

THE 5TH BATTALION'S PAGE

Dear Tom,

In my last letter I believe I groused a trifle, but now that is all over. Never again will my manly voice be heard raised in argument with the Orderly Officer, nor will I feel depressed or down-hearted. We are having the time of our lives between working parties, and juggling mulligan mixers. Say, we pulled one out of the slop chest, the last shuffle, who is a regular joker; a Khedive of all the cooks. Mind you, he can't cook. Far from it. But he's so original. The first thing he does when he was enticed into the cook house with a handfull of oats is to chop up some bacon, and when he's complimented on the symmetry and general contour of the chunks he claims the bone impeded the course of the knife. And black already! Say Tom, you ought to see him. He looks like a cloud on a rainy day. You'd think the sun had gone into total eclipse when he appears on the horizon. The Sergeant-cook, who has experience in this line and naturally ought to know, says that this cook should take extreme care and not let the black get shiny, because the Germans might take him for a howitzer and treat him accordingly.

You know yourself Tom, I'm not hard to please in the way of grub, but I leave it to you, when a man is a trifle unlucky and comes kind of late for his chicken giblets, and reaches down to the bottom of the dixie and fishes out an old sock that has somehow wandered away from the home pasture, a man is entitled to speak his mind free and unhindered. And variety! the same yesterday, to-day and forever more. We had mulligan three times running and o-day we had a stew. Can you beat it? Our beloved cook says he has got a change for us for to-morrow. I expect it is what the old woman used to call a New England boiled dinner when we had company on a Sunday afternoon. Personally I'd rather have a nickles worth of fried liver. Say Tom, I came mighty near to getting this same cooks job a few days ago but the German spy system is just about perfect. You see, it was this way. I was just getting a treaty drawn up to be striker to the guy on the fire and the spy must have waggled the information to the enemy; or maybe the news was carried by pigeons. Anyway, just when I was completing the terms, ringside weight, forfeit and all, Fritz sent over one of his ninety six inch shells. You have probably heard all about these new guns of theirs. They fire a shell and then throw rocks for two hours. Well you can see that was no place for me. But this new guy is a whale. He fears no Huns nor their diabolical contrivances. Sometimes he takes a walk with me when times are busy or cold feet, this is no sign of "bigunitis" but merely what we military people term a masterly rear guard action.

It's a funny thing, Tom, how the Primus stoves and Tommy's cookers have boomed around here lately. Seems like somebody's going to eat around here soon. Me, I bought a cook book. Say, she's some volume. It's already settled a subject that has been puzzling me for a long time. You know how great minds run. I expect Columbus was already in doubt about the shape of this earth until he found out for himself. Well that was the way with me, I had some potato soup in a French farm house a while back and I always had a sneaking suspicion about the recipe of this said soup. But when I got the book which should be in every homesteaders shack and on every white man's house boat, the mystery unravelled itself, as you might say. You know Tom how the Pacific coast Chink makes his bread. Well there's your potato soup, otherwise it's not too bad.

Your old friend,
Smoky.

MY EPIGRAM

I have seen the beautious splendours
Of the mystic Northern Lights;
And the Southern Cross I've worshiped
In the warmth of topic nights.
I have roamed around the prairies,
I have sailed o'er several seas;
At my own sweet will I've wandered,
With no one to please.

For some are born to wander
And some to stay at home,
And there's surely a taint in the blood of the man
Who eternally longs to roam.
It's a fierce and burning fever,
And it keeps him on the go;
To day he stands on coral strands,
Next month he'll freeze in snow.

But it's a glorious independence,
To revel in God's free air,
To go where you may choose to go,
And no one else may care.
And when your span of life is run
And you pass beyond the pale;
You have come to the great Adventure,
To the raising of the Veil.

Your body to the earth consigned,
Is buried 'neath the sod:
While your soul, unfettered and unchained,
Goes out to meet your God.
"Requiscat in Pax" so says the cross
That decorates your mound;
But your carcase is food for the loathsome things,
Which are crawling underground.

So when I leave this mortal plane
I would "Rest in peace" to know
That my body in death, was, as in life,
Quite free to come and go.
My bones cremated to an ash,
And not to the worms be given,
But thrown on high, to wander free
On the wings of the winds of heaven.

FRANC.

We are coming Mother England.

We are coming Mother England
One hundred thousand more,
To help you guard your island home
As we helped you once before;
But then we fought with honour,
For we faced a worthy foe,
While now we fight the culture of
Three thousand years ago.

For they drown our little children
And they crucify our men;
They bombard your defenceless towns,
And in the trenches when
They fear to meet us face to face,
Their Kultur finds excuse
To save what they term "Honour",
By the deadly gas they use.

We're coming Mother England
Seeking neither wealth or fame;
We want to meet the ruffian Huns
Who to honours but a name.
For them "the day" has come and gone,
But for us the hour draws near
When we'll hail our final victory
With an old time British cheer.

So we're coming Mother England,
To help you in your need,
And the Huns will find we're Bull-dogs,
Of the old time British breed.
For we won't lay down our weapons
Till this bloody war is o'er,
And the faithless Hohenzollern falls
To rise again no more.

Pte. Walter Hill.