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The Peerless "E"

Nos. 1 to 5

October, 1917

A Journal of Battery E, 2nd Ohio Field Artillery.
Originated by Captain C. O. Mitchell and
Edited by Corp. Baruch Jonas.



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By Corporal Baruch Jonas



The writer's thanks are due to Capt. C. O. Mitchell and Lieut. H. Huntley without whose encouragement and personal efforts this book would have never been published or even written; and also to all the other officers and men of the Battery E, whose kindness and consideration inspired me to do my very best.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

This curious Journal originated in the following manner: There is in the Battery E of the 2nd Ohio Field Artillery a certain worthless fellow whose name is Corporal Something-or-other, it does not matter much what it is. He doesn't know his left hand from his right and has a perfect genius for throwing a battery into confusion at the very moment when it has almost won the war by getting a beautifully straight line on the parade ground. A council of war was called to decide what to do with him, but no one could suggest anything, because the man, as said before, is good for nothing at all. But finally an idea occurred to Capt. Mitchell, who is the commander of the Battery E. "Why not make a writer out of him," thought he. "And have him record the sayings and doings of the Battery? Any fool can be a successful writer, as witnessed by 99 out of a 100 books."

Accordingly, Corporal What'shisname was appointed as the official writer of the Battery E, and we, the Editor, were instructed to take charge of that weak-minded cumberer of the earth and to see that he do his work in a satisfactory manner.

This we shall try to do as well as it is in our power, but we hope that the reader will consider the difficulties with which we have to contend. We have no fixed abode, our home being wherever we happen to hang our editorial hat. And we have very little leisure on account of that daily nuisance, the drill, which consumes five hours of our valuable time. The style of this journal will therefore necessarily be abrupt, unpolished and painfully plain, but we venture to predict nevertheless, that the reader who knows how to read between lines will not find his time altogether wasted.

THE PEERLESS E

No. 1

June 9th, 1917. A miracle. The Lord transformed chaos into this rather chaotic world in seven days. The U. S. War Department goes Him one better and in one second transforms a troop of cavalry into two batteries of artillery. And yet there are sceptics who claim that the age of miracles is past.

The newly created units are called Battery B and Battery E.

July 1st, 1917. Battery E receives the first installment of its equipment in the shape of a bugle.

July 12th, 1917. Battery E receives more equipment in the shape of another bugle. Greased lightning is supposed to be a fairly rapid thing, but it is a veritable snail in comparison with an American mobilization. No criticism is, however, intended. Please Heaven that other nations were as slow in going to war as we are. We regret our unpreparedness, but at the same time we cannot help being proud of it.

July 15th, 1917. The Batteries B and E go into a carefully selected camp. An open sewer called by courtesy the Ten Mile Creek, represents the No Man's Land, for no man has as yet been foolhardy enough to go into it. A bath in its oily water would probably be more fatal than a German bullet. A highly realistic sham battle is fought every night with real blood flowing in streams. Mosquitoes by the million are attacking. The men, hopelessly outnumbered, defend themselves as they can, using oil of citronella, liquid fire and sulphurous language. The stench of the battlefield is imitated and even surpassed by a nearby garbage disposal plant, which also provides valuable experience in the matter of poisonous gases. No better site could have possibly been selected for a camp, for the men are now ready for almost anything. The name of this delightful place is Camp Walbridge.

July 20th, 1917. The downpour of equipment continues. The Batteries B and E receive an old

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farm wagon and a couple of planks and manufacture a wooden gun. Berlin hears of it and is thrown into consternation.

August 12th, 1917. The Batteries B and E invite the Ladies' Auxiliary for a picnic. The Ladies provide enough fruit, cake and food of all kinds to spoil the digestion of a brigade. The Batteries generously supply an unlimited amount of water. An entertainment is also given at which the peerless quartette of the Battery E consisting of Privates Chamberlain, Drulard, Steiger and Stimpfle covers itself with glory.

A member of the Battery E, whose name we charitably suppress, steps forward and recites the following literary crime.

CAMP WALBRIDGE.

1.

Quite happy and wonderful lives lead we,
The men of the Second Artillery E,
Somewhere in Ohio, on the lovely shore,
Of a crystal pure stream we are waging grim war.
Speak not of Marne, the Aisne or the Yser,
Right here in Ohio we're fighting the Kaiser.

2.

And, friends, let me tell you: the worst of our foes
Is a bit of a chap, weighs ten pounds in his clo'es.
When stripped, I think he weighs nothing at all.
"I can't get 'em up," is his desperate call.
"I can't get 'em up," so his bugle sadly blows.
But he does get us up for the Lord only knows
If we dare to remain on our bunks or our ticks,
The Captain's upon us like a ton of bricks.

3.

That bugler chap, Buttery, eats not nor sleeps,
But ever and ever he after us keeps.
At 8 in the morning he calls us to drill;
At 10 in the morning we are drilling still.
A brief little rest at the hour of eleven,
And then it is drill call again by heaven!

4.

That bugler chap ruins my nerves, I say
Boys, lynch him, I think he's in Germany's pay.
And the same should be done to the alien spies
Who brought here ten millions of blood-thirsty
flies.

That eat us and plague us while sunshine is bright,
And clouds of mosquitoes that plague us at night.

5.

Camp Walbridge! A wonder you are 'tis no lie.
Sad tears shall we weep when we bid you good bye.
Five thousand mosquitoes last night I have slain;
Was pretty near drowned as it started to rain;
For breakfast five flies I had and an ant,
And poison gas breathed from the near garbage
plant.

Speak not of Marne, the Aisne or the Yser,
Right here in Camp Walbridge we're fighting the
Kaiser.

August 4th, 1917. The two batteries are mustered into federal service. This arouses wild rumors that a pay day may be in sight. But hope dies away and gloom settles once more upon 400 "busted" men.

