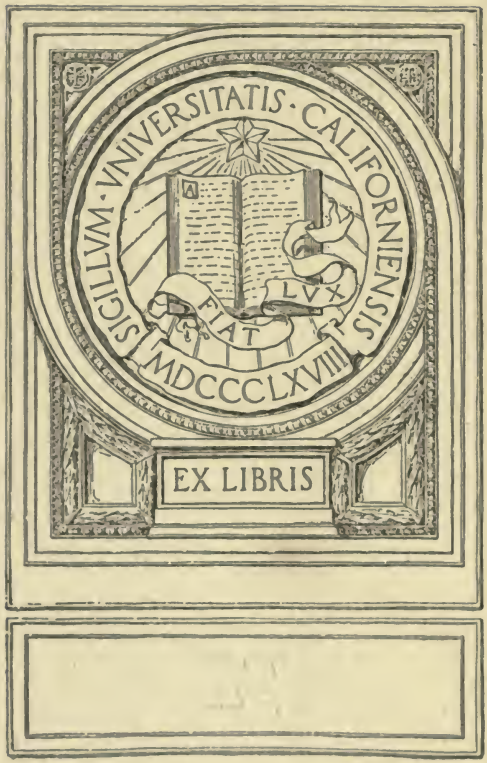
THE FIRST SHOT FOR LIBERTY

CORPORAL OSBORNE de VARILA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Corporal Osborne de Varila
Battery C, Sixth Field Artillery

THE FIRST SHOT FOR LIBERTY

THE STORY OF AN AMERICAN WHO WENT OVER WITH THE FIRST EXPEDITIONARY FORCE AND SERVED HIS COUNTRY AT THE FRONT

By

CORPORAL OSBORNE DE VARILA

Battery C, Sixth U. S. Field Artillery,
Who fired the first shot of the American Army

ILLUSTRATED

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

THE JOHN C. WINSTON COMPANY

PHILADELPHIA CHICAGO

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The First Shot for Liberty

CHAPTER I

I Join the Colors

SOME of my buddies have the superstitious belief that destiny picked me to fire the first gun for the United States in the war against the Hun.

Personally, I take very little stock in destiny, fate or any of those things of the occult, around which sentimental, half-baked novelists like to weave impossible yarns.

According to my understanding of the case, I was selected to send Uncle Sam's first shell-message to the Kaiser because I put in many weeks of hard training, and got to know every twist and wrinkle in the disposition and temperament of my French "75."

But, just to give the romantists a little consolation, I will concede that I come of a race of red-headed, freckled-faced fighters, and am proud of it.

My father, Walter de Varila, was a United

States cavalry scout in the early seventies, and helped to round up the Apaches in Arizona.

Dad was a red-head, and had freckles as big as copper cents. He was a fighter, and a good one too, as United States Army records will show. Hemmed in by savages, while on one of his scouting expeditions, he cut his way out in a running fight, using two Colt's revolvers to excellent advantage. The Indians dubbed him, "Red the Brave."

My grandfather on the paternal side fought for the Confederacy under General "Stonewall" Jackson; he had hair like burnished copper. My mother's father served the Union under Grant.

There was a red-haired de Varila with "Mad Anthony" Wayne when he stormed Stony Point, and a pair of sorrel-topped, lusty de Varilas, delivered hammer-blows for democracy of the pioneer brand, in the French Revolution.

Every one of these fighting de Varilas had freckles as well as red hair—God bless them all.

My mother was of Irish descent, and my father French.

Now, you need wonder no longer why I love to fight when the fighting is good. When you get a French and Irish combination, and breed it for several generations on the stimulating soil of the good old United States, you are bound to produce something that absolutely refuses to "let George do it," when there is a scrap on deck.

I was fifteen years old when the Kaiser and his gang of international burglars set out to crack the safes of the nations of the world, and revive the chain-gang methods of the unholy old Roman Empire.

I wanted to get into it then, honest I did, although I had just blossomed out in my first suit of long trousers, and was proudly wearing my first dollar watch.

My hair always has a habit of bristling like a cat's tail when I scent a scrap, and when the Kaiser started to reach through Belgium to get at the throat of France, I could feel that red alfalfa of mine crinkle all over.

The hair of some folks bristles when they get scared. It is just the opposite with me. When mine starts to lift up, I'm just fighting mad. My mother has told me that it was always that way with the de Varilas.

My buddies in the battery over in France used to get a lot of fun watching my hair when I got real warmed up with my French "75" gun, and was pumping shells into the Boche first line trenches. They found the effect particularly startling one day, when, in the height of a battle, I put on my gas mask. After that, they called me "The Little Red Devil."

But that is pushing ahead of the yarn.

As I started to say, I felt the old de Varila fighting itch when the German Emperor began to blast his way through Belgium, burning cities, blowing up villages, and killing women and children.

Maybe it was the blood of some of those French ancestors stirring in me and urging me to do something for France, but more

likely it was that unbeatable combination—American, Irish and French.

I stood it as long as I could, and then I told my mother I was going to Canada to enlist. I let her know I thought it was a disgrace for a fighting de Varila to be wasting his time going to school while a bunch of boodling Huns were running loose over Belgium and France, and doing murder wholesale.

I could see that she liked to hear me talk that way, for there were tears in her eyes, and she gave me one of those warm, motherly smiles that make an American boy in his first long trousers feel that he has suddenly grown three inches taller and is a man. But of course I did not realize then that no sensible mother is going to enthuse very much about sending a fifteen-year-old son into the gore of battle.

But she understood her boy all right, and didn't argue with me. She snaked a freshly baked mince pie out of the oven, and told me to scoot to the back steps and gorge myself.

It was a mighty good pie of the mother-used-to-make kind, and in the eating I almost forgot about the Kaiser and the Belgians.

A few months after mother had camouflaged the de Varila fighting itch with mince pie, I was packed off to a prep. school at Los Angeles.

I found the school a regular incubator for the war spirit.

There were a couple of English lads there who received frequent letters from relatives in the thick of the fighting in France. The Britishers used to sneer at us American lads because Uncle Sam wouldn't get into the fight for civilization.

I was obliged to lick one of them to make him stop saying rotten things about Uncle Sammy. I have often wondered if the Englisher I pummeled knows that the Reddy de Varila who blacked his eyes on that memorable day is the same de Varila who fired the first shot for Uncle Sam against the Boche. If he does, maybe he has forgiven me for the licking I gave him. I am certain that by this

time he has taken back all the unkind things he said about Uncle Sam.

I warmed up good and plenty when our Uncle Sammy told the German Ambassador to pack up his duds and clear out for Germany. I couldn't concentrate on my studies after that. The print on my lesson books became blurred, and all I could see were marching troops and maneuvering battleships.

But the bottom dropped clean out of my education when Congress bucked up to the occasion and declared the United States at war with the German Empire.

Wow! Every fighting de Varila in the whole list of de Varilas seemed to rise up before me in spirit and announce:

"Now is the time to get in, my boy."

That settled me; I determined to get into the scrap while the getting was good. I was eighteen then, and big for my age. All I needed was my mother's signature to precipitate me into the biggest war in history. I packed my suitcase, went home and told my mother I was going to enlist in the United States Army.

She was game and didn't even blink a tear. And why shouldn't she be game? She was Irish, her father had fought under Grant, and besides, she had married a de Varila.

"You are a de Varila," she said, "and I'd be ashamed of you if you didn't want to go. Your father and both your grandfathers went in when they were eighteen."

Her voice shook a little bit, and the next morning I noticed her eyes were a trifle red.

I enlisted in Battery C, Sixth Field Artillery, U. S. A., April 25, 1917, nineteen days after the United States jumped into the war.

I was as proud as a six-year-old boy just learning to whistle when the army doctors looked me over and decreed I was as sound as copper from head to toe.

I was hustled off to the recruiting barracks at Angel Island in 'Frisco Bay, and was inoculated and vaccinated. I was pretty miserable for about a week from the different brands of anti-disease virus which they pumped under my hide, and on the whole I felt like an animated fever blister. But just

as soon as the effects of the virus wore away I developed the appetite of an army mule, and took on weight like a woman who is kidding herself with one of those anti-fat treatments.

We were given full equipment, including uniform, underwear, leggings, shoes, mess kit and blankets, and shipped to Douglas, Arizona. For eight days we raw recruits were kept shut up in a quarantine camp, and after that followed weeks of arduous training on the Mexican border. It was a tough grill, but it made every man-jack of us hard as rocks.

Our training embraced bareback riding, instruction in the use of equipment, and the grooming of horses. We were given an idea of the various parts of the field pieces, and engaged in battery drill and target practice with three-inch guns. We put in a lot of work on those guns, little thinking that we would handle an entirely different kind of field piece when we arrived in France.

I became the driver of the lead team of the first section field piece, and before many

weeks had passed I could maneuver that piece like a veteran. By listening to the fiery rhetoric of some of the old-time drivers in the battery, I learned there are certain cuss words which have a special and most effective meaning to artillery horses, and I sometimes used them with wonderful results.

But say, I hate to think about the early stages of that bareback training. It was fierce, worse than anything I encountered later on the battle front. Our battery was afflicted with positively the most evil-minded, devilish-dispositioned horses on earth. Honest, I believe that German propagandists had been working among every one of the nags, for how they did hate us!

No one can tell me that the horse doesn't possess the power of thinking like a human being. The way my nag used to scheme to break my neck rivaled the machinations of the villain in a melodrama. Every time the nag tossed me into the desert sand among the cactus, he would grin and toss up his heels in the most fiendish manner.

During the first few days of the bareback riding, I hadn't the slightest desire to sit down, and couldn't have if I had wanted to. There was a little comfort in knowing I had company in my misery, for all of the raw recruits ate their chow standing up as I did. But as time wore on I became toughened to the work, and developed a contempt for a nag that lacked ginger.

All this time, as you can imagine, we were getting keyed up for war. We longed for action and waited impatiently for the day when we would receive orders to move eastward.

The latter part of July, 1917, one of my buddies rushed into my tent one night, and said excitedly:

"Reddy, we're off for France tomorrow."

I thought he was kidding me, but no, the news was buzzing all over the camp, and the next morning we "entrained for parts unknown."

We all knew what that meant—we were going to France, going overseas to put the Yankee punch into the fight against the Hun.

CHAPTER II

Off for France

WE were boiling over with the fight spirit as we slid over the rails toward the east coast.

The weeks of training in the dry, bracing air of Arizona had steel-plated our constitutions and lifted our morale to the twentieth story. Every fiber of our bodies ached for a try at the Hun; we felt then that our regiment, unaided, was capable of turning the tide against the Boche.

We gave our pals husky blows across the back and told what we were going to do when we bored our way into Berlin.

"When I get to Berlin town," said a giant artilleryman from Montana, "I'm going to drop everything else and put in my time hunting for the Kaiser. Remember now, he's my meat; I'm going to settle with that bloody old boy, and I don't want any interference."

"You've got no monopoly on this Kaiser-killin' job," retorted a gunner from Kansas. "You've got to walk fast if you beat this buddy out looking for his royal highness, the chief butcherer of Berlin."

This sort of talk may sound foolish, but it showed the excellence of our spirits. We were ready for anything—the rougher the better. I believe we were about as reckless an outfit of artillery roustabouts as ever moved toward a battle front.

The trip overland was one continuous ovation from Douglas to the Atlantic port where we embarked. At every stop, even at the tank stations, enthusiastic Yankees pulled the hero stunt on us, flowing into our trains and overwhelming us with fruit, candy and pastry. Everybody wished us God-speed in our mission against the Hun. All this, of course, lifted our war spirit several more notches.

At three o'clock one morning we piled off our trains in an Atlantic port, and marched on to a transport. The ship pulled down the channel and anchored.

We remained there for two days, and they were blamed tiresome days. We couldn't see any sense in this delay at getting a whack at the Hun. I growled with the best of them, for the Boche hate had taken a heavy grip on me. In me was a deep-seated feeling that I would not be content until I had planted both feet on French soil. I suppose some of my buddies would say that it was destiny pulling me on to fire the first gun for liberty. I'll confess that I did have a feeling I was needed on the other side to help start the ball a-rolling for Uncle Sam.

Every mother's son of our lusty crew of Boche haters gave an ear-ringing yell of joy when, at sunset on the second day, the transport weighed anchor and steamed slowly out of the harbor.

Off to the fight-country; it seemed almost too bully good to be true. I felt like kicking myself to see if it wasn't all a dream from which I would soon awaken and find myself in that rather dull prep. school in Los Angeles.

Most of us were a trifle glum as we saw the

coast-line of Yankeedom fade away in the violet mists of evening, but not long did we hearties mope. Out of the east stiff, salty breezes brought to us a smell of adventure that jacked up our spirits like draughts of sparkling wine.

Here at last, I thought, I am afloat in the sea of mystery and danger—the sea which for three years had been the theater of events which had vibrated the world.

Hundreds of miles to the eastward, I knew that destroyers prowled about on the alert for the treacherous submarine, while cruiser and battleship fleets patrolled wide, watery areas, effectually bottling up the battle squadrons of the Kaiser.

I was supremely content as I hung over the rail and watched the foam churn over the bow. About a mile ahead, a United States cruiser of the latest model rode the seas majestically, while on our flanks Yankee destroyers saucily plowed the waves.

"Uncle Sam is on the job," I said enthusiastically to my buddy, Sergeant Pasquale

Atillo, a young, intelligent New York Italian, one of the best artillerymen in the battery.

"You can bet your bottom dollar Uncle Sam is on the job, Reddy," he replied. "Mr. Submarine has about as much chance of poking in on our game as a Jersey mosquito has of drilling through one of the steel plates of this transport."

I was mighty lucky to have the sergeant for my buddy, for, aside from being one of the best chaps that ever rode an artillery caisson, he was a competent man, and it was largely through his instruction that I was promoted to corporal after the regiment landed in France.

This war has opened my eyes to the fact that the sons of our immigrants have the makings of absolutely top-notch Americans.

This is being demonstrated every day on the western battle front in Europe, where they are fighting and dying in the cause of Liberty. And before this war is over we are going to take off our hats many times to the lads who, in ante-bellum days, we rather contemptuously classed as foreigners.

Believe me, they are proving themselves Yanks of the first water, every one of them. Some of them are wobbly in their English, but they are backing up the spirit of Washington and Lafayette, just as if their ancestors had played heavy parts in the American Revolution. When we have the Kaiser interned in Sing Sing prison, and the nations of the world have returned to peaceful pursuits, we are going to show our appreciation for what these lads have done for their adopted country, or I'm a poor prophet.

There was only one fly in our ointment on the trip over, and that was the chow, which, for the first few days was about the worst ever ladled out a ship's kettle. It smelled to the heavens, did that chow, and before we were two days out, a third of the outfit were groaning in their bunks with dysentery and other ailments of the digestive organs.

We bellowed long and loud to the head chef, a big, fat darkey, who didn't know as much about cookery as a longshoreman.

We might just as well have complained to

the ship's anchor or the keel of the transport. The chow grew worse and more of the boys went to the mat.

I have a stomach as vigorous as a blast furnace, but it balked at the kind of stuff that was being served up in the mess-room. I saw I would have to do something to keep out of the sick bay, so I decided upon a little strategy.

I was on pretty good terms with an undercook by the name of Sam, and for two bits a day he supplied me with chow from the officers' mess. I let my buddy, the sergeant, in on the graft, and a little before mealtime we would steal away to the boiler-room and eat the food which had been cached there by Sam.

The best in eatables on the ship was purloined for us by the ebony rascal, and my buddy and I waxed fat and comfortable while our comrades howled in increasing volume at the steady decline of the chow.

Of course the sergeant and I had to yelp and complain with the rest so as not to excite

suspicion. If the bunch had discovered our little game they would have mobbed us. We felt like a pair of Judases at first, but under the influence of that good food our consciences became covered with rawhide. I have always noticed that a well-filled stomach is the best conscience soother in the world.

Things came to a ripping climax on the third day when the rascally chef served a concoction which he labeled, "Irish stew." The stuff was an insult to the Irish race. Several of the boys gagged and beat it to the deck rail the minute they got a whiff of the steaming, stinking mess, while downright murder, and nothing else, gleamed in the eyes of other artillery huskies.

As for me, wretch that I was, I pounded on the mess table and yelled:

"Boys, this thing has gone far enough; I'm willing to die for my country on the field of battle, but I'll be blamed if any lump-headed, fumbling, jackass of a nigger cook is going to shuffle me off with a kettle full of ptomaine bugs."

If the lads had known that only ten minutes before I had polished off a good square meal in the seclusion of the boiler-room, they would have lynched me. But they didn't know it.

My words had an immediate effect, for they were ripe for murder, pillage and everything else in the category of lawlessness.

"Right you are, Reddy," yelled a buddy from Michigan. "I move we hang that rotten cook to the yard-arm. He's out to get a sea funeral for all of us, and he'll accomplish his purpose if we don't get him first."

"There ain't any yard-arm on this ship," observed an old artilleryman, "but, boys, we can lift him to the crow's-nest and drop him off into the brine."

"To the crow's-nest with the black beggar," chorused the desperate crew, and the rush was on into the galley.

The big chap from Michigan led the band. He was a ferocious looking object as he jabbed viciously at the air with a pair of table forks.

But the chef heard the uproar and the rush of feet down the stairs. He must have suspected that a day of reckoning was coming up cannon-ball express, for he scrambled up another companionway and gained the deck. So great was his haste that he took along with him a great wooden ladle from which hung threads of dough.

The boys were hot on the trail and they reached the deck just in time to see the white coat-tails of the chef disappearing around a corner of the chart house. The chase was now on in earnest. Up and down companionways, through the main saloon, down into the engine-room and back up again to the deck, the chef ran for his life with the pack of enraged artillerymen at his heels.

Finally, exhausted, the terrified negro plunged head first into the cabin of the commanding officer, bellowing:

"Save me, for de Lord's sake, save me."

"What does this mean?" asked the colonel sternly as he surveyed the panting, perspiring artillerymen gathered about his door.

"It means just this, Colonel," spoke up a gunner who had just arrived from the mess-room. He stepped forward with a bowl of the stuff that had been served as stew.

"Just take a whiff of this, Colonel," he said. "It's the kind of chow that black rascal has been serving up ever since we left land."

The colonel did take a whiff, and he drew back with an expression of disgust.

"Well, I should say so," he observed. Then he turned to the chef and said angrily:

"That's not fit to feed to pigs; you are suspended until I have a chance to investigate."

The colonel did investigate, and he found that the men in the culinary quarters never washed the kettles. Bits of food were allowed to lay in the bottom of the pots and decompose. Fresh food was put right in on top of this mess, cooked and served up to the boys. It's a wonder that the ptomaine bugs didn't get us all.

The chef was laid off the job for the rest of the voyage, and we had no further trouble

with the chow. However, the sergeant and I continued to get our private stock from the boiler-room cache.

The day after the chef was fired out of the galley in high disgrace, a shrill call rang out from one of the lookouts of the transport!

"Periscope on the port bow."

CHAPTER III

With Pershing in France

A DYNAMIC thrill ran through every mother's son of us.

Here, at last, we were face to face with that dread mechanical monster of the deep—the German submarine.

Stinging with excitement, we crowded to the rail and strained our eyes to port over the dancing sea.

All was a-bustle on the transport; officers issued sharp, quick orders, while the gunners swung their pieces and felt for the range. Sailors in blue yanked the lids from munition boxes and lifted out shells.

The cruiser ahead swung about, pointed her prow due north, and forged along swiftly in response to the quickening of her engines. The guarding destroyers darted about like eager hounds searching for a quarry that had temporarily eluded them.

"This is the life," I heard a comrade say through gritted teeth.

I stood tense, expecting every second to hear a shell go screeching out into the brine.

About a quarter of a mile away I could see something sticking up out of the sea.

"That rubberin' periscope," I thought; "I hope we make a direct hit."

Then came the sickening reaction.

"False alarm; nothing but one of those d——n porpoises," cried the lookout, lowering his glasses.

A groan of disgust ran through the ship.

"Wouldn't it make you sick?" observed a Californian. "Here we were all primed for the best movie of our lives, and the lights go out and the screen goes on the blink. I'd like to skin that hell of a porpoise."

