

# WORLD WAR I LETTERS HOME

*Submitted by: Elaine Walton Lewis*

*From: Conroe Courier*

*(Every attempt has been made to keep the letters exactly as written, including all miss-spellings.)*

**HANDY FOR SOLDIERS** – Lawrence Crooke is the first of the new soldier boys to report the contents of a “Soldier’s Companion” and for the information of mothers, sweethearts and sisters of the boys going to war, Mr. Crooke says it would be a good idea to put the contents of his in the paper as he thinks it an ideal pattern. Here it is: New Testament. Linen Collar Bag. Pin Cushion (loaded). Needles. Drinking Cup. Spool of Thread. Bunch of Buttons. Thimble. Box of Cold Cream. Comb. Small Mirror. Handkerchiefs. Gum.

*Conroe Courier, August 2, 1917*

**ANOTHER LETTER FROM BATTLE FRONT** – Mr. and Mrs. G. F. Crooke have received another letter, from their son, Clarence, who is in France with the first army expeditionary force. The outside of the envelope has several stamps on it, one being “Censored for regulations, Caut. QM.” Another, “Passed as Censored, A.E.F.” The letter was postmarked at the New York post office. This is the second letter received by Mr. and Mrs. Crooke from Clarence since he landed in France and of course he would write longer letters but the army regulations will not permit that.

The letter follows:

Somewhere in France,

7-19-17

Dearest Mother and Family:

Was certainly glad to get your letter. Everything must have happened on that day. I am just as well as could be. Mother, don’t worry about me, for other mothers have to let their boys go, too. You and Papa don’t worry.

Love to each and everyone,

Pvt. Clarence K. Crooke,

Q. M. Corps,

Somewhere in France.

C-o Adj. Gen Washington D.C.

*Conroe Courier, August 2, 1917*

David Horger, son of Rev. S. D. Horger, formerly of this county, is with Mr. Crooke’s company at the front. Friends of the two boys should write to them and a little token or a useful article for a soldier would not come amiss to these boys who are “fighting our fight.”

*Conroe Courier, August 2, 1917*

**LETTERS FROM FRANCE** – Mr. and Mrs. Geo. F. Crooke have just received three letters from their son Clarence who is at the front in France. They are printed below:

Somewhere in France,

July 16, 1917

My Dear Mother, Father, and Loved Ones:

An getting along fine. Am in perfect health. Write often whether you hear from me or not, and send *The Courier*. I certainly would like to see a copy of the *Courier*.

Love to all, your son,

Clarence

*Conroe Courier, August 30, 1917*

*(Please note that the next two letters are only partially abstracted as the newspaper is torn and not totally readable)*

Somewhere in France,  
July 21, 1917  
Dear Mother and Family:

I am doing fine; in the best of health. Have received three of your letters. 'Tis useless to say I certainly was glad to get them. Have not received any other letters.

Lots of things happened that ????. I suppose Sister and her Friends had a nice time on the ????. When I get back to the ????, guess I will have some ????? on Grand Lake and elsewhere. Tell all of them hello.

With love to all, your son,  
Clarence

*Conroe Courier, August 30, 1917*

Somewhere in France,  
July 28, 1917  
Dear Mother:

???? doing fine, never get ????? to eat or sleep it seems, ????? know I am in good ???.

???? I have received all letters which might have been sent to me. Certainly am glad to get them too.

With love to all, your son,  
Pvt. Clarence K. Crooke  
Ex Force, France,  
Adj. Gen. Washington, D.C.  
??? New York.

*Conroe Courier, August 30, 1917*

Soldiers Arrive Safely- Camp Bowie, Sept. 11

Editor Conroe Courier:

Co. I 5<sup>th</sup> Tex. Inf., arrived at Camp Bowie Thursday a.m. and were assigned quarters. Because of insufficient supply of tents three squads were forced to sleep in the company mess hall. Unfortunately, the unlucky squads were Nos. 1, 2 and 3 of the Conroe contingent.

