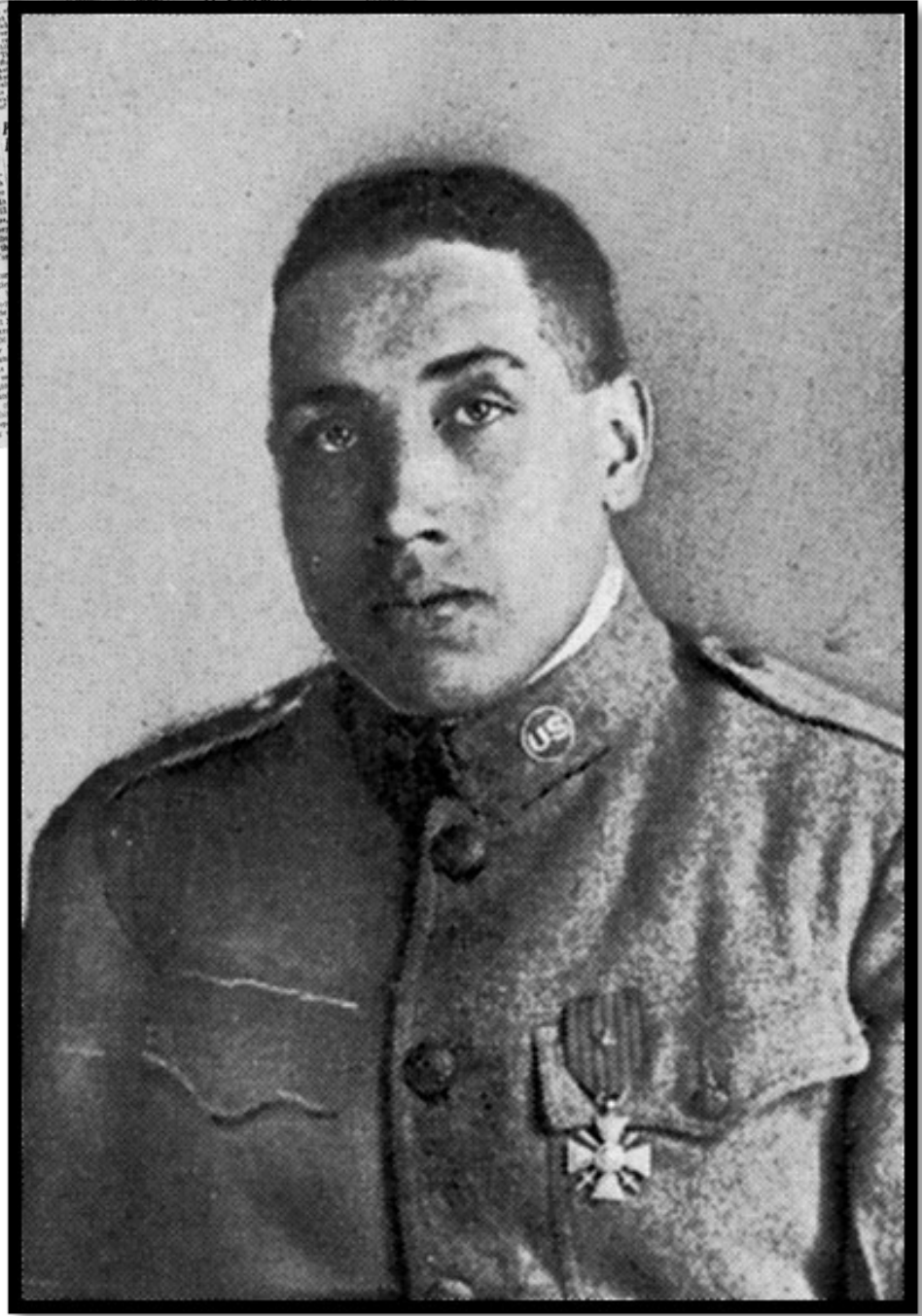


My Year in France



By
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Cover Photo: Portrait of Sgt. Clinton J. Peterson, ca. 1919, New York State Archives World War I Veterans' Service Data and Photographs. (NYSA_A0412_78_B32_F17_Peterson_photo)

Every effort has been made to transcribe this feature as it originally appeared in the columns of The Putnam County Courier, no alterations, edits or updates were made to the original content.

Putnam County Courier, April 11, 1919, Vol. 77, No 50, page 1, 3

Knowing that everyone has been more or less interested in the recent war and anxious to hear as much as possible about it from someone, who has been "over there," has prompted me to write this article.

There will be, in the very near future, many good books by able writers, which will give, with the aid of photographs, a very good idea of the various ways and means by which the great conflict was brought to a victorious end, giving figures that would drive a mathematician or statistician into convulsions, but as most of these will come from the pen of those who have never been beyond the Divisional Headquarters, they will not be able to tell the feelings and the thoughts of one who goes out on patrol, working party or raid on a cloudy night, to have a "star shell light" from the enemy lines disclose his position and half a dozen machine guns begin sending their messengers of death irritably close to him, at the rate of 500 shots per minute, and you wish that, instead of having hands on the ends of your arms, you were equipped with steam shovels so that you might "dig in," or while standing all night in the front line positions waiting for the 'zero' hour and the command, "Over the top," where you know you must either kill or be killed.

Before starting my story, I wish to make all due apologies for grammatical errors and claim exemptions from criticism in that respect as I am neither student nor writer, but am giving my plain story of the war in plain language.

A few introductory remarks will, I think, help the reader to understand the story better. While my experience differs, no doubt, from that of soldiers of any other regiment in the minor details, such as going for 45 days without a change of socks (through no fault of those in charge of that department, but because of conditions brought about by battle) for instance, it is as a whole practically the same as that of anyone else, who has spent a few months in the first line trenches, dodging bullets, ducking shells, putting on and taking off gas masks to keep the poisonous gasses from the lungs and evading the hundred and one other humane (so called) methods the treacherous Hun has of putting one's name on the "casualty list" or "honor roll."

My regiment, the 369th United States (Colored) Infantry, which came to be better known as the "Hell Fighters," was formerly the 15th New York Infantry, National Guard, and was organized in New York city in the summer of 1916 by Colonel William Hayward, former Public Service Commissioner of New York city.