As for me, I was as mad as a devil, for I felt that our trip across would not be complete without a good warm argument with one of Germany's U-boats.

Anyway, that was our introduction to the much-talked-of submarine zone.

A porpoise at a distance does look very much like a spying periscope, and the pesky mammals fooled our lookouts several times before we reached France. But then, these instances only showed that our men were ever on the alert for the Kaiser's under-the-sea dogs.

Our officers took no chances while we were passing through the territory of the U-boat. For three nights the transport traveled without lights, and our guardians, the cruiser and the destroyers, redoubled their vigilance. We were routed out of our bunks at three A. M. on each of those three days, and were compelled to remain on deck until seven A. M. with our life preservers buckled on and our shoes and trousers unlaced. The favorite time for the average submarine to attack is around dawn.

We didn't sight a single U-boat all the way over, but we had a lot of fun at the expense of these sneaking craft. Naturally we were all thinking about subs when we entered the zone, and hardly an hour would pass but that some jokester would yell:

"Hey, boys, there's a sub."

Then, we fall guys would crowd to the rail and put our eyes out looking for periscopes.

I was taking my turn at poker one day around noon when the submarine chestnut came along and caught me an awful wallop. My hand was a pretty good one—well it was nothing less than a royal flush, something which had never before rubbed acquaintance with me during my brief experience as a poker player.

I was about to proceed with this poker knockout, when a voice screeched at my elbow:

"Holy smoke, lads, here comes a torpedo; going to hit us 'midships.'"

Zowie! I was on my feet in an instant, dashing my cards on the table. The other players followed suit.

We did our little Marathon to rail, only to find that we had been properly guyed again.

When we returned to the table, of course we found the cards all mixed up, and had to make a new deal. I spent an hour looking

for the jokester, but he was wise enough to stay out of sight until I had cooled down.

One of the breeziest, brightest little personalities on the ship was our chaplain, a man by the name of Dixon from Illinois. That fellow was just one human bottle of sunshine, with the cork out so that the glad stuff could pour out and warm up the whole boat.

Well, the chaplain sure did love that song, "Uncle Sammy." Every time he found a bunch of us together he would say with one of his blithe smiles:

"A cigarette for every boy who will sing 'Uncle Sammy.'"

We would obediently yelp all three verses of the song, and after we had roared forth the last stanza, the little chaplain would deal out the cigarettes. We dubbed him "Uncle Sammy," though he didn't look any more like Uncle Sam than the man in the moon. He really looked like a pocket edition of Theodore Roosevelt, with his eye-glasses, moustache and gleaming teeth, which he displayed abundantly when he smiled.

It was the ambition of the chaplain to have us go ashore in France singing the "Marseillaise" in French, and he drilled us with this song every afternoon. There were a few in the outfit who had good voices, but the majority couldn't have qualified for the choir of the corner church in Podunk. And the way we slipped and slid over those French words would have worn the nap off any ordinary man's patience. But the chaplain had patience that made Job's seem thin in comparison. He kept at us hammer and tongs until once in a while we made a direct hit on a French word. The chaplain would reward us with one of his Rooseveltian smiles and hand around the smokes.

The ship was a-throb with excitement on August 13th when we sighted a thin blue line on the horizon—the coast of France.

"Hip! hip! hurrah! France," yelled a gunner, and we joined him in a deafening roar of cheering.

"Now for the Hun," I said to my buddy, the sergeant.

"We'll soon be in his bailiwick," he replied with a glad grin.

Then my buddy said something which I have thought of a good deal since that memorable day.

"Do you know, Reddy," he said, "I believe you are going to do well over here."

"Not any better than yourself or anybody else," I replied, trying to be modest.

"Oh, I don't know," he said with an air of seriousness: "I've a hunch you are going to do something big."

"Can that stuff, Buddy," I observed, trying not to show my pleasure at his words.

On the day after I opened the war for Uncle Sam, my friend the sergeant grasped me by the hand and said:

"Didn't I tell you, old man, you were going to do something real over here?"

But that is getting ahead of my story.

The excitement grew as our transport swept nearer the French coast. Soon we could make out dozens of neat little white houses with red tile roofs—all against a

background of beautiful green. It was a sight good for sore eyes.

A warlike touch was given the scene as we neared the entrance of the harbor.

Two big French airplanes advanced to meet us, flying low and scanning the water closely for hostile submarines. It was a dangerous spot, the entrance of that harbor. Only the day before we learned later, a German U-boat had sneaked close in and sunk a supply ship.

CHAPTER IV

A Royal Welcome

IT was evident that our approach had been well heralded, for the docks were dense with people, and on public buildings, dwellings and warehouses, hundreds of American and French flags were snapping to the breeze.

Quaint little French fishing boats swarmed about the transport, and the occupants of these craft were the first to greet us.

These fishermen were very picturesque in their rakish, red tam-o-shanters and corduroy trousers rolled up to the knee. They wore a red scarf about the waist, and their feet were bare. The faces of these foreign-looking men were wreathed in smiles; they jabbered and gesticulated after the manner of the French, shrieking questions at us, which we did not in the least understand.

One of them became so excited that he

forgot to steer his boat, and the craft rammed another, and was upset, throwing the fisherman into the water. We threw a line to the capsized party and pulled him dripping and gasping to the deck of the transport. We gave him a hilarious reception, slapping his damp back and shouting, "Howdy, Frenchy?" He replied with a torrent of enthusiasm in his own language, and a wide smile unfolded under his queer little eyebrow of a moustache when we filled his hand with American coins. He stayed on the boat until we docked and did not seem to worry in the least about the fate of his smack which he had left upset in the harbor.

In the meantime, the French aircraft had wheeled about and were following the transport, serving as a sort of rear guard. The United States cruiser rode proudly ahead and the destroyers steamed behind us.

It sounded pleasant and warlike to hear the buzzing of the motors aloft. We yelled greetings to the airmen, and they peered at us through their goggles and waved in reply.

They were flying so low that we could almost talk to them.

Dense crowds were lined up on both banks as we passed through the first locks. There were quaintly dressed peasant women who made me think of the pictures of Puritan dames in my history book back in 'Frisco. They wore prim white caps, exceedingly tight bodices, wide skirts and wooden shoes. The little girls were pocket editions of their mothers and big sisters.

The men were attired in velveteen coats, corduroy trousers and sabots. The whole scene put me in mind of a grand opera I had once attended in 'Frisco.

The populace, so as to speak, went wild as we slipped through the locks, our band playing alternately the "Star Spangled Banner," and the "Marseillaise."

Men ripped their gaudy scarfs from their waists and waved them frantically; women and girls fluttered their handkerchiefs, and American and French flags were in evidence everywhere.

We could easily gather by the actions of these good people that we were the best things they had looked upon for a long time. There was something pathetic and childish about their joy. Many of them sobbed like children, they felt so glad to see us Yanks, and I did not blame them when I thought of what they had been through the past three years.

Sons, brothers and fathers from this city had died by the thousand on the front line, along with other loyal Frenchmen. In the coming of the Americans these poor folks saw hope and a prospect of a turning of the tide against the invading Boche.

Our fighting edge was sharpened when we glimpsed the depth of their welcome. We couldn't understand a single syllable of the jargon they tossed to us, but we took it for granted that it was all complimentary and consoled them with good old United States.

"Take heart, you folks, for we're going to paste hell out of the Boches," yelled an artilleryman.

"Uncle Sam is on the job now," cried another Yank.

We docked that night, but were not allowed to go ashore. But the Frenchies seemed determined that we should feel the welcome of France, even though we were penned up aboard ship. They swamped us with baskets of fruit and bouquets of flowers. Soon the old transport looked like a florist shop, and we consumed fruit until we were threatened with colic.

The Yankee spirit of exploration and adventure got the best of some of the boys that night, and they slid down ropes to the dock. Some of them were grabbed by the marine sentries and returned to the ship, but most of them penetrated into the city, returning before morning and bringing glowing reports of the hospitality of the French.

"Great place, this France," said one of the night prowlers, a little thickly, upon his return. "Folks in this burg wouldn't let me pay for a blamed thing; never saw so much wine in my life. It must rain booze in these parts."

We landed the following day—August 14, 1917, and I shall never forget the event. At this same port, the first detachment of General Pershing's forces put in nearly two months previous, on June 26, 1917, and they were received like a lot of gods. But the novelty of seeing Americans had not yet worn off, and the inhabitants of the port gave us quite as rousing a reception as they did the first arrivals.

It was a clear, beautiful morning as we marched down the gangplanks, singing the "Marseillaise" with an ardor that nearly prostrated "Uncle Sammy," our chaplain, with pride and joy.

Well, say, those Frenchies fairly mobbed us. Shouting, "Vive le Amerique," they made for us as if we were something good to eat.

The first thing I knew, a middle-aged woman in peasant costume had swung her arms around my neck and was kissing me first on one cheek and then another. Anybody would have thought I was a long-lost son. I tried to pry her loose, but she had a

grip like iron, and I had to grin and bear it until she let go.

But the thing was not over by any means; it now developed into a matter of taking turns. No sooner had the elderly woman let go my neck, when another pair of arms flopped around my collar, and I started to run, but I changed my mind when I got a good look.

And you would have changed your mind too if you had been in my place. The prettiest girl in France had annexed herself to my neck. My eyes told me that there couldn't be a prettier girl in France than she was. Her hair was as black as a crow's wing; her eyes were big and brown, and her red lips pouted up at me invitingly.

I am an American and do things in a hurry. I gave her a smack that must have been heard at the battery in New York. She blushed and then kissed me on both cheeks and let go. And I am frank to say I was sorry to see her go.

The next in the line-up was an excitable, Frenchy-looking chap with a goatee and

eyeglasses. He had his lips pursed up like an interrogation point, and he was making for me, full steam up. I blocked his approach with a twist of my elbow, for I suspected his design.

"Nothing doing, Frenchy," I said. "Over where we come from men don't kiss each other."

He evidently didn't understand and tried to sneak in under my guard, but I shook a fist warningly in his face.

"Lay off," I yelled, "or I'll soak you one." He saw I meant business and abandoned his kissing offensive.

Of course I knew it was the custom of everybody in France to kiss, but I made up my mind not to get used to men saluting each other on the cheek

That night we slept in an open field in our blankets. It was bully to feel solid ground once more and know that we were close to the fighting zone.

We remained there a week, stretching our legs and resting from our voyage. Of course

we were impatient at the delay, for we wanted to beat it to the front immediately and take a hand in the big scrap

We were elated at the end of the week when we were loaded into funny little box cars, which were about half the size of the American brand. We were packed so tightly that we barely had standing room, and had to shove and squirm before we could create space big enough to sit down. Nevertheless we were in high spirits and were glad to be on the move.

We gambled for the positions at the side doors, and I was lucky enough to win a seat in the open several times. Our chow on the trip consisted of corn beef, tomatoes and hardtack, and at some of the stations on the route we received handouts of steaming hot coffee.

We passed through a pretty rolling country, dotted with towns and villages. We saw very few young men, for most of them were at the front doing their bit against the Hun. The work on the farms was being done mostly

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WE GAMBLED FOR POSITIONS AT THE SIDE DOORS

by old men, women and children. The inhabitants gathered at every station to see us pass through.

After traveling for three days we reached the end of the line, where American auto trucks took us to the best artillery barracks in France. That night we hit the hay on real mattresses and real pillows.

But, best of all, we were near the front line, and could hear the boom of heavy guns.

Every one of us felt a thrill when we realized that only a few miles away, French batteries were potting away at the Germans.

We were all eager to start at once for our positions behind the French line, but such a happy fate was not in store for us. We learned, to our grief, the next day that we would have to undergo many weeks of stiff grilling under the most exacting French artillery instructors before we would be allowed to pepper away at the hated Boche.

CHAPTER V

Over the Hurdles

OUR barracks were located in a village near the Swiss border. It was a hilly, wooded country, and the air was as bracing as new wine.

There was not the slightest delay in starting our training. The morning after our arrival we drew French horses and French guns and caissons, and hiked to a park where some French artillery instructors were awaiting us.

Our first work was to break the horses to harness. It was the hardest job I ever tackled, for the nags didn't understand a word of English. So we had to start right in and teach those animals how to take orders in the language of the United States.

Some of the fellows had brought French grammars over with them, and they tried out some of the French words on the horses. But their pronunciation was so punk that the

nags didn't savvy at all. As driver of the lead piece, I had my troubles, as you can well imagine.

The horse may be the most intelligent of the beasts, as the naturalist tells us, but he is no linguist, and can't carry more than one language in his noodle at the same time. Before you can graft a new lingo into his brain you have to kill off the old one, and that is the method I followed with my nags. I gave orders that nothing but United States be talked to the horses, and every time I caught a Frenchy "parlevoing" to them I blew up and asked him what in thunder he meant by butting in on my educational system. I guess the first United States words the nags learned were "damn" and "hell," for I confess I used both pretty freely at the start of the instruction.

I had to laugh when I looked at the French 75-millimeter guns, they seemed so small and inferior when compared with our American field pieces.

"If we have to use those toys," I thought,

"the Huns won't do a thing to us when we get into action."

But I underwent a radical change of opinion after several days of target practice with the little fire-eaters. I found that we could do faster and more accurate work with them than with the more warlike looking American pieces. It is certain that the Germans know to their cost what the little "75's" are capable of doing.

With my buddy, the sergeant, to help me, I put in some hard work on the guns, practicing with the sights and getting familiar with the parts. It was my ambition to be able to send accurate shell messages into Boche-land. My buddy was enthusiastic, and said he had never seen anybody get along so fast.

"I can't get it out of my head, Reddy," he said, "that you are going to make your mark over here."

"You make me blush, old top," I replied. But his words gave me a lot of encouragement, although I knew that he was just trying to make me feel good.

The hard work soon won its reward, for on September 1, 1917, I was made a cannoneer. I was the proudest buddy in the whole American army when I got that boost.

On the day of my promotion I was turned over to a little French sergeant, who had the reputation of being one of the best artillerymen in France. His English was insignificant, but his gestures were eloquent, and I picked up fast under him. He knew the French "75" like a jeweler knows a watch. Among the things I learned from him was how to clean and how to disable the gun in case it was threatened with capture by the Huns. I learned to love that little "75" as a man loves his horse or his dog.

A few days later I was made a corporal, and then my joy was complete. I wouldn't have changed jobs with the chief marshal of the French army. In a battery the corporal sets the deflection, sees that the cross hair is on the target and fires the gun. Already I had visions of mashing in Boche front-line trenches and making direct hits on German

munition dumps. I wanted to move my little "75" right up to the front line at once and begin the devilment.

The way we Yanks progressed with the guns amazed our French instructors. It may sound like boasting, but it is a fact that in a few weeks we learned all they knew, and in target practice we dumbfounded them by the number of our direct hits. It is true that the American gunners are the best in the world. They have a truer eye, a steadier hand and work more quickly and accurately than the artillerymen of any other nation. We demonstrated that after we had been on the front line but a few days, and when American batteries get going good over there, Germany is going to realize that the Yanks are on the job. American gunners are going to deliver the knockout to Von Hindenburg's forces.

Now I will give you a little idea of our every-day life in that little French village on the Swiss border. Reveille sounded at 4 A. M., and we bounded out of our bunks and had

cold showers. We engaged in setting-up exercises until 6 A. M., when mess was served. Gun drill started at 7 o'clock and lasted until 11.30 A. M. Then we knocked off for mess again, and went back to the guns at 1 o'clock, drilling until 6 P. M., when we had the evening meal. After that we were free until 4 o'clock the next morning.

The villagers used us very generously until some of the artillerymen learned to speak French fairly well and put them wise to the pay we were getting. Then they thought every American soldier was a millionaire and began to soak us in the matter of prices. I heard a story which illustrates the price-gouging of Americans pretty well.

A French soldier went into a shop in the village and asked the price of a souvenir handkerchief.

"Five francs," said the shopkeeper.

"Too high," grunted the Frenchman, and he walked out.

A Canadian soldier went in and priced the same handkerchief; he was told he could

have it for twenty-five francs. He left without buying.

An American soldier was the next to call.

"How much?" asked the Yankee, picking up the handkerchief which had been turned down by the Frenchman and the Canadian.

"Fifty francs," replied the shopkeeper, without the flicker of an eyelid.

"Give me five of them," said the Yank, reaching for his wallet.

The village where we were billeted had short, crooked, narrow streets. Most of the houses were plain, bare structures made of stone, covered with plaster. The roofs were all of tile. In the center of the village was a church, with a figure of the Virgin set in the front of the building, and a statue of Jeanne d' Arc in a little plot in the back. There were always wreaths of flowers at the feet of both these statues.

The houses and stables were built around a courtyard, and the courtyard is used for dumping refuse. Around this courtyard centers the activities of each family unit.

Like as not, the cow resides next door to the parlor, and the horse next to the kitchen. This may be a very handy arrangement, but from a standpoint of sanitation it cannot be praised.

The convenience of this grouping of buildings about a courtyard was demonstrated to me one day while calling on a mademoiselle. She and I were endeavoring to establish a line of communication with the aid of a French grammar, when her mother stepped into the parlor and announced that it was time to milk the cow. The girl took a bucket from a hook, opened a door, and there we were looking right into the stable where the cow stood placidly chewing its cud. When she had finished milking we returned to the parlor and resumed our efforts to understand each other. In consequence of this courtyard arrangement the houses in the village were constantly filled with whiffs from the cow barn, horse stable, the piggery and the hen yard.

In that village horses, cows, pigs, hens and geese were privileged individuals, for they roamed the streets and alleys at will.

The shopkeepers evidently didn't believe in advertising, for they had no signs over their places of business. When I first hit the village I had a hard time deciding which was a store and which was a dwelling.

We were never at loss for ways to amuse ourselves. In good weather we played baseball or duck-on-a-rock in a field back of the barracks, and when it rained we'd get under shelter and shoot craps or play cards.

After supper we could do as we pleased; sometimes we would call on a mademoiselle, or if things lagged we would drift into the Y. M. C. A. hut, where they had games of all sorts, a talking machine and writing materials. Those Y. M. C. A. huts are certainly a godsend to the boys over across. They are doing wonders in the way of boosting the morale of the army.

Sometimes on Sundays we would procure passes and go to a nearby city. At first we had some amusing experiences on these trips because of our ignorance of the language.

On one occasion I became lost because I

didn't know enough French to find my way back to camp. I guess I would be still wandering about the countryside if I hadn't encountered a French sergeant who knew English very well.

Soon after we were billeted in the village we received three months' pay all in a lump, and maybe we didn't make things hum for a while. Wine was very cheap in that part of the country, and at first many of us drank more than was good for us. It was a very sweet wine and didn't at all agree with the American brand of digestive organs. Most of us became sensible and knocked off on it all together. We quickly realized that if we wanted to retain our pep we must be temperate.

On October 19, 1917, a jolt of joy was thrown into our outfit when the orders came to proceed with speed to the front-line trenches.

At last we were going into action and start things going for Uncle Sam.

CHAPTER VI

Off to the Front

EVERY one of us bristled with the electricity of excitement as preparations were speeded for the departure to the front.

Every man in the outfit was tickled to death. We were going to get a chance to show how Yankee gunners could fight.

"We'll make the Kaiser's eyes pop when we start tossing shrapnel over the plate," a tough little gunner said to me in high glee.

"Righto," I grinned, every whit as pleased as he was.

We made a night hike of twenty-two miles with horses, guns and caissons. It was a chilly march, and there were oceans of mud in which the caissons wallowed to the hub. But we pushed and tugged, and kept the line winding forward through sleepy villages and over open country. Only the horses

minded the march, and they wouldn't have minded could they have understood, we were sure of that.

We were blithe as larks, though every little while we would have to jump from horses or gun carriages and help a stalled wheel. So hilariously happy were we that we were advancing toward Boche-land, that we were almost unconscious of the mud and cold. A hundred times did we make the countryside echo with our battle hymn.

"The artillery, the artillery, with dirt behind our ears.
The artillery, the artillery, they can't get any beer.
The cavalry, the infantry and the bloody engineers,
Why, they couldn't lick the artillery in a hundred thousand years."

Every mile we advanced our spirits climbed higher and so did our appetites. In the middle of the hike we stopped for chow, which was served from a rolling kitchen. Beans, bacon, rice, bread and coffee was the ménu, and we devoured the rations like a pack of hungry wolves.

