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Letter #53 from Bob Jones to His Parents

Bob Jones

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Tuesday, ^{Nov.} Oct 20
Weisbaden

Dear Mom and Dad,

You may have received my post card (#52) from Paris but if not I'll let you know that I was there for three whole days! And believe me it is everything they say it is. I've been looking forward to seeing the city for a long time and have been building up a glowing expectation about it from reports of others who visited it and I wasn't in the least bit disappointed.

I took five rolls of pictures with my new camera and should have them printed and ready before long. I'll leave all the detailed descriptions until I can send you the fix.

Of the two disappointments I did have, this was the worst. I had hoped to call you by transatlantic telephone but

a few days before we went the service was discontinued. Now it has started up again yesterday - a day after we left Paris! Maybe I'll get another chance. The other disappointment was in not going up into the Eifel Tower; it was closed for repairs.

The trip started Wednesday afternoon. There were four of us leaving from the battalion. Leo Walker (my roommate), Gene Wayhen from Co B and Audrie Kirby from Co D. We had all kinds of difficulty finding the truck that was to take us to the railroad station in Frankfurt. Then we had more trouble finding the station with the result that we arrived almost an hour after our train had left. However we were very fortunate in getting some unclaimed reservations on a later, priority train. It left Frankfurt three hours after the leave train

that we were supposed to catch but was an express and got to Paris three hours before the leave train! An extra added attraction was a dining car in which we ate supper and breakfast. We had a second class compartment which is comfortable (heated) for sitting up though not so good for sleeping. However, we got along quite well and arrived in Paris Thursday morning not too worn out. We went to the Red Cross headquarters and were assigned a leave hotel. André, one of the four of us, is a native of Chantilly, a suburb of Paris, so he knew which hotel to ask for - and did - and got it. We stayed at the Hôtel de Paris, now known as the Rainbow Corner Red Cross Club. It ^{is} was the best leave hotel

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in the city. We got a single room for four with bath. We ate at a GI mess in the hotel and though the food wasn't bad, it wasn't much better than any other GI mess.

Thursday afternoon Leo and I started our sightseeing by taking in the Louvre. It is now practically empty compared with what it was before the war, of course. But we did find enough to keep us occupied for the afternoon. Among the paintings we saw were the Mona Lisa, Whistler's Mother, and a couple of Rembrandt's that I remember seeing before. All in all there were about three rooms of paintings. In the sculpture section we saw, among others, Winged Victory and Venus de Milo.

On Friday we took a two-hour conducted tour in the morning and then

started back over the route in the afternoon. We got to see only the Arc de Triomphe and the Trocadéro that afternoon, though. At the Trocadéro there are two large twin buildings, known as the Palais de Chaillot. It was built for the 1937 Exposition and has remained as a National Museum. We spent a couple of hours wandering through there.

On Saturday we visited the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on top of Montmartre, the highest hill in Paris. It is truly a beautiful church, Catholic of course; it stands out gleaming white over the city. We went up into the dome and looked out for several miles over the city, though it was too foggy to see very far.

On Saturday afternoon we tried unsuccessfully to go up in the Eifel

Tower. We also visited Napoleon's tomb at the Hôtel des Invalides, an ancient Napoleonic military hospital. We saw the Military School, walked through the Latin Quarter and took some pictures of the Notre-Dame. That is an impressive sight though not much bigger than several cathedrals I've seen in Reims, Metz, Soissons, and other towns, it is remarkably well-preserved and it wears its age well. The three ^{large} rose windows are still in storage but there are enough small ones and newer ones to lend much beauty to the interior.

That about ended our tour. We did walk around the street somewhat just to see the modern city. I took some pictures of some of the latest hats - in the shop windows. I'm sure you will want to copy

them so I'll send you the snafu.

Sunday we started back by train at 11:30 in the afternoon and were on the blamed thing till 11:30 next morning, a very slow trip. It took us four hours to hitch-hike from Frankfurt to here so we got in late in the afternoon yesterday and were pretty tired out. But, in spite of the lousy travel conditions, I'd go again on a moment's notice. It was well worth while.

The Watts' package came today - contained three boxes of cookies, candy, and a couple of pocket books. Sometimes when you get a chance, can you slip in some crackers - sunshins or Ritz or the like - something on which to eat the cheese and meat spread and sardines you and others have sent. Thanks. Box #6 not arrived yet.

Love,
Bob.