August 16th, 1917. The Batteries E and B for the first time in their career go into action. The list of casualties is appalling—400 officers and men are shot—in the arm with a hypodermic needle containing typhoid serum. Great courage is displayed by the men in spite of the fact that Corporal X, who is the finest fellow and the most accomplished liar that ever wore a red hat cord, is trying his hardest to scare them into a fit. With a face a yard long on which sympathy is struggling with consternation he approaches a strapping recruit. "Whatever you do," he whispers, "hold your arm away from your body. The needle, you know, goes occasionally clear through the arm and pierces a fellow's side, in which case, of course, he dies." The recruit's face turns a beautiful olive drab and he becomes somewhat wobbly on his feet. But otherwise he meets his awful fate like a man.

As the nasty stuff begins to circulate in the bodies of the victims, some of the men (always the tallest and the strongest) faint away like school-girls, others become feverish and dizzy, and a fortunate few are not affected at all. Altogether it is a delightful diversion and ought to be repeated at least once every week.

August 20th, 1917. An epidemic hits the camp.

It is a mysterious disease somewhat similar to paresis or softening of the brain, its principal symptom being a strange desire on the part of the men to sprout a dinky little Charley Chaplin moustache. Corporal Lewis and Sergeant Parke are the first victims. Corporal DuClerq and a number of others are quickly infected. Two commissioned officers likewise catch the disease. The writer of this Journal resist heroically, but gradually begins to feel a strange stirring in his manly breast: he likewise yearns to sprout a moustache.

This desperate situation calls for heroic means. A mob gathers around one of the patients and after a short struggle overpowers him and clips off his moustache. Seeing this, Pvt. Stone of Battery B takes to the tall timber with a hundred men in wild pursuit. He is caught and his moustache is ruthlessly amputated. The same grim fate overtakes Sergeant Parke after a desperate resistance. Whereupon Corporal DuClerq retreats to his tent and with tears in his eyes shaves off his own moustache, thus establishing a new record of wisdom and stoicism.

The day ends in an almost complete wiping out of the disease. The two commissioned officers are still affected, but discipline is discipline. Their equals in rank will have to attend to them.

August 20th, 1917. Private Phillips of Battery B is kicked by a horse. The horse is not seriously injured, but sustains a slight abrasure on its left hoof and a nervous shock.

Aug. 21st, 1917. The horse that had kicked Private Phillips has completely recovered and is ready for another man, preferably of Battery B.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thus ends the first number of the Journal, which, as the reader can see, does not contain a single word of sense. Our excuse is that we were extremely busy and could not watch our writer as he ought to be watched. But we are going to put the screws on him, and the next number will be more sensible, or we will know the reason why.

THE PEERLESS E

No. 2

CAMP WALBRIDGE, Aug. 24.—The writer of these pages has a painful conversation with the editor. We are told in terms which are more forceful than elegant that we had better “come out of it,” and write some sense or else it is the guard-house for us.

Our answer is an absolute refusal. If we had any sense, we tell him, we should not be a second assistant of a junior acting corporal in the army. We are walking and eating and sleeping according to regulations. (See Army Regulations, pages 24, 25, 26 and 27: How to Fold a Blanket.) But we shall be thrice blessed if we write this Journal according to regulations. And just to demonstrate our complete independence we shall begin this number with several pages of undiluted nonsense, devoted entirely to:

Women.

Before Germany concentrated her collective mind upon poisonous gases and submarines it used to have artists and poets, and one of them said:

Ehret die Frauen. Sie pflchten und weben
Himlische Blumen ins Irdische Leben.

Which can be tamely translated as follows:

Honour the women, for heavenly flowers
Into the tissue of earth-life they weave.

While another writer prefaced a very interesting book with the following four lines:

Drum höret was der Weise spricht
Zu euren dicken Shädeln.

Verachtet mir die Mädeln nicht,
Die Schönen, süßen Mädeln.

Which, translated into camp-English means:

Oh men, into your craniums square,
Do let this great truth sink:
Despise me not the maidens fair,
They're worthier than you think.

Yes, friends, they are a thousand, no, a million times worthier and finer and more important in the scheme of creation than men, the greatest among us not excepted. I could write a whole volume on the subject and show in detail how art and kindness and decency and refinement are entirely

due to the influence of Woman upon the human race but I have no time. The sergeant wants me to fall in line to sign the pay roll. Life in the army is one eternal standing in line.

Stand in line to get a collar button. Stand in line to get a dog license. Stand in line to get an inoculation, a love letter, a car ticket. But above all stand in line to sign the payroll. For if you don't sign it, you don't get paid, while if you do sign it—you don't get paid either, but your imagination is pleasantly stimulated and you begin to remember how a dollar used to look in the distant dim past when you had one in your possession. The favorite tune in the camp just at present is the following one, which is sung to the tune of Glory, Glory Halleluya:

All the time we sign the payroll,
All the time we sign the payroll,
Everyday we sign the payroll,
But we don't get a doggone cent!

(Editor's note: All this is wildly exaggerated; we don't stand in line now as often as we used to, and as to that tantalizing payroll—we have signed it only twice. There is an excellent reason why we should not be paid before we arrive to the concentration camp, but our writer, as said before, has no sense and cannot be expected to understand it.)

Alright, we have signed that payroll and now—Attention! We are going to recite a poem which we once wrote for one of the dearest girls on earth:

At first God created the Universe fair,
The mountains and valleys, the sea and the air,
The sun and the moon and the glorious skies,
And all that delights and our wants satisfies.

And then when He saw that the world was complete,
His highest creation He added to it.
The man He created and rested content
For only on him was our Maker intent.

But man, although perfect and wondrously wise,
The Infinite could not by sense realize,
A plaything of chance he the universe deemed,
And even God's word but a dream to him seemed.