We were soon on our way again, singing

with such ardor that villagers poked their heads out of windows and doors to see what it was all about. They cheered and shouted encouragement in their native tongue when they learned that we were the first American artillery to start for the front.

An old woman whose husband and five sons had given their lives to France came forth from her little cottage, and offered the fervent prayer that we would smite the Huns hard when we reached the front.

The picture of her as she stood under a flickering street lamp is still vivid in my memory. She raised her wrinkled hands heavenward and poured forth invective against the Germans. Curse after curse this mother of France called down upon the Kaiser and his wicked gang.

The old woman smiled a happy smile and clasped her hands thankfully when we promised her we would leave no stone unturned in the effort to avenge the death of her husband and sons.

"God bless you Americans," she cried.

"The Almighty sent you over here to save France from those devils, the Huns."

Swiftly we picked up hate for the Hun on that memorable hike.

In a village five miles further on we paused for a few minutes to rest. Here a woman approached us with a boy about six years old.

"You are Americans," she said with blazing eyes, "and I want to give you inspiration to fight."

She bent over and lifted up the arms of the boy by her side.

"Look," she said in a cold, even voice, "this is what the Boches did to my little son."

We hardened artillerymen gurgled with horror at what we saw.

My God! The little lad's hands had been chopped off at the wrist. I had heard of such cases, but had never really credited them, but here was one right before my very eyes.

A murmur of rage went up from the Yanks grouped about.

"Those beasts!" growled a gunner. "We'll

send those devils back to hell, where they belong."

Other Yanks expressed their shocked feelings in a manner quite as vitriolic.

"The Boches," said the mother with a face full of tragedy, "crippled my boy so that he could never take up arms against Germany. That is how they are fighting France—they are making war against children as well as men. They stole my fifteen-year-old daughter, and I have no knowledge of her fate. It would make me happy if I knew she was dead."

We all swore then and there that we would make the Boches pay, and, thank God, we made good our promise before we left France.

For many a long mile after we dropped that little village we were sobered by the thought of the boy with his hands lopped off at the wrist. The sight of the lad forced upon me the knowledge that America was indeed in the war for the cause of humanity and that the world would not be safe until we had whipped the Germans to their knees.

We arrived at a poky little village through which ran a railroad. Our hike was over, and we were not sorry, for we were a little weary.

We boarded box cars just like the little ones which had taken us into the interior shortly after our arrival in France. When the horses, guns, caissons and other equipment had been loaded aboard, the engine gave an asthmatic little toot and off we started.

It was a smelly, itchy, jolty trip all the way through. When the train bumped over a bum switch, as it often did, or when you managed to squeeze your head through the flock of heads at one of the side doors of these box car Pullmans, you could feel and see that you were moving—somewhere.

I have said that it was an itchy trip. It was. I started to scratch good at about dawn, and I noticed that others were doing the same thing.

"I wonder what makes me itch so?" I said to a fellow gunner.

"I'll be blamed if I know," he replied, trying to reach an isolated area on his back. "I've got the same thing. I believe it's prickly heat."

"Prickly heat nothing," I said; "you don't get prickly heat this kind of weather."

A little later we discovered the cause of the itch; we had taken on a crop of the regulation war lice which the French call "cooties." We were in the war at last.

The town of Nancy was our destination, and we arrived there October 20, 1917.

We received our first real taste of war as we pulled into that town.

The place was in the process of being bombarded by a flock of Boche airmen. The enemy raiders were dropping tons of bombs, and the place was rocking and trembling from the explosions. Every time a bomb landed, a great crater was opened in a street, or some building crumbled. Between the big explosions we could hear the popping of French anti-aircraft guns. We could see the shrapnel from these guns burst around the

raiders. One of the enemy planes was hit and it came hurtling downward like a comet, leaving a trail of smoke and flame.

French fliers mounted to meet the enemy, and there followed a thrilling aerial combat over the city. The daring of those French airmen was amazing. They drove straight at the foe, pouring a stream of machine-gun bullets at the Boches. I saw a French machine make a thrilling nose dive and take up a position in the rear of a German plane, sending drum after drum of nickel bullets into the enemy. The Boche went wobbly under the galling fire, turned a fearful somersault and shot straight down to earth like a wounded bird. The noise was terrific and death lurked everywhere, but we were glad to be there. It was the first time we had been under fire, but there wasn't a nervous Yank in the outfit.

While the raid was going on we were unloading our equipment as fast as possible. The raiders quickly got a line on us, for two Boche machines darted in our direction and

hovered over us. Things became tense for us, I can tell you, when a great bomb shot downward from one of the machines. There was every indication that it would land in the midst of our outfit.

CHAPTER VII

The First Shot for Liberty

FATE was kind to us, for the bomb hit about fifty yards in our rear, and exploded with a terrible racket, spraying us with gravel.

Not one of us received the slightest hurt, though a few were stunned by the concussion. That bomb opened up a big enough hole to use for the basement of a twenty-story building.

We whipped up our horses and dashed forward. Several French planes darted to our rescue and quickly chased the Boche airmen out of our bailiwick. We yelled out satisfaction when we saw one of the German planes go wobbling back behind the Boche lines. Before we reached the outskirts of Nancy, the French had cleared the skies of German fighting planes. Ever since I saw that air battle, which was my first, I have

entertained a mighty respect for the courage of the French fliers. They don't know what fear is, and they take all kinds of chances.

We pulled into camp at seven o'clock that night, a fagged-out bunch of Yanks. We knew we were very close to the front line, for the earth rocked continuously from heavy artillery fire. We groomed our horses and had chow at about nine o'clock. The camp was a filthy place. We laid down that night on six inches of straw which was inhabited by three or four generations of cooties. When we woke up the next morning we found that the lice had taken possession of us body and soul. We sat in the sun and hunted through our undershirts for the pests, but it was a hopeless job. While you were killing one, fifty were born. Eventually we succumbed to the odds, and gave it up.

That morning we moved up to the front with a light pack, consisting of one suit of underwear, three pairs of socks and three blankets.

We were billeted in a village about a mile

and a half behind the first line. About every twenty minutes the Germans would rake the main street of this village with machine guns, and twice a day they would shell the place.

Under these conditions you can well imagine that the main street was a main thoroughfare in name only. Nobody used it for walking purposes unless they had to. When we first went into the village we were so reckless about walking in the street that the officers were obliged to caution us continually. I sneered at the danger on the first day, and told everybody I was going to cross that street, machine guns or no machine guns. I got over all right, but when I started back, hell broke loose. The Germans turned a storm of nickel bullets down the thoroughfare, and I lost no time in flattening myself against the pavement until the hail of death had ceased. After that, when I wanted to cross the street, I went over on my hands and knees so that the enemy gunners couldn't get a line on me.

The Huns made a practice of shelling the

town at about noon and at nightfall. We could almost tell to the minute when the methodical Boches would start hell going, and we arranged our chow hours so that the shelling would not interfere with our digestions. Most of the buildings in the town had been reduced to mere shells, but the Germans kept peppering at them as if it was their desire to knock down the last brick.

There were about twenty-five inhabitants left in the town, and most of them were old; most of them lived in the cellars of shell-battered homesteads. An old woman there had lost three sons in the war; she still retained a cow, a pig and several hens. When the Huns tossed over shells she philosophically retired to her cellar and remained there until the death-shower was over.

Of course, as you can imagine, each of the batteries of our regiment coveted the honor of firing the first gun for Uncle Sam. We made up our minds that our battery, and no other, would do the trick.

But we got a bad shock on the night of

October 22d when information reached us that another battery was out to steal the bacon. We howled with rage and apprehension when we got the news.

"Are we going to let them get away with it?" cried a gunner.

"We'd be a sick lot of hounds, if we did," I said.

Our battery commander was terribly aroused, for he had set his heart on that first shot. But it was a bad night for any kind of an operation. Rain fell with tropical violence, and mud lay everywhere, a foot or more in depth.

"If you lads have the guts," said our commander, "we'll fire that first shot. Who will volunteer to pull the gun into position by hand?"

Every man-jack in the battery volunteered with a whoop.

It was a job that would have taxed the utmost strength and courage of any body of men. Before the gun could be placed in position to fire the first shot, we must drag

it through the storm and pitchy darkness, for a distance of three-quarters of a mile over an almost impassable country—a swamp, pocked with mud-choked shell holes.

But we huskies were fired by the fiercest kind of enthusiasm, and the thought that another battery was planning to cut in ahead of us was just the incentive we needed. So we bent to our task with a will

Though the night was black as ink, we were not allowed lanterns to light our way over the quagmire. The flash of a light would have immediately drawn fire from the batteries of the enemy.

So we stumbled along through the rain and muck, perspiring and cursing at our job, but not relaxing one iota in our determination to land the gun in a place where we could pot the Hun.

I was filled with a kind of fierce exhilaration, as I tugged and pulled until I thought my arms would jump from their sockets. If we landed the gun into position I knew I would be the one to fire it, and the very thought of

sending the first shot over for Uncle Sammy made my noodle swim with joy. Drenched with muck and rain, as I was, I could hardly refrain from giving whoop after whoop of happiness.

Once I stumbled and plunged into a shell hole filled to the brim with soft, slimy mud, worse than quicksand. I sank to my armpits, and would have undoubtedly slipped in over my head, had not a comrade grabbed me by the hair and pulled me to safety.

A little later, another man sank into one of these death traps, and we had to feel around quite a bit in the darkness before we located him. He was actually gurgling with the mud to his lips when we yanked him out. Several times the gun narrowly escaped dropping into one of the craters, and if it had, the jig would have been up for that night, and probably I would have never fired the first gun.

Brush and stumps of trees impeded our progress. Frequently we would fall over these obstructions, and would curse in regu-

lation United States while we picked ourselves up and felt for the gun ropes again. We barked our chins, tore our uniforms and lost our tempers, but our determination remained as iron-clad.

I felt that I would rather die than fail in the attempt to place that little "75" in position.

Thoughts of the ambition of the rival battery spurred all of us to give the best in us.

"Going to beat us to it, are they?" growled an artilleryman who had barked his shins against obstructions until they bled. "Well, they have a fat chance with this bunch of huskies on the job."

"If we don't fire the first shot, then nobody will," said another buddy, puffing at the gun ropes.

Our hands were raw from pulling at the rough ropes and the cold rain had chilled us to the bone. A round of cigarettes would have helped a lot, but the commander had issued a rigid order against smoking.

We began to take hope when we reached the foot of a little hill.

Our objective was the crest of that hill, and with a mighty spurt we rushed the gun to the top.

Then we flopped in an utter stage of exhaustion. I fell on my back and lay there panting like a fagged-out purp. Every bone and muscle in my body howled with weariness, but I was happy—terribly happy—for I felt that I was near the crowning event of my career as a soldier of Uncle Sam, the firing of the first gun in the war for the United States. It had taken us four hours to pull that gun over the marsh.

In a pouring rain, six of us slept alongside of the gun which was shortly to make history for the world.

We were up at five o'clock, looking eagerly toward the enemy's country. It was still rainy and misty, and we could not see more than three hundred yards away. We carried a few rounds of ammunition over to our position and awaited developments.

Captain I. R. McLendon came up at six o'clock. He was accompanied by a French colonel who had the firing data.

"Battery, attention!" called the battery commander in a cool, even voice.

The momentous event was close at hand—the official opening of the war for Uncle Sam against Germany.

I thrilled from head to toe, but my head was cool and my hand steady.

The gun was wheeled into position, its business end pointing toward Germany. There was barely enough light for us to read the markings on the little piece.

The battery commander gave the word to the sergeant and the sights were set.

"Use second pieces only," rapped out the commander.

A gunner cut the fuse of a shrapnel to meet the requirements of the order, and the shell was placed in the breech of the little "75" by a non-commissioned officer.

"Range 5,500 yards," snapped the commander.

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THE EMPTY CARTRIDGE FROM WHICH THE FIRST SHOT WAS FIRED

I set the deflection and saw that the cross-hair was on the target.

I was tingling from head to foot with the tensity of the moment.

There was a brief pause, during which every mother's son of us were on our toes.

"Fire!" rasped out the commander.

Filled with a thousand conflicting emotions, I pulled the lanyard of the little spitfire, and America's first shot of the war went screaming into German territory.

CHAPTER VIII

The Infantry in Action

THE savage departure of that projectile for the German lines was as sweet music to our ears.

It was a shrieking battle-hymn without words.

The warning scream of that eighteen pounds of shrapnel served formal notice on the Kaiser that the United States had started in on the job of exacting retribution for the sinking of the "Lusitania," the rape of Belgium, and a thousand other outrages committed against civilization by Germany since she set out to rule the world by the sword.

There was not an American within sound-range who did not whoop with exultation when the first shot for liberty rang forth. It was an event akin to the ringing of the old Liberty Bell in '76, and it wouldn't have sur-

prised me a bit if that little French "75" had cracked from pure joy, just as the beloved bell in Philadelphia did when it tolled forth the song of American liberty. The little French gun really had more excuse for cracking, for it spoke for world liberty, while our Yankee bell pealed for just one country. But I'll bet anything the old bell in Philadelphia vibrated from pure delight and sympathy when that shot was fired.

As for me, I got the reaction when my hand left the lanyard. I shut my eyes to stop the dizziness, but in a minute I opened them again and tried to see through the mist into No Man's Land. I would have given a year's pay just then to have observed where the shell struck, but I couldn't see through the mist that enveloped the German line.

The shell as it ricochetted through the fog probably had no special meaning to the Germans crouched in their trenches across No Man's Land.

It was just one blast in a chorus of blasts, for French guns were barking away at the

Huns all along the line. If the Boches had grasped the significance of the shot they would probably have been a glum lot of creatures, and undoubtedly their beer would have gone bitter in their mouths.

I want all loyal Americans to paste it in their hats that it was C Battery, Sixth United States Field Artillery, that fired that shot, and that every member of the battery did their bit toward sending Uncle Sam's first calling card into the trenches of the Kaiser.

We sent a few more shells over to help Fritz warm up his morning coffee, and then we were relieved and returned to our quarters in the village for chow.

After chow, shovels were issued to us and we began the arduous work of digging gun pits and building dugouts. We constructed the pits by digging in to a depth of three feet, and then placing logs, concrete slabs and sandbags around the edges of the excavation. We camouflaged our new positions by stretching wire netting over them, and covering the netting with marsh grass.

The Huns shelled us repeatedly while we were at work, but all the boys stood up under the music like veterans. We thought the Boches were getting our range when they landed a six-inch shell within thirty yards of our position, but that was the nearest they came to us that day.

That night the American infantry, helmeted and ready for battle, marched into our front-line trenches. The infantry beat us to France by nearly two months, but we of the artillery got into action more than twelve hours ahead of the doughboys.

After two weeks of work on our battery positions behind the front line, our regiment of artillery went into winter quarters, and we were kept out of the scrap until January, when we went in again with a wallop.

Our battery was paid special honors all along that hike to winter quarters.

The little gun that fired the first shot for world-liberty was decked with fresh flowers in every village, and we of C Battery had to run a kissing gauntlet almost every step of

the way. I can tell you the French appreciated the significance of that first shot. They knew that it spelled freedom for them from the invading Hun.

Sergeant Hugh Marsh, of Belleville, Illinois, who was with the first contingent of General Pershing's forces to reach France, has given me a graphic description of the experiences of the infantry during the period I was absent at winter quarters, and I shall tell it as nearly as possible in his own words. After that I will resume my own story, and take the reader back again to the Yankee battery positions behind the lines.

Sergeant Marsh spent four years on the Mexican border doing patrol work before he went across with the first contingent of the Pershing forces.

The infantry moved right into the fight zone upon their arrival in France, and started drilling eight hours a day under the guidance of the famous Alpine Chasseurs, or "Blue Devils" as they are called by the Huns. They taught the Americans the latest wrinkles

in bayoneting, grenade throwing and the use of the trench knife.

On the first day of training the boys drew their full trench equipment, which included packs, gas masks, helmets, trench knives and grenade aprons. The latter look exactly like a carpenter's apron with pockets, but in this case the pockets are used to hold the deadly grenades and not tools.

Of course our lads were pretty green when they started training for trench warfare, although most of them were seasoned United States soldiers, and were well up in the sort of fighting game which prevailed before the Hun inaugurated the most inhuman struggle in history. But the Yankee infantrymen were apt pupils, and in a few weeks they outclassed their instructors in the use of the bayonet and grenade.

The infantrymen managed to have a pretty good time while they were training. They had Wednesday and Saturday afternoons off, and on these occasions they would go fishing or promenading with some pretty mademoi-

selle. When an American soldier is struggling with his French he endeavors first to learn how to ask for something to eat, and second how to frame an invitation for a mademoiselle to promenade with him.

The boys found excellent trout fishing in the canals near their camp, but the fish didn't bite fast enough for the Americans, so they threw grenades into the water. The explosions that followed brought the fish stunned to the surface, where they were easily gathered by the doughboys by the basket. By employing the grenade method, the lads had fresh fish at nearly every meal until the French police stepped in and put a stop to the practice.

A doughboy considered himself lucky when he was picked to go on wood-cutting detail, for he could take his gun along and have a shot at game. The woods near the camp abounded with wild boar, rabbits, pigeons and geese.

One afternoon a wood-cutting detail in charge of Sergeant Marsh was charged by a

wild boar, and all members of the detail climbed to the tree tops in a hurry. The boar kept them treed there all night, and the next day a squad was sent in search of the missing soldiers. The boar charged the squad, and these soldiers were also obliged to adjourn to the branches. Finally one of the new arrivals killed the animal with a well-directed shot behind the ear.

The infantrymen had daily reminders that they were right on the edge of the war-crater. The boom of big guns reached their ears constantly, and enemy airplanes were continually flying over the American barracks in an effort to collect data on the strength of the first detachment of General Pershing's forces. Frequently the Huns exhibited their kultur by bombing hospitals and schools. Every time an enemy airman was sighted, bugles would be blown and bells rung to warn people to get into their cellars and other shelters.

The doughboys were wild with enthusiasm when the order came to march to the front-

line trenches. The business of packing up followed. Bayonets were sharpened with gleeful zeal, and fond farewells were exchanged with petite mademoiselles. Local shops and company stores were emptied of all the candy and other luxuries they contained. Kits were inspected with the closest attention to every detail, new uniforms and equipment were doled out liberally, and feet and teeth became matters of keen curiosity to officers.

When everything was in readiness, the Americans were packed into box cars with their equipment, and the first stage of the journey to the front line was begun. As they drew nearer to the front, the Yanks saw everywhere gruesome evidence of the blasting hand of the Hun. They passed dozens of places which had once been the sites of prosperous, happy villages, but were now unsightly heaps of brick and mortar, with here and there a ragged wall standing.

A few miles back of the front line the Americans left the box cars and began on

foot the last stage of the journey to the trenches.

The country grew more desolate as they advanced. Our boys saw hundreds of graves marked by little wooden crosses, and there were old, ruined dugouts and trenches which the French had taken from the Germans. There were huge shell craters, and the ground was scattered with rusty infantry equipment. The Americans saw long lines of munition and supply trains creeping foward, and now the noise of the big guns became deafening.

It was dusk when the Yankees arrived at the trenches. Orders came to stop smoking and talk only in whispers as they entered a communication trench to go to the first line. Silently and in single file the Yanks pushed foward in the winding traverse until they reached the first-line trench, where they were greeted enthusiastically by the French troops they were to relieve.

The French, clad in their blue-gray uniforms and tin hats, kissed and hugged their

new American allies after the French custom. Before the French filed away to their rest station, they assured the Americans that the sector was the quietest on the whole front line. Because of this, they said it had been called the "peace sector."

But I guess the shelling our battery had given the enemy in the early morning had changed his disposition, for bedlam broke loose soon after the French departed.

Maybe a spy had carried word to the Germans that Americans had taken over the sector.

Be that as it may, the Yanks had no rest that night. The Huns rained shells on our line and one American was killed. The shelling became more violent when morning dawned and the Boches saw the stars and stripes fluttering proudly to the breeze over the sector. The sight of that glorious banner must have been as gall to the beasts. It told them for sure that the United States was in the fight for real.

