

Lend a Touch of Home to That Overseas Christmas Parcel

Christmas Would Not Be Christmas To Him Without This Tangible Expression Of Love From Home

By JUDSON T. STUART

CANADA'S sons in service abroad are going to have the merriest Christmas this year of any that they have experienced since the war. Their glorious victories, their heroic advances, and their knowledge that the foe is beaten and weakening every day with a weakness that can know no recovery and end only in his justly deserved disaster, will make it a happy holiday.

Whether, at Christmas, the enemy has crumbled and surrendered, or whether he is continuing in his desperate but impotent defence will make no real difference in the Christmas situation. Our boys who are in service over there cannot get back home for the holiday by any miracle, not even if there has been an unconditional surrender.

And no matter how happy they may be because of this turn of affairs that their valour has brought about, you can make it a still happier Christmas for them by sending them a box for the holidays.

It is getting late. That box must be sent now—without delay. Do not waste a day in getting it ready. It doesn't matter if they are to have the very best sort of a Christmas feast provided for them, as many will have, it will not be complete without that box from home. The day will not be quite the same without some token and without a sample of good old "home cooking."

Many of the boys will be in the trenches in the front lines—for the lines must be held and advanced, Christmas or no Christmas—or in the open, chasing Huns, or in many places in advance of the base and if any great spreads are prepared for the majority, these boys on duty will be unable to join. You do not know whether your own boy will be back at the base for the Christmas feast or whether he will be in the front lines on Christmas Day, but if you send him a box now you will be sure that it will reach his Division Headquarters in time to be forwarded and that messengers will on that day take the Christmas boxes to whoever may be in advance on duty. And so there is a double reason why such a box should be sent on.



An idea worth while! Before boxing, wrap gifts in bandana or khaki handkerchief—which in itself is most acceptable.

board between. A box of this sort, with a cover that slips down over the box at least two or three inches, will serve quite well. But it must be so packed that no liquids or damp goods, like jams, can break and leak, as this will soften the cardboard and cause it to tear open and the contents rattle out during rough usage.

The tin and thin wooden boxes did best service last season. A few dents in the tin boxes and a few cracks in the wooden ones did no harm. A bit of jelly leaking out into the box did no harm.

See that the address is painted on the tin in at least two places so that if it is scratched or rubbed off in one

or something of that nature that will not easily break or wear through in the days of constant joggling and friction with other boxes in transit.

What to give the boy is, up to a certain point, not difficult to decide. A trench mirror is flat and takes up no room. You say he has one. You mean he "had" one. How do you know that it is not lost, or rusted or damaged some other way? It is probably dulled by wear, and the bright new one will always be gratefully received.

Razor blades? Certainly. Life in the trenches is death to razor blades. The dust and mud gets into the pores of the skin and the blade that would serve the boy with four good shaves at home will be dulled with one shave. Give him plenty of them. There are small arrangements for sharpening various makes of blades, a holder and oilstone or a strop, depending on the make. Send one along so that he can fall back on it when his new blades are dulled.

A pocket knife is useful. The big boys over there are like the little boys at home, always losing a knife and always needing one. Perhaps he has lost his housewife kit and needs needles and pins and a few buttons for undergarments, and some safety pins to patch up the uniform torn on barbed wire until he can have a new one issued.

Cigarettes? By all means, and a pipe if he is a pipe smoker. Some good tobacco, his favourite brand. A fountain pen, a few ink tablets that may be dissolved in water to make good writing ink. Socks. Wristlets, muffler—remember he has no steamheat and hot and cold running water and carpets and morris chairs and woven wire springs and woollen sleeping garments in the trenches. When the boy's feet are dry and his wrists warm and the biting wind kept out of his neck, he's comfortable and practically safe from colds.

BUT the boy wants a little nearer touch of home, too. Have you a few snapshots taken this year? How about a picture of Kate, the family horse, and Gyp the dog, and even Thomas, the fireside cat? And of course if there are little brothers and sisters, or little tots of his



Above: Christmas parcels in "Hospital." Repairing them for the front after they have been damaged in transit.

To the right: Playing cards and cigarettes for the boys.



Above: Ready to be boxed.

To the left: Cigarettes, cards, fountain pens—all are easily packed, and, oh! so welcome. Big folks and little folks, all can help.

MANY weeks ago arrangements were made to insure prompt delivery of the Christmas boxes. There will be few delays or mistakes, providing you do your part now, address and pack the box properly and rush it off to him.

What to send him and just how to pack that box is a problem that should be solved at once. First of all, bear in mind that there will be tons of these boxes. Picture the mail that comes on Christmas time into your one small home town. And then picture the Christmas mail that will go forth from all parts of the Dominion to the boys—great mountains of it. The boxes cannot be handled singly, or like a package marked "Glass, With Care." They must be sacked at your own office and re-sacked for the ship and hoisted aboard and hoisted off over there. They must be piled into trains and go to the bases and from there in motor trucks to regimental headquarters and there sorted for the companies.

And by that time the box has had some rather hard usage. No ordinary cardboard box will stand this strain. On the other hand, thick wooden boxes are out of the question, they are too bulky and far too heavy. But there are several sorts of boxes that are just suited for this. A neat strong tin box is probably best of all. A medium-sized biscuit tin or any box of that sort. Next are the boxes made of very light and thin wood, about the thickness of the wood in which comb honey is formed for the market.

DRUGGISTS, grocers, and other merchants have many such boxes which are suitable. And next comes the box made of the corrugated cardboard such as is used for mailing photographs. Such cardboard is in two thicknesses with the corrugated or "wave-line"

place it will be found in another. But before you do this, put the address on a card *inside* the box, for as a last resort if boxes arrive without address they are opened, and officers look for this very thing—the address inside.

If you wrap the boxes, and they should be wrapped with stout paper because this protects them from bruises and forms a sort of thin cushion for them, be sure and put the address in two or three places on the outside wrappings. Tags are not advisable because they tear



Our wounded heroes, before all others, must not be denied toys in their stockings, and this photo, taken at the 3rd London General Hospital last year, shows ladies packing toys and useful presents for the wounded.

off. The wooden boxes should also have addresses painted on them. Your Christmas box now has the boy's address inside, painted on the box, and also on the outer wrapper. It is well wrapped and tied with good cord, never with twine. Stout linen cord, linen fish line,

own, send the latest pictures of them. They will mean more to him than all the works of art in the world. When he sees their confident, smiling faces he will feel that he has been fighting for something worth while, not only for suffering others, but to protect his own from the possibility of such suffering.

Send him something good to eat. Nothing that will spoil in transit. If you can make a small fat mince pie, of the good old spiced mincemeat, cooked rather dry, not too much moisture in it, and leave it in the tin baking plate and fasten a thin flat board over the top, or put two tin plates together with a pie in each and first make holes in the rims so that you can wire them together, they'll get there safe and sound and fill his heart with joy and his stomach with comfort. Fruit cake that will not crumble, but will keep indefinitely is good. Little jars of marmalade, some of that thick quince preserve, a bit of mint apple preserve—whatever it was he best liked at home. Fill in the chinks of the box with sticks of chewing gum, some of the hard old-fashioned peppermints, and, above all else

A Joint Letter From Every One in the Family!

You know your own son or brother or husband or sweetheart—you know his likes and dislikes, you know his especial fondness for some thing or things that you can get into the box. Fold up the home paper and stick it in, even if you have to separate the sheets and fold them separately.

He deserves the box. You know that. Don't delay, get it ready to-day. If you have any doubts as to size or weight, your postmaster will promptly inform you.

Pack that Christmas box for him.

Do it right. Do it now!