On May 13, 1917, it was ordered to State Camp, Peekskill, N.Y., by former Governor Whitman for target practice and maneuvers, remaining there until May 31, 1917, when it was dismissed. In a letter from the President of the village to the Commanding Officer, it was stated that the orderly conduct and discipline of the members of the regiment while stationed there exceeded that of any other organization that had ever camped there prior to that time. It was the first regiment of N.Y. National Guard to reach war strength, when it became known that all units would be called into Federal service on July 15, 1917, the next closest being the old 69th N.Y. Infantry, N. G.

Instead of training as nearly all of the militia did, after being Federalized, it was ordered to do guard duty and was divided into small detachments and sent to various parts of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, where it did excellent work until it was again assembled in October. After a 12 day stay at Camp Wadsworth, Spartanburg, S.C., it was ordered north to prepare for immediate sailing. On Nov. 12, 1917, the regiment embarked on the U.S.S. Poccahontas, sailing the same night but were forced to come back the following day as one of the engines broke and the ship was unable to keep up with the convoy. After many difficulties, it finally embarked December 2, 1917.

It was the second regiment of New York to go to France, following closely the 69th Regiment in the Rainbow Division, and was among the first 100,000 –“over there”-, arriving December 1917.

When the regiment represented one-hundredth part of the American Expeditionary Forces, it was holding one-twentieth part of the front held by United States troops.

It was the farthest east of any American troops at the signing of the armistice and, singularly enough, the farthest north was the old 69th, which had been so closely associated with us in so many of our achievements.

It has the distinction of being the first of American troops to gaze upon the Rhine, as well as of having the honor of carrying the first American flag to wave over the most beautiful of rivers, when the triumphant Allied armies marched forward into the reclaimed territories to the German border, following closely upon the heels of the disheartened and demoralized German army, the remnants of what was once the world's greatest military organization, as they slumped away into the interior of their Fatherland, and were lost to view in the dense undergrowth on the opposite bank of the Rhine. It had grown from lack of attention since they had come forth a little over four years before, with their new uniforms, bands playing and heads erect, hoping to conquer the world.

Lest some of my tales should be looked upon with doubt and my ability as custodian of the truth questioned, I will give a few figures to show that everyone is not killed because they happen to spend a few months in the front lines.

Statistics from the Allied armies at the close of 3 years war, which ended August 1917 (when Americans began making their first appearances in the trenches) showed that about 6 ½ per cent were killed, about 10 percent were permanently disabled and between 25 and 30 per cent were wounded, who returned to the lines within six months.

These figures were quite as consoling to the soldier when he started for the front as for the relatives whom he left and he enjoyed himself a great deal more than he would had he known that 30 per cent of an army never goes to the front, but is engaged in the various duties that are necessary to maintain the fighting men at the front.

Many times, though, the doughboy (Infantry man), as he is dodging death at the front, wonders why he could not have been fortunate enough to have secured a position “back in the S.O.S.,” (Services of Supplies), as it is called, when he thinks of the very quiet and pleasant life they must lead back there,

with nothing to worry them except an occasional bad cold or the sad news that it will be impossible for them to get a 48 hour pass for the week-end.

While my story is of the life on the other side, I will give the reader a little idea of what the soldier finds on this side as he leaves his home and goes step by step toward "No Man's Land."

My experience is along similar lines (minor luxuries) and is intended to show some of the things that every soldier experiences, when he first enters the service.

The Regular Army man enlists for a stated period of active service with a stated period of reserve, and upon enlistment is given a few weeks drilling in what is known as the awkward squad, until he can do the various movements without being shown or told. He is then assigned to a regiment which contains men whose length of service may vary from a few weeks to many years. He has shown, by offering his services, that he is willing to suffer the hardships that at times are the soldier's lot. These men are the first to go in the field in case of hostilities.

The National Guardsman enlists for a stated period of active service and a stated reserve, but does not give his entire time to military instruction. He drills one or two nights each week and spends a couple of weeks each year in camp. He has shown, by enlisting in this branch that he does not care to give his entire time, unless necessary, but is willing to be trained, so that, in case of war he can be of almost immediate service, needing only a final polishing to be ready for the enemy.

During the reserve enlistment, a man can be called without conscription, but is under no military obligations except if war is declared and men are needed at once. (Continued page 3)

The National Army man is entirely different. He was taken for the duration of war from all walks of life, from the farm to the office, and, although his treatment and achievements "over there" were just the same as all others, before he went there he had to be broken in until he could stand the severe tests that soldiers in actual battle are subjected to.

Immediately upon the declaration of the war in April, 1917, the United States began forming plans for getting her fighters in the field and early in June the first contingent of this country arrived in France and began making preparations for the great numbers that were to follow. These men were of the Regular Army.

On July 15, 1917, all State militias were mobilized and sent to camps to have their final polishing up and be mustered into Federal Service. These men began going over early in the autumn, immediately behind the "regulars," and were the National Guardsmen.

On September 10, 1917, the first men were called to the various cantonments for training and followed the "guardsmen" across, except for a few Quartermaster Corps that did not require any special training, as their work consists of handling the supplies that the fighting man requires. These men are what is known as the National Army.

The men of the National Army enjoyed one privilege that was denied both the “regulars” and “militias.” While they were escorted from local boards to railroad depots with blaring bands and cheering crowds, after beautiful feasts, the others were moved about silently by night and loaded on transports camouflaged by darkness, the instruments of their own bands cased and not even allowed to whisper as they silently moved out of harbor.

On the other hand, however, these fellows probably felt worse with all this ceremony than the fellow who was stolen away, because of the fact that the average person thinks war and death are synonymous and the tears which came in the eyes of relatives, as they waved a last good-bye to their loved ones when the train moved away, left such an impression upon the would-be-hero that he had a constant dread and fear of something until the armistice was signed and he knew hostilities had ceased.

These little groups as they left the local boards would proceed to some point and there meeting others would be consolidated and sent in detachments of several hundred to the designated cantonment.

These cantonments had been prepared with great thoughtfulness and contained every convenience that money and short time would permit. The buildings which are called “barracks” (meaning a hut or house for soldiers) are about 60 ft. x 140 ft., are well lighted and aired, are two story, have two large rooms on each floor, are sealed with wall board and have a larger heater in each room. Sanitary toilets and bathrooms are generously provided, so that no one need go without a bath.

The soldiers have spring cots with mattresses and, with electric lighting plants and sewerage systems in each camp that would make many city officials hang their heads with shame, the embryo soldier finds himself in such congenial surroundings that his spirits begin to rise and he wonders if he wasn't a bit mistaken in his hasty conception of army life.

