

Personal Memories

A Letter Home From A U.S. Serviceman in Paris, 11 November 1918



11 November 1918

Dear Folks:

5 Arrived here last night, and was on the street today when the armistice with Germany was signed. Anyone who was not here can never be told, or imagine the happiness of the people here. They cheered and cried and laughed and then started all over again.

10 Immediately a parade was started on the Rue De Italiennes and has been going on ever since. In the parade were hundreds of thousands of soldiers from the U.S., England, Canada, France, Australia, Italy and the colonies. Each soldier had his arms full of French girls, some crying, others laughing; each girl had to kiss every soldier before she would let him pass.

15 The streets are crowded and all traffic held up. There are some things, such as this, that never will be reproduced if the world lives a million years. They have taken movies of the crowds, but you can't get sound nor the expression on the people's faces, by watching the pictures.

20 There is no where on earth I would rather be today than just where I am. Home would be nice, and is next, but Paris and France is Free after four years and 3 months of war. And oh, such a war! The hearts of these French people have simply burst with joy. I have had many an old French couple come up to Major Merrill and me and throw their arms about us, cry like children, saying, "You grand Americans; you have done
25 this for us."

It is impossible to buy a flag in Paris today. Everyone has one it seems and the old streets are one solid mass of colors from all the allied nations. Paris, that grand old city that has been dark for so long, is now all

lighted up. Listen - my window is open - and somewhere there has been
30 an American band assembled. They are playing *My Country 'Tis of Thee*.

Folks! It's wonderful! So full of feeling and meaning.

Thank God, thank God, the war is over. I can imagine all the world is happy. But no where on earth is there a demonstration as here in Paris. I only hope the soldiers who died for this cause are looking down upon the
35 world today. It was a grand thing to die for. The whole world owes this moment of real joy to the heroes who are not here to help enjoy it.

I cannot write any more.

Lovingly, your boy, Chas.

Contributed by Lois Normington Haugner

40 Saturday, 22 August, 2009 Capt. Charles S. Normington, Co. E., 127th Infantry, 32nd Division

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45 <http://www.firstworldwar.com/diaries/normington.htm>