

Near Verdun  
Camp La Bahalle  
Dec. 14, 1918

Dear Bessie-

It is a dark unwholesome French day and I am frankly homesick and very very lonesome. Christmas is approaching and I can't possibly see those I want to and I do so wish I could. I can't even send you a present that I'm sure you'll get, not even a cablegram. This desolate place is about seven kilometers from Verdun in a patch of woods. The sun hasn't shown in I don't know how many days now does it look as if it even intended to shine again.

I guess it will though and I know it's shining in USA and at Nice.

I am so glad you are a general. I shall  
always expect you to outrank me in our  
household and there is never any pos-  
sibility of my ever being anything in the  
military line beyond a Captain, although  
had the war continued, which God  
forbid, I should eventually have had an-  
other promotion. You tell Geo Fred and  
May that I would have appreciated  
the major leaves and the compliment  
very highly but I'd never have worn  
them. All promotions ceased in the  
A.E.F. on Nov. 11, 1918 the greatest day in  
history. Personally I'd rather be a Battery  
Commander than a Brigadier General. I am  
virtually the dictator of the actions of 194  
men and if I succeed in making them  
work as one, keep them healthy morally

physically, make <sup>love</sup> unite to the mammals and sweet  
hearts and bring 'em all home. I shall be as nearly  
pleased with myself as I ever expect to be until  
the one great event of my life is pulled off which  
I am fondly hoping will take place immediately  
on my having believed that 194 men in U.S.A.  
You'll have to take a leading part in that event you  
know and then for one great future. I've al-  
most come to the conclusion that it's not  
intended for me ever to be very rich nor very  
poor and I am about convinced that that will  
be about the happiest state a man can be. To  
have the finest girl in all the whole world (and  
I make the statement without fear of contradiction)  
to share my joys and troubles, mostly joys I'm

hoping, to have just enough of this world's goods  
to make it pleasant to try for more, to own a  
Ford and to own the U.S.A. and France perhaps, al-  
though I've nearly promised old Miss Liberty that  
she'll have to turn around to see me again, and  
still have a nice little country home to be  
comfortable in - well that's really not a bad  
future to contemplate. Maybe lose a little  
politics and some nice little dinner parties oc-  
casionally just for good measure. How does it  
sound to you? Just its contemplation has al-  
most cured me of the blues.

You know when I was a kid say about 13 or 14  
I was a tremendous reader of heavy literature  
like Homer, Abbot's Lives, Livy, Tacitus, Isiah, and

the enemies of Napoleon Bonapart.  
Then it was my ambition to make  
Napoleon look like a sucker and I  
thirsted for a West Point education  
so I could be one of the oppressors as  
the kid said when asked why he wanted  
to go there. You'd never guess why I  
had such a wild desire and you'll  
laugh when I tell you. It was only  
so you could be the leading lady of  
the palace or empire and whatever  
it was I wanted to build. You may  
not believe it but my notion as to  
who is the best girl in the world has  
never changed and my military am-  
bition has ended by being snubbed at  
the post of centurion. And that's a  
big way from Caesar isn't it?

Now I want to be a farmer. Can you  
beat it? I'm hoping you'll like the rub  
just as well as you would have  
the Napoleon. I'm sure the farmer will  
be the happier.

Today was our regular inspection  
day and I had to inspect Pete's battery  
and Salisbury inspected mine. Pete  
looked over Salisbury's. The Chief Quilla  
gave me a very nice clean bill of  
health and of course I give Pete one.  
You've no idea how scared some of  
these men get when a Captain stops  
in the inspecting process and asks  
him a question. Most of 'em would  
rather go over the top than talk on in-  
spection day. I used to be that way  
myself but since I've got to the



point where I do the questioning it seems real funny and I can't understand why I was ever afraid. I asked one man in line why he had no pistol and he swallowed about three times and finally succeeded in saying No, sir! I found out that he was a replacement from the S. Q. S. and he'd been told that all the Captains of our Bata were hard boiled cookies and he'd better step straight. My Irish are n't afraid of me nor the Colonel either. In fact they some times are very nearly disrespectful to him when he acts ludicrously they laugh at him. I rather admire em for it.

You are probably tired stiff by this time

but I am writing you just as I feel today I do wish I could see you Christmas day. I'll be thinking of you as I usually am any way. I hope to have a better present for you next Christmas than the one I tried to send you this one. Keep on writing to one who thinks of you Always

Harry Truman

Capt 129FA

American ET

France.