He arrives in the camp in civilian clothes covered with dust, after having marched from the station behind hundreds like himself, looking curiously at his new surroundings and the many soldiers he sees, some drilling, some working, some playing but all apparently enjoying themselves. They are all taken to Camp Headquarters and checked, and are then divided up in small detachments and turned over to guides who take them to barracks where they rest until they get some food.

Nothing is done the first day. If they arrive in the morning, they have much longer to rest before the next morning and their new life really begins. If they arrive late at night they have less. Whichever it is, that night as they lie down they try to draw a picture of “No Man's Land” and, between that and the thoughts of what lies ahead of them on the morrow, they fall asleep.

Meanwhile, at Camp Headquarters, everybody is swearing because these new men have come, as they must have various rosters prepared before morning and various blanks must have each man's name typewritten on it, so that they may be quickly examined, clothed and equipped with all the paraphernalia that goes to make up what Uncle Sam calls “heavy marching orders.”

The embryo soldier is dreaming, perhaps, of the “girl he left behind,” who kissed him so affectionately at the station that morning as he left. He is returning to his home town once more, after four years of war

and hardships, and is calling upon the one knows will be his, because of the promise she made that morning as he was leaving. He has a German helmet that he took from off the head of one of those he killed and which he thinks would make her a beautiful flower pot. As he approaches the house, he thinks he will look in the window to see if he can still recognize her, as she was only 18 when he left and he was gone so long. He sees her, yes, and seated upon the lap of some fellow whom he does not know. Infuriated, he rings the bell and, as he does so, he is awakened by someone who pulls the blankets off him and says, "Get up, and fall in." It is the sergeant, and he gets up and falls in with all the other fellows of that barrack for roll call.

After roll call, they are marched to breakfast and then they go to the Medical Department where they are examined and if O.K., are taken to another building where they are enlisted and where they are asked about a thousand questions. The one that is best remembered is, "Who shall we notify in an emergency?" After all official papers are made out, they are then "sworn in," a proceeding that takes little time but which means a great deal.

The next thing is the uniform, which everybody is anxious to get and which nearly everybody is as anxious to get rid of when the war is over. These proceedings sometimes cover a period of two or three days and occasionally is done in one day. The soldier does not do anything though, until he gets his uniform. The blankets, mess kit, knife, fork, spoon and cup are usually issued before any other equipment, so that troops will have something to eat from and sleep on.

After the above articles have been issued the soldier begins his training.

Next week's installment will tell how the American soldier is trained and the routine of camp life.

TO BE CONTINUED

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After the soldier gets his uniform, he is soon started at the intensive training that is necessary, in order that he may be on an equal footing with his adversary when he meets him, and this training is, in most cases, continued until he will do the various things in the prescribed manner, under any conditions that may arise; and I can assure the readers, that some of them are such as would cause the average lady to, at least, faint.

For the first few days, he is drilled in what is known as "close order" drill, which is largely for discipline and to instruct troops in moving in various kinds of formations. Except for the discipline it produces it is of no use on the battle field, but, no matter how well soldiers may have fought, they would receive little applause if, when parading before the large crowds, they moved as a mob instead of a well regulated machine; hence the several days or weeks of hard work, that to the soldier seems to be wasted time, money and energy. However, I have seen soldiers come on the line in replacement detachments who, 30 days before, had been civilians and who knew absolutely nothing about warfare.

Early Rising in Camp

The soldier is awakened at 5:30 a.m., (the schedule of calls varies at each camp, but his is a good example, and the hours given are the usual ones for starting and ending the soldiers' day) when "First Call" sounds. Reveille is sounded 10 minutes later and at that time he is supposed to be fully dressed, bunk made up, and standing in line to answer "roll call," which is completed by each company's First Sergeant by 5:45, at which time he reports the number present, absent, etc., to Company Commander!

The next 15 minutes are devoted to "setting up" exercises, which put the muscles in good shape for the duties of the day.

He is then dismissed and goes to wash up, if he did not have time before reveille. At 6:15, "Fatigue Call" is sounded and all men not sick must get busy to thoroughly police camp, picking up the smallest piece of paper or scraps that are thrown about each day.

Disposal of the Sick.

"Sick Call" is at 6:20 and all who are sick report to the "infirmary" in charge of an "N.C.O." (non-commissioned officer), who has their names written on the "sick book," a small book with blanks for names, disposition of case, etc. Each company has its own book and each company is attended separately. The surgeon takes the book and calls the names, when the men answer "Here," step up and tell their troubles. He examines them and marks the disposition of the case according to seriousness. "Hospital," means the man will be sent to the hospital, "infirmary" means that he will be sent to the infirmary, "quarters" means that he must remain in his quarters and in bed, "light duty" means that the man should keep fairly quiet, perhaps a little police work, or peeling potatoes in the kitchen; "duty" means that the man is well and available for anything.

In the army, men figure every way to get out of doing anything and the "sick book" gag is almost as bad as the small boy's dead grandmother on the day the big leagues play in town. Not wishing to do much on an especially hot day, the soldier get a "Be Your Own Doctor" book and, after studying the symptoms of some disease until he can say it forwards or backwards, he falls in line for sick report and, if he can fool the surgeon, he will lie in the shade all day. The surgeons know this and, as a result, they become very skeptical when the percentage of sick in a company is very high. The result is that, often times, a really sick man is marked "duty."

A very large amount of iodine is used in the army and the following story will show the reader how quickly it is thought of by soldiers when anything goes wrong.

A soldier was walking along a road in France when he came upon a Lieutenant of the Medical Corps laboring with a Ford, which had utterly refused to advance. He had exhausted all his mechanical knowledge and he asked the young chap if he knew anything about automobiles. He replied that he did.

The M.D. asked him what he should do. "Well," replied the lad, "If I were you I'd paint the d--thing with iodine and mark it 'duty'."

Routine of Camp Life.

"Mess call" is at 6:30 and I will add here that is the first call the "rookie" learns.

"First call" for drill at 7:20 is followed by "assembly" in 10 minutes. At first call, everybody "falls in" and at assembly, the first Sergeant reports to the C.C. (Company Commander) the number of absentees; with causes for absences. Everyone must be there except those on special detail or excused by reason of sickness.

"Recall," at 11:30, ends the morning period.

