

FIRST LEAVE, MARCH 28TH 1919:

This leave was the first one since we went into service; it took us down to Southern France thru war torn Metz-Verdun Area. We rode "Pullman De Lux" with four men to a compartment, seats facing each other with a narrow isle between; two fellows slept lengthwise on seats and two in baggage racks above the seats. No room for a fat fanny or large middle aged spread!

The railroad ran thru a valley between two very high ridges, where water falls cascaded down the steep high walls--a most beautiful sight. Then, according to my diary notes, we started to climb, and there before our eyes, Hannibal Pass! Just a short distance more was a beautiful lake appearing like an enormous blue jewel within a lap of snow! The story is told that this lake has never been known to freeze over.

MORE DIARY EXCERPTS....

Arrived Aux-le-Baines 5:30 P.M., where we lodged in the home of a French Family with two girls well versed in American English. The famous casino and gambling hall had been taken over by the YMCA, among the glitter and spangles wich still hung from the ceiling. The "Leather Necks" lived a "Life of Riley!" With plenty of food, books to read and at last just pleasures of home, with shows in the Theater at night

We looked over the sights in a very old museum, Diana's Temple dated B.C.; the 5,000 year old Roman Bath, fed by underground springs, eighty meters deep with a flow of million gallons water every twenty four hours! Why in the world did'nt I bring my colored camera?

APRIL 2ND 1919:

Rode the Cog Railroad up 5070 feet; two hour ride up and one hour down! Very steep and each time you felt the stop block bounce up. you gave a silent word of thanks to the Diety! At 5,000 feet it looked like a straight drop into eternity!

APRIL 2nd 1919..continued:

It was there that we met two friendly brothers on skis. They found some skis for us and we were baptised in the art of skiing in over 8 feet of snow..enough said!

What a view of the Italian Alps! The sun breaks thru and there she is..the peak of the Mighty Mt.Blanc in Switzerland! We returned to the base and there the cherry blossoms were blooming in the valley! Attended church that Sunday at YMCA.

ALL ABOARD OUR FRENCH PULLMAN!

During the night we switched from French Engine with the French Horn Tooter on the front, to an American Big Steam Engine. The first big blast from the whistle made you wish for home sweet home!