And said the Creator: "What ought to be done?
For lo, 'tis not good that the man be alone."
And out of His pity for ignorance human
Our Maker created the Love and the Woman.
And Man saw the Woman and knew he had erred,
For Love in his heart had delightfully stirred,
And said the First Lover: This cannot be chance.
It cannot be dream or illusion or trance.
Those beautiful eyes, that wonderful face,
Her every movement's enchanting sweet grace,
No dream could create and no chance could devise.
So there must be a God infinitely wise.

The sergeant wants us to fall in line again, presumably to sign another payroll. Alright, we are coming. But first of all we shall conclude this article by saying, that while we were writing it we had in mind a particular set of women, I mean the dear mothers, sisters and friends of our Ladies' Auxiliary, who transformed this dreary camp for us into a delightful and wonderful place. Three cheers for our Ladies' Auxiliary, fellows! And whenever we meet a woman, any woman whatsoever, French or German, rich or poor, exalted or persecuted, we shall remember. won't we, that she is made of the same wonderful clay of which the women of our Auxiliary are also made.

CAMP WALBRIDGE, Aug. 25.—The Batteries E and B will break camp the day after tomorrow, Sept. 27th.

CAMP WALBRIDGE, Aug. 27.—The Batteries do not break camp today, but will positively leave here next Friday, September 28th.

CAMP WALBRIDGE, Aug. 29.—The Batteries are still here and are having a glorious time. But will undoubtedly entrain the day after tomorrow, September 1st. This time there cannot be any mistake, because Corporal Warner has it from Private McNally who has heard somebody say that he had heard it from the captain's orderly.

CAMP WALBRIDGE, Aug. 30.—Contrary to the previous announcement, the batteries will not entrain tomorrow.

CAMP WALBRIDGE, Aug. 31.—They didn't.

CAMP WALBRIDGE, Sept. 1.—Nothing certain is known about our leaving here, but there is no uncertainty whatever about our having a corking good time. We are being petted and wined and dined by the best people in Toledo, and the dearest of girls allow us to monopolize their time, thereby driving their civilian admirers to desperation. Sad looking young men in civilian dress are constantly approaching us on the street with heart-breaking questions: "When do you fellows leave?" And when we tell them that we do not know they walk away in the direction of the nearest drug store presumably to buy carbohic acid. The rumor is beginning to spread that the entire mobilization has been a scheme on the part of a number of the young men to place themselves in the limelight, and that the Batteries will never leave here at all.

CAMP WALBRIDGE, Sept. 3, 1917—Labor Day. The Batteries B and E not being allowed to fight the Germans, arrange for a friendly fight with each other. A boxing match takes place between Pvts. Harry Clark and William Rose, who represent respectively the Batteries B and E. The former is an Englishman, has seen service in the English army and has at one time held the light-weight championship in Detroit. His style in fighting is something delightful to see. The latter is a Hebrew, only 22 years old, with no pugilistic reputation, but with no end of courage and aggressiveness. Some gruesome preparations take place. A hospital litter carried by two men makes its appearance. "Take it to Clark's corner, he'll need it," yells the bloodthirsty contingent of E. "Take it to Rose," yells the equally bloodthirsty Battery B. The fight lasts three rounds with a lot of punishment being cheerfully given and taken. At the end of the third round it became evident that the men are too evenly matched and Lieutenant Huntley who is the referee, declares the fight a draw. Two despondent men carry the litter away, alas, empty.

CAMP WALBRIDGE, Sept. 2.—"I like thunder

and lightning," says Pvt. Manley as he is preparing to hit the hay at about 11 o'clock last evening. The next moment there is an appalling crash and a sheet of red flame descends upon the top of the tent. It was to be expected. Pvt. Manley is a God-fearing man, a church member, and a 32nd degree Mason. He is known far and wide by the lily like innocence and exquisite purity of his speech. When a holy man like this says that he likes thunder and lightning it is only too natural that the Archangel in command of the celestial artillery should gratify him by a particularly well aimed shot. The lightning runs along the wet sides of the tent into the ground and does no harm. On the contrary it does some good by interrupting the flow of Pvt. Manley's eloquence. We are living in constant fear that his saintly language may yet cause him to be taken bodily to heaven, as the Prophet Elijah was according to the Bible.

Unfortunately, however, (or shall we say fortunately? It all depends upon the standpoint.) this is merely a beginning. Having fired the above mentioned shot the celestial gunner now traverses his piece so as to sweep the entire camp. One shot hits the tent opposite to ours and, being apparently under the impression that Private Gunn of Battery B is made of gun-metal, tries to pass thru his body. He is thrown out of his cot and hits the wooden floor very hard, but, we are glad to say, does not break it. Another shot hits the telephone wire and stuns Lieutenant Johnson who is trying to send a message. A third goes wild but creates such a disturbance in the air that the big guard tent, a 30x40 foot affair, crashes down and buries the sleeping guards under a tangle of tent poles and canvas.

This causes intense happiness to a number of men. Nothing pleases the never-do-wells of this outfit so much as making plenty of noise, and now is their chance. The bugler of the guard rushes out in his pajamas and in quick succession blows the fire-call, the assembly and the reveille. We expect him to sound the mess call and the fatigue while he is at it, but are disappointed. The sentry on post number 6 lets out a yell of "Corporal of the Guard" that can be heard clear across the state of Ohio, and not being content with that, follows it up with

a succession of shots from his 45 automatic. It is the nearest approach to real action the battalion has ever had and every one, especially the victims, is delighted.

During all this commotion the writer of these lines quietly remained in his bunk. He is a person of philosophical turn of mind and does not allow a little thing like a bolt of lightning to disturb him. He instinctively knew moreover that there was "nothing to it". When death is around one feels it by a sort of a sixth sense.