The next half hour is spent in rest or in any way pleasing to the men until "mess call" at 12:00.

The afternoon drill schedule is usually from 1:30 to 5:00 and is followed by "retreat," which is at various times, but usually around 5:30.

At retreat, the colors are taken down and the soldiers stand at "present arms," if in formation, or at "salute," if not, while the band plays the "Star Spangled Banner" and the colors are taken down.

After supper, which is at 6:00, the men are free to wander about the camp, visit the Y.M.C.A. or any of the various places that are about the camp for amusement of troops. At 8:30, "tattoo" is blown and is a signal for all soldiers to start for their regimental area. At 9:15 or 9:40, "call to quarters" is sounded and is the signal to get in your tent or barrack and is followed by "taps," 15 minutes later. This schedule or a similar one is maintained by soldiers at all times, except at the front, and on Sunday when drill is omitted and "reveille" is a little later.

Overseas Equipment of Soldier.

At the end of the week or 10 days the soldier is issued a rifle and then begins his instruction in its use. At first it seems very heavy to him (weights about 8 ½ pounds), but by constant practice he gets so he can handle it with as much ease as the bookkeeper, his pencil. More attention is paid to bayonet exercise than target practice, and all troops who fight with rifle are well able to defend themselves in a hand to hand encounter with the enemy.

When the first American troops went abroad, they did not receive their helmets or gas masks until they arrived in France, but later it was found that they could carry them and thereby save room for freight as no more space is needed for a soldier with gas mask and helmet than without. Great attention is paid to gas masks, and all soldiers must become efficient in quickly adjusting them before they can go to the front.

The intensive training is kept up until sailing orders are received, then daily inspections follow until the men finally embark. When the soldier embarks, he must have the specified equipment and so each day it is inspected and all shortages filled. The following list shows what each soldier has issued to him by the government and if, at an inspection, any article is missing, it is immediately supplied and charged to him and deducted on the next pay roll.

1 O.D. coat, 1 pr. O.D. breeches, 2 O.D. shirts, 2 suits underwear, 4 pairs socks, 1 overcoat, 1 pair gloves, 1 waist belt, 1 pair leggings, 1 slicker, 2 pairs shoes, 4 pairs shoe strings, 1 service hat, 1 hat cord, 2 collar ornaments, 1 razor, 1 shaving brush, 1 tooth brush, 1 clothes brush, 1 tooth paste, 1 shaving soap, 1 comb, 2 towels, 2 boxes shoes dubbin, 3 blankets, 1 shelter half tent, 1 shelter half tent pole, 5 shelter half tent pins, 1 condiment can, 1 bacon can, 1 meat can, 1 canteen, 1 canteen cover, 1 knife, 1 fork, 1 spoon, 1 cup, 1 rifle, 1 rifle sling, 1 bayonet, 1 bayonet scabbard, 1 cartridge belt, 1 pack, 1 pack carrier, 1 haversack, 1 first aid packet and pouch, 1 intrenching tool and carrier, 1 helmet, 1 gas mask, 2 identification tags and tape.

If in addition to this the soldier wishes to carry a few personal articles (excluding outside wearing apparel), he may do so, but it is a rare thing to see anybody with more, as this becomes very heavy toward the end of an all-day march.

System of Embarkation.

Organizations going overseas are sent to one of the embarkation camps which are close to the ports, and from there they are taken to the transport.

The system of loading is excellent and it is a simple matter to load from three to five thousand troops aboard one of the transports in half a day, assigning each man a bunk and life boat. As each man steps up the gang plank, he is given a ticket showing which deck he is located on, the number of his bunk and the number of his lifeboat. Down in the hold of the ship are rows of bunks, three tiers, and just space enough between each row for a man to pass. Each bunk is numbered and he only has to find the deck, and then, hunt a short time to find his number. As soon as he has gotten his equipment off, he goes up on deck and finds the location of his life boat, so that he will be able to get there without delay in case of need.

The Trip Across.

The trip to Europe, as the American army took it, was not what one would call a pleasure trip. Men are packed in the ships like sardines in a box and the air becomes very foul at night when all the men are below. All matches, cigars and cigarette lighters are taken away from men and it is strictly forbidden to smoke, except on deck, and then only between sunrise and sunset. The throwing overboard of anything, no matter how small, is forbidden, and failure to obey these rules will put the offenders in the "brig".

The brig is a small, stuffy, unlighted room where those confined get a very little food, if the guards happen to think of it, and where one might easily be forgotten in case the ship was torpedoed. The room, which is rarely ever larger than eight feet by eight feet, is absolutely bare, except for the metal walls that enclose it, and those who get in once rarely ever do anything that causes them to be put in again.

These transports usually leave harbor as soon as it gets dark and travel without lights. The following morning they have the first "abandon ship" drill, and, as the bugle sounds, everyone except those on

duty, who have been told that there would be a drill, rushes to their places on the deck from which the life boats are launched. It is so planned that each boat carries a certain number of ship's crew and at least one of the army officers to command the soldiers.

Everyone wears a life belt day and night and never moves without a full canteen of water, and it is quite amusing to see the troops rush up on deck when the call is given. These calls are never ignored, as no one knows whether it is drill or reality. The food aboard a transport is usually better than the soldier is accustomed to and in this respect he is filled with regret at having to leave France when they yell, "France, all off."

The ships do not travel alone, but usually in groups of five or six, guarded by a naval fighter, usually a cruiser, which goes as far as the war zone and then turns back, after being picked up by the French convoy which is composed of from three to six torpedo boat destroyers.

As the soldier gets his bearings aboard ship, he begins to get friendly with the sailors and, if he happens to become acquainted with one, he soon starts asking all sorts of questions about the other side; how many trips he has made, if he has seen any "U" boats, what France looks like, where the soldiers go when they leave ships, etc., etc., etc.

A very sharp "look out" is maintained during the entire voyage for submarines and the gun crews practice daily, as well as spend a little time each trip at target practice.

The commander of the ship that I went across on (U.S.S. Poccahontas) stated that if no one lost his head the last man to leave the ship could do so within twenty minutes and, if torpedoed, it would take at least thirty minutes to sink.

