

18 general Hospital B. E. F.

A.P.O. 518 France

March 31 1918

Sunday.



My dear Mantland family:

We have Sunday here too - but like the other 365 days (in leap year) Sunday is a work day and I have to pile out of my sleeping bag at 7. At sunrise we have breakfast at 8 and I am usually the first one to be served - because I simply love oatmeal and Forbes (our mess sergeant (at home in Iowa he is a banker) has managed to get real Quaker Oats for us. One of the other attractions about getting up is to get in by the stove in the dining part of our mess

room.

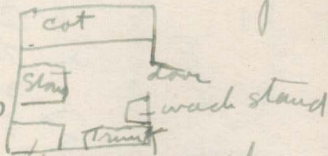
Possibly I have never given you a specific view into my home life. That life consists for the most part in sleeping hours. I have a little Kerosene lamp with a round chimney like a student's lamp. That's all the light I have at night. My tent is an alghoon tent - canvas stretched over a wooden frame with a door of the same and 3 windows - or rather near windows covered with greased cloth. Oil in light glass is terribly scarce - and putty is not to be had. The roof of this tent is corrugated iron - which is extremely

pleasant to me in as much as it brings to my  
dull ears the pitter patter of the rain, which  
happens very frequently. I like very much to  
be collected to it - who does not except that it  
means getting up to put on rubber boots & slop  
around in the mud. The roof is cantankerous  
though - it has a friendly habit of springing  
a leak in a real storm and this leak is  
just over my bald head - I am living proof  
that rain water will not grow hair.

I have a wooden table with books thereon  
a wash stand, clothes hung against the  
wall, <sup>all of</sup> which are covered with blankets.  
These blankets are the result of my thrifty  
habits - I gather them whenever I can so  
that now I have enough to "paper" the  
whole surface inside. My shaving mirror  
hangs over my gas mask and at the foot  
of my couch there is a broken piece of  
plate glass, formerly a shelf in the opera  
ting theater. This is held to the wall by  
best nails and on its under surface  
are some pictures of Janet & Bertha

held on by surgeon's adhesive tape.  
A simple yet effective arrangement.

These furnishings



seem elaborate I know <sup>table</sup> but they  
all dwell in importance be  
fore the piece de resistance -  
Any stone, French stoves are  
wonderful things some are  
so small that they look like  
the kind we buy for kiddies  
and their dollies at Christmas.  
In addition to small size most  
of them are very ornate. Mine  
is not so small. and is fairly  
ornate with banded ladies figures  
hold up the corners etc -  
anyhow it, like other French  
stones, is meant to burn anything  
even French coal. Someday

Some one with a fluent pen  
will write a treatise on French  
Coal. Its the most difficult  
Coal in the world to obtain first  
fall and then it is a cleft  
between black mud and a  
black cement - mostly in  
powder form. When one  
discovers a lump - one feels  
rich. My stove is under  
contract to burn this - mostly  
by means of collusion  
between stove pipe & stove  
or a wrong wind or wet wood  
it fails to line up to its con-  
tract and smoke intended  
by every one to go up the pipe  
prefers to come out of the front  
& sides - Its easier to do

that. My servant comes in at 6.30 & builds  
a fire - At 7 I awake in a thick fog - rarely  
can I see 3 ft away and am gasping  
for breath - My first effort in struggling out  
of the bag is to find the door - to fling it open  
for a breath of air - and of course let in  
the cool winter breeze on my pyjamas -  
Then I grab a bucket & drench the fire &  
start to curse every thing German for bring-  
ing us into this war. It really is danger-  
ous and some day you will read about  
an orderly who attempted to deliver an  
early morning message to me and was  
rescued lying on the floor of my hut in  
a swoon - found just in time. This stove  
feeds at the top and when one puts on a  
handful of this coal dust the hut is  
filled with black irritating smoke before  
the lid can be clamped on again -

It's a long war.

My cousin Margie's husband is O.K. so  
far. My first cousin Capt Eric Speed  
is in Italy - I had a letter from him

2 days ago. He is alive & well as far as I know now. My cousin Frances - married to Cyril Groom - think I wrote you that Cyril was blown to pieces by a shell Dec 30<sup>th</sup> and poor Frances is a widow. She is a charming girl (Maryon's sister) and I thought very much of Cyril. My aunt Nellie's brother St. Chambers has been captured & is a prisoner in German hands. One other of my cousins, Arthur Speed is in Baghdad and another Sydney has just been married and is called up this month.

You see we are pretty well in  
this war - my family.

Thanks for the package  
of 20cs you have sent. They  
have not yet arrived. My  
sister Anna sent me a box  
early in December which  
has not come. Margaret  
will be delighted to get any  
present - she dote on them  
like all women.

With the war is still  
in embryo - more anon.

I enjoyed your description  
of the Red + chance.

I have written one article  
and am hard at work on  
another since my return.



My responsibilities increase each day & I have little time to spare for reading or writing.

Margaret & I hope to be married about March 14 and are going to take a flying trip to Monte Carlo. I must attend a meeting in Paris on the 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> -

Today I have a disagreeable cold - and am hugging a little stove which is in Margaret's office. She is not here so I must use the stove - and am trying to catch up on my letters. Don't scold - I really work hard & play not at all.

Yesterday I sent a little package of buttons etc to Dorothy.

Kindest regards & thanks

Yours

Kellogg Speed.

Have not long since written you that I had to send Capt. Dale back to the U.S.A. early in January suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis.