



AMERICAN RED CROSS.

At Last  
Oct. 24, 1918

Mother dear:

We're here in [redacted] after so many months of anxious [redacted] I can't say just when we came over, but believe me, it was some trip. Had about twelve hours notice, in which to prepare, and believe me, we made some preparation too. I got a hair cut, and clean shave, on the night before. Rolled up my equipment, and <sup>had</sup> everything in readiness for an early start. However, we had breakfast, at the usual time, next morning, and after a few final touches, ate an early dinner, drew our traveling rations, and slung packs. And oh what packs; Gee! mine was not quite as heavy as myself, but even without the odds, it came near getting the best of me. When the whistle blew, the band came out



to give us a send off. Good band too!  
Among the numbers played, was the  
old "stand by Our Director". Right  
away, I was back behind the old  
M. C. F. B., swinging along with the  
Cadets. You can't imagine how that  
music tended to lighten our burden.  
We had quite a hike, and were  
brought to our senses when the band  
would stop, and the pack would  
start tugging away at those  
shoulder straps. Don't know just  
how far we had to hike, but it  
seemed miles to me. A short ride  
on the railroad brought us to  
our port of "Debarcation", and we  
were dumped out on the dock. No  
[redacted] waited for us this time,  
on our second "overseas" voyage.  
Instead, we had a [redacted]  
similar to those in [redacted]

[redacted] It seems that  
we were holding up the trip, for  
as soon as we got aboard, and had  
our life belts adjusted, the boat moved  
out, and slowly, but steadily, into  
a heavy fog, slipped the faint





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out line of "Merry England." "Whit" and I, once more together, sat on the very extreme stern and kicked our heels over the railing at casual passing craft, until, darkness and fog completely enveloped them. Then I went below and ate part of my ration. Savingsome, for another time. When I came out on deck again, it was so dark that I could not locate "Whit," so went up forward, and joined another party. All lights were out, on deck, and the boat was beginning to roll so that strolling about was quite a problem. Once more, we went below, and this time I met Bob Lawson, who by some stroke of good fortune, (and eight shillings) had come into possession of a box of good chocolates. We squatted down, on the floor, deck, I should say, and proceeded to put them away. They were fine, and before long, we were both "snoozing" soundly, with the back part of our life belt, for a pillow.



Something woke me up, suddenly, maybe it was a passing foot, but I don't know, and I thought of my air pillow. Right away, I started to dig it out of my pack, when the corporal of the guard spied me, and asked to take <sup>the</sup> place of one of the boys who was seasick. I went, and was posted at the top of the companion-way, to keep a passage open. Talk about your fun? Holy scissors! I suppose it was mean, to laugh, but I had to. To be wary some of those "land lubbers" came up the stairs, was a joke. One hand over their mouth, and the other on the rail, three steps at a time, was the coverage. For two hours and a half, I helped, and pushed them out, as the case required. Sometimes that boat was on one side, then on the other, (as was I) Gee! but she did pitch. When I was relieved, I went out on the bow, for a little rest. It was too stuffy, down on our deck. Anyway, when I thought the worst was over, I picked a coil of rope, pretty well forward and dropped in for a few weeks. Just as I was



\$ 1861-R A. D. Stevens.



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beginning to saw wood, we caught a big one. Some of the boys around got wet, but I just caught a little spray. We all laughed, and settled back, thinking that it was just a "stray one." No one said anything, we were all thinking. Suddenly a light one rolled over, and we got some more. At this, someone suggested that we move, but I said no, let's wait, and see if we get another. It was great, laying up there. One minute you would be almost standing on your feet, and next, on your head. Finally she dipped deep into a big roller, and "good night," we got all we wanted, <sup>and more</sup> below to throw out. Gosh! but some of those boys were sick. One fellow said, "Oh! for a submarine," then ran for the rail. I took off my coat and belts and dropped on the deck and slept for one hour and a



half. Then a whistle blew, and I woke up, looked at my watch, and found it not yet two o'clock. Well, I was not the only one who woke up, and there was quite a commotion. Further sleep was out of the question. The cooks were making coffee, and we started to get ready for breakfast. Now another gaward got sick and I took his place. At about eight o'clock we were on the road. Those packs got damn heavy, this time and we had to halt, for a rest. We had no band, but it did not matter. "We were in France," and on our way, further. We are now in a camp, for a while, not for long, I hope, for the quicker we get into action, the sooner we will be satisfied.

You will have to pardon the appearance of this letter, for I am sitting on a real sand bag, writing on my knee.

With love and best wishes to all,  
I remain your loving son,

W. H. Ham  
R. H. Ham

Richard.

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