Were our doughboys scared by their first

experience under fire? Not so as you could notice it. Their officers had hard work restraining them from going over the top and charging the Boches trenches, which of course would have been a very foolish thing to do. Every one of the fighters from the States were boiling to mix it up with bayonet, trench knife and grenade. The Americans stood up under fire like seasoned veterans, and kept a merry machine gun fusillade going in answer to the shell fire.

It is typical of the Yankee that he cannot rest content until he has paid off old scores, and when morning dawned the American infantrymen set out to exact retribution from the Huns for the one United States soldier killed during the night.

Snipers—the best sharpshooters in General Pershing's forces—took positions in favorable spots along the sector, and watched their chances with keen Yankee eyes. And every time the smallest part of a Hun's anatomy showed on the other side, crack would go an American rifle. The bullets that sped over

No Man's Land rarely missed their mark. The snipers estimated they bagged seven Germans that day, which was fair retribution for the killing of one clean, honest God-fearing American soldier.

But right away the Boches employed trickery to get even with the Americans. In some manner they smuggled a machine gunner out into No Man's Land. From his concealed position this gunner was able to rake a section of the American trench at will. Our boys were obliged to duck into their dugouts or lay flat on their stomachs in the trench to keep from getting killed or wounded. The situation was desperate, for there is nothing that so disturbs the morale of fighters as the machinations of an unseen sniper. The way in which the Yanks dealt with the situation showed they were more than a match for the Germans in resourcefulness and cunning.

CHAPTER IX

Feeling Out the Hun

THE problem at hand was to wipe out that machine gunner before he did any serious damage.

But every time our sharpshooters plugged bullets into the spot where they thought the Boche gunner was stationed, the Hun would change his position in some mysterious manner, and start peppering our line from another angle. Parts of the American line became untenable.

Finally one day when the Boche machine gun started barking our men turned a trench mortar loose on the pest. The gun out in No Man's Land suddenly became silent and gave the Yanks no further trouble. The following night an American patrol found the Boche gunner dead in a shell hole with his machine gun, badly battered, beside him. The American trench mortar had done its work well.

From the first, No Man's Land, with its shell craters and barbed wire entanglements, was enthusiastically explored by the Yankees. In fact, from the start they virtually took over the control of this desolate region and annexed it to the United States. Every night our forces sent out patrols to ambush Boches, cut enemy barbed wire and to feel out the positions of the Hun.

On his second night in the trenches, Sergeant Marsh went out with an ambush party. The members of the party were guided through the barbed wire by a French soldier.

"When the Frenchy had taken us through the barbed wire," said the sergeant, "his mission was ended," and he turned back after wishing us Godspeed in our mission. It was our first trip into No Man's Land, and I confess that it was spooky work at first. It was as dark as a pocket out there, and a heavy rain was falling. Our mission was to wait by a certain water hole, in the hope of ambushing any Huns that might come there

Trench Inspection

Sergeant Hugh Marsh Illustrates Life in the Trenches

during the night for water. We waited there for six hours, but no Germans came. Every once in a while the Huns would send up a flare from their trenches and we would flatten out on our stomachs and wait until the light died down. It is a curious fact that if you remain perfectly still while a flare is in operation the enemy cannot see you, no matter how brightly the landscape is illuminated, but if you move even the slightest bit you will be detected and made the subject of target practice for machine guns and rifles.

The next night Sergeant Marsh and his men made another trip out in No Man's Land, and inspected the enemy's barbed wire. They were searching for weak spots when they were detected by the enemy. The Huns sent up star shells and started a brisk fire with machine guns. The Americans dropped flat on their stomachs, and when the flares died, crawled to a shell hole, where they remained until the fire had slackened. Then they crept back to their trenches.

On another night an incident occurred which showed that the Huns were constantly in fear of being attacked and were very much worried over the arrival of the Americans. On this particular evening a Yankee patrol made a noise out in No Man's Land, and the Germans evidently thought the Americans had started a general attack all along the line, for they sent up scores of flares, and dropped a barrage on our trenches which lasted for fifty minutes. It made our doughboys laugh to see the Germans waste their ammunition against a phantom attacking force.

Four of our men stationed in a listening post showed their mettle when the Germans dropped a trench mortar box barrage on a communication trench and cut them off so they could not get back to our lines.

Thirty Germans raided the post under cover of the barrage, and a fierce hand-to-hand struggle ensued. Our boys put up a terrific fight and accounted for at least twelve of the Huns before they were over-

whelmed and killed. The next day our men found traces of the fearful struggle. German rifles, helmets and bayonets were scattered all about the post, and one of our men lay dead with his automatic clutched in his hand. All of the cartridges were gone, showing that he had not ceased to fire until he was struck down. This incident furnishes a good example of the average American pluck. The Yankees will die fighting rather than submit to be taken prisoner.

When you make a visit to the German trenches you can always look for a return visit. It may occur the next night, or maybe it will not happen until a couple of weeks later.

Raids are made usually for the purpose of taking prisoners and squeezing information out of them concerning the strength of the enemy positions. When it is decided to make a raid, the officer in command calls for volunteers, and of course everybody volunteers. A certain number of men are selected for the stunt, and the preparations begin. The

raiders cover their faces and bayonets with lampblack, and then steal into No Man's Land with pistols and grenades. Sometimes the raid is a silent one; that is, you suddenly rush forward without the formality of a barrage, jump into the Boche first-line trench, grab a couple of prisoners and get back with them before the enemy has time to tumble to the situation and do you any damage.

The barrage raid is the most thrilling. The time of the starting of this raid is called the "zero hour." Your batteries start the barrage and you follow right along after it to the Boche trenches. It doesn't pay to walk too fast, for if you do you are likely to get in the way of your own barrage and be killed. When you reach the enemy trenches your first work is to take prisoners, and then you blow up dugouts and munition dumps with your grenades. Your barrage follows you right back to your own trenches, protecting you all the while from the enemy.

While our infantrymen were bravely holding their own in the trenches frequent clashes

were occurring in the air above. On clear days air fighting and air scouting proceeded briskly, and every time a flock of enemy airmen moved toward our trenches, our anti-aircraft guns got busy sending a barrage of shrapnel skyward.

Early in November, 1917, two German planes flew over the American lines for the purpose of making photographs. The Yankee doughboys rubbered upward, wondering what had become of the allied machines.

They did not wonder long. Way up in the sky appeared a spot no bigger than a dime. It was a French plane coming down like a rocket in a daring nose dive. It seemed to the enthralled watchers in the trenches that this man was hurtling to his death.

But when the French flier had dropped some two thousand feet his plane suddenly righted, and he swung in behind one of the Boche photographing machines and opened fire on it with his machine gun.

The Boche pilot flopped back in his seat, his chest riddled with bullets. The machine

shot to earth, and the Frenchman followed to make sure that he had made a killing. When he had ascertained that the machine and the pilot was out of commission he ascended again and made after the other enemy plane, but the Boche evidently had no desire to share the fate of his countryman, for he scooted for home in short order.

A few days later, on a bright morning, a big double-seater German fighting plane, flying low, made directly for the American trenches. There was a pilot and a gunner aboard, and it was apparently the intention of the outfit to sweep our trenches with machine gun bullets and bomb our dugouts. It was a ticklish situation, for none of our planes were in sight. But our sharpshooters were cool and steady as they prepared to give the swiftly approaching enemy plane a warm reception.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

CHAPTER X

Clashes with the Enemy

OUR sharpshooters let go when the big German plane came within easy range.

The shooting was wonderfully accurate and put the finishing touches to the ambition of the Boche aviators to bomb the American position.

The German machine gunner was seen to lurch heavily forward as if he had been badly hit. A bullet from a Yankee rifle smashed through the oil tank of the plane, and other bullets fired by our crack shots riddled the wings of the machine. The German pilot saw he had struck a hornet's nest, and he turned tail and hiked back to his own lines. This incident demonstrated to the Huns that in the Yankees they are contending with the crack sharpshooters of the world.

In one place our trenches were less than

sixty feet from those of the Germans, while in another place fully a mile separated the opposing forces. Our trenches were located in marshy ground, making the use of "duck boards" necessary at all times except when the trench water and mud became frozen in winter. The trenches were very shallow when our infantrymen moved in, but they began immediately to deepen them and improve them in other ways.

In every dugout the soldiers worked almost constantly pumping out the water which seeped in. The presence of this water was disagreeable, of course, but in one way it served a good purpose. Rats detest water, and they gave these damp dugouts a wide berth, for which our boys were supremely grateful.

Every man in the line at all times kept his eyes peeled for two kinds of colored rockets. One is green and the other red. The first means asphyxiating gas, and the other calls for a barrage. And the green light to the men in the line means more than anything

else, for in a gas attack they know that their lives often depend upon the speed in which the gas masks are adjusted after an alarm is given.

During November, 1917, the Huns made several attempts to raid the American lines, but were always beaten back with heavy loss. The Germans made an attack early in the night of November 12th, bringing up five machine guns and opening a cross-fire on the Yankee lines. Not one of our men were hit. When the first deluge of bullets came, the American lieutenant in command telephoned for the machine guns to come up on either flank and fire toward the Germans in No Man's Land. Observers at listening posts reported that there were two hundred Boches in the raiding party.

Our machine guns began peppering in less than a minute after the first German shot was fired. A few minutes later the artillery in the rear was laying down a barrage where the Germans were supposed to be. The Yankees in the trenches, shielding their faces with

their steel helmets, climbed on the shooting ledges, aiming at the flashes of the German machine guns. The attack was continued for more than a half hour before the Germans retired. It is believed that they timed the raid to take the Americans by surprise while a relief was entering the trenches. Both American and French soldiers in advanced listening posts reported seeing the returning Germans carrying bodies. This indicated they had suffered heavy losses.

In the early morning of November 15th, the Huns attempted another raid and were repulsed. The Germans moved several machine guns into No Man's Land and swept our communication trenches with a heavy fire in preparation for an advance. At the same instant American flares disclosed the raiders, and the French and Yankee batteries dropped a grilling barrage in the midst of the foe. The Huns retreated, suffering several casualties.

And all the while the Yankee boys were fighting cooties as well as Germans. These

little pests are certainly the bane of the life of the soldier. Sometimes I think that eventually they will gobble up all of the German and Allied soldiers and fight this war out between themselves.

When the boys got leave from the trenches the first thing they did was to go back of the lines and take a gasoline bath. This rid them of the lice. Then they would put on new underclothing and fresh uniforms, and feel like men again.

The American soldier on leave from the trenches has the time of his life. His Uncle Sammy has seen to that. The American government has taken over the famous watering place, Aix-les-Bains on the borders of the Alps, and turned the place into a paradise for Yankee soldiers. For fifty cents a day, the American doughboy is allotted a room which millionaires in ante-bellum days were glad to secure for fifty dollars a day. The Y. M. C. A. and other organizations are spending vast sums at Aix-les-Bains for the entertainment of American soldiers on leave.

Sergeant Marsh spent two months in the front-line trenches, and then, one morning at two o'clock, he was put out of commission in a Boche gas attack. He was taken to a hospital and remained there until he was selected with others of Pershing's forces to return to America and aid in the third Liberty Loan Campaign.

I will now resume the story of my experiences with Battery C, Sixth United States Field Artillery.

After our battery had fired the first gun, and had spent two weeks improving the position back of the Yankee first line, we groaned with disappointment when the order came to move to winter quarters. Every man-jack of us considered it pretty tough to be yanked out of the scrap just after we had poked our nose into it and were beginning to warm up. But orders are orders, and of course we had to submit.

So, very sorrowfully, we began a three days' hike for the winter billets many miles back of the line.

The village which had been wished on to us for winter quarters was far from being a spotless town or a model community. If that town had been located in America it would have had the board of health down on it in short order. And the board of health would have had to put in some hard work to bring the place up to the American standard of sanitation.

After we had been in the village five minutes we decided that we had an important duty to perform, and that duty was to clean the place up. There were evidences that we would have to educate the people before we could bring this about, but we determined we would do that if it was necessary.

That little village was strong on the map, not because of its commercial or agricultural importance, but principally because of its astonishing variety of odors. You could smell that town ten miles away if the wind was blowing in the right direction.

In front of almost every house in the village was a manure heap, and before he had been in

town an hour our commander decided that these heaps would have to be removed.

The edict nearly started a revolution in the village. The villagers seemed to regard these manure heaps as heirlooms, and I guess some of them were. The inhabitants appointed a committee to call upon the commander and protest against the removal of the historic piles, but our ranking officer was firm, and said they must go. The next day we went at the heaps with shovels and carted the fertilizer to a place a considerable distance from the village. The village smelled fifty per cent sweeter after that, and life was less burdensome.

We were billeted in barns—historic barns, I should have said, for there was every evidence that they had been built long before the time of the first Napoleon. We slept in these barns along with the horses, cows, pigs and chickens, and at night as we lay in the hay we could look up through holes in the roof and see the stars. Of course it was pleasant to see the stars, but it wasn't so

hunky-dory when it rained or snowed and the wet sifted down through those holes in the roof. Many a time I waked up in the morning and wiped away a miniature drift of snow from my eyebrows.

The floors of these barns were so ancient that they were rotten, and several of the boys fell through and sustained ugly bruises. In a windstorm the barn-billets rocked like boats at sea, and when the weather was frigid we had to burrow down under the hay with our blankets to keep warm. The orders against smoking in the billets were rigid, and we were not allowed to have lamps or candles. Some of us had flashlights, so we were able to maneuver around at night without breaking our necks.

Waking up in the morning in my barn-billet was an event.

A little red rooster served as our alarm clock.

This little barnyard pest would take a position on a high rafter and start his devilish little cock-a-doodle-doo business at about four o'clock every morning.

My buddies would roll over in the hay, mumbling curses at the aggravating little fowl. But I guess the rooster thought he was being applauded, for he kept it up harder than ever, giving us all of the shrieking variations of his cock-a-doodle-doo morning song.

Then the boys would reach for things to throw at their tormentor. Shoes, cans, pieces of wood and everything within reach would fly up at the bird. On rare occasions a missile would reach its mark, and then the bird would flutter down to the barn floor. But by this time all of the fowl and animal kingdom were awake and further snoozing was an impossibility.

Every barnyard cock in the neighborhood took up the morning song; horses began kicking at the sides of their stalls, cows mooed for their grub and pigs grunted for breakfast.

But we got even with that feathered alarm clock, all right. We laid in a supply of rocks one night in the haymow, and the next morning when the pest started in his ear-splitting

clack we let him have a hail of missiles. A heavy stone landed on the music box of the fowl, and we had him for dinner at noon.

CHAPTER XI

Camp Life

BUT sleeping in the barn-billets had one advantage; we had fresh eggs for breakfast.

During the day those simpletons of hens would lay their eggs in the haymow, and every morning we would go on an egg hunt. The farmer who owned the barn where we were billeted complained all the time because he thought his hens had stopped laying.

"This war," he said to us, "has turned everything upside down; even the hens won't lay any more."

We washed our clothes in a duck pond near the village, and every Sunday was wash-day. The mademoiselles in the village used to come to the pond and kid us while we were doing the washerwoman stunt. Sometimes they would take pity on us and help us out.

It was a hard winter and a cold one. Our

horses were smooth shod, and there was the devil to pay when we took them on artillery maneuvers. They slipped and fell on the icy roads, and many of them broke their legs and had to be shot. Sometimes we would be absent three or four days on maneuvers, sleeping in our blankets on ground covered with snow. Several of the artillerymen went to the hospital with frozen feet. Food was scarce, and on an average we had only one good meal a day.

Breakfast was our best meal, consisting of bacon, hardtack, coffee and potatoes with the jackets on. At noon we had a sandwich and at night beef stew, coffee and hardtack. The food improved wonderfully after the raising of the second Liberty Loan over in America. The folks at home must back us to their last cent if we are to win this war. Money talks harder right now over in France than at any time in the history of the world. There must be a constant stream of cash from the pockets of Americans if we are to keep men and munitions pouring into the fighting zone.

While in winter quarters I had an excellent opportunity to watch the training of war dogs which are now being used extensively by the French.

The faithfulness of these animals is taxed to the utmost when they are assigned to guard munitions and prisoners, but this they do with devotion. Dogs that have been trained to work with the ambulance corps have performed wonderful work in seeking and locating the wounded. There is another class of dogs called convoys. They are used to pull small mitrailleuses and sleighs. Other dogs are delegated to the job of killing rats in the trenches, and they do it well.

All kinds of dogs, from the mongrel to the animal with a pedigree, are used in the service. The breeds include St. Bernards, Alaskan dogs, Newfoundland dogs, collies, bobtails, Alsatian dogs, fox terriers, Scotch terriers, Irish terriers, Dandy Dinmonts, Aberdeen terriers, English bulldogs, and Skye terriers.

All of these dogs were given voluntarily

to the French Ministry of War for the duration of the hostilities.

The animals have to pass an examination just like soldiers and nurses before they are sent to the front. They are examined by a special board before they are shipped to the canine training camps.

After carefully inspecting the bow-wow situation at one of these dog-training camps, I came to the conclusion that the average purp has the same hero-makings as a man.

Hundreds of dogs engaged in courier work and the rescue of the wounded have already given up their lives in this war.

As couriers the dogs carry important dispatches from one military unit to the other over country that is exposed to heavy shell fire. They carry the messages more quickly than a soldier can do it, and a dog will go into places where the average man wouldn't dare to venture.

I made the acquaintance of "Zip," an English bulldog that carried a message two miles through a shell inferno at Verdun. The

dog's jaw was fractured by a shell fragment, but the plucky animal carried out its mission in spite of the wound. When I saw "Zip" his jaw was in splints, and he was on the road to recovery and active service again.

All of the intelligence of the canine is brought to the fore in the work of the ambulance dog. After the ambulance dog finds a wounded man he brings in the man's cap and then leads the ambulance drivers or stretcher bearers to the spot in No Man's Land where he has discovered the fallen soldier. Dogs of super-intelligence have been trained to attract the attention of ambulance drivers to the wounded by the means of a series of short, quick barks.

All of the dogs in the service wear little wallets around their necks. These wallets contain flasks and rough dressings for first aid.

Kennels have been established at the front line for the dogs. They are given as good care as are the soldiers in the trenches. They have sulphur baths daily to protect them from

disease, and their chow consists of the best cuts of meats.

One of the dogs at the station I visited had rescued twenty wounded men. He was a big Newfoundland, and his name was "Napoleon." Part of his tail had been shot away by a shell fragment, and once he had been left for dead in No Man's Land, but he was still on the job working for civilization. When I spoke to this big, intelligent animal he raised on his haunches and put out a hairy paw for me to shake. And I can tell you I was mighty proud to shake with that hero. I believe that these dogs realize that the world won't be a fit place for man or dog if the Boches win the war. That is why they are working against the Hun with such intelligence and enthusiasm.

One of the trainers told me that the dogs hate the Boche like poison.

"You see that big mastiff over there?" he said, pointing to a big brute of a dog munching at a slab of beef. "Well, that animal has accounted for five Huns so far. One night

out in No Man's Land he found a Boche sticking a bayonet into a wounded French soldier. Prince, the mastiff here, reached the throat of the Hun in one bound, and when the stretcher bearers got there the treacherous German had been literally torn to pieces by the dog.

"Another night, Prince accompanied a force of French raiders in the German front-line trenches. You see that scar over his right leg? Well, that's where a German bayoneted him. But it was a sorry day for the Hun when he tried to kill the dog. Prince snuffed out the Boche and killed three more of them before he returned with the raiding party.

"Prince has been on several raids since then, and he likes them, for he is a born soldier and a loyal Frenchman.

"He understands every wrinkle of the raid idea, and has intelligence enough not to try and run ahead of the barrage.

"And Huns—why that dog can smell them five miles off. He always barks deep down in his chest when he scents a Boche. It's a

blood-curdling sound—makes you shiver to hear it."

I looked at Prince with increased respect. Any soldier would have been proud of his record.

"Why wouldn't it be a good idea," I suggested, "to train, say, a thousand big dogs like Prince and turn them loose on the Germans?"

"I have thought of that same idea myself more than a dozen times," replied the trainer excitedly. "The Germans have proved themselves beasts, and why not set beasts to fighting them? But even a dog is lowering himself to fight with those Boches.