As the ships glide into the harbors on the other side, women and children come out in row boats begging for money, food and souvenirs from "Amerique," as they call it and our boys at once begin to "parlez Francaise," it being their first opportunity to find out if anyone can understand them. It is quite amusing to see an American soldier, who has studied soldiers' French and never heard a word spoken, except as he or his comrades have done it, try to make the French understand him. Because they cannot, he is apt to draw the conclusion that they are awfully dumb. After being on the restless sea for a week or more and then seeing a strange city filled with strange people who speak a strange language, but is on terra firma, he at once makes up his pack and anxiously awaits orders to debark so that he may see all the men and interesting sights.

TO BE CONTINUED

Next week will tell of some of the interesting sights and customs that the American soldier saw as he landed and began going step by step toward "**No Mans Land.**"

ARRIVAL AT BREST

The sea voyage is very tiring, especially to troops, as they are so crowded that they are not able to get sufficient exercise and, when land is sighted, everyone feels much better; they breath freer because they know the submarine danger is over and they are uneasy until they are on good old terra firma again. My regiment landed at Brest, after being at sea eighteen days, and, when land was sighted about 9:30 a.m. on the morning of December 28, 1917, everyone tried to get on deck to have a look. We were sighted from shore at about the same time and two aeroplanes came out and looked us over to see if we were friend or foe and hovered above us for a couple of hours. The harbor at Brest is very shallow and, as we steamed in, they kept sounding so they would not get aground, and it was not until 2:00 p.m. that we finally anchored about one-half mile off shore. There are no piers to accommodate the large vessels and consequently they have to anchor out in the harbor. From there the troops and freight are loaded into smaller boats and taken ashore. As we lay in the harbor that afternoon, women and children came out in small boats begging for money, tobacco and souvenirs, and everyone who had anything at all in this line began throwing it to them.

First Impressions.

Everything seemed strange. The people who came out in these small boats were all of the lower class and were poorly dressed and looked very funny in their wooden shoes. The language was new to us and no one could tell whether they were wishing us good or bad luck, except by the expression on their faces, and by this it was easy to see that they were glad to have us come and help shoulder the weight they had been under a little over three years. Although the ground was covered with about a foot of snow when we lifted anchor on this side, the grass was green and the weather mild, over there.

The city looked a great deal different from any American town I have ever seen. The buildings are nearly all built of concrete, finished white, and with roofs of red tile, they present a very beautiful appearance. There is an occasional stone building, but one could travel for many days in some parts of France and not see a wooden structure.

There are no skyscrapers and a five story building is considered very high. As one goes inland, he sees villages with no building higher than one story and many with thatched roofs.

I was taken sick with mumps on board ship the day of our arrival and was taken off the same night and spent three weeks at Naval Base Hospital No.1 before rejoining my regiment at St. Nazaire. The regiment did not leave the ship for a couple of days, as it was necessary for them to get transportation before debarking.

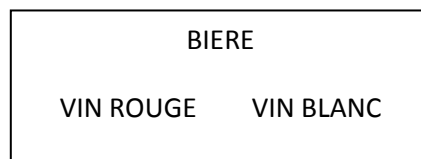
Welcomed by the French.

The morning that they were to leave, everyone was ordered up early, and after making packs, began cleaning the ship and then, as the small boats came out, they were taken ashore in groups of about 200. There they remained until the entire regiment was off. In the meantime, the French people began

flocking around, as these were the first American colored fighters that had been seen and it seemed as if the entire city of Brest had turned out. When the band started playing and the regiment moved forward, everyone went wild and our boys were glad that they had gone over. This one scene was enough to repay them for any sacrifice they had made.

As they marched along, on both sides of the streets, stood young and old dressed in mourning, and tears ran down their cheeks as they recalled the day when their sons or husbands had gone forth with bands playing and flags flying and who are now sleeping "Somewhere in France." It is a pretty hard matter to find a family in France who have not lost someone in this war and black in the color most seen on the streets.

As you go along the streets, you observe that nearly every other door is a cafe and signs:



announce that you will be able to get beer, red or white inside.

Traveling by Rail.

If troops go to the camps at Brest, they have a three mile hike up hill to the muddiest spot on earth. My regiment entrained upon debarking and went to St. Nazaire. As you approach the railroad station, on a siding, you see a long line of freight cars quite unlike those in this country.

They are about 22 or 24 feet long and each car has four wheels. These wheels are not solid, but have spokes, and are much higher than ours.

The coupling, too, is a little different as the cars are hooked together and, after being hooked, are tightened by a screw. One the ends of each car are two large irons that have a flat face, about twelve inches in diameter, and are directly over the rails.

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These are held by springs that eliminate the jar when starting and stopping. Some have brakes, some have not, and, when a train is made up, cars with brakes are put in at proper intervals and men ride on the outside of these cars to operate them, which has to be done quite often, as the grades are terrible in some places.

On the outside of each car is marked:

HOMMES – 40

CHEVEAUZ – 8

which means the car will hold either forty persons or eight horses. This can be done, but when troops get in them for a three day ride, about twenty less would make it possible for all to sleep at night. With forty in a car, they must sleep in relays, as all cannot lie down at once. There are no lights and it reminds one of a cattle train very much.

Our men were counted off in groups of forty each and quickly loaded. About 2:00 p.m., or 14 hours, the train started. The French have no a.m. and p.m. as they start at midnight and run to 24 hours the following midnight: For example 18H20 means 6:20 p.m., 5H40 means 5:40 a.m. etc.

Some of the cars had straw in them, and these were very comfortable. Others had no straw and became as cold as an ice box when the train got under way, the air coming in through cracks two and three inches wide in some cases.

When the regiment arrived in St. Nazaire the following morning, everyone was cold and hungry and about thirty per cent had frost bitten feet and could hardly walk.

They were marched about two miles above the city to Camp No. 1 – Base Section No. 1 where they were fed late in the afternoon and given barracks.

Living in Barracks.

These barracks were much different from those previously described. They are one story, about 18 feet wide and 100 feet long, without floors. A very small stove is located at each end and each morning you draw a certain allowance of coal which is about enough to last eight hours. The other sixteen, you freeze. The bunks are built by taking four uprights, seven feet long, and nailing four more on them about two and one-half feet from the bottom and four more near the top. Then strips are nailed through the center of each and chicken wire stretched across to form bunks for four men. About one hundred men sleep in a barrack and, if it is very cold, they frequently freeze.

We remained at St. Nazaire about a month, working at Montoir (pronounced Mon-twa) about five miles distant.

