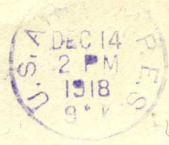


Henry F. Cleman
Chaplain
Mobile Hospital #1



Mr. D. D. Drapnell
601 W. 169 St
New York
N.Y. U.S.A.



No! I didn't leave any trouble about baggage coming over & leave
not done any more of the fool tricks I did!

Mobile Hospital # 1.

Dec. 10 - 1918

My dear Edna:

I expect you think I am
mean not to have written for so long
but I expect Nell has kept you occasionally
posted as in several of her letters
she has said 'I have written to Edna'. I
received your very interesting letter of
Sept. 22nd after I left Beauvois &
joined this outfit & life has been so
strenuous & such a rush since that
I didn't even attempt to write any
personal letters except to Nell. I wish
I could write you a long letter & tell you
the many things I have seen & experiences
I have been through but can only send a
short one this time for while we are
not busy just at this time yet conditions
of living make it difficult to write.
I am in my tent with one wee candle
for light & my ever ready knee is my

usual writing table. I saw much
of interest around Montdidier when I
had headquarters at Beauvais but it
was quiet there compared to what it
has been here. About Oct 1st I had a
wire to report to Paris immediately &
on arrival there was assigned to Mobile
Hospital #1 & told to take train to Par-
le Duc & find the outfit from there.
I expected to be several days finding
it as it was just back of the fighting
front at Verdun but located it & arrived
bag & baggage that night, a very fortunate
& thankful man. Mobile #1 is entirely in
tents & moves with the battle front & receives
only the worst wounded cases which
cannot be moved back further. When
there was a drive on there would be a
constant stream day & night, we would
operate & as soon as possible pass them
on back to an evacuation hospital, the
last month of the war we operated 1077
cases & I had 227 burials, this will give
you some idea. We were & are yet constantly

in mud & rain, we waded in mud
sleep in mud, eat in mud there is
no escape. We were always within range
of the enemy guns & frequently
shelled & bombed but our work went
quietly & incessantly on regardless of
danger or inconvenience, our ~~Base~~ ^{Base} ~~Boys~~ ^{Boys}
were coming back in need & the
Drs & nurses stuck to their job as long
as there was the need, I was in Verdun
one day while it was being shelled
& one of the big fellows broke right
over my head, I heard the whine
but before I could think to duck it had
exploded & the shrapnel was pattering
down around me but my name
wasn't on it & it didn't touch me
Two days after we moved from that
location it was shelled & the outfit
that followed us there had a number
of their personnel killed & wounded, we
were very fortunate to get through with
out any casualties. Mail was just brought

in & I drew four letters, two from
Hell, Nov. 10th the last & one from a poor
little woman in Austin, Texas, the wife of
a Capt. Moore, whose husband I buried Oct 16th
& I wrote her, it was her only notice & her
letter is just heart breaking. We were at
the foot of Dead Man's Hill & the famous Hill
304 when the end came, that is a desolate
& God forsaken country, I never saw a
place so torn up, we later moved up
near Dun & as I went over the battle
field we saw most awful sights, many
of our own boys, as well as Coche, were
lying unburied where they had fallen two
& three weeks before, some bodies only in
part & no possible way of identification
I buried all we found. We are now near
what was the town of Varennes, a railhead,
awaiting orders to retrain for Germany, it
is raining hard. I just looked at my bed
& found a nice puddle of water on my
pillow & elsewhere & have moved to what I
hope may be free from deluge. I am well &
feeling fine & notwithstanding inconveniences am
glad to be at the front as long as I have to be over
here. Did Tom get over? Love to all. Don't know
when I'll get home. Hope to see you in N.Y. when I come.
Am delighted to hear if you can find time to write. Tell Val to
word hard at school & see how much she will know when I see her next.
affectionately Harry.