



ON ACTIVE SERVICE  
WITH THE  
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

191

My Regiment landed in  
France on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 1918  
after a fine voyage of 12 days,  
well my first impression  
of France would be hard  
to describe, of course it was  
odd and strange for us to  
see old women pushing  
wheelbarrows around the  
streets, not to mention the  
hundreds of German prisoners  
at work, but to be brief we  
went to a rest camp and  
stayed 5 days, then we



= 2 =

were loaded into cracker boxes. (the short for trench railroad trains) and shipped to a training camp where we received expert instructions on different methods of war-fare after staying there about 6 weeks we were again loaded on a train and taken up ~~to~~<sup>toward</sup> the front and there we were billeted in the barns over the stables, and it was here we began to realize that we were over in France (and not in peaceful America.) as the Germans came over in airplanes and bombed the village next to us, after a few days of final instructions we were loaded into trench

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trucks and brought to a replacement camp, the next day we started on a hike toward the front. I was sick that day, so having permission from my Captain I fell out and lay by the side of the road until I felt a little better then I started trailing along after my company and after a few hours we came to what was left of that once famous Hindenberg line, it was here we saw our first horrors of war, nothing was to be seen but shell holes barbed wire entanglements trenches dug-outs, with here and there the ghostly corpses of Germans



<sup>= 24 =</sup>  
and French. well when I caught  
up with my company they had  
gone into camp. we ate supper  
and some of us had gone to bed  
when the order came for us  
to go to the front. we had to leave  
our blanket rolls and I being  
sick my captain gave me orders  
to stay on guard with the  
packs and not go with the  
company. well I stayed  
there 3 days before I heard from  
the boys. then some of the run-  
ners came back and they could  
hardly talk to me at first. all  
they could say was. Oh. Hovey  
it is Hell up there. then they  
told me some of the boys  
had been killed this was on





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Oct. 9<sup>th</sup> and on the 11<sup>th</sup> I was ordered to report to my company which had advanced some 15 or 18 Kilos. I started about noon and went over all of the ground my company had fought over and it was there I saw my first dead American soldiers, it was an awful sight.

The next day after I joined what was left of my company, we were ordered up for reserve and after 4 days we went to a rest camp, and then we were ordered to



= 6 =

go back to the front in  
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I received my first (and so far)  
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we were in holes dug in a  
bank but in order to see the  
effect of our artillery we would  
stand up and look over the  
parpet and three times we  
were knocked down by  
shells and covered with  
dirt, well after 36 hours we  
were relieved (by the French)  
and started back to a rest  
camp, which we reached  
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272  
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abdication of the Kaiser,  
Corp Harry S. Hovey  
[Co. E, 142nd Inf. ?]

**PERSONAL WAR EXPERIENCE, CORPORAL HARRY S. HOVEY, 1918 (TRANSCRIPT)  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION (77424682)**

My Regiment landed in France on the 31st of July 1918 after a fine voyage of 12 days, well my first impression of France would be hard to describe [describe], of course it was odd and strange for us to see old women pushing wheelbarrows around the streets, not to mention the hundreds of Germans [Germans] prisoners at work but to be brief, we went to a rest? camp and stayed 5 days, then we were loaded into cracker boxes. (the short for French railroad trains) and shipped to a training camp where we received expert instructions on different methods of war-fare after staying there about 6 weeks we were again loaded on a train, and taken up toward the front and there we were billeted in the barns over the stables, and it was here we began to realise [realize] that we were over in France (and not in peaceful America.) as the Germans [Germans] came over in airplanes and bombed the village next to us, after a few days of final instructions we were loaded into French trucks and brought to a re-placement camp, the next day we started on a hike toward the front. I was sick that day, so having permission [permission] from my Captain I fell out and lay by the side of the road until I felt a little better then I started trailing along after my company and after a few hours we came to what was left of that once famous [famous] Hindenburg line, it was here we saw our first horrors of war, nothing was to be seen but shell holes barbed wire entanglements trenches dug-outs, with here and there the gasty [ghastly] corpses of Germans and French, well when I caught up with my company they had gone into camp we ate supper and some of us had gone to bed when the order came for us to go to the front we had to leave our blanket rolls. And I being sick my Captain gave me orders to stay on guard with the packs and not go with the company. Well I stayed there 3 days before I heard from the boys, then some of the runners came back and they could hardly talk to me at first all they could say was, oh, Hovey, it is Hell up there, then they told me some of the boys had been killed this was on Oct. 9th and on the 11th I was ordered to report to my company which had advanced some 15 or 18 kilos. I started about noon and went over all of the ground my company had fought over, and it was there I saw my first dead American soldiers, it was an awful sight.