"But a thousand dogs like Prince would be capable of wiping out a German division. These dogs have no fear of shell fire, machine guns or bombs. They move right along toward their objective and hunt for throats to tear. If we turned loose a thousand of these dogs into a German trench, the carnage would be awful. To tell the truth, I wouldn't care to witness the fight."

"Nor me either," I agreed heartily. The thought of it was enough to make anybody shudder.

CHAPTER XII

Back to the Front

ABOUT seventy-five per cent of modern war is plain hard work.

That dawned upon me with force before I had been very long in France. You see, the Huns were a long time preparing for this thing, and that is why they had the bulge on us at the start. They had such a wonderful machinery perfected that they could do a whole lot more than we could, and with less work.

The Allies had to put in some mighty hard digs to even up with that forty years of preparation of the Hun. But they are bridging the gap fast, and with Uncle Sam to help there won't be any gap very soon.

The latter part of November my battery was sent to a nearby camp to instruct some green United States army officers how to handle horses and how to use the French artillery.

We found we had some job on our hands before we had been there twenty-four hours. What some of those officers didn't know about horses and guns would fill several books. Some of them were positively numb in the head and didn't appear to realize it. How some of them buncoed their way into officers' jobs I don't know. But they didn't fool General Pershing very long; he weeded them out as fast as he got wise to them, and replaced them by capable men who had the proper makings.

Well, the officer that was wished on me for training had brought three trunks of clothing with him from the states. He was some dandy; a major general would have been content with his layout of tailoring. He must have thought that the war was some sort of a big social function where you had to be ready to jump at a minute's notice into an English walking suit or a dinner coat. Maybe he thought it was the proper thing to go into action in an evening suit, for he had two, and a couple of silk hats to match. And

uniforms! Why he had enough of them to outfit the staff of a brigade. I hope he paid his tailor bill before he left home, for if he didn't the poor suit-maker will surely have to file a petition in bankruptcy. This chap's outfit couldn't have cost a cent less than three thousand bucks.

My officer brought a portable bath-tub over with him too, and every morning before he would consent to do any drilling he would scramble around in the tub. At the time I felt the sorest against this fellow I used to wish that he'd drown in the tub. After he had taken his "barth," manicured his nails, and put some rose scent on his pocket handkerchief, the officer would get into his uniform and come out on the drill grounds. I could see that it shocked the fellow terribly when he heard me swear, for he would squint at me through his monocle in the most supercilious manner. That monocle was the bane of my life, for the owner kept dropping it, and instead of picking it up himself would insist that I bend and do the trick.

After the glass had slipped out of his fingers, he would say petulantly:

"Ah, fellow, I have dropped my glars, pick it up, please."

The only comfort I obtained from stooping and picking it up was that it gave me an opportunity to swear softly without being detected.

One day when he dropped it, I put my heel upon the thing when he wasn't looking and ground it to bits. I thought than that I would be relieved forever from the job of picking up monocles, but I reckoned without my host.

"Awkward fellow," he observed languidly when he saw that I had stepped upon his glass.

Inwardly I groaned with despair when he drew a whole case of brand new monocles out of his coat pocket, daintily selected one and screwed it into his eye and put the case back into his pocket.

He dropped the new monocle twenty times that day if he did once, and my back ached from picking it up.

I had my troubles when I undertook to give this immaculate fellow instruction in the unharnessing of teams. After he had scrambled the harness around a few minutes it would take me a half hour to get out the knots and snarls. The way he used to take off a bridle made me grit my teeth. He would unbuckle the cheek straps on the bit to get the bit out of horse's mouth. In taking the saddle off a horse he would unbuckle the quarter strap instead of undoing the cinch.

Some of these officers were so fastidious that they needed two men to wait upon them, and they picked men right from the battery to polish their shoes and clean their clothes. It made us very sore, for we figured that it was bad enough to try to teach those boneheads, without having to act as their servants. But these fastidious officers kept disappearing, and the Germans didn't get them either. They simply returned to the states, where they found environments sufficiently lady-like to make them comfortable again.

As for me, I was relieved of the job of

picking up monocles and teaching officers how to harness horses, when I came down with a very bad case of frozen feet.

I was sent to the hospital, and it felt good to get there. The chow was good and the care was excellent. I spent the Christmas of 1917 in the hospital and I will never forget that day as long as I live. There were a lot of wounded boys there and we had a jolly time swapping yarns.

I met a chap there by the name of McNichol from Cleveland, Ohio. He told me that when he first went into the trenches his ambition was to capture a real, live ferocious Boche, so he could write of his exploit to a certain winsome, blue-eyed lass in Ohio who had placed McNichol high up in the list of heroes.

The young woman had written something like this to the soldier: "Oh, please capture a Boche so that I can tell all the girls about it."

McNichol wrote back: "Lizzie, I'll get a Hun for you or bust my blamed neck trying."

And McNichol meant every word he said

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McNichol Wrote Back: "Lizzie, I'll Get a Hun for You or Bust"

too, and from that time on planned ways and means.

One night when the mist hung low in No Man's Land, the lieutenant in charge of McNichol's sector observed that it was a fine night for a raid.

A few minutes later, fifty men, including McNichol, sallied forth into No Man's Land.

On their hands and knees the Americans crept toward the German trenches. Suddenly star shells soared upward from the Hun breastworks, and the Americans flattened out on their bellies, praying they would not be seen. They escaped detection, and when the blackness settled down again they resumed their slow advance.

When the members of the little band came to the German wire entanglements, they pulled out their wire cutters, and began the dangerous and tedious work of opening up a path through the maze of steel. Luck seemed to be with them, for they cut through the last wire without being detected.

The Huns were taken completely by sur-

prise when a few minutes later the Americans with wild yells leaped into their first-line trench. The invaders hurled grenades and fired their automatics.

McNichol had just one thing on his mind, and that was to make good his promise to the little girl back in Ohio. After he had tossed his grenades, and emptied the chambers of his revolver, he leaped upon the back of the German nearest to him.

It happened that he selected for his quarry one of those Prussian, beer-fed monstrosities weighing about two hundred and fifty pounds, but McNichol had no time to make a selection. In his mind, a Hun was a Hun, big, little or indifferent. Poking his automatic under the fat jowl of the terrified Boche, McNichol growled:

"You are my prisoner. No funny business now, or I'll bore you. Double quick—march."

The big Hun understood the order, for he waddled dolefully out of the trench, and McNichol brought up the rear, now and then giving his prisoner a suggestive poke in the ribs with the muzzle of his pistol.

McNichol's buddies nearly died laughing when he walked in with the fat boy, but he didn't care a rap about that. A few weeks later the little girl back in Ohio was delighted when she learned that her sweetheart had kept his promise and captured a Boche.

But McNichol didn't think it necessary to tell her in his letter that the prisoner he had taken had proved to be the cook of the German sector. No, why should he? There's no use being a joy-killer when it concerns your best girl.

CHAPTER XIII

Scotty, the Irrepressible

ONE of the most entertaining characters I met at the hospital was a Yankee called Scotty, who gave me a thrilling account of how a bunch of Americans in the Canadian contingent received the news of the entrance of Uncle Sam in the war in April, 1917.

Scotty had been gassed, but he was on the high road to recovery when he and I collided. He was formerly an American telgraph operator—one of the roving kind who had tapped the key to the accompaniment of the Morse code, from Chicago to New Orleans, and from Boston to 'Frisco. He was long, lean and lank, with legs like stilts and arms like bean poles, but his muscles were as of steel. I found that out when he reached out of his cot and grasped my hand. When he let go

my paw I felt as though it had been mashed in a coffee grinder.

From a Scotch-Irish ancestry, this buddy had inherited a keen love of fighting, when the fighting was hard and fast. He told me in detail the story of that memorable night when the news reached the trenches that the United States was in the war, and I will repeat it as accurately as possible.

On a particular evening in April, 1917, Scotty said to his buddy, one Jack Murdock, of Albany N. Y.:

"Jack, this is getting too slow for me, lying around in this beastly trench, doing nothing but wallow in mud and duck shells. I joined the Canadian contingent to fight, not to fester in muck and get rheumatism."

"Time 'parently ain't ripe for taking a swat at the Huns," replied Murdock, whiffing at his corncob pipe.

"Ripe!" snorted Scotty disgustedly. "We'd soon make the Boches ripe if we could get at them with our bayonets."

"Oh, lay off that stuff," protested Murdock.

"Don't grit your teeth at me that way; I'm not to blame because you can't jump into Berlin tonight and slit the Kaiser's throat."

Just then a sergeant hurried into the trench from a communicating passage. He was covered with mud and his eyes gleamed with excitement.

"Boys," he yelled, "the biggest news yet; the United States has declared war on Germany and Uncle Sam is going to ship a big army into France."

The rangy Scotty was on his feet with a whoop. He grabbed the sergeant by the shoulders with his knotty hands and said huskily:

"Say that again, old man, and at the same time kick me so that if I am dreaming I'll wake up."

The sergeant repeated the joyous message and at the same time gave Scotty a dig in the shins with his foot.

"Hurrah!" shouted Scotty. "Old Uncle Sammy has his dander up at last." He executed a little war dance around the trench.

The news raced up and down the sector like wildfire, and the Canadians joined in the joy-fest of their Yankee comrades.

As for Scotty, he grew more excited every minute as the import of the tidings sank into his intelligence.

Finally he grabbed a rifle with one hand and seized an American flag with the other. His keen gray eyes burned with the old fighting fire of his Scotch ancestors.

"Come on, Yanks," he yelled. "Over the top for us; we'll be disgraced for life if we didn't serve notice on the Boches over yonder that Uncle Sam has jumped into the war with both feet. Every blamed one of you who has red American blood in his veins, come on over."

Yelling like an Apache, Scotty cleared the sandbags with a mighty bound, and he was followed over by a hundred or more Yanks.

A Canadian lieutenant shouted something about violation of orders, but he might as well have tried to carry on a dialogue with the wind.

Fortune favored the raiders, for there happened to be a break in the barbed wire barrier of the enemy, and through this rushed the Americans, with Scotty at their head, waving the Stars and Stripes.

It was a thrilling moment, and the dumbfounded Canadians back in the trench expected every minute to see the little band wither up under a fusillade of machine-gun bullets.

But the Huns were evidently not even dreaming of such a reckless assault, for they didn't fire a shot. The Americans leaped into the German first-line trench and shot down a score or more of Boches before the enemy realized what had happened. Fifteen of the enemy threw down their arms and surrendered. The prisoners were marched back to the Canadian line by Scotty and his delighted men.

The commanding officer of the sector summoned Scotty and wanted to know why the raid was made in violation of orders.

"We couldn't help it, Colonel," explained Scotty. "When we heard that Uncle Sam

was in, we just had to go over and celebrate."

The officer grinned in spite of himself, and besides he was from Toronto and knew something about the Yankee fighting spirit.

"See that it don't happen again," he said, turning his face away to hide his amusement.

Early in my yarn I praised the courage of American soldiers of alien parentage, and I want to do it again, for they are doing a noble work for democracy over there.

While my feet were getting well in the hospital I heard the tale of Nick Kornies, a Greek youth, who was formerly a vender of bananas at Fifteenth Street and Avenue D in New York.

The streams of humanity that daily coursed by his humble pushcart had no realization that this mild immigrant lad from New York's seething East Side was a potential hero. It is safe to say that any of the men or women who bought bananas from Nick Kornies would have laughed incredulously if anybody had predicted before the lapse of many months

an entire nation would pay homage to this obscure Greek boy. Yet that is just what did occur.

Nick Kornies had no idea himself what the future held, so why should strangers be able to guess? He was a dreamer, but he never dared to hope that his dreams would come true. The big war overseas was a vague, distant thing as far as he was concerned; the only times when it penetrated even slightly into his consciousness was when he heard the shrill voices of the newsboys calling off the headlines which told of gains, defeats or deadlocks in the war zone in France.

Though this great modern struggle for the preservation of democracy disturbed not the simple soul of Nick Kornies, he thought much of the stirring deeds of the old Greek heroes. His parents had raised him on the legends of Agamemnon and Hector, so he grew up with a warrior's heart.

Nick Kornies might have gone on indefinitely as a banana vender and a dreamer had not he heard a French soldier in New York

making an appeal for recruits to fight the Hun. From the lips of this warrior of modern democracy, Kornies heard the message that brought his soul up to date and inspired him with the ambition to give his life if necessary in the holy cause of France. The invasion of that country by the barbarous Huns recalled to his mind that march of the Persian legions upon ancient Athens.

He enlisted in the Foreign Legion, and it was at Verdun that this idealistic young soldier proved to the world that the spirit of Ancient Greece is not dead.

When the order came from the French commander to take a certain section of the German first-line trenches, Kornies led his comrades over No Man's Land in the face of a terrific storm of shells and bullets.

Only about half of the courageous band, including the Greek youth, reached the German trench. There they engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the enemy. Bayonets, trench knives and grenades figured in the struggle. Kornies was everywhere, encourag-

ing his comrades by his utter contempt for death. He killed six Germans and captured several others single-handed. The enemy was completely routed, the French taking over the trench for a distance of 1,500 yards.

The following day, the former New York banana vender was decorated with the War Cross, and the Military Medal, and was kissed on both cheeks by an admiring French general.

The French Republic has recorded the heroism of Nick Kornies in the following phraseology:

"Kornies (Nick), Legionnaire, Eleventh Company de Marche, Foreign Legion—elite grenadier; 20th August, 1917, won the admiration of all his comrades by his courage and his contempt for danger. Led his comrades to the conquest of a trench which was defended with energy, and which was captured along a distance of 1,500 yards after several hours of bloody combat; took single-handed numerous prisoners; already cited twice in army orders."

That's the kind of stuff our immigrants are made of, fellow Americans. Let's take off our hats to them.

CHAPTER XIV

German Atrocities

MY blood boiled when the story of the first American prisoner taken by the Germans reached the hospital.

Every one of we Americans wanted to leave our cots at once and go Hun-hunting. The nurses had all they could do to restrain us.

The first American prisoner taken was a sergeant, the censors prohibit naming him or his unit. He was captured after a plucky fight and removed to a prison camp in Germany. En route there he was fearfully abused by the Boches; officers banged him with the flat of their swords, children threw rocks at him and women spit upon him. Fine, kind ladylike persons those German women.

When the sergeant arrived at the prison camp, the Boche officer in charge said to him:

"We are going to give you a bath, plenty

to eat and a change of clothing so that when you get back to the United States you can tell your Yankee friends how well the Germans used you."

The sergeant did get a bath, some clothes and chow as the officer had promised.

Then he was escorted by the officer to a room where there was a barber's chair. He was ordered to sit down in the chair, which he did.

A barber stood near sharpening a razor.

"Give the American a good shave," ordered the officer with a cruel sneer.

Two German soldiers leaped forward and strapped the American to the chair. The barber with quick strokes cut off the ears of the poor chap. Then a Prussian surgeon inoculated the sergeant with the germs of a dread disease.

"This is the way we use Americans," jeered the Boche officer as the sergeant lay bleeding and suffering.

From reliable reports from Germany's interior we know the sergeant survived the terrible

torture, but of course he is disfigured for life. We have learned the identity of the inhuman butcherers who mutilated him, and may the devil help them if they ever fall into the hands of the Americans.

While in France I talked with a French corporal who had spent six months in a German prison camp. The stories he told me of the barbarous treatment of prisoners by the Boches made my blood run cold and increased my hatred of the Hun.

He was interned in a camp with French and English prisoners. Upon one instance, because a French prisoner wished to share his soup with a fellow countryman, the German sentinel reached through the wire enclosure about the camp and stabbed the Frenchman in the stomach with a bayonet. The man later died. Upon another occasion, without any apparent reason, eight Boche barbarians in uniform entered the stockade and beat to death an English prisoner. My friend, the corporal, protested at the terrible thing, and he was struck in the face with the

butt end of a rifle. He carries a scar as evidence of the cowardly blow.

The corporal said that he and his fellow prisoners were often compelled to work under heavy shell fire behind the German lines. They were denied clothing and adequate shelter, and hundreds of them died from starvation.

When the corporal first reached the prison camp he absolutely refused to engage in any work that would benefit Germany. He was given a choice to work or be starved to death, but still refused to labor. For six days he stood at attention from six o'clock in the morning until noon. At the end of the sixth day he was locked up in a wet cellar. He remained there for five days, but his determination was still of steel.

The corporal was led out of the cellar and stood up with thirty other prisoners who had refused to work. A German officer informed them unless they consented to labor they would be shot. All of the prisoners with the exception of the corporal and ten other

prisoners weakened and said they would work. The corporal and the other men who had courageously stuck to their guns asked the Boche officer to shoot them and put them out of their misery.

But the Hun had quite another plan for the application of German Kultur. The arms of the prisoners were twisted behind their backs, their wrists were tied with a rope and they were led each to a post and backed against it; they were made to stand on wooden blocks while their hands were tied as high as possible to the post.

The blocks were then kicked out from under them and they were left suspended by their wrists with their feet off the ground. They remained thus suspended for two hours.

The next day the process was repeated and one of the men broke down and consented to work. Torture of the remainder was continued and was followed by beatings with rifle butts. Then they were subjected to four more hours of hanging, when consciousness left all with the exception of the corporal.

Those who succumbed were carried in a cellar and thrown on wet stones.

Altogether the corporal hung twelve hours on his post. Had he not possessed an iron constitution he would have died. Finally the Huns saw they could not kill him by that method, so they cut him down. He was given a shovel, but he threw it away contemptuously. The Boches did not ask him to work after that.

The corporal informed me that each prisoner is marked with a number, indicating the degree of his health and strength. No. 1 means good for any work; No. 2, good for field labor; No. 3, good for light work; and No. 4, incapable of work. These numbers are tattooed on the right hand, together with the letters "Kr-Gef," which are abbreviations for war prisoner.

Prisoners are made to work without any consideration for their ages, social rank, aptitude or strength. Doctors of law or of philology, college and high school professors are working as farm hands or in mines; men

whom the Germans themselves acknowledge to be sick and excusable are employed from morning to night unloading the vessels which bring ore from Sweden into Germany. Sentries stand over them with rifles, and the minute any poor wretch falters in his work he feels the prick of the bayonet.

The prisoners who work on farms are fed on turnips, nettles, barley gruel and Indian cornmeal, almost exclusively. Virtually all potatoes in Germany have been requisitioned. The orders are that the hours of labor shall be determined by the farmers. In the summer the prisoners work fifteen and sixteen hours a day. If a prisoner makes a kick, the peasant appeals to a sentry, who comes running up with his bayonet.

The corporal said he learned that a large number of prisoners had been put to work in the salt mines at Kaliwerk, Germany. The salt is used especially for the manufacture of suffocating gases which the Huns are turning loose on our lines.

The galleries in these mines are at depths

which vary from two hundred to seven hundred meters (about 650 to 2,300 feet). The heat is so intense that the men work absolutely naked with the exception of wooden shoes. The air is filled with poisonous vapors which bring irresistible drowsiness.

At the end of a few months in these hell holes the prisoners break out with boils and incurable running sores.

In September, 1917, the corporal said that several hundred British prisoners, many of them wounded, were brought into the camp where he was interned. They were marched into camp between two lines of German troops. The Boche soldiers kicked the Britishers and struck them with sabres and bayonets. Men with walking sticks had them taken from them and were beaten with them; men with crutches had these kicked from under their arms, and when they fell they were beaten with the crutches. Senior German officers were present and joined in the attack.

My friend, the French corporal, escaped

from the German prison camp into Switzerland, and is now back in the trenches fighting the cause of civilization with renewed vigor. His experience in Germany has convinced him that life would not be worth living in a world dominated by the Hun.

But Germany's brutality to helpless prisoners is but a small part of her campaign of frightfulness. In every German regiment there is what is known as a "Hellish Squad." Their job is to poison wells, cut off the hands of children and plant mines and bombs in villages.

The War Department at Washington has taken precautions against American soldiers being caught by the snares and traps which the "Hellish Squads" spread thickly through territory they are forced to evacuate. A special brochure on this subject has been prepared by the intelligence division of the general staff for officers, who are to be held responsible for the proper warning of their men.

