

Sunday 6th

Dear Mrs. Hart -

Fortunately,
just as Dad handed
me your letter, Hyder
Rollins drove up to the
house - He was on his
way to Abilene, but as
he speaks French fluently,
I ask him to translate
the letter for me - It
came this morning, and
I am sending it to you.
I wish I could know

this little French
woman, because I know
she is wonderful - I
think she writes a
beautiful letter, and
she certainly loved
Vernon -

There must be a mistake,
however, about his being
killed on the 11th - That
battle did not ~~begin~~
until the 12th, and all
who were near, said that
it was the 15th

I can't tell you how much I appreciate your sending the pictures - I sit and look at them, though, and still can't believe - I can't believe that he is lying there beneath that snow! so far from us all -

I have tried to put him entirely out of my life - for my mother's sake - but I don't think it will ever be possible. The mother is the one who has to pay the price, however, and I would give anything if I could help you -

We certainly did enjoy Vada's visit, and only wish she could have stayed longer - I know she has told you about our plan of going to the river, and hope that it will appeal to you.

Your letter made me happy, and I am so glad to know that you feel as you do -

Lovingly -

Elva Mae -

Rouelles par Oulleville,
Haute-Marne, France,

May 26, 1919.

Madame;

I suppose that you have received my letter in which I gave you some information regarding the probable fate of the baggage of your son Vernon and in reply to your letter in which you gave me details of his death. Poor boy! his death overwhelms me as on the first day, I do not give up my dear friend! after a good many rewrites I have finally succeeded in my inquiries and I enclose for you the letter which I have received from the Red Cross. I am copying it for you because I need the original in order to make inquiries in the Commune, if it still exists. For there was much fighting in the vicinity and the saddest thing for me is what I have heard, of the battle in which he died, here at home.

Captain Cobb has just spent some hours in Rouelles and has gotten his trunk. I was away; I had gone to be present at the marriage of my brother on the Swiss frontier. He should come back on leave in June, and then I shall get a great many details. I shall beg him to be as kind as to unite his efforts with mine to ^(take up) collect, if possible, the remains that are so dear to us. [Very likely she means to assist in removing the body to America? Or possibly she fears that the cemetery has been destroyed and needs restoring.]

I am going to write to the Mayor of the Commune where he lies, and if the cemetery still exists, I shall ask Monsieur the Mayor of Nornay

to be so kind as to watch over your son as if over his very own.

I should already have done so; but my little boy Marceau — he who followed Lieutenant Vernon everywhere — cut a finger above the nail: the end entirely fell off. The child is sickly, has been a little nervous, and as he is very keenly intelligent the doctor has advised us not to let him meditate over his mutilation.

My little boy has kept heart, he consoles himself with the thought that he will go to America to become a Lieutenant and to have a red belt with a six-shooter like "my Lieutenant Hart." He speaks of it constantly and never goes to sleep without asking me if the Boches who killed him are dead. If any of them remain, he himself will kill them! I believe I've already told you this.

To-day we have lots of flowers and the children always ^{keep} ~~kept~~ a bouquet before the photograph of Lieutenant V. D. Hart. "That would please him," they say. It is the season of the "muguet" — here are two shoots of the bouquet that I thinned near him to-day. If the Commune of Normy ^{still} exists, I shall send flowers until you have recovered the body, if it is possible.

A year ago he landed in Scotland! On June 29 at 1:30 p.m. he entered my house. In what a condition! Heaven, he was sick with thirst, hunger, cold, anxiety, and discouragement. My heart aches to think of it.

I want my letter to start in the quickest possible time and I close assuring you of all my sympathy.

Cordially
Thérèse Collinet

American Red Cross

Regarding Lieut. Hart, Vernon D.,
Co. "M", 360th Regiment Infantry, 90th Division,
American E. F.

We have the honor to inform you that we have made some investigations about Lieutenant Hart. These are the details that were communicated to us:—

" Lieutenant Hart was killed by a machine-gun bullet about eleven a.m., September 11, 1918, in the St. Mihiel Sector.

" He was commanding the second platoon, which was making an advance on the enemy. The platoon had been obliged to halt for several minutes because of a violent bombardment. Lieutenant Hart was waiting in a rather shallow shell-hole. It seems that when he raised his head to look at the Front he was hit by a machine-gun bullet in the upper lip. Death was instantaneous.

" He was buried in the American Battlefield Cemetery, Commune [= township, or parish] of Norroy ([Department of] Meurthe-et-Moselle), Tomb No. 10."

We beg you, Madame, to accept the assurance of our very kindest regards.

Home Communication Section
Bureau of Home and Hospital Service.
M.L.

May 26, Evening. I ~~read~~^{learned} this evening that the 360th ~~has~~
embarked at Saint Nazaire, Tuesday the twentieth, for America. Good luck
to it!¹ On the other hand it appears that the repatriation of the
A. G. F. has been stopped until after the Peace is signed. Whatever the
occasion I am and I remain at your entire disposition for any thing
that may concern you in France; and believe in my sincere gratitude.

Henry Cottant.

[¹Perhaps a stronger phrase — I can't read her words.]

French letter
Keeps —
88-87



Mrs Julia C. Hart, —
123 W. Tenth St.,
Dallas,
Texas.