For the benefit of any soldier who has since been there, I will say that at that time we were filling it in with sand hauled from the ocean by railroad. I am told that there is a camp, which will accommodate 30,000 soldiers, on what was a worthless swamp in January, 1918.

Initiated in Use of Money.

Here we began learning to parler Francaise, count francs and centimes and get accustomed to the ways of the French people.

The French money is very confusing until you get used to it and you usually pay for your experience. The French had already found out that the Americans had plenty of money and, accordingly, had planned ways and means of getting most of it. The American soldier receives about \$1.00 per day, while the French soldier gets five cents, except when at the front, and the French soon arranged things so that the Frenchman had as good a time for his day's work as the American.

The stores have three prices, namely; one for the Frenchman, one for the man who speaks French, and one for the man who does not speak French. It is needless to say that the latter is about double that of the Frenchman.

Where we measure the value in dollars and cents, the French have francs and centimes.

There approximate equivalent is follows:

FRENCH	AMERICAN
½ centimes	1 mill
5 centimes or 1 sou	1 cent
1 franc	20 cents
5 francs	1 dollar

They have 5, 10, 25 and 50 centime pieces; 1, 2 and 5 franc pieces. Each territory issues 50 centimes, 1 and 2 franc bills, which are good only within the territory. The Bank of France issues bills of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 500 and 1000 franc denomination and are good any where in France. They are not printed on as good paper as our money and our men destroyed great deal of it, as they would crumple it up and put it into their pocket. Do that once and the money is gone the same as any ordinary paper. The French all carry large bill books and fold only the large bills.

The bills are larger according to denomination, the smallest being a 5 franc note, which is about 3 x 4 ½ inches, and the largest, the 1,000 franc note, about 7 x 10 inches.

Upon arrival in France the soldier goes to a Y.M.C.A. and gets his dollars and cents changed for francs and centimes and goes forth upon his first shopping expedition. If he was a fellow who drank and went over in 1917, he had no difficulty getting a bottle of champagne for from 3 ½ to 5 francs; if he was one of the last he would be lucky to get it for 20 francs, so great was the increase in price as soon as the French found the American was a good spender. I have paid 8 ½ francs for a No. 2 can of apple jam, which was nothing but apple sauce with very little sugar in it. Eggs were from 15 to 20 cents a piece and hard to get at any price. Nothing is wasted over there and the average American family throws away enough food to maintain a family of the warring nations, who have been bought face to face with starvation.

The French are very slow going and one never sees anyone in a hurry. Everybody works that is old enough, and the women and children do all the work on the farm and in the town. Every man and all

boys, who were able to shoulder a gun, did so and one never saw a man on the street, except in uniform, unless he had been disabled and discharged.

Poor System of Sanitation.

The cities and villages are not models for cleanliness and one wonders why everyone has not died from typhoid fever long ago. There are no sewers and all filth runs down the side of the street.

There are no farm houses as in this country. You see a small village here and another a couple of miles down the road. The house and barn is always under one roof and the house and barn door are side by side with manure heaps in front of both.

There are no fences between farms and when the cattle go out to pasture, a herder, who is usually a very old man, goes out with his dog and stays until it is time to return in the evening. Nearly everyone wears wooden shoes and the noise, produced by a lot of children, playing tag on the pavements, is deafening.

We were at St. Nazaire about three weeks when, one night, an order came through for my battalion to prepare for moving at once, as we were to go to the interior of France.

TO BE CONTINUED.

“My Year in France”, Putnam County Courier, May 2, 1919, Vol. 78, No 1, page 6

Starting for Camp.

My battalion fell in on the parade ground immediately after dinner, for inspection by the Colonel preparatory to our leaving. As soon as the battalion had been inspected, the Colonel gave us a few words of advice as to how we should conduct ourselves until we should assemble again.

The fife and drum corps of our regiment escorted us to the railroad station playing airs which brought the French people out to the streets, where they cheered us as we passed and waved good-bye.

Who knows what the thoughts of these people were as we passed in under the long shed at the station and boarded the train? They had been doing this to Allied troops since August, 1914, and had never welcomed any back.

What thoughts go through the mind of the soldier as he marches along and sees this great crowd; old men, children and women; and realizes that he will not come back until the war is over, no matter how long it may take. I will not describe mine.

A Journey in France.

Arriving at the railroad station, we found our train ready. It was a little better than we had expected, being made up entirely of third class coaches, and as we got aboard we congratulated ourselves upon

our good luck. Had the entire regiment been moving, we would have found box cars but, as it was only a battalion, the coaches were given to us.

We started at about 4 p.m. and the following morning we halted while the cooks made coffee for everyone by the side of the tracks. Although we had coaches there was no heat in them and the hot coffee, together with the corned beef and hardtack, did much to warming us up and reviving our spirits.

Our train was not a fast one (in fact, not many French trains are) and, as we rode along, everyone enjoyed the scenery. We rode all day and did not stop for food, eating hard tack and corned beef when we would feel hungry.

The villages are very close together and from one village to the next, every bit of ground was found under cultivation.

There are no lonely farmhouses along the roads as in the country, and one rarely ever sees a fence. I have counted fifteen villages at one time that were plainly visible from the road upon which I was marching, and was not upon a hill at the time.

Life in the Villages.

Everyone lives in the villages, and the houses are built in two parts; one part for the family and the other part for the stock. Each morning, someone of the household, usually the old grandfather or grandmother, takes the dog and drives the cattle out to the farm land to graze, returning in the evening.

These little villages have two or three small stores that sell groceries and, usually, about four times that number of cafes or "buvettes," where one can purchase light wines and beers, and, if one wants something stronger; cognac. Tobacco is very hard to get in France, and they only have a very poor grade, which is not cured and flavored as ours. Clothing and dry goods are brought from the larger villages and cities by peddlers, who sell from house to house. Some of the villages that we passed through had not seen American troops before and, when they found that we were from America, they nearly went wild.

Final Camp Training.

The following morning, we arrived at our destination, a large artillery training camp which is called "Camp de Coetquidan." American artillerymen were sent there in large numbers for training in the use of the French cannon which were used by a great many of our soldiers. We were sent there to do guard duty over ammunition.

Before we hardly had time to remove our packs after arriving in camp, we were assembled and warned as to how we should regard the various things that were to be found around the camp.

We were told that we would find plenty of unexploded projectiles lying about and that we must never, under any circumstances, touch any of them as several lives had been lost by fellows who, like ourselves, had seen them lying around about and picked them up, explosions resulting.