The next day after I joined what was left of my company. We were ordered up for reserve and after 4 days we went to a nest camp and then we were ordered to go back to the front in support, it was there that I received my first (and so far) my only baptism of shell fire. We were in holes dug in a bank but in order to see the effect of our artillery we would stand up and look over the parapet [parapet] and three times we were knocked down by shells and covered with dirt. Well after 36 hours we were relieved (by the French) and started back to a rest camp, which we reached after several days of hard marching, and are still here and every one is doing and feeling fine we have just received news of the abdication of the Kaiser.

-Corp. Harry S. Hovey



Dec. 27, 1918

Dear Father:-

I received your letter of Oct. 27, about four days ago and last night the one of Nov. 25.

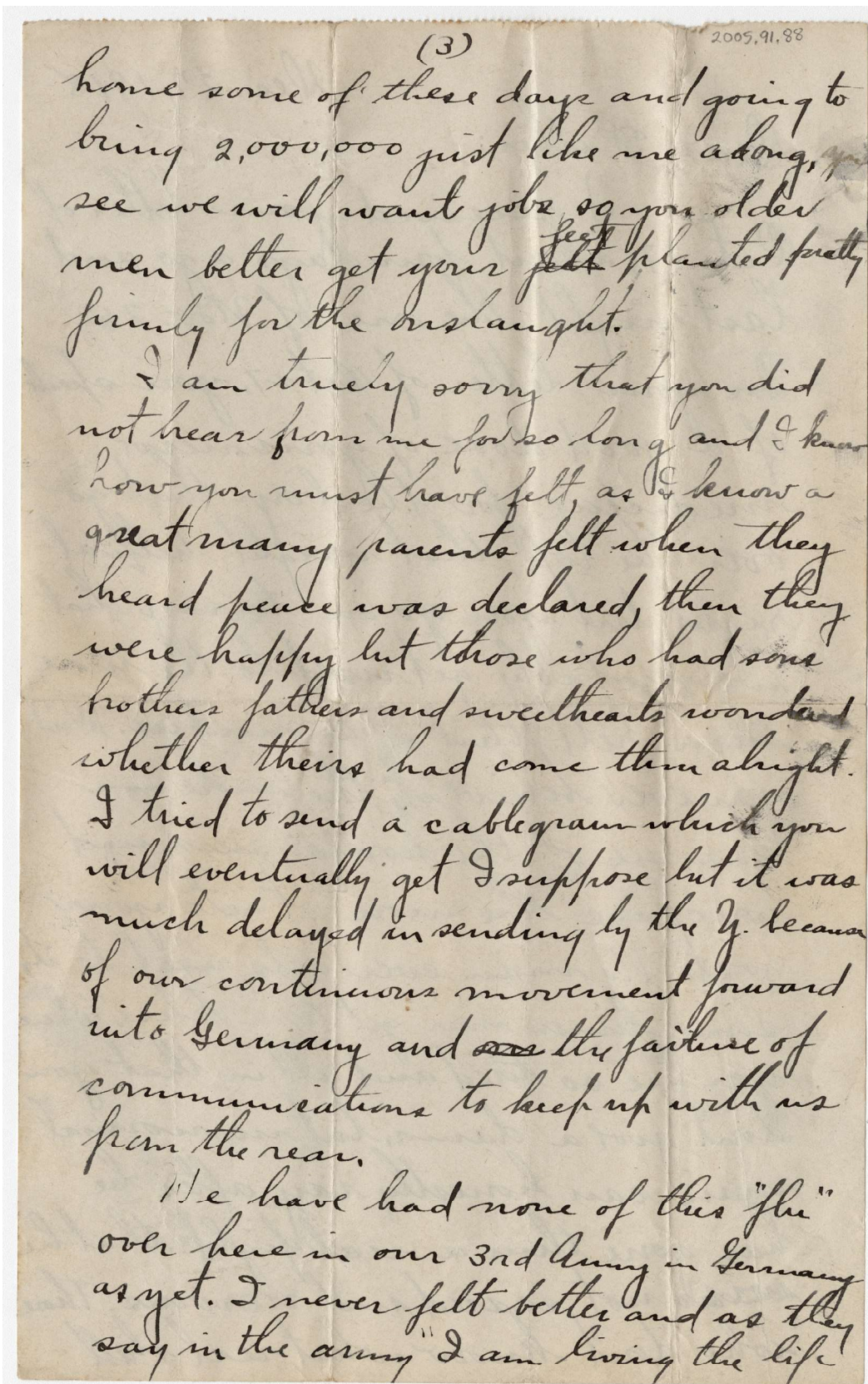
In your letter of Oct 27, you speak of a good dose of your nerve medicine for the boys that go over the top, that might help a right, but you go on to say that we probably get used to the more than hell that is around us. Don't you ever believe it, the more you see of the horribleness and wreckage the more it gets your goat. No man ever gets used to it, some times you get to a place where you are so tired and all in that you don't give a damn, but no normal man can honestly say after he has gone thru a real fight that he ~~was~~ not scared and nervous. Those who don't know what real shell



