

## Phil Thoreson Writes from Germany

The editor is in receipt of the following letter from Philip Thoreson, under date of March 31st. As the Rainbow Division has been ordered home it is likely that Phil is now in this country, and will soon arrive home.

Sinzig, Germany, March 31, 1919

Dear Friend:

I should have written you long ago, thanking you for sending me your paper so regularly, but, as I have been hoping to have the opportunity to thank you personally, have been putting it off. Your paper has been coming to me regularly now over here for a year and a half. Sometimes my mail has been delayed, but waiting only made me more impatient for the paper, which, next to the letters from home, was most welcome.

We are now allowed to write anything we wish to the people back home, as the censorship has practically been lifted; so I will tell you some of the things I have experienced although it is impossible to express them properly on paper because I am no writer.

I was transferred to the 167th Inf., 42nd or Rainbow Division in January, 1918. I was placed in the Hdq. Co. in the one pounder or 37 m. m. platoon as it fit a heavy gun, and the gun crew must be, as our gun manual expresses it, "strong, well-built men, capable of serving the gun in any capacity, and able to carry the same with ease."

You may imagine my surprise and dismay after being received in the platoon, to be told that the gun was a mankiller, both for the boche, as well as the crew. After a short course at the school of fire, we joined our regiment and on Feb. 22, 1918, we had our first initiation under fire. We stayed up at the Lorraine sector which the French called a "Bon sector", for one hundred and ten days. Of course it was a quiet front as there was no advancing, and only an occasional raid from each side. It was up here that I was gassed one night while I was on patrol. But it is too long a story so that will have to keep.

On July 1st, we were relieved and were rushed up to the Champagne front to help stop the third German drive which was expected at any moment, and which was launched on the night of July 14-15.

Our casualties were quite heavy up here, the principal reason being that we were obliged to counter-attack and drive the Germans from our front line which they had captured with their fifth wave. The artillery fire from both sides was terrific, and at day-break the German aviators having control of the air on account of their superior numbers, caused quite a number of casualties by raking the open trenches with their machine guns and dropping their "eggs", as we call them.

In the meantime the Chateau Thierry drive had been started and we were rushed up to that front by train, the latter part of the distance by motor trucks, to help in the clearing of the salient. This was the worst battle I have ever participated in, and in this battle my platoon was cited by Headquarters for good work in exterminating machine gun nests.

On August 2nd, after ten days' fighting the 37 m. m. platoon was called up, and given orders to take their position upon Hill 212 (beyond Sergy) and exterminate the machine guns that were holding up the advance of our infantry. In that engagement we had all three guns put out of action but not, however, until we had put a number of machine guns and a still greater number of Germans 'hors de combat'. My gun was blown up by having the shell exploding in the barrel. The gun had been fired for so long that it was overheated and the heat of the barrel exploded the shell, tearing a large hole in the right side of the breach of the gun killing my loader instantly. (The loader lies on the right hand trail of the gun with his head beside the barrel. I was the gunner of the piece and lay on the left side of the gun and outside of the shock from the concus-

(Continued on last page.)