

**Form Letter from King George V to Dan Tompkins**

**April 1918**

**Hunter Library MSS 80-14**

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For ENGL 618: Research Methods in English  
Western Carolina University  
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## Introduction to the Series

This transcription and its attendant annotations, explanatory material, and bibliography were prepared by students in ENGL 618: Research Methods in English, the required gateway class for the MA in English at Western Carolina University. The learning outcomes for this class include the following:

1. Conduct appropriate, effective, and ethical scholarship
  1. Effectively find and use advanced research tools (handbooks, databases, guides, bibliographies, etc.) appropriate to a subject.
    - Students will be able to use a wide variety of such tools and evaluate those tools.
  2. Find appropriate advanced research (print and electronic scholarship) and apply that research to specific disciplinary questions or issues.
    - Students will be able to find a variety of scholarship, evaluate both the appropriateness and rigor of that scholarship, and incorporate that scholarship correctly and effectively.
  3. Develop accurate bibliographies and reference citations.
    - Students will be able to annotate, abstract, and cite materials following standard MLA format.
2. Understand the process by which the texts we use are made available.
  - Students will be able to conduct basic editorial work and evaluate the editorial work of others.

All work is presented as submitted by the students. While these students take great care with their transcriptions and annotations, errors are always possible. As these students learn throughout this class, good scholarship requires checking of sources and corroboration by authoritative sources.

It is hoped that the transcription and annotation of WCU Special Collections materials will be useful to the institution, students, scholars, and other patrons and users of WCU's Special Collections materials.

## **Introduction**

This form letter was written by Britain's King George V to the enlisted American soldiers upon the arrival of United States troops on Europe. King George had declared war on Germany four years earlier, helping set the stage for the battle between the Allies and Central Powers that the U.S. joined in 1917. This letter was received by all American soldiers entering the war and was a treasured souvenir for many soldiers.

Dan Tompkins served in WWI from 1917-1918 (Austin). Prior to serving in the war, he wrote many editorial columns in his paper, the *Jackson County Journal*, questioning America's increasing involvement in the war. However, once America had declared war, Tompkins shifted to a more patriotic tone. He believed that "hope might rise out of despair" (43). Rather than covering the progress of the war, the *Journal* focused on how Jackson County was affected. The slogan of the *Journal* during the war was "Trust in God and keep the crops growing" (43). This slogan urged Jackson county citizens toward patriotism and helping with war efforts by growing and canning food and being frugal. After the Treaty of Versailles was signed, the *Jackson County Journal* reported "Jehovah has triumphed. His people are free" (44). The end of the war filled Tompkins with hopes of peace and a promising future for America and Jackson County.

## **Editorial Statement**

In accordance with the regulations of a diplomatic edition, this text has been transcribed to reflect the authenticity of the original document as closely as possible. Any misspellings, grammatical errors, or inconsistencies have been left unchanged. The diplomatic edition style does not interfere with the readability of the document. Additionally, the placement of the letterhead and greetings attempt to replicate those from the manuscript

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WINDSOR CASTLE

Soldiers of the Unites States, the people of the British Isles welcome you on your way to take your stand beside the Armies of many Nations now fighting in the Old World the great battle for our human freedom.

The Allies will gain new heart and spirit in your company.

I wish that I could shake the hand of each one of you and bid you God speed on your mission.

George R.I.

April 1918

## Works Cited

- Austin, Suelle Reece. Dan Tompkins: Mountain Editor. 1966. Western Carolina University, Masters dissertation.
- Showalter, D. E. "World War I" 1914-1918." *The Reader's Companion to Military History*, edited by R. Cowley & G. Parker, Houghton Mifflin, 1996.  
*CredoReference*.
- Windsor Castle Letter. April 1918. Western Carolina Digital Collections, Hunter Library MSS 80-14. <https://wcu.lyrasistechnology.org/repositories/2/resources/348>.