All day long, we could hear nothing but the boom of cannon in practice and the whirr of aeroplane motors, as they flew about reporting shots and correcting the artillerymen in their work. It seemed to us, then, as if we were at as noisy a place as we could find. I found out differently.

We were at this camp a very short time, as our regiment was put in the French army, and, after being assigned to a division, we were ordered to leave and rejoin the remainder of our regiment which also had orders to proceed to a point near Vitry la Francoise, which is very close to the front.

Moving Near the Front.

In due time, we were on our way again and, after a ride of two days and two nights, we arrived one evening at Vitry. As we were getting close to the front, we did not proceed beyond this point until it began to get dark, as enemy "avions" (fliers) might sight the train and drop a few bombs on it. While we were at the station, railway officials came and told us that there must be no lights of any kind, as they would give away our location and cause the loss of many lives. As soon as it began to get dark, we pulled out and proceeded very cautiously toward our destination and, as we moved along, we would see trainloads of soldiers who, like ourselves, were going to some part of the front. Camouflaged cannon, mounted on railway cars, filled us with interest and here and there along the tracks we would see a grave which told the awful story and, as we went along, these graves began to get more and more frequent.

Everyone being tired, and not having a light by which to see to do the various things that help soldiers to pass away many a lonely hour, all hands fell asleep, and, when I opened my eyes in the morning, we were at a standstill in the freight yard of a medium sized village, which I later found was known as Givoy en Argonne.

Warned Against Spies.

As soon as possible, after everyone had detrained, we were lined up and given a few instructions regarding the county we were in and how we should act, so that, if we should run into a spy unexpectedly, we would know what to do, etc. We were told that it was only a short way behind the front line and that occasionally a German spy gets behind our lines and then, changing his uniform for that of a Frenchman, wanders about getting information about our troops, until he is satisfied and returns. Troops, who are going to the front for the first time, are apt to be talkative, and what appears to them to be nothing becomes valuable information, when placed in the hands of the enemy.

Sleeping in Billets.

We had a hike of one kilometer (5/8 of a mile) to the town which was to be our home until we went forward. Up here, where the cannon roar night and day, we began to think the end of time was at hand.

Up until this time, we had always stayed in barracks but, up at the front, they are known as billets and are barns, houses, chicken houses, sheds and any place imaginable that will keep the rain from falling directly in the face when one tries to sleep, and I have seen many that did not ever do that. The advantage of quartering troops in these little villages up near the front is easily seen. The enemy is

constantly flying overhead and, if barracks were built they would be either shelled or bombed the first time troops were put in to the front by night and stay in these villages, which are nearly all deserted by day, and the enemy flying over gets no sign of life behind our lines, as the men are not allowed to wander about the streets.

In each village, there is a man who is known as the "Town Major," who has charge of the billets in said village. Each house or barn is numbered and capacity was plainly marked upon it. If there are 500 soldiers coming to stay all night he marks down on a sheet of paper the numbers of the houses that these men are to occupy.

Before troops go to a village they send what is known as a billeting officer, who takes one or two men from each company with him. He gets his list from the town major and then sub-divides it, giving each company representative his proper quota. These men, after locating the billets, go to the edge of the town and await the arrival of the troops. As they come through the town, they are dropped off at their respective places without confusion. Occasionally, troops get into a town in the middle of the night, soaking wet in a pouring rain, and find that there has been a misunderstanding and that the town is already full of soldiers. Then there is nothing else to do but march on to the first empty town. I have experienced this and can say that it is not a pleasing situation.

Such was the way we were billeted in this village, which was at one time a beautiful place of perhaps 800 to 1,000 inhabitants but which had been reduced to less than 100.

Preparing for the Trenches.

Two days after our arrival there, we were told we were to turn in all our American equipment and receive French; also that Frenchmen, who had seen service at the front, were coming to give us special courses and prepare us for the trenches in thirty days. This did not seem possible, as the National Guard regiments were receiving six months training and, as we had been doing almost everything except training, we knew practically nothing.

We began turning in our equipment at once, getting its equivalent in French at the same time. Everybody lost heart when they received the French rifle. The American is a most accurate weapon and carefully made. It weighs 8.56 lbs. and is very expensive. The French rifle is cheaply made, is about 8 inches longer than ours and weighs much less. The bayonet has no cutting edge like ours and can only be used to pierce, while ours pierces and will cut right and left.

We spent the first four or five days of our allotted thirty getting equipped. In the meantime, the men were classified in regards to the particular kind of training they would take up. For instance, a good ball player would be made a grenade thrower, a man with mechanical ability would be assigned to machine guns, automatic rifles, etc. Anyone, who had operated a switchboard or similar work, would take up telephones; athletes would study liaison, and so each and every man was put at that particular work for which he was best fitted. When the instructors came, they found us waiting and anxious to learn so that we might get up where we heard the constant roaring of cannon and could see the heavens light up at night, as Fritz would send up a star shell light.

TO BE CONTINUED

Next week, will tell about the manner in which the training was conducted and how each man, besides knowing in a general way the art of attack and defence, was a specialist in some, particular branch.

“My Year in France”, Putnam County Courier, May 9, 1919, Vol. 78, No 2, page 6

Instructed to Kill.

The French instructors who came to our regiment were equally divided among the companies and at once began their work of teaching us how to kill without being killed.

The soldier as a rule is sometimes careless and indifferent to the drills he is forced to go through, but we, who were within hearing of the big guns that were belching out death and destruction daily, proof of which could be seen in the ambulances which came along filled with wounded, began to look upon it seriously and no one would feign sickness in order to miss a drill as each one realized that something might be taught that day which would be the means of saving his life. In addition to receiving the very latest methods in warfare from these instructors certain men were selected from each company to go to school for a 4 week's course in some special thing and in that way become a specialist in the particular branch which they studied. These men were selected according to their ability or experience which would help them to quicker learn the particular work they were to study, for example; good ball player, especially a pitcher, would be sent to study grenades and grenade throwing. This man would, upon his return, be an expert grenadier and, besides knowing all about the use of the various type of grenades, would be able to further instruct the regiment.

A mechanic would be sent to study machine guns as his mechanical knowledge would help him in quickly learning all about that particular weapon, as these men must become so expert that, should a gun “hang up” (bullet become stuck), he could quickly take it apart and assemble it in the darkest night and under highest excitement.