He was not mistaken. An investigation next morning revealed the fact that nothing of any consequence had happened. We have already mentioned that the floor in Pvt. Gunn's tent was not broken. The telephone which had stunned Lieutenant Johnson was in perfect working order. There was a slight dent in the heavy tent pole which fell across the head of one of the guards, but the quartermaster says that the guard will not have to pay for the damage. The battalion was cheated out of a first class military funeral and that was all.

And therein is contained a lesson: Do not get excited under any conditions whatever. Things are seldom as dangerous as they look. It is our excitement that makes them dangerous. And supposing even that a few tents and uniforms and bodies do get mussed up, what of it? There are plenty more where these come from. The Great Source of all such things endures forever and ever, and should this not be a consolation to every thinking man?

THE PEERLESS E

No. 3

The men of the Second Artillery E
The faithful young sons of Ohio are we,
With vim and with art to do ever our part
To be on the spot right away at the start
And second to none in the world to be
Is the aim of the Second Artillery E.

We come from the shore of the fair Maumee
And some of us come from way over the sea,
We are men of books and we are also cooks
And some of us boast only money and looks,
But here all alike and all equal are we,
We're men of the Second Artillery E.
Tho all of us like to be well at our ease
We'll drill and we'll fight and we'll hunger and
freeze.

Who fears you, oh Huns, and your "fearfulness"
dire?

Bring on your vile poisons, your gas and your fire.
Let brief but sublime our existences be.

We're men of the Second Artillery E.

Our aim is not conquest, but justice and right
For freedom and fairness, not lucre we'll fight.

'Tis war against war for Humanity's sake.

We care not a yard from our our foeman to take.

But greed shall be downed, the earth shall be free.

Ay, just is the aim of the Battery E.

And just as our aim shall our firing be, friend.

Let fair, just and true be each shot which we send.

On every shot shall the message we write:

Dear Fritz, kindly learn that might is not right.

And Fritz will swear: "Oh verdamm it, I see:

'Tis again das verflixte old Battery E!

Camp Walbridge, Sept. 22, 1917. The monotony of the camp life is affecting the nerves of some of our men. One of them has been reading too much about German atrocities and decides to commit an atrocity of his own. He does it in verse and we publish it on the first page as a solemn warning to others.

Camp Walbridge, Sept. 23, 1917. The most unpopular person in the Battery E just at present (excepting of course the buglers) is Pvt. Kuhlman, who is an expert in physical culture and is directing our setting-up exercises in the morning. It is not his fault. In the human body there are several thousand muscles, some of which are doing all the work, while others are merely loafing, and it is Pvt. Kuhlman's job to compel those lazy muscles to do some semblance of work. His commands are therefore extremely complicated and sometimes weird. I do not remember them exact-

ly, but they sound about as follows: "At-ten-tion! Standing on the little finger of your left hand, revolve your ears in a circle! The same thing on the middle finger of the right hand! Al-ter-nate! Now, lay down on your back, raise yourself on your right elbow without touching the ground at any other point and being in that position **rest!**"

The men know of course that it is all for their own good, but occasionally a heart-rending groan ascends from a prostrated multitude to Heaven.

On a Train, Sept. 25. We are writing this on a train, because the thing which we have almost ceased to expect has at last happened. We broke camp yesterday and are on our way to a concentration camp near Montgomery, Ala.

The breaking of a camp is a peculiar and instructive sight to those who are accustomed to look for the inner meaning of things. At 6 o'clock in the morning the complicated organism which we called Camp Walbridge began to disintegrate. Down fell the members of its body, the stately rows of brown tents. A turn of the switch, and its nerves, the telephone wires became silent. Its head, the headquarters building, from which the contents were removed, ceased to be a head and became simply a scull, an empty house, where the directing intelligence was dwelling no more. Axes resounded, and platforms, mess shacks and temporary structures of all kinds went to pieces. . . . At 8 o'clock Camp Walbridge was dead. Nothing remained of it but a desolate field covered with debris, bags, implements and shapeless groups of men.

But in this wonderful world of ours, which the awakening intellect of man is just beginning to comprehend, there is no death but that is at the same time a birth. There is no end but that is at the same time a beginning. The forces which had transformed order into chaos now began to re-transform chaos into order. The debris were piled into heaps which were set on fire, and the ashes were buried. The bags and implement were loaded into wagons and carried away. Once more there was a clean and orderly field. And presently a bugle—a veritable trumpet of resurrection—was heard. It sounded "Assembly" and then "Forward

March." And miracle of miracles: Here was "Camp Walbridge" come to life again in another form and under another name. A long line of khaki clad men moved out four abreast, the flame-red guidon fluttering in the lead, the band playing, the crowds on the sidewalks cheering and the earth resounding to the measured tread of 800 determined feet. The hornet's nest which Germany had so imprudently stirred up was sending out another swarm of defenders.

There had been no confusion in connection with the breaking of the camp. Hardly any orders were given but every one worked with a will and with the characteristic initiative for which the American soldier is justly renowned. There was no noise but the work was done promptly and efficiently, which argues well for the future activities of the battalion.

As to sadness, yes, there was a good deal of that. Some of us were leaving their parents, sweethearts and friends, and of course, they were sad. Others had no one to whom to say a true good-bye and of course they were still sadder. For such is the nature of man. We are unsatisfied with what we have and also with what we have not. One of our 400 friends, a powerful, strapping fellow whom we should never have suspected of such a weakness, wept as a child. Another was impassive in appearance, but we happen to know that he had death in his heart, because somebody who was dear to him, was not there. "But suppose that she were here," we said to him: "And suppose that you could convince her to say yes to a certain question. Would that have made you happier?" He reflected for a few moments and answered: "Certainly not. It would have ruined all my plans and in the long run proved to be a disaster." This being so is it worth while to attribute real importance to any human sorrow? For our part we prefer to treat all our sorrows and joys as we do the weather. Is the sun shining and are the trees green? Very well, we enjoy it to the utmost. Is the weather cold, the wind cutting, the scenery bleak? We wrap ourselves into the cloak of our philosophy and wait. Sooner or later, in this existence or in a future one the sun will shine once more.

