

Letter, Harry S. Truman to Mary Ethel Noland, March 25, 1919.  
Correspondence File, Noland Papers.

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DISTRICT OF PARIS  
AMERICAN OFFICERS' HOTEL  
(HOTEL DU LOUVRE)

AUTHORIZED BY  
THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF A. E. F.

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Dear Ethel:-

You fine and highly appreciated letter came a few days ago and I as usual was most happy to hear from you. I am in Paris - on business, strictly business for the regiment, which I hear is not so important but I'll see a few things and hear a few more. Tried to go to the Opera Comique a while ago where they are playing Carmen but the ticket man said finish on tickets so I went to Pathe Bros picture palace. It's not as fine as the Royal for all its in Paris and is supposed to be something extraordinary in picture show houses. They had Pathe's usual weekly and then a French reel with a plot about

② like "Nereu Again" Remember "Nereu Again"

I had to work some rabbits foot to get up here. We are stationed at Le Mans and are expecting to go home very shortly now, say about April 15 if there is no ship and I earnestly hope there won't be. Several officers of the regiment have trunks stored at the American Express Co here, among them myself. I also have a bank account there in fact two of my own for myself and one for my battery. With French thoroughness and inability to understand the English language and American banking methods they succeeded in searching the two accounts until a Philadelphia lawyer could do <sup>well</sup> whose money was which. There is an A.E.F. order to the effect that all officers whose Battery Funds are not correct and ship

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shape to the penny or the centime will  
be hooked at the boat and left on this  
side, until matters are straightened  
out. I stated my case to the Colonel  
and he sent me after the baggage and  
left let me bring three of my sergeants  
along to help. There are 114 trunks so  
you see I needed lots of help. I let  
them draw for the chance to come and  
just to prove to you that my battery's  
not all Irish I'll name the three  
that won - Cheney, Tierney & Seiben.  
There was much waiting among those  
who had to stay in Le Mans. I spent  
yesterday straightening out my accounts  
and several other battery comrades,  
paying storage on trunks, hunting up  
lost ones etc. Today being Sunday I took

my sergeants sight seeing. They pretended to be very interested in the various sights especially Notre Dame and Napoleon's tomb but I think the pretty girls looked better to them than any sight.

Notre Dame is very grand and impressive. We looked on the place where Robespierre set up the Goddess of Reason where Napoleon & Josephine were crowned and where all the Bishops & Archbishops of Paris are buried. They have the hats of the three Archbishops of Paris who were beheaded in the Revolution hanging over the great altar. There is another beautiful church called the Madeleine that is an exact copy of the Pantheon. It also was erected to the Goddess of Reason but was turned into a Catholic Church by Napoleon I think. It is very beautiful inside and out. Napoleon's tomb at the Hotel d'Invalides is to me the most interesting place in Paris. There is more things there to see than any where else except the Louvre and there is

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no use starting in the Louvre unless  
you can stay three weeks. I saw  
serious articles of apparel and horse  
equipment that belonged to the Great  
Emperor and also his tomb. Before  
Napoleon here it was covered up with  
sand bags. His sarcophagus is of red  
granite and is very beautiful. It is  
in a niche below the level of the floor  
and is under a great golden dome.  
The building itself is as large as a church  
and is simply magnificent. It is done  
in Corinthian architecture and con-  
tains the sarcophagi of Jerome + Joseph  
Bonaparte as well as Marshall Lannes  
and Kantan Kantan's a new one on me  
I don't know who he was. Evidently  
some large ~~homme~~ homme de terre though to be

planted in the company he is.) We also went to the Pantheon de la Guerre a great painting commemorating the war just past. It is some forty or fifty feet high and extends around the inside of a circular building about 100 feet in diameter. It shows in the back ground all the battle fields of France from the Belgian coast to the Vosges.

There are life sized pictures of the principal men of each country arranged in separate groups around the wall in the foreground. In ours of course the main guy is Woodrow, with Josephus Newton D. Gen Pershing, Admiral Sims and various others whom I didn't know. The British have George V and the cute little Prince of Wales, Lloyd George, Marshall Haig, Admiral Beatty etc etc. It takes a whole set of stairs to show the French. There must be a thousand of em. I guess people will come from the ends

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of the earth to see it when the tourist traffic is resumed. Something has to be done to get American money after we leave. I don't blame the French for bleeding us a little they certainly bled on the field of battle for the rest of the world so why should we squawk over a few paltry dollars. When you consider that France had as many men killed at Verdun and Chemin des Dames as we ever had on the front you can see what she's suffered. France lost in battle 1,600,000 killed - we lost 48,000 and then we think we've been to war! I know of one British battalion of artillery consisting of 600 men. That battalion has had 3800 casualties. You know our Army of Occupation is going home

German sympathisers because they<sup>8</sup>  
are all getting feather beds up there  
in the conquered Hueland and pie and  
the fat of the land, while in France they  
lived in towns and extras were scarce.  
But French soldiers lived in towns and  
when you hear talk of the French rai-  
sing up prices on us so did our own  
patriotic citizens at Lawton and  
~~Lawton~~ (New York). It's a pathetic situation  
that humans can forget the awful  
cruelty of the Hun toward the Belgians  
and the French, forget the Lusitania  
and hundreds of more like her forget  
the ruthless destruction of Lorraine  
Rheims, Verdun and remember only  
that they gave us feather beds to sleep in  
(because they had to) and did it raise  
the price on us (because they dare not).  
I'm afraid that that is what is going to  
happen because the American loses  
his stomach and his couch above

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all things else.