The following extracts from the pamphlet

will give a good idea what Americans have to contend with in fighting the men-beasts of Germany:

"Until specialists have had a chance to investigate, one must be very suspicious of: Shelters which are excessively well furnished or luxurious; houses that seem miraculously to be left standing among ruins; all new work, recently constructed trenches; parts of equipment in good condition; articles stuck in ground or walls and utensils scattered around trenches or shelters.

"Stabling for horses should be thoroughly disinfected and only used cautiously after burning all bedding, straw and oats left by the enemy.

"The sign of 'Use of this water is forbidden,' must be placed above all sources of water supply until analyzed by technical experts.

"Listening tests must be made in all buildings, galleries and subterranean chambers to make sure that there are no clockwork-driven infernal machines.

"Roads should be made the subject of

painstaking inspection to detect mines prepared for their destruction.

"One should be careful to cut all suspicious looking threads, being careful not to sever those stretched tightly, for they may support weights, which fall and strike detonators."

We artillery boys found that a favorite trick of the "Hellish Squad" is to leave one of the spiked German helmets that every Allied soldier covets as a trophy, lying apparently innocently on the ground, and underneath a detonating device for a mine that would blow to atoms the soldier who picked it up.

But perhaps the most hellish trick of the "Hellish Squad" is known as the "double coffin."

Counting on the Allied troops desiring to give a decent burial to any dead they find in captured places, the Germans place one coffin on top of another. The instant the upper coffin is moved a charge of high explosive is detonated and the soldiers who suppose themselves about to perform the last office for a dead enemy are themselves killed.

The indictment against the Hun is growing daily; there seems to be no limit against his infamy. Yet the worst thing he does is to make brutal war against little children. I have told about the little boy who had his hands cut off at the wrists, and now I will relate a case even more terrible.

In the little shell-torn village where my battery was quartered when we first moved up to the front line, lived a young French mother with her two-year-old son. Just before this son was born she was taken prisoner by some German cavalrymen, and sent to a hospital in Germany. When her child was born it was taken from her and returned two weeks later, with its sight destroyed.

"If your child had been a girl," explained the brutish German surgeon, "we would not have done this. But we of the Fatherland must make sure that the French will never again take up arms against Germany."

With her face full of woe and tragedy, the mother told me this story, and I swore vengence against the Hun as the tale slipped from

her trembling lips. Nestled in her lap as she gave me every detail was the living evidence of the crime—the poor little two-year-old who is doomed to go through life sightless because of German Kultur.

If the Germans hope to scare Americans by their campaign of frightfulness they are going to be badly fooled. Every time a Yankee boy comes in contact with one of these cases, it simply whets his desire to kill another Boche.

I was discharged from the hospital January 2, 1918, and rejoined my battery. The boys were tickled to death to see me, and I was glad to get back, you can bet your bottom dollar on that. We returned to the front line January 22d, and straightway jumped into the hottest fighting of the war.

CHAPTER XV

Strafing the Enemy

WE relieved a battery of French-Moroccan artillerymen, curious looking chaps, decked out in khaki uniforms, red fezzes, puttees and regulation French hob-nail shoes.

These fellows are smashing good fighters, but are the dirtiest in their personal habits of any soldiers in France, with the exception, perhaps, of the Indian troops from India.

They have black, fierce-looking moustaches, and are continually scrapping among themselves. They have no fear of death and will never admit defeat.

The dugout we moved into that night had been occupied by these troops for nearly a year, and was alive with vermin. It was quite evident that the rat kingdom had established its capital there, for the place was overrun with rodents. Some of them were

big enough to wear helmets and gas masks and go over the top in a bayonet charge. When I waked up the next morning I found that a rat had eaten his way through my overcoat and blouse and stolen a cake of chocolate out of my shirt pocket. Part of the uppers of one of my shoes was eaten away. Before breakfast I shot one of the pests and found he was nearly as big as a house cat.

And the cooties—say, I never saw such cooties. They were fully a quarter of an inch long, and when they drove their pincers into you, it felt like being stabbed with a pair of garden shears.

The whole outfit was on the scratch that morning; we adjourned to a sunny spot and took off our shirts and went on a still hunt through them. We were thus engaged when a shell dropped within a hundred yards of us and exploded with a fearful bang. We did not linger a second. Leaving our shirts lying on the ground, we scrambled head first into the dugout. There was another bang

that shook the sand out of the turf over our heads.

When we peered cautiously out of the dug-out we saw our shirts were gone; the second shell had landed right on top of them and blown them to shreds. There was one consolation, though—the blasted cooties had gone into kingdom come with the shirts.

After much study of the cootie problem, I discovered a way to outwit them. I wore two vests and turned each one of them inside out every two hours, on the theory that it took the pests about two hours to make the round trip of the garments. By this method I managed to keep them on the outside all the time, that is if I didn't forget to turn the vests. I quite frequently forgot to turn them on schedule time, and then the cooties beat me to it and started chewing my hide again.

The cook of our battery had a very bad case of cold feet, and consequently the chow suffered. He was more afraid of a shell than an old woman of a thunderstorm.

Every time he heard a shell whistling he'd go under the bunk head first. It didn't make any difference what he had cooking; he'd let everything burn up rather than come out before he thought the danger was over.

In order to bring the chow to the boys, the cook had to walk out into the open and go from one dugout to another. And the worst of it was that the Boches always started shelling us around mealtime. If a shell fell within a quarter of a mile of that cook, he'd drop the slum-kettle, spilling the contents, and do a Marathon back to his dugout. On the second day we got back to the front, the cook dropped three slum-kettles in that manner, and we were some sore, for we were as hungry as a lot of woodchucks. In fact, we were so hot under the collars that we manned our guns and gave the Boches a salvo, just to show him we resented getting our chow spilled on the ground. We felt better when our observer signaled us that our salvo had blown up three of the enemy's soup

kitchens. The Huns didn't disturb us around mealtime again for fully a week.

One day I tried to remonstrate with the cook about his fear of shells.

"You've got to die some time," I said consolingly, "so why play with this fear stuff? If a shell hits you, you'll never know what struck you."

"Maybe I've got to die some time," he replied with a comical shiver, "but I don't want to go just now."

The American sector is near Toul, one of the most ancient towns in Lorraine. Before the war Toul had a population of about 15,000. It lies in the valley of the Moselle at the foot of a range of imposing hills. Nearby flows the Moselle River and a sleepy old canal, which in times of peace connected Germany and France, being the artificial waterway from the Rhine to the Marne River. In 1870 Toul was captured by the Germans. It is now a fortress of the first class and is much coveted by the Huns.

The country where the first American sec-

tor is located is generally low ground spotted with little hamlets and towns, mostly shell-torn and criss-crossed by succeeding lines of trenches, strong points and battery positions, all part of the defense of both Toul and Nance. The principal roads in the district have been pretty well camouflaged with trees and with other devices known to the French.

A large portion of our sector is wooded, and there are picturesque little lakes here and there that gleam like mirrors on clear days. Our forward lines parallel a low ridge, along which are several towns. Behind this ridge are concealed a network of American batteries.

On a clear day we could see the distant towers of the Gothic cathedral in the Germen-held Metz, the capital of German Lorraine.

One of the best things near the front line are the French co-operative stores which are run by the French army. They have been thrown open to the American soldiers. The prices in these stores are very reasonable.

The gloves they sell are very warm. We have them beat in the matter of underwear, but they have many things which our supply chiefs had not stocked up on when we got into the scrap. These include flashlights, caps, self-starting pocket fuses for lighting cigarettes, and other knickknacks which make life in the front line worth living.

Every son in our battery enlisted as artillerymen, of course, but we did all kinds of extra work without a whimper. Besides potting away at the Boche, we built three or four miles of light railway, made a lot of camouflage and constructed dumps for ammunition.

Fixing camouflage is interesting work. The best kind of camouflage is the wire netting sort, covered with marsh grass and stretched overhead like a roof. It looks like a bit of green field to the German aviator flying overhead, and prevents them from mapping out our positions. In going to and from dugouts we were allowed to walk only on

paths that had been carefully camouflaged. If we had taken other paths the enemy airmen would have gotten a line on our positions.

Frequently we constructed camouflage carelessly as a decoy. The German airmen would fall for the bait and signal back to their batteries. The Boche gunners would get the range of the spot covered by the fake camouflage, and they would pepper away, probably with the thought they were raising Cain with an important American position. We gunners would laugh hilariously and fervently wish the Boches would keep on wasting their ammunition that way forever.

Sometimes it seemed to me as if the whole front slept, or had been abandoned by men, so dead was the silence that reigned. But at these times I found that the watchfulness was of the keenest, and that more is to be learned of the enemy and his plans than in periods when there is greater activity.

The first necessity of war is observation of the enemy's line. Upon the evidence produced day by day by piecing together the

reports of thousands of observers, the whole tactical scheme is hung.

For every mile of front, many pairs of eyes are perpetually watching, each gleaning an occasional scrap of information, here or there, seemingly unimportant in itself, but actually a fiber in the web of knowledge that grows continually at some far off headquarters. The aim of all this watching is to discover the enemy's intentions. For example, if he means to attack, he will bring up and retain a large number of troops in the zone where the attack is to be launched. If he abandons the idea, the strength will be reduced. A massing of batteries heralds a bombardment. Considerable movement behind the enemy's lines suggests the relief of a division. It is by continual consideration of these things that a commander deduces the plans of his opponent.

The ordinary everyday observation is embraced under three main heads—ground observations, kite ballons and airplanes.

The ground observation work is done in ground posts, and the duty of the men in

these stations is to keep their eyes peeled every minute on the enemy's front-line trench system. Sometimes the observer is concealed in a dugout on the side of a hill or he may be perched on the top of a chimney with a hostile battery trying every minute to knock down the chimney with a well-aimed shot. The observer is provided with maps, glasses, telephone, and a note book.

Looking through his peephole the observer sees immediately before him his own trench system, then No Man's Land, torn by shell holes and filled with rusty barbed wire. Beyond this runs the irregular line of the front parapet of the enemy, and behind this the enemy's reserve and communication trenches. Still further back is a country dotted with ruined farms and clumps of trees shorn of their branches. To the casual onlooker there is no sign of movement in this scene of desolation, but the trained observer sees many things through his glasses, things which sometimes help to win battles or enable our forces to anticipate attacks from the enemy.

The second night after our return to the front we were ordered to drop a heavy barrage into the German front line. An attack was anticipated, I guess, and it was our job to see that it didn't come off. For forty minutes we pumped shells over No Man's Land, mashing in many yards of the Boche front line and preventing the enemy from going over the top.

The Boche batteries, located about 6,500 yards away, began to reply hotly. Shells hit all around us, blowing up dugouts and blasting big holes in the landscape. I kept at my gun until it was hot; a six-inch shell lit within thirty yards of me, and when it exploded I saw stars, half-moons and other constellations. At first I thought my end had arrived, but when I felt myself over, I saw I was O. K. A minute later I heard a noise like a bottle of water being hurled through the air, and then came the warning cry, "Gas!"

Right then and there I had my first experience in a gas attack, and it was a hummer.

CHAPTER XVI

The Gas Attack

WE clapped on our masks like lightning, and we were none too quick, for already we were beginning to feel the effects of the poisonous vapors.

The enemy sent over a total of one hundred shells containing vosgene and chlorine gas. Five Americans were killed and sixty-one were sent to the hospital.

The gas shells were fired from trench mortars (minnenwerfers). Officers in the front line, 'phoning for barrage fire to offset the gas attack, found the wires had been cut and sent up rockets as a signal to the artillery in the rear.

We responded to the signal with a will and within an hour had plugged 1,460 shells into the German lines, blasting dugouts and mussing up enemy trenches in fine shape. We must have shuffled off a lot of Boches that

night. I have never had had doubt but that we squared up for the Yankee boys who were gassed. The Americans who were killed in the attack had taken refuge in dugouts.

It was certainly a strange experience firing a "75" with a gas mask on. I had a smothery feeling at first, and could hardly see the sights of my gun. But I got used to it after a while.

Right in front of our battery was a graveyard where many hundreds of French soldiers had been buried.

Occasionally a shell would light in the cemetery and dig up some of the dead ones. Just then it was no place for a superstitious person. We were all dog tired when the firing died down and we quit for the night.

My battery came into action again on January 29th, when the Huns threw a box barrage around one of our listening posts, cutting off our men there. When the barrage lifted, one of the Yanks in the post saw four Huns approaching. He popped at them with his automatic and saw one of them fall. He kept on firing until shell splinters hit him on

the head and arm. He lost consciousness, and didn't wake up until he reached the hospital.

Right here I want to assure American mothers, wives and sweethearts that the best of surgical care in the world is available to their loved ones fighting in France.

First there is a medical organization attached to each regiment, with a regimental infirmary for simple cases. There is also a regimental surgeon and medical officer ranking as captain to each battalion. To each division there is attached an ambulance company, a hospital corps and a division hospital for first aid.

In action these work as one unit. The wounded are given first aid at an emergency station right back of the line, then taken on stretchers to an ambulance for transportation to an advance hospital some miles behind the front. Operations are to be avoided at this hospital unless the case absolutely demands it. When the patient is able to be moved, or if he can be forwarded without

danger by postponement of operation, he is sent to the rear by division ambulance and railroad to a base hospital. These are far enough behind the battle line to be considered almost outside the army zone.

The men in charge of these base hospitals are the very cream of Yankee surgeons and medical men.

They rank as majors in the United States reserves, with the title of directors. Many of them have international reputations as specialists in their particular lines. Most of these chaps have abandoned big incomes to serve their country at a major's pay.

I know of one surgical doc. who threw down a practice in New York which netted him a cool $100,000 a year. And he didn't look a bit worried about it either. He always had a pack of cigarettes for us artillery buddies, and every time he passed our dugout he would stop and swap stories. My freckles used to amuse him, and nearly every time he saw me he'd bawl out:

"Hey, Reddy, when are you going to let

me graft some decent white skin over those copper spots?"

"Never," I would call back.

"Foolish boy," he would return. "You'd be quite a handsome chap if you let me eradicate those freckles."

Sometimes I think he was really serious about it, and wanted to take a hand at experimenting with my freckles. But he didn't have a chance; my freckles and red hair are the badge of the fighting de Varilas, and I wouldn't part with them for anything.

The ambulance drivers are plucky fellows; they go out after the wounded in the thick of the shelling. There was one chap near our lines who picked up a soldier who had one of his legs shot off at the knee. The driver made a tourniquet by cutting some rope off a horse's harness. Then he placed a hammer on the under side of the leg over the severed artery and bound the piece of harness around the leg, tightening it with an ordinary tire iron. You have to be quick and resourceful, you know, when a man is bleeding to death.

I have spoken of that graveyard right in front of that battery. Well, some of the superstitious boys in our battery used to see all kinds of things there at night when they were on guard duty.

One of the guards came into my dugout one night with his face as white as chalk; he was trembling from head to foot.

"That graveyard is haunted," he said, "tonight I saw a ghost out there as sure as you are a foot high."

"A ghost!" I hooted. "There are no such things as ghosts."

"There ain't, hey?" he scoffed. "Well, you ought to see the boy I saw."

"What did he look like?" I asked, just to kid him along.

"A Boche general in white uniform—said uniform glowing like a lightning bug; moustache like the Kaiser's, and steel helmet. And such terrible eyes; they looked like spots of fire."

"Maybe it was the Kaiser," I said tauntingly, "dropped down from an aeroplane to curse the French dead."

"No, it wasn't the Kaiser," said the scared one; "it looked more like Bismarck. I figure that he was apologizing to the French dead for the inhuman way the Kaiser is carrying on."

Two or three more of the boys got worked up over that graveyard, but in all the time I did guard duty there, I never saw anything to get crinkly over. I never could figure why anybody should be scared of dead folks, for they are peaceful and never fail to mind their own business, which cannot be said of most folks who are alive and kicking.

Right through January and February we kept potting at the enemy with our "75's," and the enemy kept potting back at us. I always had a number of shells beside my gun to be fired at a minute's notice.

Many nights we would wake up in our dugout with shells dropping all about us. We would scramble out of our bunks, race half-clad to our gun pits and send a few over to the enemy just to show him that we were wide awake.

One night I awakened with the feeling that I was being tossed about in the vortex of a Kansas cyclone. It was a trivial incident; a shell had landed nearby and blown the top off my dugout. I ran through the darkness with the rest of the crew to the "75," and sent a couple of shells into No Man's Land. Then I went back to bed and slept like a top.

The next day a German deserter wandered into our dugout. I will tell you how it happened. Down in our front-line trench a doughboy observed a movement in the dead grass and weeds among the American wire entanglements. Tense with expectancy, the doughboy put a finger against the trigger of his rifle and waited.

The grass parted and a yellow dog—just plain dog—emerged, paused inquiringly, his forefoot lifted in graceful gesture. Then he trotted from Germany into the United States, wagging the signal of "kamarad" with his tail. He was adopted by the doughboys, and stayed several days in the first line trench,

catching rats for his board. Then he got sick of working so hard, and deserted to our battery. He stayed with us for about a week and then disappeared. Maybe he wasn't satisfied with the chow, or perhaps he got homesick and went back to the Boches.

We tried to solve the rat problem in our dugouts by keeping cats, and at one time we had as many as ten. But the cook fed the little beasts so well that they laid off the job of rat catching, and would do nothing but snooze in the sun when they were not eating. One day a shell landed and wiped out five of the cats, and the rest of them got scared and beat it to parts unknown.

We were not a bit sorry to lose them.

We jumped into real action on March 1, 1918, when a large body of shock troops, picked from the Prussian Guards, went over the top, and charged toward the American front line. The attack was met with conspicuous bravery by the American troops, and there were many shining examples of heroism on the part of our boys.

CHAPTER XVII

Yankee Heroes

THE attack was preceded by a heavy bombardment of our lines with large-caliber guns.

These guns ranged from the six- to the twelve-inch type. The enemy also let loose great quantities of poisonous gas. Heavy shells and gas shells fell on our lines in a perfect whirlwind for more than a half hour. A driving wet snow was falling and the visibility was very poor.

The minute the attack opened we leaped to our guns and worked like devils out there in the storm. My gun averaged about twenty shots a minute, and the big guns all along our line were popping like mad. At the very beginning I had put on my gas mask, for the gas was coming over bad. At six A. M. the Boche barrage fire lifted on the trenches to the right of the salient, and the Huns, num-

bering three hundred, came sweeping forward under the protection of their own fire.

We dropped our barrage right in the midst of them, and we yelled with joy when we saw a score or more go down. The rest of them jumped into what was left of our first-line trenches. But instead of the easy time anticipated, the Kaiser's shock troops found the Americans all ready for battle. Fierce hand-to-hand fighting began.

While the hand-to-hand struggle was going on, we kept a fierce barrage fire sweeping over No Man's Land. It caught many Prussians who were beating it back to their own trenches.

A Boche shell dropped near my position and exploded. I was thrown a distance of ten feet by the concussion, but was not injured. When the enemy had been driven out of the positions, the bodies of ten German soldiers were found in the American trenches. Two German officers were entangled in the wire. Many bodies were in sight in No Man's Land. Eight were visible through the snow-

storm at one point. The ground was littered with enemy hand grenades, boxes of explosives for destroying dugouts and incendiary bombs which the Boches had no opportunity to use.

My battery received orders to cease firing at seven o'clock. We were a delighted bunch of buddies because we had helped defeat picked troops of the German army. A few of our lads were wounded, but none were killed.

Stories of the great personal heroism of the boys down in the first-line trench, while the fight was on, drifted to our headquarters before the day was over. I will relate some of them.

Sergeants Patrick Walsh and William Norton were in a dugout when the Huns landed in our first-line trench.

"Come on out, you American dogs!" yelled a German captain through the door of the dugout.

"We're coming!" yelled Walsh. He emerged with a rush with a 45-caliber automatic in each hand; he killed the Boche

captain with one shot, and menaced the rest of the German crew with his pistols.

"Come on out, shall we?" sneered the spunky American sergeant. "Well, we're out, and what in the devil are you going to do about it?"

Walsh had now been reinforced by Norton and ten American soldiers, who had come forth from the dugout. One of the Boches treacherously fired a shot point-blank at Walsh, but the shot grazed the right ear of the sergeant and buried itself harmlessly in a sandbag.

