

Editor's note: We've standardized some spelling in Hezzie's travelogue.
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When I find by actual count eighty-three (yes e-i-g-h-t-y t-h-r-e-e) unanswered letters lying before me you must agree that something well-nigh heroic has got to be done and done quickly if I maintain my self-respect and keep my friends. Two weeks of leave, a move of the office almost across France, another long trip in addition and much work has gotten me hopelessly behind in my correspondence. However I shall offer no apologies in using this method in answering your interesting and appreciated letters, I am doing the best possible under the circumstances and I trust you will appreciate my situation and forgive this kind of a letter.

MY FIRST LEAVE

After having worn the uniform for ten months, most of this time living a rather strenuous and not always a most pleasant life, I was in a position to enjoy the eleven days leave which came to me recently.

I chose the southern coast of France as the place to spend my vacation for two reasons. I the first place one's leave does not start until the soldier reaches his destination and, secondly, this section of France is most interesting (with the one exception, of course) especially at this time of the year.

However, travel in France just now must be undertaken with a stout heart. I had made quite a journey before reaching Paris and from Paris to Nice at this time is a trip of from 30-36 hours- if you have no mishaps. There are few diners, no sleeping cars, and in fact you may consider yourself fortunate indeed to secure even a seat. At this time of the year seats even must be reserved eight days in advance, of which fact I was not aware until I reached Paris. However a few francs came to the assistance of the most persuasive French I could command and I found myself the proud possessor of a seat, even tho it was a second class seat and beside a fat lady too. However, I never mind fat ladies, they are always good natured, besides later I found this particular benevolent partner of mine could make most delicious cookies.

But, even after 34 hours riding in a chair car, I soon found, upon arriving a t Nice, that it was well worth the effort. I found the Mediterranean coast from Marseilles to the Italian border a close rival of our own southern California in climate and even surpassing in many ways the scenery of our fair Hawaiian Islands in blending in one view, snow covered mountains, and high rugged coast covered with a high tropical verdure, before which stretches an ocean of the deepest blue. Coming from section of France in the throes of winter and everything covered with heavy snow, I found myself, over night, in a country of blooming

flowers, singing birds, with the almond trees in blossom and the olive and orange trees bearing their ripe fruit.

NICE: Nice is Europe's California and Florida combined- the popular winter resort for all Europe and is indeed a beautiful city with its magnificent hotels and residences, with its well kept gardens, parks, drives, and promenades. A part of the city is very old, having been founded by the Phoenicians sometime before the Christian era and the ruin of an old Roman amphitheater just back of the city gives one a[n] idea of antiquity. Nice at one time was a part of Italy and there is still a distinct colony of Italians located at the heart of the old portion of the town.

One morning while walking along the beautiful promenade overlooking the sea, I noticed the name of the boulevard had recently been changed and the new sign read, "Promenade des Etats-Unis" (Promenaded of the United States), which incidentally indicates, as is to be noted all over France now, the influence of America's entrance into this great war.

Near the center of the city is a large hill 300 feet in height from which a wonderful view can be obtained. To the right and almost below lies the harbor with its docks and six-mast schooners, and a multitude of busy little fishing crafts plying in and out; to your left and in front of you is the city proper with its large buildings and beautiful system of boulevards in the foreground and extending back to small white cottages with their little red tile roofs far up the foothills. Above these cottages lie the vineyards and olive groves and then the higher mountains and, lastly, far in the background rise the rugged snow-capped peaks of the Alps. Turning about you look out over the placid blue waters of the Mediterranean dotted here and there by a small white sail of some fishing smack far out at sea.

MONACO: Nice is the center of an excellent interurban system. My first trip was eastward, thru some of the best scenery it has ever been by good fortune to see. The track is built, for most part, high up the side of the mountain and from the car window at this height one can look down now upon a little fishing village fare below, then a small orange orchard of olive grove, as the car winds in and out along the precipice with the ocean stretching out before you. After some ten miles of such riding one arrives at the City of Monaco which is built upon a promontory 200 feet above the ocean. The cities of Monaco and Monte Carlo make up the Principality of Monaco which has a very unique history which I am sorry I cannot go into here, suffice to say that this little scrap of coast line of France, less than two miles long and not more than one half a mile in width is a small kingdom of itself, having its own postal, monetary, and government systems. The Prince of Monaco is the absolute owner and ruler of the kingdom. He resides in his castle, a magnificent structure of massive walls and stone

turret overlooking the City of Monaco, parts of the castle date back to the 13th century. It was my good fortune to be one of the first American soldiers to be shown thru the palace with its treasure of art and the beautiful grounds surrounding it.

MONTE CARLO: A mile distance from the castle and also overlooking the ocean is the city of Monte Carlo. Of course we have always read and thought of Monte Carol as merely a great gambling place and I must confess before coming to France I had a conception, as I believe most Americans have, of a place composed of the greatest bunch of swindlers, cut-throats, and the scum of the creation in general; a place here you would have to hold one hand on your money, a good-sized automatic revolver in the other, and be prepared at any instant to defend your life against the grandest set of crooks the world could produce. While there is no doubt but that Monte Carlo is today the greatest gambling place in the world where fortunes are lost and won every day in the year, however if this is your conception of Monte Carlo and the people who frequent it, you are due for the surprise of your life when you alight from the care in the heart of this peaceful little city. It certainly is the beauty spot of France if not of all Europe. Only magnificent buildings, beautiful lawns and the homes of the rich. However, making it the prettiest spot in Europe is a part of the business of the place for people of wealth must be attracted here to spend their leisure time and surplus cash. Nature also seems to lend herself to the task in supplying one of the most wonderful climates to be found anywhere. Frost never visits Monte Carlo and one finds here almost a tropical climate.

