



Somewhere in France

May 7, 1918

My Dear Cousin:-

You're no idea how very much pleased I was to get Ethel's letter from Camp Hemitt. It was among the first I have received in Europe and was all the more highly appreciated for that. You most certainly would have been raised to the 4th power in my estimation (if you are n't already there) had you here gone to work at that Terrain school. You'll soon know how to appreciate ~~that~~ and truly until you reach his Innocents Abroad + Tramps Abroad and then get to come over on a Government boat with all expenses paid and an almost really, truly salary in the bargain. I had a great experience coming over. It was almost like an Italian summer cruise you read about as far as the weather goes. Almost like one

I said. We landed safely as you
have perhaps guessed from the start
at one of France's beautiful ports.
Spent a week there getting used
to things and then, out one grand
town of France. Road all around in
a real French train. You know they
have little bit of engine here we
used to visit up when we were
kid and their cars are all dished
up crossways with the world about
as some of our old open bottom cars
are with seats slant across in a
step along the side. Only two seats are
tucked together and boxed up with a
door at each end. The first class coaches
have about four compartments and
look like the buses they have in most
small towns to meet the trains and
haul people to the hotels at home.
They are upholstered apart like a
Pierce Arrow Limousine and ride
very comfortably. The second class ones
are about like a Ford Sedan and the
third class ones are about like the

front seat of a sprung wagon. I was
with a Major and road first class.

I stayed at a hotel in the town
where I landed. Had a room about
the size of your dining room with
the sitting room thrown in. The floor
was as slick as glass; there was a
marble wash stand a couple of
meters long by about one wide
with a couple of towels and pitcher
big enough to take a bath in and
a cut glass water bottle. The bed
was about six feet above the floor
and they use pillows for cover.
I had to orient myself every time
I came in. There was a madogau
wardrobe with a full length mirror
in which I could admire myself
in my Sam Brown belt (may the
devil fly away with him). I visited a
castle said to have been started
by old man Julius Caesar himself
and occupied by various kings & queens
of ancient times. There were dis
covered that in at French towns

are saddled with some such rusty
old building with dungeons that had
stakes stuck up to catch unhappy
prisoners on and that Caesar or
Augustus or some other old Roman
did something do about (In all
probability never even saw or heard
tell of it) things age mighty quick
over here. There is always a keeper
who goes around with you for a
small consideration say 1/2 a
franc nearly in cents in real
money.



If you buy something and give
a five or ten dollar bill for it you
get back enough colored paper
and big copper cents to load down
a pack mule. The coppers are about
the size of a half dollar and are
worth ten centimes, two cents in
money. A French man can buy
a paper a square inch a bottle
of wine and get some change for
one but it takes dollars and francs
for an American to get along.

They are some goat to us though
and are the most polite people
I ever saw. They don't seem to be
able to do enough for us especially
here at school where they have all
been spoiled by having tourists and
and army officers around.

Saw today at a real Chateau
with a park, a moat and a cute
little picture book village out in
front. There is an marble stairs
hand carved wood work and very
thing like you read about and it
cost a lot for a base furnace or
some steam heat. There is a shower
bath that has water right out of
the Arto Ocean in it. Of course
the place was built back in 1550
by Catherine de Medicis or the Duke
Guise or Henry III, IV or Cardinal
Richelieu or somebody or other who
was ruling this glorious old country
at that time. Some law down
cases turned up most of it in

1789

1789 and a rich silk merchant
built it in 1903 There's a rock
over the door with MVC L on it
and I can't tell how much that
is. Evidently 1650. I suspect
that Henry of Navarre made
some of his three musketeers
were all ground here. There's
the cutest little branch that runs
down through rows of trees. It
is about a foot deep and ten wide
and the French call it a river.
It is sure a pretty little stream
I took a walk through an adjoining
Chateau Park the other day and
there was a swan and some
green + white ducks floating on the
river and it sure looked like a
picture. There are old mills all
over the country both water and
the wind kind like Hallad pictures
show. You'd never think that was
in California in this same land it
is so delicate and quiet and pretty.
You never see any Frenchmen. This



many women and children and
 old men. The rest are whipping
 Dutchmen. They are sure making
 soldiers out of us too. I never walked
 or studied so hard in my life. I
 be strong enough to whip a sack of
 wild cats - nice enough to be either
 county surveyor or a horse
 doctor when I get luck.

About the only things that bother
 us any are the town clocks. There
 are one on the church and one on the
 Hotel de Ville. They are never together
 and they each strike the quarter
 hours and when the City Hall clock
 strikes the hour it always hits off
 the four quarters or chimes and then
 strikes the hour. It'll wait about
 four minutes and then bang away
 the hour again to be good and sure
 that everyone knows it's on the
 job. The current old church clock
 is not far from our windows,
 (We have double French ones that Keitha the
 Clay nites about) the chimes are

cracked and insist on going off
five minutes late. The bell is
struck on the church bell, a beau-
tiful toned bell that can be heard
I'm sure about 50 miles. It
usually strikes two or twelve
o'clock and about 18 or twenty
or five A.M. Sometimes it'll strike
the whole twenty four and then
come about that time in the
morning. Then at 5.30 they in-
sist on ringing it and another one
trapped to ^{it} for about five minutes
and it sure creates a great commo-
tion in our room instead of prayers
as its intended to.

I am fit healthy and working
hard and I hope you are the same
except the fact. Be sure and
write because we're all crazy for
letters. I'll write you as much and
as often as the consil'll let me.
Tell all the family hello. Sincerely,
Harry S. Truman
1st Lt 129 F. A.
Via New York American E. F.
(Be sure we
this address.)