You asked me about some re-ports of Ralph published in the Star. I am very sorry that Ralph sent those reports. He has made himself ridiculous from a military standpoint and I fear has not stuck strictly to the facts. The artillery preparation for the Argonne drive was the most intense and effective one ever sent over in the war. There were more guns employed than were ever used in any artillery preparation. Our own Brigade fired 37033 shells the first day and nearly as many every day after that. When Ralph says that our artillery fired on him he is not stating facts because when his report came back immediate investigation was

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made and our artillery had not  
fired in the direction indicated by him  
for more than two hours previous to the  
time he stated he'd been fired on. An  
inpatient man can't tell where artillery  
fire is coming from. When he's going  
forward and the Hun gets his range  
he's always sure his own artillery  
is shooting him up. My battery was the  
forward battery on the 27<sup>th</sup> and E + T was  
nearly as far up. I was personally in  
the front line and directed the fire  
of my battery on a German battery  
and a German observation post. The  
other two batteries fired on machine gun  
nests and on Charenty. We did every  
thing that could be expected of us and  
were advanced ahead of the artillery  
on either side of us. My battery was only  
500 meters from the line on the night  
when it went into position the first  
day. We expected nothing else but to be

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captured or blown to pieces. When the  
Germans put on their counter at-  
tack on the third day our regiment  
and the 128<sup>th</sup> laid down such a barrage  
on them that they went back in a  
hurry and we did it time after time.  
Now get this - An Infantry Brigade  
Commander - a General of infantry  
who was watching German counter  
attack told our Artillery General  
that the German counter attack  
was a whiz but their artillery  
barrage fell short and bursted them  
up. It was our barrage falling  
long and when we wanted it to  
fall. That goes to show you what an  
infantryman knows of his supporting

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arm. If a General knows no more  
than that what can you expect of  
a mere Captain and operations officer,  
although he is my cousin.

Here is the situation. It was the  
biggest battle ever pulled off by any  
army anywhere. Mistakes were made  
as they always are in every battle  
but the object was accomplished - we  
licked the Hun to a stand still got  
to our objective and held it. Kept on  
going and made the Germans holler  
enough. Maybe we were short of horses,  
maybe the infantry officers could not  
read a map and get lost in the fog  
and foyretted one another a little but  
the victory was won - the war was  
won so why does any Y.M.C.A. peanut  
politician have the right to say that  
an arm of service of which he knows  
nothing was incompetent. Three  
Division Commanders have told us



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we're all right and General Pershing himself told us so. The infantry made as many and greater mistakes than any other <sup>army</sup> ~~other~~, but we admire them for winning in spite of their errors. Every Division in the drive had as many or more killed than we did but you don't hear any yapping because they're lucky enough not to lose any Y.M.C.A. governors. Just take our cousin's remarks with a grain of salt and remember that he couldn't see but one very narrow piece of the front. Remember that the object of the drive was attained, that the commanding general of the Division said his artillery was efficient, that the commanding general of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division who refused

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the 35<sup>th</sup> said it was efficient, and they surely ought to be qualified to say. They're not running for office neither are they after any cheap notoriety. I might also say that the commanding general of the 81<sup>st</sup> Division whom we supported in the last offensive of the war said that we were efficient. I know that my battery shot where it was told to because I observed a great deal of my fire and I am the poorest and about the least experienced battery commander in the Brigade therefore I have reason to believe that every other battery did as well or better than mine. We all think its mighty oney of the Star to pick on its own home town regiment that did its damndest and did it well. It seems to us that they should at least keep still if they're not proud of us. You know the Star was always sore at us because we were whiteies. Their pet 89<sup>th</sup> never got in to the lime light so they thought they'd be-

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squish our reputation and I guess they're happy. But there's a day of reckoning coming.

Pete Allen has been sent to the regulars, 4th Division. We look for Saturday to leave any day. Major Gates is a Lt Colonel and we hope will take the regiment home. Lt. Col Elliott took Bourlands body home. I guess he and Klemm are to the home by now. Capt Thacker is now Major Thacker in the Ammunition Train.

Remember me to all the family and write when you can to

Yours sincerely  
Harry Truman  
Capt 89th 129 Pa  
American E.F.