Saturday was examination and vaccination day. The inoculation for typhus was the most severe, causing several of the boys to become sick for a few hours, among whom were Clyde McGuire, Ferd Travathan, George Baseke, J. D. Burroughs, Morgan Cartwright, Clarence Whitton and Ancil Gibbs. They were all right in a few hours and now feel better than ever.

The boys of Company I, Conroe division, have all expressed themselves as being highly appreciates of the many kindnesses showered upon them by the splendid citizenship of Conroe and whatever our future lot may be, when we are lying beside the camp fires our last thoughts will be of Conroe and its people.

Because of a lack of supplies on hand when we arrived we shall ever be grateful for the ample mess fund supplied by the citizens of Montgomery county, for we were fed on that fund until supplies arrived, and had it not been for that we might have been on half rations for two or three days.

Everything is all right now, and our officers are looking out for us, you may rest assured. We have among the best company officers to be had and the best colonel in the world, Col. John S. Hoover, who has a well earned reputation for looking out for his men and has shown it on several occasions already.  
Cor. *Conroe Courier*, Sept. 13, 1917

Note From Crooke in France – Somewhere in France, 8-26-17  
My Dear Mother and family:

Received three letters from you yesterday, one saying you had received the first letter from me. Certainly hope you are well long before this reaches you.

Guess Conroe is a lonesome place since all the boys left. Received fifteen letters yesterday. Gee, but it made me feel good. I am well.

With much love to all, Your Son,  
Pvt. Clarence K. Crooke,  
Q. M. Corps, U. S. P. O. No. 1,  
via N. Y. Cy. A. E. F. France

*Conroe Courier*, Sept. 20, 1917

Joseph W. Westmoreland, who was captain of the eight men sent out by the draft last week, sent the following card to Secretary Coffman of the local board on Sept. 12:

Drafted boys like the camp.

All of the boys like it fine. They could not run us off now. We drill about three hours per day and we are learning fast. Our captain is Governor Hogg's son, Mike Hogg, he certainly is a fine man, too.

Tell the rest of the boys they had better hurry and come on.

Joseph W. Westmoreland,  
Co. P, 360 Infty. N.A.

*Conroe Courier*, September 20, 1917

Camp Bowie, Texas  
Sept. 17, 1917

Editor *Conroe Courier*:

I am taking this method of letting the citizenship of Walker and Montgomery County know the true and existing conditions in and around Camp Bowie, reports to the contrary having reached the camp and the impression they have left are doing a gross injustice.

The report regarding Lieut. Burt B. Hawkins having lost his eyesight is absolutely false and without foundation. Another report to the effect that two members of Company "I" have died from the effect of vacipation, and the same having not been reported to their home folks, is also the thought of some person with a vivid imagination; as no such thing has happened. Last, but not least, the report circulated to the effect that liquor is found in most every tent, is doing, not only the officers in charge, but the enlisted men as well, the greatest injustice that could be thought of; as I have kept a sharp look-out for just such things and I have never found one drop of beer or whiskey in or around the camp. I know that reports of this kind will not be believed by ninety-nine per cent of the people, but the other one per cent can circulate them until they sound reasonable.

I must confess that Camp Bowie is one of the biggest things of the kind in the entire country, as many as fifteen thousand soldiers being encamped here and as many more to come. Every convenience of the men having been looked after and nothing has been left undone that would add to their comfort. True, the men are being worked pretty hard at present, but none too hard for the greatness of the task before them.

Company "I" is fast becoming a company of well drilled men and stands at the head of the column in most every respect. The health of the company as a whole is good, there being only two or three men being confined to their tents at the present time and they are not seriously sick; but suffering from their vaccinations and the change of climate.

I hope that the occasion will not again arise that I will be called upon to contradict any more such slanderous and degrading reports as the ones above referred to.

With assurance that the Conroe and Huntsville men are being well treated and well cared for, I am,

Yours sincerely,  
ALLEN T. SMITHER,  
Captain Co. I, 5<sup>th</sup> Tx. Inftry.