On a train, Sept. 26th. There is a very simple way to end this war. Take a number of German prisoners, put them aboard an American troop train and then return them to their beloved Vaterland. The things which they will tell their countrymen concerning the princely way in which American soldiers travel will produce a revolution and the revolution will end the war.

The writer of these lines had been brought up in Europe and still remembers the cattle cars in which common people and especially soldiers are transported there. Most of those cars bear on the wall the inscription: 40 men, 8 horses. It happened once that one of the soldiers who were packed into such a car complained about the crowded condition. Quick as a flash a non-commissioned officer turned upon him: "Can you read?" he fiercely inquired. "Yes, sir." "Well, then, what does this inscription say? 40 men, 8 horses. There are only 40 men in this car, and if I hear one more word out of you, I'll add 8 horses to it."

Quite different is the way in which our battalion is travelling. We have 10 enormous sleeping cars at our disposal with at least one luxuriously upholstered seat for every man, electric light and every other convenience a person could reasonably expect. A staff of cooks is traveling with us in a special kitchen car and there is of course a number of baggage cars, because distinguished tourists like us do not carry their own luggage. All we deign to encumber ourselves with is a small comfort bag containing a few toilet articles, a magazine, a pad of paper and the photograph of our best girl. We have just finished our breakfast which consisted of the following seven things: Bread, butter, bacon, eggs, milk, sugar and coffee, all of which in unlimited quantity.

In our opinion, however, this luxury is somewhat unscientific and overdone. This nation is rich, but we doubt whether we are wise in wasting our money on velvet upholstering, and on fancy food which costs like sin and has but little nutritive value.

One simple and well prepared course is better than half a dozen courses indifferently prepared. A cook is but human and cannot be expected to prepare 57 varieties of food and do it well. The

Spartans ate but one course at their meals, but it must have been sufficient, as it enabled them to become the foremost fighting nation of their time.

We solemnly move that we cut out grape nuts and corn crisps and butter, save money and invest it in shrapnel for our dear Fritz. Those who are in favor of this motion kindly say Aye! Dead silence. Our boys like their little luxuries too well.

On the train, Sept. 26th. Camp Sheridan, Ala.!
Everybody out!

THE PEERLESS E

No. 4

Camp Sheridan, Ala., Sept. 27th, 1917. The publication of this number was somewhat delayed because the writer got lost and had to advertise in the local papers for somebody to find him. It is a very easy matter to get lost here, for the camp is enormous. Wherever you cast your eye you see tents and barracks, barracks and tents. The various battery streets look as much like as two peas and the only way we know to tell them apart is by the battery mascots. Do I see a coon at the entrance of a battery street? It is the Battery B from Toledo. A diminutive doggie about the size of my fist and barking ferociously at every passer-by? It is Battery F from Cleveland. A black bear? It is headquarters, and so on. But the big, lumbering beast of the Battery X whom some of us call contemptuously a fishhound and our dear little collie whom the Battery X men call a laughing hyena happened to change places. Not knowing it and the night being dark, we entered the third tent on the right side of the Battery X street and, being tired, sat down heavily upon a bundle which was lying on what we imagined to be our bunk. There was a violent commotion and the bundle arose and said

But no, we are not going to profane these immortal pages by reporting the extremely unlady-like language they are using in the Battery X. Be-

sides we did not stay very long to hear it. Our presence of mind is proverbial. The moment we felt that earthquake-like upheaval we knew that a strategical move was in order and that, like great Hindenburg, we had better retreat to a better position. We stood not therefore upon the order of our going, but went, the animated bundle after us. That bundle was surely bound to make our acquaintance, but we turned around and said these magical words: "Look out, the colonel." It is not good to run into our colonel when a fellow is in his night dress and swearing a blue streak of profanity. The bundle ran back into his tent as fast as he had run out of it, and we resumed our weary search of the street of our peerless E.

Camp Sheridan, Ala., Sept. 20th, 1917. The men of the Battery E are getting familiar with their surroundings, and the more they see of them the better they like them. The general opinion is that Camp Sheridan is "**some**" camp. We have two rows of brand new tents, an enormous mess hall, and a bath house with a number of showers in it. So far we have not seen a single mosquito in this camp and to our amazement the flies are also incredibly scarce. We saw one fly disconsolately walking back and forth along the mess hall, but it could not get **in** because the building is screened from end to end. The poor fly finally committed suicide by alighting upon Pvt. X. You surely know Pvt. X. or somebody like him, for a number of men of his type are invariably present in every battery, company or troop. Yes, and also in every workshop and office and schoolroom. He is generally a neat looking young chap, expensively dressed and rather proud of his appearance. They tell me that he is clean and takes a bath as frequently as others. But his cleanliness is only skin deep. Underneath it he is mean, vile and so indecent and foul that the contact with him is poison. The moment that unfortunate fly alighted upon him it turned over on its back and began to wave its six legs in an agony that was painful to behold. It had been born in dirt and raised on dirt, but it had never come in contact with anything quite as dirty as that. Five seconds later the unfortunate insect was as dead as the Kaiser's hope of victory.

Camp Sheridan, Sept. 27th, 1917. - Glory, Glory, Halleluia! Who said we would never get paid? The ghost has walked today. The men are extremely busy getting rid of those forty-six dollars which are their first pay. The merchants of Montgomery and the canteens are helping them in a most patriotic and effective manner.

