

France; Sept 14, 1918

Dear Grandmother,

I wonder if you are still home in Bakerville you said in your letter you were going to stay there this summer, I suppose summer will be gone when you receive this. We think it has left us here for the nights are chilly and damp.

Still it is fine weather for my job of "odd ing" which keeps me outside all the time.

We have been able to see what war does to a country. The characteristic rectangular patches of woods are

well cut up by the shell fire
the fields that suffered barrage
fire are spotted with shell holes
every five yards and closer and
strewn with unexploded shells.

These are marked with red
flags on a stick till they can
be gathered up and exploded.

Most of the villages on the
former Norman's Land are ruined
tho not obliterated in this sector
and this all done in only two
months occupation by the German
and one fighting over.

Yet the inhabitants come back
as soon as the authorities will
allow to set up housekeeping in
the ruins. They tack up a blan-
ket over the broken windows of
some lucky house that still

possesses a second floor to serve
as a roof, and move in. You can
see them out hacking down
the overripe wheat and dried
up hay with their old-fashion-

ed scythe. There are many Ame-
rican reaping machines but
no horses to pull them, sometimes

they use big white bulls or
even the family cow, in a pinch.

Some of the big farms have ten
or a dozen German prisoners
to help with the harvesting.

They are well treated as far as
I can see and do not work

any harder than the French
with them. There are numerous

small graves of course, along
the roadside, up the back lanes

or by the side of the streams,

in a convenient shell-hole or
on the top of a bald hill -
wherever they happened to fall.
Many are marked

"Soldat Francais Inconnu"
(unknown French soldier) or
"Soldat Allemand Inconnu",
usually the soldier's helmet
is lying on the mound and
his bayonet is stuck up in
front of the black cross.

When the names are known,
the French letter the cross
and, in addition stick up
a bottle by the neck with
this duplicate information
inside on a piece of paper.

All this seems prosy and
common place for a letter but
it is necessary to write of
something and as yet, I