The first thing to attract one's attention is the Casino, the building in which all the gambling is done. It is a magnificent snow-white building of large dimensions overlooking the sea and surrounded by well kept gardens and parks of flowers and palms. You enter thru an entrance very much as you would a large hotel. On either side are cloak rooms and the offices with pages at every stop. Passing on one enters a large room furnished, as is the entire Casino, in richly polished woods, artistic paintings fill the panels of the walls with rich mural decorations between. In this large room the throng gathers awaiting the hour when the doors to the gaming rooms are thrown open. No person in an Allied uniform is allowed to enter the rooms while gambling is in progress. However, I prevailed upon the kindness of the courteous guard and saw the gambling through a large plate glass window. The principal game is roulette at which any number up to about 20 can play. Roulette is a game of chance purely, played by means of a circular tray revolving on a pivot, and a ball spinning in the opposite direction. It is quite an intricate game but the principle of it is that you win if the ball stops at your number. The concern gets a certain fixed percent (approximately 1/35) of all money played so it is to its interest to see that it is purely a chance game. The

least you can bet is about one dollar and the largest is something over one thousand. The only figures I could obtain as to the amount of money gambled at Monte Carlo in the course of a year was based on the revenue of the Casino for 1912 which was a few hundred dollars less than twenty-five million dollars. This means that the enormous sum of at least eight hundred million dollars was wagered across the tables that year. This was before the war, so it is to be hoped that the amount is not so great now when France needs it. The smaller rooms of the Casino are devoted mainly to the card games of various kinds which I understand require considerable skill. There is a morning, afternoon and evening session. The thing which astonished me most was the fact that there were at least three women to each man gambling. To be admitted one must conform to certain regulations, one of which is the matter of dress. At the evening session only dress suits and evening gowns are worn. I think it is a fair statement to say I saw more gorgeously dressed people while at Monte Carlo than I have seen together in any other place in Europe. Leaving the gambling rooms, on the opposite side of the Casino there is a theater. It is quite small, seating perhaps not over five or six hundred persons, but it is the most lavishly furnished and decorated room I have ever seen. The Prince has his own individual lodge in the center. I was told only the very highest talent ever appears here. While I was there the grand opera was being played.

So much for one side of the life at Monte Carlo. While there, however, I stumbled onto a bit of information which doesn't appear in the guide books, which brings out the other side of life at Monte Carlo. Between the Casino and the sea is an ordinary appearing terrace or grassy lawn which gradually slopes down to the ocean. This would never attract one's attention especially; however this is the resting place, unmarked and soon forgotten, of those who came for a last chance, lost and then ended it all. Here, and only at night, they are laid away, averaging one a night in the midst of the season I was told by an old man whom I had reason to believe. They put them away at night so as not to attract attention, I presume, and the process is, no doubt, quite simple, merely the digging of a hole and then filling it in. This, then, constitutes "the other" half of the picture of life at Monte Carlo.

MENTON and the ITALIAN FRONTIER: Taking the tram again, after a ride of some five miles thru the same beautiful scenery, one arrives at Menton, a popular resort of the English especially. Here the car line ends so I continued on, walking another two miles up a gradual incline and came to the Italian border. The French guard here was one of those interesting 'mixtures' of whom one sees many varieties in France now. He was a full-blooded Chinaman - if there was one- speaking very little French, but wearing the French uniform and guarding the Italian Frontier- some combination, I thought. I wandered across the

line into Italy and after taking a few pictures of the French and Italian sentries, returned the car just leaving for Nice. As we passed back thru Monte Carlo the evening crowd was gathering and the city was one brilliant blaze of light while beautifully dressed women escorted by men in evening dress were to be seen on every hand, on their way to the Casino, theatres or balls. I presume it is one of the very few places of the like to be seen in all Europe today.

CANNES and ANTIBES: My last trip was to Cannes, also a popular resort on the ocean some 20 miles from Nice, and in the heart of the fruit preserving and perfumery manufacturing district. On the way there I stopped off at Antibes and took several pictures of some very interesting ruins of the ancient Grecian city of Antipolis, of which there still remains many relics, such as fortifications and the ancient walls of the city. At Cannes I spent several interesting hours. The principal attraction here is the large harbor with its facilities for boating and the wonderful opportunities for taking excellent photographs under perfect atmospheric conditions. Of the many pictures I have taken in England and all over France, I think I had the best results while on the Mediterranean Coast.

I returned to Marseilles and Paris, and am now settled down to the usual grind. However I am looking forward and planning my next trip for the leave due in mid-summer- perhaps! In addition to our regular leaves, however, we get shifted about the country more or less. I have recently had one of these changes of station and in the words of a "Tommy" who didn't wish to break any rules of censorship, I might say: "I am not now where I was, but have just come from the place I last went to".

So much for my trip. You will please note a slight change in my address. Mail reaches me more quickly when the full address is given, which now is:

Chief Surgeon's Office
American E. F., S. O. S.,
A. P. O. No. 717
France.

Now just a word in conclusion. Please do not take the length of this letter as a sample of the letter I usually write. It is not always that I have the opportunity to write as fully as I have this time. However, I would appreciate receiving a letter from you when you have the opportunity but I am sure you understand that it is not always possible for me to answer as promptly as I should like.

With best of wishes,
Very sincerely yours,