That quick cowardly shot was just the thing needed to warm good honest American blood to the boiling point, and the Yankees pitched into their foes, unmindful of the fact that they were outnumbered three to one.

Walsh had a double incentive for putting the best in him into that fight, for in his bosom was concealed the log-book of his company. He knew the Huns would give a good deal to capture that record, but he made up his mind that they would only take

it from his dead body. He and his men fought with such splendid ardor that they quickly drove the invaders from the trench.

But the Americans enjoyed only a brief respite. A force of fresh German troops to the number of forty poured into the salient. Walsh quickly sensed a fight to the finish.

"Boys," he yelled, "we've got to step lively now or we'll wake up tomorrow morning in a Boche prison pen."

He had scarcely finished speaking when the Germans bore down upon the little American band, yelling and firing their rifles.

"Wait until they get within ten yards," counseled Walsh, "and then pump the lead into them."

When the advancing horde of Boches had reached a shell hole about ten yards distant, Walsh yelled:

"Fire!"

Bullets cracked from Yankee rifles, and several of the Huns went down.

"Mix in, boys, now and kick hell out of 'em!" shouted Walsh, jumping into the

thick of the fight and laying about him in every direction. He put a bullet into an aggressive German, and cracked the skull of another with the butt of his automatic. The Yanks, inspired by the plucky work of their leader, fought with the vim and courage of American fighters of old. It was a hand-to-hand fracas that would have made Israel Putnam, that fine old saint of Yankee battledom, chuckle with glee. The Americans sweated, puffed, swore and grunted as they lunged with knives, swung rifle butts and searched for Hunnish windpipes with wiry fingers.

As for the Huns, they quickly realized they had unwittingly struck into a very bad hornet's nest, and they retreated in disorder, throwing away their rifles and trench knives in their haste to get back home.

In the same attack a big Irish corporal ran into two Germans near a traverse in the American trench. He was so close to the Boches that he couldn't use his bayonet, so he grabbed one of them by the neck and

pressed his thumb clean through the fellow's windpipe, choking him to death. The other German started to run, and the corporal spitted him with his bayonet.

An American private of small stature engaged in a terrific hand-to-hand fight with a giant Prussian. The Boche was as powerful as a boilermaker, and bent his adversary backward, evidently with the intention of breaking the spine of the American soldier. But the Yank grabbed a mess fork from his boot leg and jabbed it into the throat of the Prussian, who died instantly.

When the raid began, Private Voile started to throw a grenade at the enemy. The grenade slipped from his hand and fell into the bottom of the trench. Telling his comrades to beat it, he threw himself upon the grenade in the hope of extinguishing the fuse. The infernal thing exploded and Voile's legs were terribly mangled.

Corporal Thomas Cosgrove had his head stuck over the top when the raid started, when, zip! a machine-gun bullet passed

through both cheeks, knocking a chew of tobacco out of his mouth. Cosgrove was sorry he lost the chew, but he was mighty glad he had escaped so easily.

An American doughboy was buried by a shell explosion, only his feet sticking above the earth. On those feet were a pair of brand-new shoes. A Boche came along, unlaced the shoes, removed them and beat it across No Man's Land with his booty. When the doughboy was dug out by his comrades he was so enraged at the loss of his boots that his comrades had to lay hold of him to keep him from rushing over to the German trenches.

Most of our boys who were wounded were able to walk to the first-aid stations. When they arrived there the surgeons would make use of that famous English expression, "Are you downhearted?"

And the doughboys would roar back: "No, we're going back and get some more of those Boche devils."

Sergeant Joseph Petrush, of my battery,

was awarded the Croix de Guerre for conspicuous bravery during this engagement.

Shells exploded all around him, but he stuck to his post. The spokes of his gun carriage were blown away and his shield was riddled with shrapnel. An exploding shell wrecked his gun pit, but Petrush didn't quit. He cleared away the wreckage with hell a-poppin' all around him, and kept his piece going until the order came to cease firing.

I talked with some of the German prisoners taken by our boys, and it was truly amazing to discover how they have been buncoed by the military leaders of Germany. We couldn't make those prisoners believe we were Americans. They thought that we were Canadians and English dressed up to look like Yanks. One of them told us that New York had been captured many months before by the German fleet, and that every transport that had left the States had been sunk by Boche submarines. We had an awful hard time convincing them that we were real honest-to-goodness Yankees.

The German officers tell their men that they will be subjected to all kinds of abuse by the Allies if they are captured. One of the prisoners who was sent to the hospital because of wounds wouldn't eat any food until it first had been tasted by a nurse. He was certain that poison had been placed in his chow.

A map found on one of the Germans showed how completely the Huns prepare their raids. The map showed every machine-gun emplacement, every trench and every depression in the ground within the American lines.

That raid made us so mad that we decided to strike back at the Huns, and we did a few days later.

CHAPTER XVIII

The American Raid

WE determined to do a little raiding ourselves and laid our plans with great care.

Both the artillery and the infantry practiced for four days so as to insure the success of the attack.

It was planned to have the engineers place tubes containing explosives under the German barbed wire, and at the "zero" hour these tubes were to be exploded so that a passage would be made through the entanglements for our men.

On the evening of March 5th we were given our instructions and ordered to our posts. At one o'clock in the morning, the time selected for the zero hour, all the batteries on our line began plugging shells into the German trenches. The sky was lighted intermittently for miles around by the flare

of our guns, and during the lulls in the firing of the big guns we could hear the popping of the machine guns in our front-line trenches.

The Boches were greatly alarmed, for they sent up hundreds of star shells in an effort to keep No Man's Land well illuminated. It was planned to have the barrage last for forty-five minutes, after which our boys were to go over the top and charge into the German first-line trench, but when ten minutes had passed we were ordered to cease firing.

We gunners yelped with disappointment and wondered what in blazes had happened.

We found out soon enough; the engineers had failed to blow up the Boche barbed wire and our lads couldn't get into the German lines. The raid was a fizzle, but the failure only whetted our appetites for another poke at the Hun.

We made another try on the night of March 7th, and it worked fine that time. We dropped tons of shells into the German front line, virtually obliterating the trench. Our

men walked over nicely behind their barrage, and penetrated to the German second line.

Raiding began to be a habit with us after that and it was encouraging to hear how well our infantry boys matched up to the enemy.

Sergeant Eugene McNiff, twenty-two years old, and Corporal Milo Plant, twenty years old, both of the famous old 165th New York Regiment, participated in one of the most important raids early in March. Before his enlistment McNiff was employed in a munition factory and Plant was a vaudeville piano player. After taking part in a raid, these two young men made three trips into the shell-swept wastes of No Man's Land and brought in the wounded. They were awarded the Croix de Guerre for their bravery.

The commanding officer called for volunteers to take part in the raiding expedition which was designed to bring back German prisoners and force information from them concerning the strength of the units opposite the American trenches. Every one of the

165th volunteered, as was to be expected, but only forty were chosen. McNiff was selected from C Company and Plant from D Company, the latter being in command of Captain James McKenna, famous athlete and lawyer, of New York City.

These forty, with two officers and fifty French privates, went to a spot ten miles behind the front lines, and for two weeks were intensively trained for the raid until every man knew his part perfectly.

When the night of the raid came, the boys could hardly to restrained, so eager were they to get at the enemy.

Corporal Plant, who was one of the Pershing heroes sent to America to aid in the Liberty Loan drive, gave me a thrilling description of the raid, and I will let him tell it again:

"The zero hour came at 7.37 P. M.," he told me. "Two hundred light and heavy pieces of artillery and two hundred machine guns opened up on a space of one hundred yards. Our batteries certainly gave us a fine barrage.

"We went over the top at 7.40, and immediately star shells began to shoot from Fritz's side, two hundred yards away. I don't know how long it took us to get over to Fritz's bailiwick, but we certainly did hop it.

"The damage to the German trenches was something awful. They were all torn to pieces. Sixteen-foot holes were hollowed out by our shells. The holes were eight feet wide. There was groaning and cursing all around us by wounded Germans.

"The Germans put a barrage right on their own front-line trenches as soon as we got there. We found out later that about four hundred men had occupied the terrain we invaded. About three hundred of these men were killed by our barrage. Most of them were half buried in the ground. Bits of torn flesh and blood covered everything.

"The Huns kept sending up star shell after star shell, and it was as light as day. Sergeant McNiff and I fought side by side. We kept emptying our automatics into the struggling mass of men, who tried to organize them-

selves into some sort of a defensive fighting unit.

"About fifty of the Germans had run away and there was about an equal number left to oppose us. These were reinforced by Prussian guardsmen, big husky fellows who have the reputation of fighting until they are killed.

"The rescuing party must have come up right through their own barrage, and right here I want to say that it is typical of the Germans to do what those men did that night. Their gunners never slackened up on the front-line trenches, though they knew that their own men were 'clicking it' (dying) with every round fired.

"We had intended to stay in No Man's Land and in the German trenches only long enough to get prisoners, but the barrage that the enemy put down was so hot and kept up so long that it was five hours and a half after the time we went over the top before we got back in our own dugouts. During that time we crept from shell hole to shell hole and

gained what little protection we could from the craters.

"I suppose our entire stay in the trenches wasn't more than ten minutes. Four of our men were killed and two were wounded in the encounter.

"We were all pretty mad during those hours we waited out in the shell craters for the barrage to stop, because we hadn't brought any prisoners back with us.

"When we landed back at one A. M. the lieutenant called for volunteers to go back and get the wounded. Sergeant McNiff and I volunteered to go, and we made three trips at three, five and six o'clock, respectively. In bringing the wounded back we had to carry them from shell hole to shell hole to avoid the murderous fire of the Huns."

CHAPTER XIX

French War Crosses

THE Croix de Guerre, a badge of honor which only the highest heroism wins, was awarded by the French government to many Americans during March, 1918.

Some of the winners were my buddies, and I knew first-hand of the deeds of bravery which won for them the greatest military honor of the French Republic. And every one of them deserved to have the little medal pinned on their breasts, for they had acquitted themselves with a courage that has burnished anew the sacred battle traditions of the United States.

The conferring of the decorations was accompanied by an impressive ceremony. The lucky Yanks picked to get war crosses were lined up with a number of French soldiers, who were selected for the same honor.

A French military band blared away at "The Star Spangled Banner," and when it ceased playing, an American band returned the compliment with the "Marseillaise."

Then a distinguished looking French general, resplendent in dress uniform, went down the line, pinning the decorations to the breasts of the American and French heroes. After he had completed the work of pinning a medal on an uncomfortable looking hero, the general, after the French custom, would kiss the recipient of the honor on both cheeks.

I sort of filled up and choked with feeling every time I saw the general put one of the badges on a Yank. I felt proud of them and proud that I was one of their countrymen. I remember fervently wishing that George Washington, John Paul Jones, Stephen Decatur, Abe Lincoln, General Grant, and all the rest of America's old-time heroes and patriots could be present and see how America is keeping up the old Yankee traditions in the present war. Honest, the way I felt then, I believe that I could have overcome my aver-

sion to being kissed by a Frenchman if the general had walked toward me and tried to pin one of those badges on my coat. I know a lot of my buddies felt the same way about it.

One of the boys who landed a war cross was Private Homer Whited, of Bessemer, Ala. He came back with me to America to help boost the third Liberty Loan, so I know all about the stunt that made him a hero. It was his pluck that checkmated what might have been a disastrous raid on a sector of the American trenches on the Lorraine front, the night of March 5, 1918.

Whited and three companions were attacked by a force of Huns six times their number, but the Americans routed the Germans after killing nine and taking two prisoners.

Homer is a modest little doughboy, and I had a hard time pulling the yarn out of him, but at length I got it, and here it is in his own language:

"We landed in the front-line trenches at Ancerville, on the Lorraine front, February 17, 1918. On the evening of March 5th,

snow fell, covering the ground to a depth of four inches.

"It was cold and disagreeable, and when three fellows from my state came to my dugout and asked me to go along with them, I was none too merry about it.

"The men were Sergeant West, and Corporals Edward Freeman and Amos Tesky. They told me they had a liaison message to carry from one sector to another, and were crazy for company.

"They kidded me about my disposition until I crawled out of the dugout and went along with them.

"We had to pass through five gates between the point we had left to the point we were seeking, and as we went through the last of them, Sergeant West ordered me to return for some hand grenades. I misunderstood the order, and thought he said: 'See if there is any one between us and the gate.' When I reported and he found out the mistake I had made, he insisted that I go back and get the grenades anyway.

"It was a mighty good thing he did, as later events showed, although at the time we had not the slightest thought of meeting any of the enemy.

"I soon returned with the grenades, and we resumed our journey. At a traverse, we thought we heard voices, and Sergeant West challenged. Receiving no answer, he fired.

"In the flash we saw that a party of Germans, six times as large as our own, was upon us.

" 'Give them the grenades, Homer!' yelled West.

"I gave them the grenades, all right, and the next minute, two big Germans were running toward me with their hands up, yelling 'kamarad.'

"I shoved them behind me as I saw five more coming over the top of the ridge. I emptied five cartridges into them, and they came no further.

"Just then I happened to turn, and saw one of my prisoners preparing to leap upon my back. He knew my gun was empty, and

From International Film Service

"I Soon Returned with the Grenades"

In the lower right hand corner is a typical grenade as used by our army

thought it would be easy for him to clean me up. There was nothing to do but give him the butt, and he got that until he couldn't yell 'kamarad' any more.

"When the little tea party was over, there were nine dead Germans, and we were able to get back with two prisoners. They told our officers of the Forty-second Division that a party of two hundred Huns were preparing to raid our sector that night. We got ready for them, but they never came."

Equally as thrilling is the story of Corporal Raymond Guyette, another war cross winner. The corporal is a soft-spoken little chap, and before he got into the war was a clerk in the American Brass Company's plant at Waterbury, Conn.

Orders came to capture two German prisoners from a certain sector near the Yser Canal and the Chemin des Dames on March 18, 1918. Thirty-five Yanks, including Guyette, and one hundred and ten Frenchmen volunteered.

Twelve American engineers from the 101st

Commanded by Col. Geo. Woodbury Bunnell, Jr., son of Geo. Woodbury Bunnell, Professor Emeritus of Greek, University of California. Col. Bunnell is a graduate of Westpoint and of the University of Calif

went out across No Man's Land ahead of the raiding party with pontoon bridges to throw across the canal. The German trenches were on the other side of the canal.

The zero hour of the raiders was at 5.15, when the American barrage started. But, unfortunately, the French guides led the raiders too far by a couple of hundred yards, and the raiding party blundered right into the midst of their own artillery fire. Of the twelve engineers, five were killed and the remaining seven were wounded.

To make matters worse, the Germans laid down a barrage, behind which their infantry advanced upon the Americans and French. Shells were falling everywhere—our own and Fritz's—and rifles and machine guns were blazing away merrily.

There were a good many gas shells mixed up in the German firing, and a lot of our boys got slight doses of the poisonous stuff. Thirteen Americans were wounded, including Guyette; a number of the French were hit too.

As Guyette, suffering from his wound, was

limping back to our lines, which were about three hundred yards from the canal, he heard a call for help. It was one of the wounded engineers. Guyette went back and slung the man over his shoulder. While he was doing this he noticed there were other wounded men lying close by. When he had landed the first man safely in our trenches he was pretty well exhausted, but he had strength enough to bring another man in, so he started back. He packed the second man on his back and got back with him all right. Then this gritty young chap from Connecticut went back a third time, and brought in a third man. All this time, it must be remembered the No Man's Land was being raked with a terrific fire by the Germans. If Corporal Guyette didn't deserve a war cross, then nobody ever did. His brave deed or deeds ought to stir the blood of every American. Guyette came back with the Liberty Loan hero outfit, and every time I hear his name mentioned I feel like cheering and tossing up my hat.

A number of boys of the Ohio infantry received war crosses while I was in France. One of these was Sergeant Ethridge Justice. When the whole team of one of the 37-millimetre guns was disabled this spunky chap continued to fire it, at the same time keeping command of the other guns. Another Ohio boy, Private Charles Cain, of the infantry, was wounded on March 9th, but continued to load his piece until his strength was exhausted.

Corporal H. W. Fanning, of Maryland, was commended for throwing himself upon a bomb on a parapet and preventing its falling into a trench, averting a serious accident. Private B. J. Block, of Alabama, was cited for pulling the igniter from a gun to prevent firing when the shot would have probably killed a comrade engaged in the rescuing of the wounded.

The manner in which Private John McCormack, of the 165th, traveled over a shell-swept area to obtain food for his weary comrades fighting in a front-line trench, furnishes one of the thrillers of the war. McCormack

didn't get a war cross, but he deserves one for the way he conducted himself.

He gave up a good job as a keeper in Sing Sing prison to answer the call that stirred his Irish blood. His experience is sufficient to thrill all Americans who are proud of their fighting men. He is a big blue-eyed boy with muscles as strong as steel. I heard him spin his yarn when he came back with us to America.

"We went into the Lorraine sector," he said, "on the night of March 7th. There hadn't been any heavy firing there for two years, the French fellows told us as they came out. They said it was as safe as a church.

"Well, we hadn't been there four hours before Fritz let go at us with everything he had. There was only one line of trench there, so there was nothing for us to do but get down into our dugouts. There wasn't any communicating trench through which we could retreat to our rear lines. We just had to hold tight and take our medicine.

"I was in a deep dugout with twenty-two

men and a couple of officers, when a heavy 'minnenwerfer' smacked on top of it, and buried us all underneath tons of earth. I was covered with earth and débris up to my neck, and it was an hour before I was able to make the least movement toward digging my way out.

"There were a few groans to be heard, but mostly it was silent in the wrecked dugout. And no wonder, for of the original twenty-two, only three of us remained alive.

"Finally I worked myself free, and found the other two boys who were alive. We were all hurt, but were strong enough to try to dig our way up to the surface.

"This is how we did it: One man would dig away earth with his steel helmet, then pass it to the second fellow, who stood half way up to the steps, leading to the surface. The second would pass the hat to the third, who would chuck the dirt out of a little opening at the surface, through which we were getting air.

"Corporal Helmar and Corporal Raymond

were the other two fellows with me. It took us four hours and a half to dig our way out.

"The bombardment, which started at 11.30 at night, lasted through until the next day. And this was the sector they said was safe as church.

"When we finally got above ground we were cut off by a couple of hundred yards from the next sector of the trench that remained intact, but we had to get over there somehow, so we took it on the run, through a rain of all sorts of shells. We made it all right.

"All day we stayed in this place (the boys were getting a strafing too) without any grub. In the afternoon somebody said: 'Who'll volunteer to go back to the second-line trenches and bring some chow out here?'

"I was pretty hungry, so I said I would go.

"There was no communicating trenches and I knew it was up to me to beat it back over the open country.

"I will confess that the prospect didn't appear very joyful to me, but when a man is

half starved he becomes desperate. So I started across.

"The whole German army started banging at me and I had to duck into a shell hole.

"There, hungry as I was, I had to stick for two hours until Fritz let up a bit. When there was a lull I started on again.

"When I arrived where the mess outfit was located, I needed help to carry the chow back to the boys at the front. Lieutenant Ellett and Private McCarthy felt sorry for the hungry lads, and they said they'd go along with me.

"We each grabbed two big tins of red-hot stew, thick with meat and vegetables, and off we went.

"We got there all right, after a few stops at the way stations (the shell holes) and believe me, those twenty-three lads in the first-line trench were mighty glad to get the chow. But I'll tell you that was the hardest dinner I ever rustled for in my life."

These are the types of lads America is sending against the Hun, and in view of this

fact, I am certain that the Kaiser has no more chance of winning this war than Charley Chaplin has of becoming the Archbishop of Canterbury.

CHAPTER XX

Back to the U. S. A.

ONE night we noticed a series of light flashes at a point about a mile behind our battery position.

Immediately after the flashes ceased one of the Boche batteries began a terrific bombardment, sending shells screaming to a spot in our rear.

Our suspicions were aroused after this thing had occurred two or three times, and they were verified the next night when some French soldiers bagged a German spy over back of us in the wood. The spy was a mere boy, and how he got back of our lines nobody knows.