Camp Sheridan, Sept. 28th, 1917. —The men are still very busy. Their money is burning big holes in their pockets and must be gotten rid of at any cost. One of our friends spent about thirty dollars in one evening. "What have you been buying, the City Hall?" we inquired. "Oh, just junk," he answered in a disgusted manner. Another one came staggering into our tent half buried under miscellaneous packages big and small. Most of them contained eatables of various kinds; such as fig bars, Nabisco wafers, ginger snaps, chewing gum, bananas, oranges and so on and so forth. He won't die but is a very sick man this morning.

It has been raining for the last 24 hours and military work of any kind is out of question. We went to the Y. M. C. A. but were driven out by a lunatic who was walking on his hands up and down the keyboard of a piano. We did not see him do it, but it sounded like it. We wanted to shoot him, but are not allowed to carry firearms or ammunition. We were told by some of the innocent bystanders that the man was not crazy at all but was merely playing ragtime. All right, ragtime let it be. But we shall say one thing: if the German atrocities are only half as bad as this so called ragtime, we shall take precious good care not to be taken alive.

Camp Sheridan, Sept. 28th, 1917. Isn't it wonderful what a little practical experience will do to a theory? So much has been said about the wonderful things which would happen if all human beings were given an equal opportunity. Read the two ponderous volumes of Carl Marx and, if you survive them, read the writings of other shining socialistic lights such as Engels, Bebel, Bernstein and so on, and you will get a very definite idea as to how to cure this sick world of its many ills. Suppress capital, redistribute wealth in an equitable manner, give every one an equal opportunity,

and the millenium will be at hand. Very simple and plausible in theory, but how does it work in practice?

If you want to know, you are hereby invited to take a post-graduate course in that great school of practical sociology which is called the U. S. Army. The experiment is done here on a gigantic scale. A number of men are taken from every walk of life and **all are given an equal opportunity**. All are dressed alike in the best clothing that money can buy, given food, shelter, medical attention, recreation, rooms, gymnasiums, libraries and other things too numerous to mention, in addition to which each enlisted man receives 30 to 40 dollars per month according to rank. And what is the result?

Come around three days after a pay day and you will see. You will probably find half a dozen men who have profited by their pay and have either saved it or spent it in a reasonable manner. The rest are "broke." Some have managed to gamble their money away, although games of chance are strictly forbidden. Others bought a lot of useless trash precisely as the savages do who exchange gold nuggets for a few colored beads. Still others have stuffed themselves with indigestible food and are sick. This is how the equal opportunity works in real life.

Camp Sheridan, Sept. 29th, 1917. We know at present why we did not see any mosquitoes and hardly any flies in this camp. This place is not fit for a mosquito. It is not fit for a fly. All it is fit for is ducks, frogs, water snakes and similar creatures for whom life is one eternal bath.

It had started to rain soon after our arrival here three days ago and it is raining still. The word raining is however, a very tame expression and does not begin to convey what I have in mind to say. I must therefore make a digression and tell you about the military gentleman, who returned from an artillery school and was relating to us his experiences. When he came to the description of a frightful explosion which had been caused by the premature bursting of a shell in the breech of a gun, he said "The gunner lost his head," and seeing that we were somewhat in doubt about his

meaning he gravely added: "When I say that the gunner lost his head, I mean that he lost it."

I hardly need to say that the gentleman was not joking in the least. He was speaking in perfect earnest of a fatal accident, and if there was a touch of grim war humor about the thing, it was not his fault.

In a similar manner when I say that it has been raining for the last three days I mean that it has been **raining**. Raining in torrents. Raining cats and dogs and pink alligators. It began with just a common, ordinary, every-day rain. It was followed by a more serious rain and then by 24 hours of entirely business-like rain. But at 6 o'clock yesterday evening a telegraphic message arrived to the camp stating that the real, genuine, copper-riveted and dyed-in-the-wool rain was yet to come and that it would be accompanied by a 70 or 80-mile-an-hour gale. A tropical storm was raging a few hundred miles south of us and was headed for Camp Sheridan gathering strength as it went.

It was a gentle hint for us, army men, to get busy. This writer does not believe in hard work, nor does anyone else in his tent, but we certainly did work during that hour or two of grace that had been allowed to us. We drove the stakes into the ground as far as they would go, dug trenches to carry away the deluge and did everything else in our power to prevent our tents from collapsing upon our heads. But the best we could do was not good enough. In the morning the entire camp was a wreck, or rather a dirty, water-logged sponge. Hundreds of tents had been blown down, and those that had remained up were not much of a protection, for there is not a tent in existence that will stand this kind of a deluge.

As a result we are all very happy. This is our first taste of real war hardship and every one of us is amply equal to it. There was more laughter in our tent this morning than at any previous time. Pvt. Waltenberger, who had undressed before going to bed, awoke to find his clothing soaking wet. "I absolutely refuse to play this war game any longer," he exclaimed imitating to perfection the voice of a spoiled child, and there was homeric laughter. The writer of these lines had been wiser. He went to bed fully dressed, uniform, boots, spurs, water-

proof coat and all. As a result he had a dry thread or two in his clothing when he got up and felt very proud and superior about it. In addition to which he did not have to go to the bathroom for his morning toilet, for the rain water running off his coat had formed on his cot a small lake about an inch deep, in which he proceeded to take his morning ablutions. Some more laughter and then songs and merry making of every kind.

Surely God loves the Battery E. We have had a stroke of lightning and a deluge and if our luck keeps on we may yet have an earthquake.

THE PEERLESS E No. 5

Camp Sheridan, Oct. 3rd, 1917. Nothing important to record. The battery goes on a hike and one of the fellows gets tired and sits down on a stump. He will never, never do it again. The trees in this locality are mostly firs and the stumps are covered with a layer of pitch a quarter of an inch thick. The face that friend of ours made, when he tried to get up and could not, would have made a fortune for a moving picture concern.