*Conroe Courier*, September 20, 1917

From Camp Travis – Camp Travis, Feb. 20, 1918

Dear Editor: I will write a few lines to the readers to of *The Courier* to tell them how we are getting along in Camp Travis. It has been raining here and the boys have been laying off until they think they do not have to work.

We want the rest of the boys to hurry and come on. We have everything cut and dried for them. Tell them I know that they would like it because there is never any racket made, and besides, tell them they had better learn how to take a joke, for the boys will jump them as soon as they get here.

Chas. Luby Walding,  
Co. D, 360 Inf Cp Travis

*Conroe Courier*, February 28, 1918

H. B. Everett, Jr. In France Writes Interesting Letter – H. B. Everett, Jr. was one of the first crew of men who went across the waters and is now a sergeant in the field artillery. His father, Mr. H. B. Everett has just received the following letter from H. B. Jr.

France, Feb. 28, 1918

My Dear Parents:

I've just returned from the greatest summer resort in Europe, where I spent eight days enjoying lost of sleep and rest which I certainly needed.

Saw lots of beautiful scenery, also some old and ancient buildings, an old summer home of Queen Victoria, also old homesteads of Napoleon's ancestors, and the big casino building where all the crowned heads of Europe meet. It is a wonderful palace, large mirrors, paintings and statues. No doubt you've read of it, a beautiful city surrounded by lakes and mountains. Myself and a friend (of whom I enclose a photo with me) walked to the top of one mountain, where we found snow 4 and 5 feet deep. After 5 hours of hard walking and climbing, we reached the top, wrote our names in an observation tower, and only stayed up there a few minutes, as we had very thoughtlessly failed to take a lunch.

The next day we rowed a boat across the lake, visiting an old Catholic church, built all alone on a mountainside where several aged monks and priests now live. Some of them looked to be nearly 100 years old, but as neither of us could speak French we could not ask any questions, but learned later that we were the first American soldiers to visit that building. I have a bunch of post card views of the place which I will send if I am allowed to do so.

This same city is where the rich from America spend the summer while in Europe. A pretty boulevard is named for Plerpont Morgan. I saw Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. while there. She is with the Red Cross.

Received a letter today from Lizzie , Lucy May and Ava Lee. All letters from home are opened and read so fast, I always have to read them several times. It is always a great relief to know that all are well.

I enjoyed my trip very much and the undisturbed sleep most of all. We could not hear nor feel the noises and jars, resembling a Fourth of July celebration, while there. No concession in the air there to jar your candle out while trying to write a few lines to the folks at home. It cost me 400 francs (about \$70) for the 8 days, but it was worth it.

Lucy May wrote me of the patriotic things they are doing in the U. S. She mentioned the city doing without lights one night every week, I believe. I am glad you haven't any shell holes to fall into, or barbed wire entanglements in your way on those dark nights. Some of us must contend with those hardships though, and I am glad to do my bit. Always ready and glad to go and to do all I can. Lucy Many sent me some Houston papers, which are certainly appreciated and passed around to others. It's getting late, so will close and write a few lines to Lucy May before retiring to my feather bed which I built myself; it was quite a job to make it, as about all the tools I had to work with were a small pair of scissors and a safety razor.

Ava Lee wrote that May's baby had been sick, hope she is well by now. Hope this will find all well and remember a letter from any of the home folks is always a great comfort. I carry the photos of mama and others I have in a card case in my pocket. My pockets are always full of note books and other papers, but I always find room for the photos.

Would like to have the Conroe paper. It is from home and just the locals will be lots of news to me. Don't think of the hardships I have to go through. I'm glad I'm big and strong and we are well clothed and fed. Let's just hope that the blue star never turns to gold.

Best wishes to all my friends and love to all my family. H.B. Jr.

Sgt. H. B. Everett, Jr.  
Hdg. 8<sup>th</sup>, F.A., A.E.F.  
Via New York (Censored)

*Conroe Courier*, March 28, 1918