

PETE TAKES THE GAS-COURSE.

Bovington Camp.

October 30, 1918.

Dere Bill,

Things is pretty much the same; the Sergeant-Major still tells us to stand steady that man you're standin' at ease the way he useter and the grub is just the same except that we get coffee in the morning and tea at night now instead of tea in the morning and coffee at night the way we used to, and the boys didn't like it, and they kicked, and so they changed it. So you see there aint very much I can write about except Bill I went through the gas chamber to-day, and I guess you don't know what that means, but it ain't no fun, and I don't mind telling you Bill just between me an you and the post office clock that I'm glad its all over.

Well, I guess you've herd about these Germans how they use musterd gas, and its a whole lot worse than a mustard poultice, and it gets in your eyes and your mouth, and all over, and blisters, and I'll tell the world it ain't no fun. Well, to sort of



counteract this stuff, I think counteract is the word the British use gas masks and they purify the gas, so you don't breathe nothing but ozozne, and I don't mind telling you I'd rather breathe the gas than wear the mask cuz it ain't no fun.

You slobber all over the mouthpiece, and the spit runs down your chin, and you can't wipe it off because the mask is there, and I'll tell you it ain't no fun. You can't take the mask off to blow your nose, but when the captain hollers gas shell you got to get it on in five seconds or its good-night, mother, good-morning St. Peter. Ha, ha. But its no joke, cuz the instructor says there's only 2 kind of people in gas warfare, the quick and the dead.

Well, they make you put the mask on, and then

you play games where one side lines up and the other side lines up fifty yards away, and you got to run and catch the other man's arms before he gets the mask on. I forgot to tell you neither side has a mask on till the instructor blows a whistle. And then they take you for a root march with the mask on, and you can't take it off to spit, and I was chewing gum, and I nearly drowned myself. Then the instructor says double, and he must have been seeing double or something cuz he didn't say it until we got to the bottom of a hill, and gee, I couldn't breathe, so I took my mask off to breathe, and he says what are you taking your mask off for? go back and double up the hill again.

Then in the afternoon we goes through the gas chamber, which is going into a little hut, and it ain't no chamber at all, but you goes in and he turns on the gas, and then cleers the room of gas after we sees our masks are working allright, but he reely didn't cleer the hut of gas, and he only pretended he did, and when he sez take off your masks we all did, and we nearly choked to death honest bill, it wasn't any fun, but believe me, we got those masks on quick, and I started to run, but he wouldn't let me get outside.

Then he turns on this chloride gas which they use to put in water in the big cities, and that's why Toronto water tastes like it does. It was just like a white smoke, and after the room was full of it he says test for gas, and you was supposed to take your masks off just a little bit, and smell a little. Well, bill, I didn't think I'd live to tell you about it cuz I took a little whiff, and I didn't smell anything, and so I smelled as deep as I could, and gee, then I knew why the Frenchies run away when the Heinies used the gas at Saint Julian when the Canadian boys stuck it out and saved the world for democracy and slivilization as Tommy Church says.

Anyway, its all over, and I came out of it better than George Howson, cuz when he went through he had a hoal in his mask, and he feels it yet, I meen the gas not the hoal.

But anyway, we got it all over the Germans cuz the instructor told us its a secret, so don't tell anybody else that we got a gas that's so strong when Fritz takes one smell of it it even kills his next of kin, and I guess he was joking when he said that.

And here's another joke he told us about a Irish-man who was teaching gas, and he said boys, this gas is terribly poisonous, boys, he said, if you take one whiff you're a ded man, and if you take another whiff you'll never forget it. Pretty good, eh bill?

Goodbye; I guess we'll soon be over there driving the old tanks into Hunland, that is if the war ain't over, and I hope it ain't over cuz I want a whack at the Germans, but if it is over I won't kick. So long.

Your friend,

PETE.