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## **Theodore E. Boyd World War I Collection - Memoirs and Correspondence Sent to Family, numbered 1-31**

Extracted on Mar-29-2024 07:13:55

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^[[13 13]]  
May 11, 1973

Dear Alice:

I think it was on January 9, 1918, that I stood all day in the rain on a hillside near Gondrecourt. A week earlier, when I joined Battery C of the ~~8~~ <sup>7</sup>th Field Artillery, there had been snow on the ~~gr~~ ground. It had stayed, but on that day it was turning to slush. Most of the day it drizzled, but now and then the rain came down hard for a while. My only comfort was to congratulate myself on having bought that British trench coat as I came through Paris.

I was there playing a small part in a war game. If the ground had been drier and firmer, my stage props would have included two 75 mm. guns with their caissons. But that morning the generals who were running the show had wisely decided not to risk getting the guns mired down in the muddy fields. So our 75's ~~remained parked at Houdelaincourt, the village where we had spent the night. On the hill I had only imaginary guns. I did have real live gun crews. They loaded with imaginary shells and aimed the guns. When I commanded "Fire!" they pulled imaginary lanyards. No doubt we gave the imaginary enemy a bad time.~~

War games will always be necessary as long as we have wars. I would not think of ridiculing them, but my part in that one had comic aspects. For the 26,000 men of the First Division, the occasion was just another typical army foul-up. This was to have been form them a day of relaxation and rest. They had been driven through a week of field maneuvers in freezing weather, finishing their original schedule on the 8th. They had gone to bed that night with the promise of an extra hour of sleep next morning, to <sup>be</sup> followed by a leisurely breakfast and a march back home, to the villages where they had their respective winter quarters. Instead, they had heard reveille at daybreak on the 9th and were now being marched out again, this time into the rain.

All this came about because General Pershing had missed the field exercises of the final day. He had meant to witness them, but had somehow been detained and had not reached Gondrecourt until late on the night of the 8th. Now the final day had to be replayed for the general's benefit. Orders had gone out around midnight. I supposed every company and battery commander had been awakened <sup>and</sup> told to pass the order down the ranks.

13  
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