

Shampittle France.

Nov. 24-15

Mr. H. W. Kennedy,

Gayton Ala.

Dear Father:

I received yours and  
mother's letters last Wednesday. Was  
very glad to hear from you all  
and to know that you all were  
still well and alright. I am  
well and alright to day and  
am having a good time.

Will you ask me to write  
you a letter, (something of interest)  
so will try as I have the  
permission to do so to day. to begin  
we left the states the 25<sup>th</sup> of Apr.  
and landed in Liverpool the 7<sup>th</sup> of May  
we left there that night and by  
train and got to Winchester about  
4<sup>00</sup> o'clock the next morning. We staid  
there two days and took the train  
for Southampton, got there and hiked  
about 4 miles to a camp and

there one day and hiked back and boarded  
the ship and landed in Le Harve. France  
May the 10<sup>th</sup>. There we were fully equiped  
with new guns. Helmets and gass mask. I put  
on my first gass mask there and  
believe me I wished I had never  
seen one after I had staid 5 minutes  
in the gass chamber. but later I  
found it to be one of my best  
friends.

We left Le Harve on the  
eve of the 12<sup>th</sup> it was pouring down  
rain. hiked 5 miles to the train and  
landed in a little town about 6 O'clock  
next morning. had breakfast and set out  
about 9 o'clock and hiked 15 miles to  
Chipy. got there about 13<sup>0</sup> O. and  
I was all in as it was my  
first long hike with a full pack  
It was here that we heard  
our first <sup>big</sup> guns. The Germans were  
making their big drive at this time  
and we could hear the cannon  
though we were 20 miles behind  
the lines. We also had a few

air raids at a near by big town (Abbeville I believe was its name).

We staid here and drilled about a month. (It was here that I threw my first live hand grenade, and got my first rifle practice).

Well we left here and after three days and nights journey on the train we landed in Toul the morning of the June staid there about two weeks on night of the 26th of June we landed in the 3rd line trenches. we didnt really go to any trenches but were stationed in a little town by the name of Mandreys in billets.

We left this place on the night of the 3rd of July and took up the front line. I shall never forget this night! It was raining and we made a lot of noise going in, and Jerry threw about a thousand whiz-bangs at us but he didnt <sup>hurt</sup> any body. just luck I reckon ~~was~~

(41)  
and it was so dark he couldn't see anything too, but if he could have seen us I believed we should have all been killed. As this was a quiet front there was not much excitement here until the morning of the 31st of July when he put over a barrage. It lasted 45 minutes, but did not hurt anybody. I'll <sup>say</sup> I was scared as some of the shell fell in my trench. We held this front about a month then the 6th of Aug we landed in a little town behind the lines by the name of Pagny. We staid here two weeks and did some of the hardest drilling I have ever done. We left here by truck one evening and after all night we arrived a Louisy (We call it Lousy) and after seven days in surpport here we took up the front line a Pont a Mousson this was quite at this time, but when the drive was started

(6)

Things picked up. I was put on a day light patrol, and we had penetrate in to Sellaau Farm to see if there was any Boche there. it wasnt any farm either because Jerry was continually throwing shells into that place well we didnt find anything there, but two dead American soldiers and that made our blood boil to get even with the Germans. We did get even too but not there.

We were relieved on this front the latter part of Sept. and were move to the Verdun front near Verense, which is on the edge of the Argonne Forest. Here the 2nd day of Oct. we went up in support of an other division, and had several men wounded. a Lieutenant a Sargent and five privates I think. We were relieved next morning.

and came back <sup>(6)</sup> to Verense. We staid  
here until the night of the 5<sup>th</sup>  
of Oct. When we got orders to  
march out. We marched nearly all  
night up a straight road with  
Jerry throwing shells at us and  
at daybreak we formed into  
combat groups and were given  
the word forward. we marched  
~~so~~ in this formation up the  
top slope of a steep hill and  
~~when~~ we reached the top the  
Germans opened up on us with  
machine guns. (Well it was some  
fight) after about a half minute  
we had deployed and were  
going after them. Jerry is a  
good fighter at a long distance  
but when you get close to  
to him he will throw up  
his hands and holler Comrade

Well this fight lasted four  
days and nights and I tell you  
I spent some of the awfulest  
Nights here I ever spent in my

7  
life: Jerry shot stretcher bearers  
and shelled the ambulances so  
that we could not get help to  
to wounded. and my co. had  
60% casualties. so you see there  
was a lots of suffering

Well at the end of the  
fourth day we were taken  
out. We thought we were going  
to be relieved but we were mistaken  
after a nights sleep in a  
barn we were marched back  
in to the fight so <sup>the</sup> next evening  
we got orders to go over the  
top we advanced two miles  
here with out resistance - about  
dark Jerry opened fire on us  
to the right of Somerset and  
we dug in. Well we staid in  
this fight until the 31st of Oct.  
when we got relieved My Co  
had when we were relieved 25  
of the old men we had <sup>to be</sup> ~~been~~  
filled up twice

but the most of these casualties were shrapnel and machinegun wounds. Not more than 20 men were killed or died. I didn't get a scratch myself, but there were times when I thought my last hour had come. Well in conclusion I will say that we gave the Germans just what they had been looking for. For years they soon saw that he couldn't frighten the American. That's why he quit so quick after we began to drive him.

Well close for this time  
I send love to all  
Your Loving Son

Pvt Vernon O Kennedy  
Co. D. 327. Inf. A. P. O. 742  
U. S. Army