fire and machine guns are, sometimes think they are or will not be scared. But let them get into the thickest and watch them pray for protection, as I have heard soldier after soldier frankly admit he did during the bombardment on the Marne. I did the same myself. These same men you could have lived with all your life in peace time and never have heard them mention, or even recognize as existing, religion. I do not believe this necessarily implies cowardice, as a baby turns to his parent when fearful of some thing, to it unnatural as a man in the presence of bursting shells over which there is absolutely no power of human control and no chance of retaliation turns to a higher power than that of human life.

Your letter of Nov. 25 about your opportunity with Mr. Scott. I would advise that you pick the fruit while you have a good opportunity and get solidly established as I am coming







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of Riley" in other words I am eating good  
sleeping good, not doing much work.  
We are all wondering now when  
we will get home, of course the U.S.A.  
still looks mighty good to us, but  
there is not such a striking <sup>difference</sup> between  
the States and Germany as there was  
or is between France and the States.  
If one could speak German this  
country might not be such a bad  
place to live, with their new Republic  
which we gave them. This may sound  
scandalous to you but there are a  
lot of American soldiers learning to  
love Germany, especially do they love  
the pretty "Franklins" etc.  
With much love and kisses to  
all and wishing you a Prosperous New  
Year I am as ever  
Your son  
Wendell.



PERSONAL WAR EXPERIENCE, CORPORAL HARRY S. HOVEY, 1918 (TRANSCRIPT)  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION (77424682)

December 27, 1918

Dear Father: -

I received your letter of Oct. 27, and about four days ago and last night the one of Nov. 25. In your letter of Oct 27, you speak of a good dose of your nerve medicine for the boys that go over the top that might help al-right, but you go on to say that we probably get used to the more than hell that is around us. Don't you ever believe it the more you see of the horribleness and wreckage the more it gets your goat. No man ever gets used to it, some times you get to a place where you are so tired and all in that you don't give a damn, but no normal man can honestly say after he has gone thru a real fight that he was not scared and nervous. Those who don't know what real shell fire and machine guns are, sometimes think they are or will not be scared. But let them get into the thicket and watch them pray for protection, as I have heard soldier after soldier bravely admit he did during the bombardment on the Marne. I did the same myself. These same men you could have lived with all your life in peace time and never heard them mention, or even recognize as existing, religion. I do not believe this necessarily implies cowardice, as a baby turns to his parent when fearful of something, to it unnatural so man in the presence of bursting shells over which there is absolutely no power of human control and no chance of retaliation turns to a higher power than that of human life.

Your letter of Nov. 25 about your opportunity with Mr. Scott. I would advise that you pluck the fruit while you have a good opportunity and get solidly established as I am coming home some of these days and going to bring 2,000,000 just like me along, see we will want jobs so you older men better your feet planted pretty firmly for the onslaught.

I am truly sorry that you did not hear from me for so long and I know how you must have felt, as I know a great many parents felt when they heard peace was declared, then they were happy but those who had sons mothers fathers and sweethearts wondering whether theirs had come thru alright. I tried to send a cablegram which you will eventually get I suppose but it was much delayed in sending by the Y because of our continuous movement forward into Germany and the failure of the communications to keep up with us from the rear.

We have had more of this "flu" over here in our 3rd Army in Germany as yet. I never felt better as they say in the army "I am living the life of Riley" in other words I am eating good sleeping good, and not doing much work.

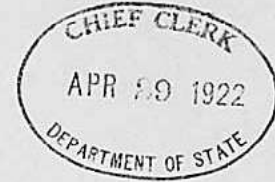
We are all wondering now when we will get home, of course the U.S.A. still looks mighty good to us, but there is not such a striking difference between the States and Germany as there was or is between France and the States. If one could speak German this country might not be such a bad place to live, with their new Republic which we gave them. This may sound scandalous to you but there are a lot of American soldiers learning to love Germany, especially so they love the pretty "Frauleins," etc.

