Germany.
Dec. 11, 1918.

Dear Father:

We have made it to the Rhine. Everything has been perfectly calm and quiet. There has been nothing of particular interest to the trip. The people knew ahead of time that we were coming and knew what would be expected of them, and so everything has moved very smoothly and pleasantly. The officers get rooms and beds with families in all the towns in which we stop over. The people are usually, in fact, practically always, very pleasant and accommodating. Our first night in Germany was particularly pleasant. We have in the battery an officer who speaks perfect German, his parents being directly from Germany, and so whenever we stop he makes arrangements for a mess for our battery officers, we usually furnishing our own food. That first night there was a young lady in the family who saw to it that we had a most excellent supper, and while we were eating, she entertained us very delightfully on the piano, playing real first class music.

We haven't reached our final destination yet, but at present we are spending two or three days in a small town near the Rhine. We probably move again tomorrow. We will not be in any large town, though somewhere in the neighborhood of Coblenz. I have a fine bed to sleep in here and good place to eat. The only unpleasant thing is the weather, and I imagine it will continue to be unpleasant more or less for the rest of the winter. Some of our hiking was rather strenuous, and we are kept busy all the time working - cleaning up everything neatly. No matter what the weather conditions and how far we have hiked during the day, we have to start out next day with everything shining. Officers are supposed to be dress as to be a credit to the U.S.A. and at the same time they have not been permitted to go where they could purchase any articles of clothing.

If I could get hold of a German dictionary or grammar, I feel sure I could soon speak the language O.K. but as it is, I find that I have temporarily forgotten all my German words.

As a conquering army, I think we are a source of much wonder to the Germans. We feathers and flying colors, or anything of the like, and very orderly conduct always. They are all pleased that it is the Americans passing thru here. They seem to have had great fear as to what the French or Belgians might have done to them - which to me seems to indicate a guilty conscience. On this side of the Rhine there seems to have been very little love for the Kaiser or even the local government officials, on account of the rigid food regulations and various taxes which have been imposed on the people.

I don't believe the Germans realize just what is taking place and as to their real innermost feelings in regard to the change, I am not informed at all. Its in the large cities of course where things are brewing - here in the smaller places where we have been, things seem to be functioning in an orderly way. There is not a great abundance of food in some places, but I have seen no signs of starvation. In the town we are in now, you can buy a meal wherever you like at a reasonable price. Coffee, however, doesn't seem to exist - substitutes altogether, made out of corn and such. The people tell us though that in the cities there has been much suffering because of lack of food.

I have no more idea when I will get home than you have. I have signed a printed slip of paper saying I desired full and immediate cooperation from the service, seeing no reason why my services are needed further in the army. However, I don't expect this to get me home any sooner. I find myself each day more anxious to get home. I am perfectly willing now to pass on to someone else the honor of being with the army of occupation.

Our mail service has been very poor recently. A birthday letter from Mother, written on the 5th Nov. and a letter from Lucy of the10th are my only letters for quite a while - since the armistice I believe. The transportation service back to France hasn't been fully organized as yet. I am in the best of health. Hope the influenza situation has improved in the U.S., and am glad the epidemic at home was not so bad. There has not been much of it in the army - in fact very little so far I know.

Hoping that every one at home keeps well, I am, with love to all,

Affectionately,
John