door of our hut this morning:

**I'll Never Forget.**

To the S.A. detachment in Thiaucourt in appreciation of the many cups of chocolate and doughnuts; for their kindness which in many ways they have shown. This is dedicated by the Q.B'N. 34<sup>th</sup> Inf. Bunch. We thank you kind friends. In the future we pledge support to the S.A. and will make it another duty to keep the "Blood and Fire" flying with "Old Glory."

We have found you a friend, all loyal  
When we've been hungry, tired and blue,  
But S.A., we leave in the morning  
But, we're not forgetting you

Soon in the States, the good old states  
I know so well, we'll be,  
Then we'll remember you kind friends,  
Just give us a test and see.

We say goodbye to old Thiaucourt  
Goodbye to you folks, too  
But just remember, Salvation Army  
We're not forgetting you.

We're beating it out in the morning  
Our faces on the Rhine are set  
But Salvation Army in Thiaucourt  
We promise you not to forget.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion leaves in the morning  
On the banks of the Rhine to get,  
But Salvation Army in Thiaucourt  
Is something we'll never forget

*Stephen J. Cocking, Sgt. Major*

**Pont-a-Mausson. Dec. 31, 1918**

This being the last day of the year must settle up all accounts and start the New Year with a clean record.

We came to Pont-a-Mausson December 13<sup>th</sup>, Adjt Perrett having picked out a dandy place for a hut. The trip here was full of interest. At Flirey found a bent old French woman poking through the ruins of what had once been her home and all she found was an old iron kettle. How sorry we felt for her and other poor old folks who had lost their homes, and yet we admired them for they possessed the stoicism of a people schooled in the heartaches and suffering that war can bring, and they could shake their heads and murmur *cest la guerre* regardless of whether it was home or sons that they had lost.

The first night at Pont-a-Mausson we had supper with Sgt. Carpenter and Corporals Begle and Enos who lived in the same building. In the course of the evening, several more boys dropped in "to see the ladies" – some curiosity.

The 328<sup>th</sup> and 329<sup>th</sup> F.A. are located here. A remarkable bunch, officers and men alike.

This is a great town and everybody has a good billet in this shell-wrecked town. We have a suite of rooms, nicely furnished. Also have a bathroom but no water. We are using sheets for window panes so heating is some problem.

Capt. LaMar gave us a field range for our hut kitchen on the first floor opposite the canteen. Had a housewarming party for the boys who helped us settle. Boucoup fun. Jam, tarts, fudge and coffee for lunch.

Adj. Perrett came to Pont-a-Mousson a few days before Christmas to take me for a shopping tour to Nancy. He told us that Capt. Barnes had died that day before of flu and complications in a Paris hospital. Turk and I both remarked that perhaps he had had a premonition that he would never see his family again which accounted for his cautiousness in B. He was the first of the S.A. party to die.

Gladys McIntyre, Lieuts. Waff and Campbell spent our first Sunday with us. Enjoyed their visit so much.

We bake every other day here and have loads of visitors in our hut kitchen.

The boys brought us a Christmas tree but we lacked trimmings so Turk and Price proceeded to make some. They made the tree quite attractive with strings of stale boullion cubes, red and white streamers and foot powder snow. Real trimmings arrived the 24<sup>th</sup> and the tree was marvelous. Planned on a lot of pumpkin pies to give to the boys on Christmas so worked hard the day before. After hours of useless effort trying to bake, the boys tore down the field range and set it up again, and then it worked. Was so discouraged I went upstairs and cried (a girl's privilege occasionally). Turk had a lot of mail and gifts. No gifts for me, but a letter from home which, when opened, contained only blank sheets of paper (some sensor's idea of a good joke). Then I did have the blues. Had a wonderful Christmas dinner. Brig. White gave us a turkey, fruit and candy. Turk decorated the table very artistically and Carpenter and Enos were guests. Carpenter helped me with dishes, and while we were at them, Waff came along. Offered to get him some dinner but he refused so gave him pie and tea. He spent the afternoon with us, and we enjoyed him a lot. We are all fond of him and hope that back in God's Country, he still be a friend.