With much love and kisses to all and wishing you a prosperous New Year I am as ever.

Your son

Wendell





EXECUTIVE ORDER

WHEREAS, Section 9 of the Act of Congress entitled "An Act to Establish a Veterans' Bureau and to improve the facilities and service of such Bureau, and further to amend and modify the War Risk Insurance Act", approved August 9, 1921, provides that -

"Section 9. The director, subject to the general directions of the President, shall be responsible for the proper examination, medical care, treatment, hospitalization, dispensary, and convalescent care, necessary and reasonable after care, welfare of, nursing, vocational training, and such other services as may be necessary in the carrying out of the provisions of this Act, and for that purpose is hereby authorized to utilize the now existing or future facilities of the United States Public Health Service, the War Department, the Navy Department, the Interior Department, the National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, and such other governmental facilities as may be made available for the purposes set forth in this Act; and such governmental agencies are hereby authorized and directed to furnish such facilities, including personnel, equipment, medical, surgical, and hospital services and supplies as the director may deem necessary and advisable in carrying out the provisions of this Act, in addition to such governmental facilities as are hereby made available. \*\*\*\*\*"

AND WHEREAS said Section 9 further provides that:

"In the event that there is not sufficient Government Hospital and other facilities for the proper medical care and treatment of beneficiaries under this Act, and the director deems it necessary and advisable to secure additional Government facilities, he may, within the limits of appropriations made for carrying out the provisions of this paragraph, and with the approval of the President, improve or extend existing governmental facilities or acquire additional facilities by purchase or otherwise. Such new property and structures as may be so improved, extended, or acquired shall become part of the permanent equipment of the Veterans' Bureau or of some one of the now existing agencies of the Government, including the War Department, Navy Department, Interior Department, Treasury Department, the National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, in such a way as will best serve the present emergency, taking into consideration the future services to be rendered the veterans of the World War, including the beneficiaries under this Act."



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NOW, THEREFORE, By virtue of the authority vested in me by said law, I direct that the following specifically described hospitals now under the supervision of the United States Public Health Service and operated for hospital or sanatoria or other uses for sick and disabled former soldiers, sailors and marines, are hereby transferred to the United States Veterans' Bureau and shall on and after the effective date hereof operate under the supervision, management and control of the Director of the United States Veterans' Bureau:

- No. 13 Southern Infirmary Annex, Mobile, Alabama
- No. 14 Annex to New Orleans Marine Hospital, Algiers, La.
- No. 24 Palo Alto, California
- No. 25 Houston, Texas
- No. 26 Greenville, South Carolina
- No. 27 Alexandria, Louisiana
- No. 28 Dansville, New York
- No. 29 Norfolk, Virginia (Sewall's Point)
- No. 30 Chicago, Illinois (4649 Drexel Boulevard)
- No. 30 Chicago, Illinois (Annex-7535 Stoney Island Avenue)
- No. 31 Corpus Christi, Texas
- No. 32 Washington, D. C. (2650 Wisconsin Avenue)
- No. 33 Jacksonville, Florida
- No. 34 East Norfolk, Massachusetts
- No. 35 St. Louis, Missouri (5900 Arsenal)
- No. 36 Boston, Massachusetts (Parker Hill)
- No. 37 Waukesha, Wisconsin
- No. 38 New York, New York (345 West 50th Street)
- No. 39 Hoboken, Pennsylvania
- No. 40 Cape May, New Jersey
- No. 41 New Haven, Connecticut
- No. 42 Ferryville, Maryland
- No. 44 West Roxbury, Massachusetts
- No. 45 Biltmore, North Carolina
- No. 46 Deming, New Mexico
- No. 47 Markleton, Pennsylvania
- No. 48 Atlanta, Georgia
- No. 49 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Gray's Ferry Road & 24th St.)
- No. 50 Whipple Barracks, Arizona
- No. 51 Tucson, Arizona
- No. 52 Boise, Idaho
- No. 53 Dwight, Illinois
- No. 54 Arrowhead, Springs, California
- No. 55 Fort Bayard, New Mexico
- No. 56 Fort McHenry, Baltimore, Maryland
- No. 57 Knoxville, Iowa

