

Letter #40

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“Somewhere in France”

Oct. 15, 1918

Dear Folks:

It's a long, long time since I wrote to you last but the circumstances were such that I couldn't find the time and place to write. Now however I have plenty of time to write and will do my best to write often, as I know you are waiting patiently for a letter. Such is the case with me also. Since I left Signal School in August I have had no word from you or anyone else. So you see that I also am waiting patiently for a letter. The reason I do not get any mail I suppose is because my outfit has been moving so much that it is impossible for my mail to catch up with me. I sure will be happy when I get a letter from you and I suppose you will be the same when you get a letter from me.

Well I hope this letter will find you all well and in the best of health. For myself I can say that I am feeling pretty fine considering where I am at. I bet you will be surprised when you find out that I am in a hospital, but don't worry because by the time you get this letter I will be well and back to my outfit a long time. I was gassed Oct. 9 but didn't go to the hospital until the 12th. I expect to be out in a week or so because I didn't get it bad. You can see that I am feeling pretty good by the way I write this letter. I am up and walking around and you ought to see me at “chow” time, I can't get enough to eat s a continually kick. All I wish is that I was back to my outfit and then I would be all right. I left them 12th and the next day was to be pay day so I am out of luck for some money, but I don't need it here and besides the month is almost over and I'll have two months coming instead of one. Since I wrote last, I have been through h-- a good many times but still am alive and kicking. I've been over the “tops” a good many times since then and have seen all of the worst horrors of the war. Seeing dead and wounded now is nothing new to me.

Since I have been with the outfit I haven't done a bit of wireless work because they have no wireless instruments and also wireless is very seldom used at the front. J.P.S. is sometimes used but not very much. The telephone is the -im portant thing, and it is some job keeping the wires together during artillery fire. The day I was gassed we went out once during a shelling and in a short distance found thirty seven breaks to fix. You can imagine how busy the telephone men are kept and how “soft” a job they have.

I wish I could tell you more about the last drive but I think that is impossible to do on account of the censors. No doubt the American papers are full of it and you have read it by this time. You can guess how much good was accom-plished on this last drive by they way the German peace proposal flew about. But according to the papers over here peace is in sight.

Well so much for war news. How is everything coming along at home? I hope things are O.K.

I bet there was something missed and something saved at home the early part of this month, around the 3rd. I suppose you know what I mean my birthday. No scraps to give and no presents to buy. Well, I think it will be the only one spent that way. I sure will always remember one birthday and that is this last one which was spent at the lines. Well so much for my birthday. In a few days it will be Marcus' birthday and if I have any paper left I will write a letter to him.

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Page 2

Paper is very scarce around this hospital, in fact it is impossible to get. The paper I am writing on now I picked up on the battle field the day we were relieved and it sure is coming in handy.

How is Rose getting along? I suppose she and Marcus are back at school. Tell Marcus to work this year so that he will get through alright. I bet Rose is waiting for a letter from me. I don't know whether I wrote her a letter since I was at Signal School or not, but just as soon as I get more paper I will write to her. How about your getting letters from me? I wrote back around the end of August. Have you been getting my mail up to that time? I hope you have. How about the Stars and Stripes I subscribed for and had sent home? Have you received any copies of it yet? How are my friends getting along? Give them my regards. I saw a piece in one of the papers here where it says that Mr. Taubert's son was awarded the American Medal for Bravery. I saved the clipping but lost it when my clothes were taken away at the hospital. I wonder what his dad thinks of him now. Does old man Taubert ever come around? What does he do now-a-days?

Do you ever hear from Uncle? If so what has he to say? I suppose things are the same with him as always. Has the old town changed much lately? How about the students at the University? Are there just as many boys there as in other years? I suppose not.

How is Company 5 coming along? Are they still existing?
How is Bob Wise getting along? Still on the old job is he? Does he ever write to me? I have never written to him yet because I have been waiting for a letter from him.
How is the weather around home now-a-days? Cold?
Here in France we are having rotten weather. Rains about all the time and also is quite cold. Well this is about all I have to write for this time so I will close with love and kisses to all I remain as ever.

Your loving and affectionate Son,
Max

Pvt. Max Ottenfeld
Headquarters Co., 18th Inf.
Signal Section
American E.F.

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C. L. Schommer
The Army