In the evening, we were guests of honor at Batter D's banquet. Beaucoup cheering when we entered. Delicious dinner and splendid entertainment. In my memory book a few days later (Turk and I each bought one) I found written by a Battery D Sergeant the following:

*'twas Christmas night I saw you at our banquet in Pon-a-mousson  
When we tried to entertain you  
With our dances and songs  
I asked, who was the lady  
Sitting next to Capt. Lamar?  
They told me 'twas Capt Saunders  
And that **She** was our Doughnut Star.*

## **January 2, 1919**

### **A Happy New Year!**

Began 1919 rather ambitiously. Made 1110 doughnuts, went out for lunch and had the Battery D officers for dinner with mistletoe for table decorations. Can you beat that?

We surely like the boys in the outfits here, such a friendly and sociable gang. Battery D is stationed across the street from us, and the boys spend all their time at our hut. Brewer is detailed to us.

We take hot cocoa to the guards at each post every night, and they appreciate it.

The men seem to enjoy our “church” services and sing heartily. Ens. Price interests them as a speaker.

### **February 14, 1919**

A birthday party that we had planned for January 9<sup>th</sup> had to be called off as all S.A. workers were called to a Peace Conference on that day. It seemed nice to see all the Salvation Army party together and we heartily enjoyed the conference.

In the early part of January, Ensign Price and I went to Nancy on a shopping trip. Bought table linen, Cluny lace and a beautiful crepe de chene blouse for myself and cameras for a couple of the boys. One of them, a sergeant, insisted upon paying me for getting the camera for him and, of course, I refused and said jokingly that he could buy me a wedding present instead in about two years. As a result, this is what I found in my memory book:

*Once a fine girl I met,  
Not far from Old Metz  
Whose specialty was doughnuts and pies.  
But in two years she said,  
Some other she'd wed  
So now I just sit and think sad thoughts and sigh,  
For my hopes are all shattered  
And I know that the batter  
She mixes for doughnuts and pies won't be mine.  
For some other will take her  
And for him she will bake her  
Pies and her doughnuts the rest of time.*

Who would ever think that a mere joke could produce such eloquent poetry.

While on the subject of memory books, we both are rather glad we bought them, for not only have we the names and addresses of lots of our boys, but the majority have written a few lines of appreciation of our personal efforts and the S.A. in general that will mean a lot to us in years to come when our experiences here will be but a faint memory.

This morning looking through the pages of the book idly, found the following way in back, all by its lonesome:

*Here's to the one and only one  
And may that one be she  
Who always saved one and only one  
Of those cuts of pie for me.*

Was that little verse supposed to do the “John Alden” act, I wondered.

Bishop and Brunner came up a few days ago and orders came for us to go to Germany. Everyone felt so sorry that we were to leave, but as the days go by and we still are “going,” it is a standing joke. The latest “dope” is that the boys will leave Monday or Tuesday, “homeward bound.”

Saturday evening Col. Hopkins gave a farewell dinner and sent his limousine for us.

The “Y” girls were there, too. Attended a basketball game and a show but did not stay for the dance.

## **February 16, 1919**

Our dear old boys left this morning. Stood outside all morning waving goodbye to one truckload after another. Hope some day to be in Detroit and see the bunch again. Rather lonesome, and we are hoping that soon we'll be "hitting the trail" for Germany.

## **Coblenz, Germany. February 25, 1919**

At last we are in Germany. Left a week ago Sunday night and came by way of Metz. Spent the night there. Met our new Zone Major, Staff Capt. Turner and Capt. Andrews. Two hours of sightseeing Monday before starting on the next lap of our journey. Two 32<sup>nd</sup> Div. Officers shared our compartment on the trip and were interesting traveling companions.

The S.A. has a modern flat on Roan Strasse, that to us seems heavenly.

Coblenz is a marvelous city and to me, at least, shows no signs of having suffered from the war. Food is plentiful, people are all well-dressed; only soap seems to be scarce. So many men on the streets; one wonders if they lost many in the war. This being a "leave area," it is literally alive with American soldiers and every day we renew acquaintance with boys we've work with in France.

Col. McIntyre did a splendid meeting at the hut. Really a wonderful man and absolutely sincere.

This afternoon we went to Montabour and Ducenbar. Had supper with Florence Turkington and Mrs. Hickey. When we got back, we found that our room in Hotel Manopol had been taken but Miss Van Norden soon secured us another.

The other day we took the boat trip up the famous Rhine River, and I wished I were poetically inclined so I could have described the exquisite scenery. We were so thrilled to see the historic fortresses and castles and the "Lorelei." The officers of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division who occupied the same salon as we were good scouts. Helped the "Y" man distribute cookies and cigarettes to the soldiers.