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No. 58 New Orleans, Louisiana (439 Flood St)  
No. 59 Tacoma, Washington  
No. 60 Oteen, North Carolina  
No. 61 Fox Hills, Staten Island, New York  
No. 62 Augusta, Georgia  
No. 63 Lake City, Florida  
No. 64 Camp Kearney, California  
No. 65 St. Paul, Minnesota (Dayton & Virginia Avenue)  
No. 67 Kansas City, Missouri (11th and Harrison Streets)  
No. 68 Minneapolis, Minnesota (914 Elliott Avenue)  
No. 69 Newport, Kentucky  
No. 71 Sterling Junction, Massachusetts  
No. 72 Helena, Montana (Fort William Henry Harrison)  
No. 73 Chicago, Illinois (Annex to U.S. Veterans' Hospital #30)  
No. 74 Gulfport, Mississippi  
No. 75 Colfax, Iowa  
No. 76 Edward Hines, Jr. Hospital (Maywood, Illinois)  
No. 77 Portland, Oregon.  
No. 78 North Little Rock, Arkansas (Fort Logan H. Roots)  
No. 79 Dawson Springs, Kentucky  
No. 80 Fort Lyon, Colorado, and  
The Purveying Depot at Perryville, Maryland.

I hereby direct that the following hospitals now under construction by the Treasury Department or projected under existing law shall, when and as each is completed, be transferred to the United States Veterans' Bureau, and shall on and after the respective dates of such transfer be operated under the supervision, management and control of the Director of the United States Veterans' Bureau:

Fort McKenzie, Sheridan, Wyoming  
Fort Walla Walla, Walla Walla, Washington  
Excelsior Springs, Excelsior Springs, Missouri  
Catholic Orphan Asylum, (Bronx) New York  
Central New England Sanatorium, Rutland, Massachusetts  
Hospital at Tuskegee, Alabama  
Hospital in Western Pennsylvania  
Hospital on Jefferson Barracks Reservation, St. Louis, Missouri  
Hospital in Metropolitan District, New York.

All facilities, property and equipment now in the possession of the United States Public Health Service in the hospitals above mentioned and all supplies in said hospitals and in the purveying depots at Perryville and North Chicago purchased from funds allotted to said Service by the Director of the United States Veterans' Bureau are hereby transferred to the United States Veterans' Bureau.

It is hereby directed that the Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service, the Director of the United States Veterans'

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Bureau and the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, shall each designate a representative to form a Board, which Board shall allocate to the United States Veterans' Bureau and to the United States Public Health Service, with due regard to their respective present and future needs, all supplies transferred to the United States Public Health Service by the War Department, Navy Department or other governmental agencies, in accordance with law, and said Board shall also allocate to the United States Veterans' Bureau and to the United States Public Health Service the buildings and facilities at the Purveying Depot at North Chicago, Illinois, according to their respective needs.

All leases, contracts and other obligations and instrumentalities of the United States Public Health Service in the District of Columbia or elsewhere and all records, files, documents, correspondence and other papers relating to the service rendered by the United States Public Health Service in the operation of the hospitals and purveying depots hereby transferred or relating to the medical examination, assignment to hospitals, and treatment of persons who are now or who have been patients and beneficiaries of the United States Veterans' Bureau are hereby transferred to the United States Veterans' Bureau as of the effective date of this Order.

The Secretary of the Treasury, with due regard to the needs of the United States Public Health Service, shall authorize and direct the Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service to detail to the United States Veterans' Bureau for duty until released by the Director of the Bureau, the commissioned personnel now on duty at the hospitals and purveying depots above mentioned and such other commissioned personnel as may be required for the operation of the Veterans' Hospitals and purveying depots, provided that the regular commissioned officers of the United States Public Health Service shall be subject to recall in the discretion of the Surgeon General of that Service. Such other personnel of the United States Public Health Service as are now paid from funds allotted by the Director of the United States Veterans' Bureau shall, subject to the approval of the Director of the Bureau, be transferred and given appointment in the United States Veterans' Bureau in the manner prescribed by Civil Service laws and regulations.

So that the transfer herein directed may be made with minimum inconvenience this order shall be construed to allow administrative adjustments hereunder to be made effective May 1, 1922.

This order shall not be construed as in any way limiting or curtailing the authority conferred by existing law whereby the Director of the United States Veterans' Bureau may utilize the now existing or future facilities of the United States Public Health

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Service, the War Department, the Navy Department, the Interior Department, the National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, or such other governmental facilities as may be made available for the use of the United States Veterans' Bureau.

*Warren G. Harding*

The White House,  
April 29, 1922.