From a tree-top this boy had been sending flashlight signals to the German lines, giving information when ammunition trains reached a certain cross-road. The Boche batteries shelled the cross-roads at the proper moment,

with the result that several motor trucks were blown up and a number of men killed.

Our boys have to keep a keen watch every minute for German spies. They smuggle themselves in behind our lines through all sorts of avenues. They employ all kinds of trickery to gain their ends. Some of them land behind the American and French lines in aeroplanes. They are disguised in American and French uniforms.

Some of them hang around staff headquarters trying to sneak information while others go boldly into the trenches and mingle with the officers and men. I heard of one case where a spy in the uniform of a Yankee lieutenant appeared one night in an American trench, and said to the captain:

"We are to fall back at once to the second line."

The faintest of accents in the fellow's speech aroused the captain's suspicions, and he turned his flashlight into the face of the speaker. The little circle of tell-tale light revealed the Teutonic cast of the man's

features, and the Yank leaped at his throat and bore him to the ground. The spy was hustled to the rear under heavy guard.

That incident showed that the Huns have got to get up early in the morning to fool the Yanks. We are all from Missouri and have to be shown.

In March, 1918, an American battery to the right of us in the woods was subjected to a terrific gas attack. This battery was in charge of Lieutenant Hirsch, of Philadelphia. The outfit was under fire from gas shells for four days, and as it is impossible for men to keep their masks on for that length of time, every man-jack in the battery was gassed. Lieutenant Hirsch refused to leave the battery until the last man had succumbed, and then he was so badly blinded that he had to be led away.

Every clear day our airmen would go up and meet the enemy. When we first moved into our sector the Huns were slightly our superior in the matter of machines, but not for long. The French came to our rescue and

loaned us some planes, and in short order the United States took over the control of the air. The Americans have proved themselves to be the most daring and resourceful of aviators. They excel even the dare-devil French fliers. One day I saw an American aviator dive down three thousand feet into a nest of Boche planes, forcing one to the ground, and compelling the remainder to flee.

The exploits of American aviators were the topic of daily conversation in our battery. One of our fliers was scouting fifteen miles back of the Boche lines when engine trouble obliged him to alight in the enemy's country. He repaired the engine without any trouble, but discovered to his dismay that he had not enough gasoline to get back to his hangar. It was a desperate situation, but the Yank was not discouraged. He hid his machine in a clump of woods and, taking a brass container, started foraging for oil. He located an enemy hangar near a farm house, and, as luck would have it, the place was unguarded. He had just finished filling his container with

oil when a car filled with German officers whizzed around a bend in the road. The Yank jumped through an open window of the farm house, ran upstairs and hid under a bed. By the sounds the American soon concluded that he had butted into the very thick of a German staff headquarters meeting. There was nothing for him to do but remain under the bed until things had quieted down.

In about an hour two Hun officers, dusty from travel and apparently dog-tired from the stress of battle, lumbered into the room, and after many German curses and much imbibing from a suspicious-looking black bottle, tumbled into bed with grunts and groans of weariness. They were quickly fast asleep, their snores sounding like French barrage fire.

The Yankee airman crept from under the bed and, clinging tightly to the container, he softly opened the door and reached the top of the stairway, only to run plump into a fat German officer coming up.

The Hun let loose a wolfish grunt and his

big watery eyes threatened to pop from his fat face. Down came the container on the top of his head, and the Teuton crashed backward down the stairway. But three or four Huns had rushed into the lower hallway, and with fierce cries they started up the stairs. The Yank dealt with them in a typical breezy American fashion.

From the top of the stairs he leaped into their midst, dealing blows to the right and the left with his container. There was a cork fastened securely in the top so that not a drop of the precious oil was spilled. The Germans went down as if they had been felled with an ax. The Yank darted out of the house and sprinted to the hiding place of his plane. He replenished the exhausted tank and a few minutes later was 2,000 feet aloft, heading for the French lines, where he landed in safety.

Our aviators are doing excellent work mapping the enemy's country, bombing trenches and blowing up munition dumps, railroad stations and lines of communication.

Well, I got mine, the latter part of March, 1918. While under fire my mask was cut by a piece of shrapnel, and I got my first bad dose of gas. It was mustard gas too, one of the worst kind the devilish Boches send over. I was pumping away at my gun, when suddenly I felt a choking, stinging sensation, and then I passed out like a baby hit with a brick. When I came to I was in the hospital with nurses fluttering all about doing kind things. But I couldn't see them, for I was as blind as a bat.

When I discovered there was something the matter with my eyes I was so mad I almost foamed at the mouth.

"I'm going to get a Boche right now," I yelled, "if I have to crawl to the front."

And, clad only in my night-shirt, I rolled out of my cot and charged at the spot where I figured a door might be located.

I plunged into a convalescent soldier, and we both went to the floor biting and scratching.

I must have been a little delirious, for I fixed such a tight grip on his windpipe that

it required the combined efforts of four nurses and an attendant to pry me loose. I must have thought the poor chap I knocked down was a Boche.

The next day I was all right in my noodle, but I was still blind and mad as the devil.

I was a little consoled that afternoon when some Irish lads from a famous New York regiment were brought in. They were in worse shape than I was, suffering from both gas and wounds, but they were as game as bulldogs. They cursed the Huns with all of the variations of the Gaelic temperament. Their Irish blood was to the boiling point, and their chief desire was to get back to the front double-quick and get another crack at the Hun. Never have I heard men swear with such picturesqueness. If they ever get a chance to do all the things they threatened to do to the Kaiser, there won't be so much as a toenail left of his royal highness for purposes of identification.

One of the lads who had lost a leg was particularly vitriolic.

"So help me," he said, "I'm going back if I have to carve me own wooden leg out of a bedpost. And that blankety blank German Emperor, may the devil get him, for if he don't I will."

At the end of the sixth day I regained my eyesight, and was a happy lad to be able to see the world once more.

I remained in the hospital two weeks and was then sent to a casualty camp. While there doing light duty, I was picked with thirteen others of the First Division to return to the States and help out in the third Liberty Loan Campaign. Thirty-seven others from various branches of General Pershing's overseas forces were also selected to go back. In this Liberty Loan contingent were artillerymen, infantrymen, machine gunners and signal corps men, representing every section of the United States from New York to San Francisco.

One of the lucky lads, Private Langhorne Barbour, seventeen years old, of Chatham, Va., was in that vicious fight on the Swiss

border, November 2, 1917, when the Germans box-barraged a tiny sector and killed that trio of American soldiers whose names will go down in history as the earliest martyrs of the war—Enright, Gresham and Hay.

I was picked to go because I had fired the first shot for Uncle Sam in the war, but when I was told I was going back to the good old U. S. A. to boom the bonds, I couldn't believe it until I was actually aboard the transport and saw the coast-line of France disappearing in the distance. Then I knew it was true and fairly hugged myself for joy.

The trip back was an excursion for us war-battered men. All of us had been gassed or wounded, and every man-jack of us was seasoned to our toes in modern trench warfare. Rigid training and the hardest of knocks had been our lot for many months, so that the life of luxury and ease on the transport was as balm to us. The chow would have satisfied the palate of a millionaire. Our ménu included turkey, chicken, pie and cake. And that pie was wonderful; I ate a

whole one at every meal. During my nine months in France, I hadn't even caught sight of a pie. Every afternoon we were treated to a movie show aboard the transport, and again we saw the friendly faces of Douglas Fairbanks, Charley Chaplin and Mary Pickford.

Many of us could not restrain our tears when we sighted the coast-line of good old Yankeedom. All of us had gone over to France prepared to die for our country, and never expected to see America again. Yet there it was looming up on the horizon.

When we reached New York harbor, April 28, 1918, our transport was guided to the transport docks and remained there all night. the next day we were taken to Fort Jay, Governor's Island, and that evening we were allowed to go into New York. The following day we paraded up Broadway—good old Broadway, the best thoroughfare in the world. We were greeted by the Mayor of New York and then escorted to the Stock Exchange, where we were given a royal reception. We

were dined by the Bankers' Association and the Harvard Club, then our unit was split into teams and sent to different cities to boost the third Liberty Loan. I went to Philadelphia with eleven others of Pershing's men.

I am happy that I played my little part in this big war by firing the first shot for liberty. I think it was fitting that I should be sent to Philadelphia, the birthplace of liberty and the shrine of that wonderful old relic, the Liberty Bell. Every man-jack of us who came over is going back to put in more blows against the Hun. We feel that it is our duty to do this, and besides the fascination of war has its grip upon us.

In Philadelphia I met the best girl in the world, and now I have her to fight for as well as my country when I return to France. The Hun peril is a real one, as every American will soon realize if they do not put their full weight into this war. The boys over on the other side are getting splendid treatment, and since the putting over of the last two Liberty Loans there has been plenty of food

and clothing. The Yank who fails to get into this war with both feet is losing the opportunity of his life. I will not rest content until I am fighting with my battery again over there in France on the front line. It is my burning desire to send over many more shots for liberty into the Boche trenches.

TRENCH TALK

THE war has evolved what is almost a new language, to which each nation involved has contributed lavishly. The American soldier went to France richly provided with a store of slang, to which each day has added a new and choice selection of terms and phrases. Some of this new language is clear to those at home, but much of it needs explanation.

Archie. The soldiers' name for the sky-pointing guns that shoot at aircraft and sometimes hit them.

automatic. The Colt 45-caliber automatic pistol with which our boys are armed. If it doesn't happen to jam it is a pretty deadly weapon.

barrage. High explosive shells fired by artillery so that they pass over the heads of an advancing or retreating force and fall in a line in front or back of them and protect them. A box-barrage is one which is laid down all around a small force so that it cannot move in any direction.

battery. A specified number of pieces of artillery which operates as a unit under the command of a captain.

Bertha. Sammee's name for a big German gun, from the name of the eldest daughter of Krupp, the German gunmaker.

big stuff. Various kinds of large German shells. The big ones filled with high explosive are called *crumps*, from the noise they make when they explode. The ones that give off a cloud of black smoke are called *coal-boxes* or *Jack Johnsons*. The French call the big stuff *marmites* or *stewpots*.

billet. The barracks, French village or encampment to which the soldier is sent after his tour of duty in the trenches, supposedly for a rest, but usually to work very hard at some non-fighting branch of military work. The soldiers usually spend one week in the front-line trenches, the next week in the support, or second-

line trenches, and the third week in the rest billets, after which they return to the front line.

Blighty. The favorite word of the English Tommy, which to him means England, home and usually a rest in the hospital. It is also applied to any wound too serious to be cured by treatment at the field dressing station or field hospital, for which the soldier must be sent to England. The "Blighty" of the French soldier is Paris, which he affectionately calls "Panam."

Boche. The name which has long been applied to the Germans by the French, is an abbreviation of "caboche," which means a hobnail with a hard, rough and square head. The simile is apparent. Among the British soldiers the enemy is generally referred to simply as "Fritz."

bomb (aerial). Long cylinder of steel filled with high explosive which the Boches are in the habit of dropping on hospitals as well as military objectives. One of these bombs is capable of destroying a building of considerable size

bowlegs. The American infantryman's name for a cavalryman.

bunkie. The companion who shares a soldier's shelter, usually his best friend for the time being.

butcher. The company barber.

caisson. The two-wheeled wagon which carries the ammunition for a field gun.

camouflage. Artificial scenery made of wire netting, covered with leaves and branches, or of cloth painted to represent scenery, which is used to conceal guns, roads and other points of military importance.

cannoneer. The member of the gun section who sights the gun on its object.

chow. Sammee's name for food of any kind.

clicked it. Getting killed and so needing the services of *Holy Joe*, the chaplain, is usually referred to most delicately as having *clicked it* or *gone west*. After the ceremony the unfortunate is *sewed in a blanket* and after that he is referred to as *pushing up the daisies*.

communication trench. The zig-zag trench which leads from one line of the trenches to another. After a position has been held for some time these sunken roads become quite numerous and are indicated by street signs which exhibit much wit and ingenuity.

cooties. The soldier's closest acquaintance and worst enemy, otherwise known as trench lice.

Croix de Guerre. The French war cross which is only given for acts of extreme bravery under fire. The recipient is usually kissed on both cheeks by the French officer who bestows the decoration, to temper the extreme pleasure of the occasion.

deflection. In sighting a field piece, the movement from one side to the other to bring the piece to bear on its object, as distinguished from the elevation, which means moving the piece up or down until the proper range is secured.

direct hit. Used when a shell strikes directly on the object at which it was aimed. The phrase is quite common in the American lines.

dog robber. An affectionate name for a soldier who works for an officer.

doughboy. The cavalryman's name for an infantryman.

duckboards. Planks which are laid along the bottom of a muddy trench to give solid footing. Usually two boards are laid down with cross pieces nailed on and this simple expedient has made it possible to live in trenches which would otherwise be nothing but mudholes.

dugout. A cave excavated in the ground and protected above by sandbags, steel plates, etc., used by officers and by men in the trenches to protect them from shell fire. In the trenches it is commonly known as a "funkhole."

entanglements. Barbed wire strung on steel posts driven in the ground outside a trench for a depth of some ten to forty yards to make it harder for the other fellow to get at the men in the trenches. Before an attack this wire is blasted away by a barrage of high explosive shells.

fag. The soldier's name for a cigarette, often a scarce article in the trenches and the first thing the wounded soldier asks for when he gets to the dressing station.

firing data. The instructions as to elevation, deflection, kind of shells to be used, etc., given to the commander of a battery of artillery.

flare. A white rocket sent up at night which illuminates the ground in front. It is the bane of night raiding parties, who are taught that if they stand absolutely still they cannot be seen. The least movement, however, brings a blast of fire from the machine guns of the enemy, which is apt to prove fatal.

franc. A piece of French money worth about twenty cents in American coin.

French "75." The wonderful little French field piece which has a bore of about three inches. The poilu calls this piece the "Little Frenchman" or "Charlotte." This gun is capable of firing twenty shots a minute of shrapnel or high explosive shells.

gas. The general name given to the various kinds of poisonous or tear-producing gases sent over against the enemy by means of shells or from cylinders in which the gas is compressed and

released from the trenches to be blown against the opposing forces by a favorable wind.

gas mask. The name given to the protective device which the soldier pulls over his head when a gas alarm is given. The soldier breathes through a chemical compound, which renders the gas harmless.

goat. The disrespectful name given to a junior officer, which the soldier is careful never to mention in his presence.

"gone west." The same as *clicked it.*

grenade. A small bomb, one form of which is mounted on a stick to be shot from a rifle and another an oval ball, which is thrown from the hand. The latter form has a lever which reaches down the side of the bomb and is grasped by the hand. At one end of the bomb is a pin to which a ring is attached and just before the bomb is thrown this pin is pulled out and this releases the lever which flies off as the bomb is thrown. This starts a time fuse which causes the bomb to explode in a fixed number of seconds from the time it is thrown.

gun pits. Excavations dug for artillery to conceal it from enemy observation and fire.

hangar. A house or shed built to house airplanes.

hick-boo. The flying man's term for a rumpus, bombardment, or attack.

Holy Joe. The usual and entirely respectful name for the regimental chaplain.

incendiary bombs. Another sample of German frightfulness. These bombs when they explode throw out a flaming liquid which sets fire to anything burnable within a large area.

kamarad. The German soldier's word of surrender and plea for mercy. It has grown very familiar to our soldiers on the western front.

kiwi. An officer in the ground service of the flying corps. The name is taken from that of an Australian bird.

K. O. Short for commanding officer.

lanyard. The line which is attached to the trigger of a field gun. The cannoneer jerks this line to fire the piece.

lead team. A field piece is drawn by six horses in pairs. The first pair is known as the lead team and, of course, directs the gun. The left-hand horse is saddled and ridden by the artilleryman known as the lead driver.

lead piece. The first gun of a battery section which leads the rest of the battery.

leave. The brief vacation given to soldiers, which they usually spend in a nearby city or town. The soldier's entertainment is

usually mild, and on his return, when his fellow Sammees ask him what happened, he is apt to reply, "father of twins," which is his equivalent for the French phrase *pas de tout*, which being translated means *nothing at all.*

listening post. A position near the enemy line, usually in a shell hole or in an advance section of the trench, where men lie quietly listening to what is going on in the enemy trenches. Much valuable information about enemy movements is picked up in this way.

mademoiselle. Sammee has quickly picked up the French word for "Miss" and any girl who seems attractive to him is known as a "mademoiselle."

mess. The army term for any meal, be it breakfast, dinner or supper. If the cook happens to be afraid and the firing is hot, the term is apt to be literal.

mess kit. Every soldier is supplied with an aluminum frying pan, with folding handle, which locks a similar dish on the pan as a cover. Inside repose a knife, fork and spoon and this outfit in a canvas bag, together with the army tin cup, make up what is known as the soldier's mess kit. With it, he can cook himself, from his emergency rations, a very acceptable meal wherever he may happen to be.

minnenwerfer. The German name for a trench mortar, a short gun of sometimes large caliber which is equipped to throw heavy mines or bombs from the bottom of a trench into the enemy's trenches.

mitrailleuse. A kind of machine gun.

mule skinner. The soldier's name for a teamster.

munition dump. In order to have an ample supply of shells at hand, it is customary to bring up huge numbers of high explosive and shrapnel shells and pile them somewhere near the artillery. This dump then becomes a target for the enemy's guns, and airplanes, which endeavor to drop a bomb on the dump which will explode the whole.

mustard gas. A variety which the Huns take great delight in sending over against the Allied lines. It smells like mustard and makes the eyes water.

No Man's Land. The strip of territory lying between the hostile trenches, which no man owns and no man wants. It is populated chiefly by shell holes and barbed wire.

nose-dive. An airplane maneuver in which the pilot points the nose of his machine downward and dives at his adversary with full engine power on and firing his machine gun as he falls. Machines have been known to attain a speed of more than 200 miles an hour in this maneuver.

onion shell. The flaming, explosive shell which the Huns shoot at our airplanes. It looks like an onion before it bursts and smells like one afterward.

Panam. Paris, the Frenchman's Blighty.

penguin. An airplane pilot who, for some reason, does not go up in a machine.

periscope. The eye of a submarine, a steel column extending ten or fifteen feet above the deck of a sea snake, which is fitted with lenses and prisms through which the observer in the body of the ship can see what is going on without bringing the boat to the surface.

poilu. The universal name for a soldier of France, which means brave, strong. He also calls himself *un bleu* from the light, gay blue of his uniform.

quirk. In the slang of the air service, a pilot or one who operates an airplane.

reveille. The early morning bugle call which turns the soldier out for his day's work. It is about as popular as the 3 A. M. rooster.

rolling kitchen. An ingenious stove on wheels on which the company cook and all his utensils ride and serve hot food to the hungry Sammees as they march.

round of ammunition. One complete shell in its loaded cartridge.

salient. A part of a trench system which sticks out further than the rest into the enemy's territory. It is usually an uncomfortable place to be stationed, as it is a natural bone of contention.

saw-bones. The regimental doctor.

sector. A division of a trench system which is under one command, or one which lies between certain points.

shell crater. The round hole dug by the explosion of a big shell. No Man's Land is dotted with these holes and they form useful havens of refuge in this desolate space.

shock troops. Especially trained and selected troops which are used in the first line of attack.

shrapnel. A kind of artillery shell in which the case is filled with pieces of iron, bullets, etc. When the shell strikes or when it is exploded by a time fuse, these pieces are driven with great force in all directions. This type of shell is chiefly used against infantry which is advancing to attack.

shave-tail. A newly appointed second lieutenant.

slum. Sammee's name for his meat or vegetable stew, which forms a frequent item in his diet list.

sniper. A crack shot whose business it is to conceal himself in some favorable spot and pick off enemy troops who show themselves carelessly.

sow belly. The universal army name for bacon.
star shells. A kind of roman candle or rocket which throws a white light into No Man's Land and lights up all the surrounding country.

trench helmet. A steel hat which Sammee thinks is comfortable or uncomfortable, very large or very small, depending on whether or not he happens to be under fire.
trench knife. A broad-bladed weapon which makes a good tool for digging or for making a Hun say "kamarad."

wagon soldiers. Artillery men who ride either on the guns, caissons, or horses, and whose lot is often envied by the infantryman plowing along in the mud.
wind jammer. The obvious name for a trumpeter or band man.

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