



39 St. Michael  
Battle

Sept. 19, 1918

Dear Mother:-

After another long wait mail has arrived and I received your two letters of Aug 26 and Ba's postal all of which contained the welcome news that you were taking a vacation. I am glad of that for it will do you both good and also glad you got mine of July 29th telling about going back to billets so you won't be worrying about me while you are away. Well we did get back to billets as the later letters you probably got while away will show but good things never last and we have been living in woods for two weeks or more and I haven't had much chance to write and could not tell where I was or what I was doing.

Well we've been in and out of another drive  
and had more fun than anytime since we've  
been over here. The first day we were in  
reserve but that night they got the Huns  
going to the rear double time and we were  
called up to chase them and it was some  
chase. It had been raining steadily for a  
week and we hadn't been able to sleep very  
well on the ground as everything was damp  
and ~~cold~~ cold and we were tired when we  
started. We could see the sky all red in  
the distance and knew that as usual  
they were burning everything as they went.  
Well we started out up the road after them.  
My platoon acted as advance guard for  
the regiment and ~~we~~ went some distance  
ahead of the main body. We walked and  
walked and walked some more. The road  
went through the woods most all the way  
and we had to watch out that we didn't



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walk into a trap. But I guess they were thinking more of getting away than setting traps. We passed two abandoned auto trucks first then some distance more and we came upon four more. As we approached six Boche jumped out and ran into the woods and we kept going. We heard afterwards that men in the rear caught them. We walked five or six hours and didn't catch up to anyone and it was getting along towards two o'clock in the morning. We had been going up hill for some time and at last came to the crest and about half a mile ahead was a town all ablaze. We skirmished out and approached it. We were on a high ridge and could see for miles.

on each side and as far as we could see was  
a line of burning villages. It was certainly  
a pretty sight but it was too bad to destroy  
all those villages but that is the way of  
the Boche. Well we got to the village and  
found not a soul. It was quite cold and  
we stood around awhile and warmed ourselves  
at different fires. Then we started out again  
after a short rest and went down the hill  
towards a burning village on the right. We  
stopped about a hundred yards away and an  
officer and five men entered the village to  
reconnoitre. We were dead tired and most of  
us went to sleep. Some time later the patrol  
returned and reported that the place was deserted.  
We started to enter half asleep and then  
something happened that made us all forget  
that we were tired — something that made us  
go without sleep for quite a few hours more and



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not mind it. Some officers went first on horse back and just as we were getting inside the village one of them came riding back yelling "Come on quick, double time everybody!" We ran forward up the street, turned a corner and there with five or six men holding them up were a couple of hundred Boche with their hands up in the air. "Come on" some one yelled, and we'll get a whole wagon train. All F Company came up on the double quick and in half a minute we had them all surrounded - about two hundred men and a whole bunch of wagons piled high with stuff. It was more like a wild and wooly moving picture than

anything else. There was a long street with  
long lines of two and three story houses going  
up in smoke and in the middle of the  
street all those Poche scared to death and  
with their hands up in the air and our fellows  
acting like wild Indians pounding them  
up. All the fellows say they had the time  
of their lives. We marched them all down to  
a building that wasn't burning and turned  
them in 2 172 in the first bunch. Then we  
started out in small bunches to scour the town.  
We entered all the houses which were not  
burning (about half were not) and found a lot  
more hiding, under beds and some in bed  
pretending they were asleep. We kept finding  
more and more until the whole village had  
been thoroughly searched. We got about three  
hundred altogether including a band who had  
all their instruments with them, base drum  
and all. They seemed perfectly willing to



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surrender and we got the whole bunch without losing a man. By the time they were all rounded up it was daylight and then we started out hunting for souvenirs etc. The town, we discovered when it was light, was one we used to see from our trenches on the Boil front. It was one I used to watch while on the observation post job. We had come in on an angle and cut off the retreat of a large number of troops by meeting our forces who came in on the other side. That is how we got the wagon train. They were just going through the town to go to the rear when we entered from the side and got them. We found ourselves in back of Mont Sec by several miles a place which

while we were in the trenches at Leicheprey  
we thought would never be taken except with  
a big loss of life and much fighting. And  
here we were in back of it with hundreds of  
prisoners immense quantities of all sorts  
of supplies and materials and hadn't lost  
a man. You should have seen the way they  
had that town fixed up. They were certainly  
living a life of comfort and ease. All the  
houses were fixed up for the men and the officers  
were living in the larger & better houses with  
big beds, fine furniture, pianos and all the  
comforts of home and none of the expenses.  
Our cooks got a lot of potatoes, turnips, sugar,  
rice and tea. You know I never liked tea.  
Well we had it for breakfast yesterday  
morning and I drank three cups of it &  
our mess cups are no dainty affairs but hold  
about a pint. It was certainly good tea. One



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of our cooks (who used to work in the Hfd Market) said it was the best tea you could buy and said it would bring \$5.00 a pd. in the States. I don't know where the Dodge got it but we enjoyed it anyway. We had soup also yesterday noon made of captured turnips and cabbage. I had a good feed of nice ripe tomatoes another fellow and I found in one house. And the salt was right on the table waiting for us. We got a lot of good horses too all of which are working for the W. S. now. All the fellows loaded up with souvenirs which they are already starting to get rid of. Souvenirs are nice but are a nuisance to carry. The rest of our regiment scattered over the surrounding country and I ~~got~~ guess we got about 5000.

prisoners in our ~~the~~ regiment alone. We certainly had a great time and all our tiredness disappeared until it was all over and then it was ~~dark~~ daylight and I slept about two hours and then it was dinner time and I got up and didn't feel sleepy enough to go to bed again until that

night but there are a long bunch of letters going through to day as no one has written in some time so I've got to have pity on the censor. I'll tell you more about it next time I write. We're not doing anything now - just eating & sleeping and I'm feeling fine. The rain has quit and we've had sun for a week almost. Well I was glad to hear you were away & before I'll be getting ~~more~~ mail soon. Well goodby for now - will write soon again.

As ever

You loving son

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. M. S. Clark H. A. Charles