Have had a lot of mail lately. Letters from home, Capt. Nutz, Waff and John and Ray. So glad they came through the war safe and sound. Turk is already in bed and the sandman keeps insisting that I go and do likewise. Good night.

Strange, isn't it, that I find it so hard to write. Nearly five months have passed since I've opened this book.

Spent a happy three months in Coblenz with Miss Van Norden and the Turks. We had a lovely apartment and enjoyed the luxury of it. Miss Van Norden is a remarkable person, and soon after she took charge of the hut it was transformed into a cheery place. Flags, bunting and flowers, as well as several coats of fresh paint did the trick.

On one of our jaunts, Slim told me Charley's story. While in Nantes, Co. H, had spent several months guarding the warehouse that contained clothing and equipment for the U.S. Army. These warehouses covered a 150-mile area along the river. Slim, as commander of the guard, one night received a call from a sentry on duty at a warehouse about two miles distant, to come at once. The Sgt. Jumped into his car and in a short time arrived at the warehouse. The sentry led him to a pile of hay in the corner and with dramatic gestures pointed to what seemed like a heap of rags. Upon investigating, the Sgt. found a ragged little boy with swollen tear-stained features, sound asleep. The sentry told him the boy had arrived an hour or so before and made furtive attempts to escape, but had finally been won over with some American chocolates and kind words. He was induced to lie down, and in a few moments sleep conquered him. When the Sgt. had found out all that the sentry had to tell him, he picked up the sleeping child and carried him to the car. The boy did not wake up until he was being laid down in a bunk in Slim's barracks. The strange faces and strange surroundings made him burst into tears, and he tried to run away, but Slim quieted him with the assurance that no one would harm him, not even the French Gendarmes (Police), of whom the boy seemed most afraid. By patient questioning, it was learned that his name was Charles Moyoux and that he was about twelve

years old and that “for a long, long time me live in trenches with British.” Later it was learned that Charles had spent approximately four years with British soldiers.

The question for the hours with Charles was, “Where is my mama?” The Sgt. promised to find his mother, and through the efforts of the American Consul and the aid of the French Intelligence Dept., news of the mother was eventually obtained. When she was positively located, the Sgt. and Lieut. Bristol went to see her. They found her in a precarious condition, physically and mentally, and they realized that if Charley was to see his mother, something must be done for her immediately, so they placed her under the care of a competent physician. The two visited her off and on, and when she had improved sufficiently to stand the news, they told her about finding the boy and promised she should see him soon.

By this time, Charley, under the care of Co. H., had grown and developed into a splendid edition of a full-fledged leatherneck, and he was very proud of the uniform that the Co. had made for him, and of his mastery of English.

In a few weeks, Charles was taken to visit his mother, and only those who have had a similar experience, can appreciate what that visit meant to them.

Soon after, Co. H. was transferred to St. Nazairre and the mother, realizing the he may had the best of care, gave her consent to Charley’s going along as mascot. At St. N., the Salvation Army also became interested in the little mascot, the Major proposed that the profits made from selling French articles at the canteen be turned over to the Marines to swell the trust fund to which every member of Co. H. liberally contributed each pay day. A part of this has been already used to rebuild their home, and the mother is happy in familiar surroundings. The balance of the fund will be used for Charley’s education.

Because Charles was going around on crutches, I inquired the reason and learned that when Slim had given the boy his first much-needed bath the evening he was found, his body bore scars from shrapnel wounds and that one leg was shorter than the other. A famous bone surgeon had operated on the leg and seemed positive that when the cast was removed, the limp would be gone.

Slim confided to me the he planned on taking the little mascot to Kansas with him. Let’s wish him luck.

### **July 5, 1919**

June in St. Nazairre passed quickly and happily. Major Hickey planned several picnics to which many of the Marines were invited. We all had a lot of fun, and the *eats* were delicious. The hut boasted some excellent cooks, chief of which were Mrs. Hickey and Ethel MacDonald, a former Home Ec. Teacher, and when it came to artistic table arrangements, my buddy, Turk, could not be beat. We often invited Belgian Charley to meals and naturally, his chaperone came along. Was he afraid to trust Charley with so many girls, or was it the delicious odors of home-cooked food that always brought the Sgt. to the hut dining room? Perhaps some day I’ll ask him (if our paths should cross).