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**Letter from Ceylon Kingston to his mother, dated January 17,
1919**

Ceylon S. Kingston

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My dear Mother:

Nothing out of the ordinary has happened since I last wrote which was last week. I went to Neufchateau Sunday and returned Monday. I bought some things that I needed at the commissary there.

I have only received the one letter yet. I am looking for a second every day. I think letters go more quickly to the States than they come here. I wrote a note to Ed Bent 50 days ago. I received a letter in reply today which was written 29 days ago. I hope your service is better than what it is this way. Everybody says the French Civil post is quicker than the American. If I was living where the American post office has branch I would have to use it. But here I have the privileges of the French service. If there is any censoring they attend to that but they seem to pay little attention to that.

There is no post office here but a French rural carrier comes out every morning from Mirecour and delivers the mail and collects it.

You might be interested in hearing about our meals. The French have a very light breakfast — coffee or chocolate and toast and then at eleven or twelve they have a hearty meal and another hearty meal in the evening. Since I have been here I have not eaten the breakfast as the midday meal comes at eleven and on days when they go to the rifle range at 10 or 10:30 I have a better appetite if I do not eat in the morning. Then the evening meal is served at six o'clock. This arrangement suits me first rate.

At these meals either a soup or salad is first served followed by courses of meats and vegetables, cheese, sometimes a desert and a cup of black coffee at the end. Cheese of the Camembert sort — a soft rich cheese that will spread on bread. Sometimes Swiss cheese is served which is more like what you are used to.

One thing that has surprised me is the amount of meat that is eaten. It forms a large proportion of the food of the upper and upper middle classes in France than in the United States. We use vegetables and fruits and sweet dishes more than they seem to. The officers tell me that the peasants do not use a great deal of meat which tends to keep down the average consumption in France. But ever since I left New York I have had more meat than I cared for. It was especially true on ship board where we had English cooking but it is also true in France.

I like the French cooking fine. Everything is nicely and neatly served. The officers mess where I live is at the house of Mrs. Eastian whose daughter Marie does the cooking. She has a monthly allowance for this work by the government. One of the young soldiers is detailed to wait on the table. I paid my share yesterday for the first half of the month and it came to 5½ francs a day which in this land of high prices is

very satisfactory. An ordinary meal at a hotel will cost that much and in Paris more than that.

Lieutenant Clemeng took some little pictures of me last week which he said were especially for my family. You will see this silly rabbit cap on my head which I heartily despise. One of the pictures is a view of the dining room and two of the officers appear in it. They will soon be leaving because they are to be demobilized and return to civil life. at the end of the month. All the older classes in the army are being released. It is the unusual thing now to see a man in anything but army uniform. Soon it will be different.

I had the experience in coming back from Neufchateau Monday of making the trip in a box car. One marked for 8 horses or 40 men. There were 4 Americans and the rest were French soldiers. The French have something to learn from us in the running of railroads. Usually they don't take up the tickets and I am enclosing one. You have to watch out for your own station and generally look after yourself. I could tell you a lot more than I have time to write.

Today I think I shall walk to Mirecour and mail this letter there. I want some stamps anyway and that will furnish an afternoon's exercise.

Affectionately,
Ceylon

P.S. What you see on the backs of the photographs are good wishes, names, dates and place.