

On Active Service with the
American Expeditionary Force

June 19, 1918

My dearest Folks:-

Yesterday I sent the telegram, telling of Artie's heroic death. He volunteered to go to the front line to bring in a wounded man. While there he was struck by shrapnel about the legs and back. This was Sunday morning early. He died in the afternoon about four o'clock. He suffered very little but his strength gradually left him. After repeating the Lord's Prayer to the Chaplain, his spirit joined little John's on the right hand of God. While he was lying wounded he insisted on giving his chance to be carried out to another fellow, who was more severely wounded. Perhaps this delay cost him his life; The motive was the same at any rate. "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for another." I did not see him before he died but I have talked with all who did. All say he suffered hardly at all.

Yesterday I went to his grave on the outskirts of Toul. It is a beautiful spot, right at the edge of the forest, safe from all depredation. His body will rest there until after the war when it will be sent to us in America. It is an American yard. The grave is buried from the abundance of flowers. No death in the regiment has called forth such concern.

I was allowed to take what I wished from his personal things; the remainder will be sent to you. I took the pen, lighter and pictures of you folks. I will send the contents of his barrack bag sometime later.

Everybody has been very kind to me. The officers are as considerate as I could wish. You may rest assured if any furloughs are given home, I will be among the first for the sake of you folks.

Now, dear Ma, and dear ^{Sister} Dace, no bitterness, only pride. That you have had a son and a brother who was not afraid to die. You, dear Dad, and you, ^{Brother} Johnny, will not be cast down. For a few years his presence has been taken from us but his memory will tide us over that brief gap until we shall meet in our Father's Home.

I have not wept a tear. I am filled with pride that I am a brother of such a hero. I lay down to sleep in my little tent with my comrades at night and I am conscious of God's presence. I feel that Art sees me always and approves as I go on my way with my head high without a downcast countenance. We will have some pictures of the grave taken.

May God comfort you as He has me and may your return letters be without bitterness or pity but just pride and love.

With a son's and a brother's love,

Raymond.

R.W. Stowell,
103 U.S. Inf.
Med. Dept., A.E.F.

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