

3-17-1919

Letter from Ceylon Kingston to his mother, dated March 15, 1919

Ceylon S. Kingston

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Thisancourt, Vosges 3-15-1919

My dear Mother:

Another week has passed and nothing of great importance has taken place. The weather is fine and the farmers are busy putting in their crops. Quite a number of the soldiers are helping the farmers. They get two francs a day for themselves and food and the company gets one franc. I have watched the boys at work and they are good workers. They are all, ^{and all} young ~~and~~ all very industrious.

Some of the combinations are odd. One of our neighbors has been plowing back of the house with three horses and one ox. He has two horses hitched to the plow and then the ox ahead and the third horse ahead of the ox. I saw another outfit today where the ox was hitched with the horse. They put a collar on the ox like a horse collar. The women do a good deal of outside work — some pretty heavy work, too.

Tuesday I went to Henedancourt about 60 kilometers from here to make a talk to American soldiers. The Foyer du Soldat is arranging talks by the Foyer workers among American soldiers to remove some misunderstandings of the Americans regarding the French. But when I got there I found they did not know anything about it and so I did not deliver my little speech.

You know it seems strange but the Americans appear rude after you have lived with the French. You get used to the politeness of the French and you miss it when you get away from it. I felt rather glad to get back again among my own boys here.

Tonight after dinner which consisted of soup, mutton stew with beans, salad, cake and coffee we sat and talked about the government of the United States and France and then about the war. We have two new officers new — Captain Santa-Maria and Lieutenant Billie and they never tire of talking about Verdun and the other battles of the war.

I have not been able to learn anything definite about my return. I want to return in May and the Regional Director wants me to stay until June or July.

The Frenchman, Martin, will return about the 24th and then I am going down to the South of France for 10 days. After my leave I do not expect to return to Thisancourt but will have a new assignment.

There are quite a number of German prisoners in the region. When I go to Neufchateau I see them at work on the roads and streets. Always under guard. They are fat and lazy — doing as little work as possible. It seems as though the Treaty of Peace will soon be ready. Everybody is getting anxious to get home. I rode into Mirecourt yesterday in a British truck and the Tommy was voicing the general sentiment. I think the U.S. boys are the grouchiest of all. The English and French are more easy going.

Affectionately, Ceylon