On the same hike the writer of these pages makes his acquaintance with a delightful southern fruit called persimmon. He saw First Sergeant Davis pick up something that looked like a beautiful ripe plum and hold it temptingly between his finger and thumb as a man does when a thing is too good to be eaten quickly. We asked him to give us a piece and to our astonishment he gave us all of it with an alacrity which would have put us on our guard if it had not been counteracted by the look of perfect innocence which he habitually wears on his face. We took it and of course Pvt. McNurney who was marching alongside, demanded a half and got it. Both of us bit into it at the same moment and

This row of points is the only way in which I can express the wonderful taste of the thing. Nothing quite like it exists in God's world. "The flavor

lingers" and even now as we are writing these lines we can feel it on the tip of our tongue. We earnestly recommend persimmons to all our readers and friends.

Camp Sheridan, Ala., Oct. 6th, 1917. Again nothing to report except a number of boxing matches between the various batteries of the 135th Regiment (the present name of the Second Ohio.) The representative of the Battery E is once more that white hope of ours, Pvt. William Rose and he justifies our fondest hopes by securing the only knock-out of the evening at the end of only three rounds.

We have nicknamed Pvt. Rose a white hope because his general conduct is that which is supposed to be but is not characteristic of the typical white man. He does not use any vile language and does not act as if he had left his manners at the door of the recruiting station, as so many other unfortunately do.

A LETTER

Camp Sheridan, Ala., Oct. 10th, 1917.

To Mrs. Geo. P. Greenhalgh, President of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Batteries B and E.

Dear Madam:

I received your letter and hasten to assure you that I never forgot my original intention of keeping the ladies of our auxiliary well informed. But I have been doing it too well. I have written 50 or 60 pages which one of these days will be typewritten or printed, if necessary, at my expense, and presented to the Auxiliary. But it will take some time and in the meanwhile here is just a brief account of our latest experience.

We arrived at Camp Sheridan, Ala., about three weeks ago and were surprised at the generous and almost royal way in which things have been prepared for us by the Government. Nothing seems to be too good or too expensive when our comfort and our health are concerned. Our tents are brand new and are now being fitted out with floors, walls and glass doors (!) They are lighted by electricity and so are our mess halls and bath-houses. Thanks to a clever system of in-

cineration and drainage the sanitation of the camp is splendid. There does not seem to be a drop of alcohol for miles around, and so far I have not seen one intoxicated or even mildly intoxicated person anywhere in town or camp. So much about the material conditions. You, ladies, need have no worry whatever. Your sons and brothers are taken as good care of as can possibly be expected.

The social conditions are not and naturally can not be as good. There are so many of us here, that the town of Montgomery is literally swamped and transformed into another camp. Soldiers are promenading through its streets by squads, sections and platoons. The shops and theatres are full of us and a civilian is almost a curiosity. This being so, no one of course pays any attention to us and, far as social life is concerned, we might just as well be camping in the desert of Sahara.

Those among us who are very young and do not yet understand that the stern realities of life must be taken without a complaint, are somewhat down cast. The other day one of my tent fellows, Pvt. McNurney, expressed the general sentiment much better than I can do it myself, in one single phrase: "All dressed up and no place to go," said he.

Others take it philosophically and drown their sorrow in pop which they drink in prodigious quantities. Still others indulge in a veritable orgy of letter writing. One of my tent mates uses up a whole writing tablet every day. Another (McNurney) recently broke all records by receiving 12 letters and a newspaper in one day. There is of course some dark secret in connection with such a profusion of mail. I refuse to believe that he is as popular as all that. Is he writing to himself? Or is he spending his princely wages to hire somebody to write him? I should not be surprised at all. A person is apt to do anything to relieve the deadly monotony of four hours of drill which are followed by four more hours of drill and so on in an endless succession.

Nevertheless the "morale" of the camp is splendid. The men work with a will and literally fall over each other when there is something to do. They still have a somewhat wrong idea of discipline and imagine that discipline consists in obey-

ing the better and more competent man. They do not yet understand that true discipline is the obedience to the lawful command of **any** man who happens to be in charge. But it is gradually being drilled into them and very soon will become second nature.

Must finish this letter as there is no end of things to do, but will be delighted to write you again. I still remember how humanely and graciously you, ladies, have been treating us in Toledo and nothing I can do for you in return will be left undone.

Sincerely yours,

ANOTHER LETTER

To Mr. Lawrence C. Norton,
Los Angeles, Cal.

Dear Norton:

Am I still alive? I would not take a bet on it. Not until some competent medical man examines my remains and assures me that some parts of the mechanism are still working. Judge, however, by yourself from the brief history of the day that has just elapsed.

I got up at half past five and rushed to the bath house to get a shower before reveille. Miscalculated the time by 10 minutes and had to break all records in fast dressing so as to be on my post at the roll call. Reveille over, made up my bunk and saw to it that my tent mates did the same. Rushed to the mess hall only to find it closed and waited outside beating a tattoo with my teeth. The nights are cruelly cold and the days cruelly hot in Alabama. After breakfast conjured a broom and had the tent and its surroundings swept clean. Fell in for "fatigue" and spent 4 hours with pick, shovel and rake. As a non-commissioned officer I did not have to work, but did it all the same for the sake of an example. A hasty lunch and then 4 more hours of "fatigue" consisting of the task of cleaning up about 3 acres of grass and weeds by the beautifully simple process of pulling them up one by one. Returned from "fatigue" and helped to unload a few wagons while the mess orderlies were apparently making up their mind whether we had earned our daily beans. They decided the ques-

tion in the affirmative, but were 15 minutes late so that I had to bolt down my food and make a break neck rush for the incinerator to wash my mess kit. The first call sounds and my squad is in line. Parade Rest! Attention! Aha, at last. The Star Spangled Banner which waves long, very long for a tired man who is waiting to hear the blessed word "Dismissed!" But instead of "Dismissed" we quite unexpectedly hear "Squad Right!" Like the perfect machine which we are getting to be, in the twinkling of an eye we change our formation and move out. Where are we going? We do not know, but we are on our way. In the regimental street we become a part of an immense column of other marching troops. A few more evolutions and thousands of us are massed around a platform and are waiting. What is going to happen? A hanging? A sermon? Something worse? We do not know, but patiently, without a question, without a murmur we wait. The band plays a funeral march or ragtime, I am too tired to tell which, and then we wait some more. And then the band plays some more.

