

## Another Letter from Phil Thoreson

The following items are taken from a letter from Philip Thoreson to his parents, and is dated Feb. 25, and written at headquarters of the Second Army in France.

It is now over a year since I left the states, and almost eighteen months since I left my home and you folks. In that interval I have had more experience, endured more hardships and have seen more of what can be called Hell on earth than I ever expect to see again. Some of it has been pretty easy and commonplace, sometimes humorous. There is a lot of my experiences in the front line that I want to forget. I wish I could see you folks so that I could tell you of all my experiences, but as it will be some time before that can be possible I will try to tell you of some of the places I have been in since my arrival in France.

We first went into the trenches the 21st of last February. After one hundred and ten days of that place (we were on the Lorraine front) we were sent to the Champagne front the last of June.

We hiked across the country and entered the trenches on the Champagne front and helped to stop the third German drive which started on July 14-15 at 12:15 o'clock.

From there we entrained and went directly to Chateau Thierry, where we hit the boche for an advance of twelve kilometers in four days fighting. We stayed in reserve for three days, being by the way under shell fire all the while, and went back again and resumed the drive.

You possibly have heard of our fight around Sergy and Hill 212, which changed hands nine times, by the way, before we held it.

After 14 days up in that place we came out and got three weeks' rest, the first rest, mind you, that we had since we entered the trenches in February—from the middle of February to the 13th of August without a rest. You can imagine how much we appreciated that rest, although it was the shortest three weeks that I have ever spent in my life. I got a pass to Paris, too, about which I will tell you later.

From our rest camp we went to the Toul sector where we participated in the St. Mihiel drive, the first all-American drive since the United States entered the war.

Got through the drive all right, but the old Spanish flu got me, caused from sleeping in shell holes and on the wet ground without any blankets. Well, I was pretty sick for a while but I pulled through in good shape in three weeks. From the hospital I went to the replacement camp, from where I was transferred to the motor section, Headquarters Second Army where I am now working.

I have seen and experienced so many things, have had many narrow escapes and the only reason that I can figure I am alive is that the good Lord has decided that I was not to be killed in this war.

When I first came over I did not think I would be capable of killing a man even if he was a German. But when I came up against them, saw their work, what they had done to women and little children, saw what they did to my friends when they caught them, my view changed and it seemed as if killing was only something like putting some loathsome creature out of existence.

Well, it is all over, or practically over, and I believe that it is going to have a good effect on us all. We will be coming back better men for what we have gone through has made us appreciate a good home, a mother and a father, I certainly am waiting to come home because a real home made meal is one of the best things I could wish for just now.