Everything, however, comes to him who waits, and this time it is a major, a chaplain and a colonel of Engineers. Each delivers a corking good speech and is applauded to the skies. And then at last: "Dismissed!" Time: 7 p. m. or 14½ hours in the harness. And now please tell me: in your unbiased opinion, based on previous experience and upon your knowledge of my unparalleled indolence, in your opinion I say, is it actually possible that I am still alive?

Not all days are as hard as this or else I should by this time be in heaven and playing a harp instead of sitting in the Y. M. C. A. and writing this letter. But they are hard enough. We are going to be **men** when we get out of this and don't you forget it. Even now we are taking our little hardships like little men. No tears were shed while we were pulling that grass (for a purpose utterly unknown) but the thing was considered as a huge joke and enjoyed to the utmost. And no questions were asked either. Such perfect sympathy and mutual faith exist here between officers and men that a question would have seemed absurd and in bad taste. When we are told to do a thing we

simply go ahead and do it, not because we are afraid but because it is the proper and soldierly way to act. And a few days ago when we received our fourth "shot" in the arm (inoculation) and half of us became temporarily sick, how many men do you think asked to be excused from drill? Not one! We went out and drilled under the fierce Alabamian sun, going through setting up exercises and double time and all the other inventions of Satan, and all the time a score of us were on the verge of collapse. One did collapse eventually, remained on his back for a few moments, a fellow soldier fanning his face with a newspaper, and then got up and went to his tent unattended, while the rest of the battery continued to drill as if nothing had happened.

I tell you, Norton, it is great to be a part of such a machine. You know what a misanthrope I am and how embittered against the entire world. But damned if I am not beginning to love those 180 young devils for their grit and nerve and inexhaustible good nature if for nothing else.

It is going to be no end of an adventure to go into action with them, and if I am not killed by the first shells I'll write a few pages about them, that will be real writing and not merely a mere pattern of paper and ink.

THE LAST WHO SHALL BE FIRST

Before the pearly gate of Heaven,
Through which the hero legions go
Before they pass to bliss eternal,
A sentry paced to and fro.

A sound of steps. "Halt, who goes there?"
—" 'Tis I, the General."—"Advance,
And recognized be by me
Beyond all doubt, beyond all chance."

—"To pass this gate although unwounded
My right beyond all doubt is fair.
Behold my head: it is white as snow—
Behold my face: it is lined with care.

I fought with mind, I fought with study
And sleepless, anxious nights I spent
And greater agony endured
Than those whom to their death I sent."

—“Pass on, on, sir, and all is well”
And as he passed to his reward
The sentry stood presenting arms
But did not call: “Turn out the guard.”

And others came, lieutenants, captains
And majors with their leaf of gold
And colonels with their silver eagle
And many non-coms young and old.

And each was stopped and passed in turn.
Each was saluted as he went.
Some by a smile of friendly greeting
And some by soldierly: “Present.”

But never once the guard was called
Until at last a dismal shade
Was seen and challenged and obeying
Advanced wearily and said:

“’Tis I, a private, Smith or Jones
(Or possibly ’twas Clark or Swain)
I’m hungry, frozen, mud-bespattered
Stiff with fatigue and numb with pain.

Without a hope of fame or credit
Without a thing to cheer my soul
Not knowing even I was immortal
I went and did and gave my all.”

—“Pass on, oh friend,” the sentry cried:
“Pass on, and sweet be your reward!”
And as the sorry shape advanced,
The sentry called: “Turn out the guard!”

ANNOUNCEMENT

By the Editor

Copies of this book can be secured by writing to Corporal B. Jonas, Battery E, 135th Regiment, Camp Sheridan, Ala.

The lowest price to civilians of the first part of this book is 50 cents, the highest limit being the sky. The same is true of the second part which will appear not later than Christmas and copies of which may be ordered now. Remit by check, money

order or stamps.

A minimum price of 50c for a few printed pages is exorbitant and we, the editor, know it well. But the irresponsible creature who is writing this book, and who, like most writers, has no sense, has the queerest possible ideas on the subject. He brazenly asserts that this book is going to be a rare and beautiful thing. Mr. John D. Rockefeller, he says, is making a million dollars per year by manipulating standard oil stocks. A good book, he says, is far more important than all the stocks in the world. Therefore—so runs the crazy logic of our writer—if Mr. Rockefeller makes a million a year, he, the writer, ought to make two millions at the very least and is going to get it.

We, the editor, are shocked and surprised at such an unseemly greed. Editors of great magazines naturally make a good deal of money and so do publishers. But who ever heard of an unknown writer to get more than a starvation wage for his work? In our opinion it is scandalous and immoral for a writer to expect anything else. A writer ought to be paid by the joy he derives from his art and by his consciousness of doing good to his fellow beings.

But alas, what can we do? We have to humor our writer or else he simply won't write. We venture therefore, to suggest, ladies and gentlemen, that you had better come across and do it now while the coming is good.

Very regretfully,

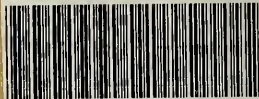
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