Others were sent to bayoneting, telephones, wireless, gas, liaison, signalling and the automatic rifle.

We would be up before daylight, and, immediately after breakfast, would go out in the fields of the surrounding country and drill until night, stopping just long enough to eat a hasty dinner. There would never be more than fifty men in a group and these groups would be widely separated, as the enemy would occasionally by over head at a high altitude, but not so high that the observer could not have seen a large body of troops with the powerful glasses that are used on scout planes. To be seen would mean that we would be treated to a shower of bombs and the result usually being serious, officers soon learned to have their men lie down and remain perfectly motionless until the enemy had passed over.

Moving in the Front.

After being in the village a few days, we would move up to another village and, in that way, we became accustomed to the noise and the conditions at the front. As we left the little village near the railway station and went forward, we could not help but notice that each one had less old men, women and children, until finally we reached Maffrecourt, which is about seven miles from the front line.

There were eight or ten civilian families that would not give up their home, even for the Germans. They consisted of an old man and his wife in nearly every case. I saw one baby and a young woman of about twenty.

I will say here that, in the most advanced villages that are inhabited, the population in nearly every case consists of old people who, I imagine, think they have not long to live and they are willing to die in the place where they have always lived and which they cannot bear to leave behind with the priceless accumulation of a life time, which in most cases, has to be done when they become refugees.

The children and babies cannot wear the gas mask, as it too large, and their mothers take them back out of the Z. of A. (Zone of Advance), as it is called. Hundreds of babies have been killed in these villages by gas because of this, and, as everyone knows, innocent and helpless women and children are the Germans' most prized victims.

Regiment Reorganized.

As we had been moving up, our regiment had been reorganized, so as to be able to act as an independent combat unit. We were in no division and consequently had to undergo some changes that most regiments do not. Our regiment consisted of a Sanitary Detachment, one Supply, one Headquarters and one Machine Gun and twelve line companies. The twelve companies were divided into three battalions of four companies each. In the American army, they have what is known as Machine Gun Battalions and one of these is attached to a regiment but, as we have no machine gun battalion, we had to organize so as to get the necessary machine gun crews, as each battalion of a regiment works independently when holding a section.

Accordingly, one of the companies in each battalion was made up as a machine gun company. The regimental machine gun company was turned into "Sappers and Bombers," whose duty it is to dig dug-outs, bury the dead, etc. The supply company was increased to three times its size as for was to be much more work for them on the front as they have to bring long wagon trains of supplies (food, ammunition, clothing, etc.) up each night, returning to their base before daylight for the needed rest before making the trip and following night.

In some sectors where observation is poor, owing to hills and woods, this work can be done in daylight.

While we were at Maffrecourt, we received our first Replacement troops to bring the companies up to proper strength after reorganization.

We were ordered to turn in our barrack bags, which contained all our clothing, and only retain one suit of underwear and one O.D. shirt. Many of the men had personal things, but as we were under the belief that we would get them again they were left in the bags. They were never returned.

Ordered to the Trenches.

One evening, the platoon sergeants were told to be ready at 7:00 the next morning to go to the front to reconnoiter the positions, as we were to enter the trenches the following day.

This is a task which is not as easy as it may seem.

When troops go into the front line to relieve other troops, there are many things that must be learned so that the new troops may be able to defend the new position, if attacked a few minutes after taking charge.

These officers and non-commissioned officers must get the necessary information while on reconnaissance, so that they may be able to give it to their men when they arrive. Each man, who goes on this very important job, must carry pad, pencil, compass and field glasses.

Arriving at headquarters of the unit to be relieved, guides are given so that these men may reach their destination without delay or confusion. Several guides are required, as nearly all of them go separate ways. Most people are, I think under the impression that the trenches are long ditches running parallel to each other, filled with men standing side by side with their rifles lying on the "parapet," as the dirt which is heaped up in front is called.

You find trenches running this way from one fighting post to another occasionally but, more often, you have to go back and get another trench that leads up to the next fighting post, which may be within calling distance.

Imagine two large trees with their tops trimmed off squarely and laid down on the ground with the tips toward each other and with a space between varying from grenade throwing distance to one-half (hime?), and you have an idea of the great mass of networks that was laid on the battle fields of Europe.

The ends of the of the branches terminate in what the French call "groupe de combat," meaning combat group.

The entire affair is handled at the trunk and, as the troops go in the line they are separated and this continues until two members who go in the G.C. (Groupe de Combat) varies from twelve to twenty-five.

These G.Cs. are surrounded by great masses of barb wire and the space between the G.Cs. is also thickly strewn with it.

Entering Champagne Sector.

We made our first entry into the trenches in the Champagne sector and, the morning following the reconnaissance, we started upon our trip which was about nine kilometers. The roads upon which we

travelled were heavily camouflaged and there was no danger of being seen. Where there is an open country in view of the enemy, the troops must go at night so as to take the positions without the enemy knowing it. Should they know that new troops were occupying positions which they knew little about, they would attack them and such an attack would almost certainly end in defeat for us, unless the men had been there for several hours.

The sight of those men that day as they marched to the front is one that I shall never forget. All the equipment was new and clean, having lately been issued in exchange for our American equipment. We had heard wonderful tales about the trenches where we were to go. France lost more men in Champagne than in any other place, and, being a more or less open country, there is lots of activity of all branches. The trenches were being held by French Troops with whom we received our initiation. They maintained their same number of sentinals and we simply went and stood post beside them watching everything they did and, when possible, asking them various questions. As no one could speak French then as well as they did later, we did very little talking and most of our information was gathered from the many things we saw them do.

Trench Equipment.

As we came into the lines, we brought everything that a combat unit requires and our train alone was a very interesting sight. Our motive power was the traditional army mule, which was settled down to the routing of war and which could not be induced to hurry no matter how much depended upon his doing so.

Our train consisted of ration wagons, rolling kitchens, ammunition wagons, medical carts, machine gun carts and liaison carts.

All this was in charge of an officer, who would ride from one end to the other giving orders.

After we arrived at the point where the train could go no farther, we found a narrow gauge railway and plenty of cars, upon which our supplies were loaded and pushed to the front.

TO BE CONTINUED.

What we did and saw during our five day stay, will be told next week.

"My Year in France", Putnam County Courier, May 16, 1919, Vol. 78, No 3, page 6

Off for the Front.

The road leading up to the front in the sector we were going in was heavily camouflaged and we did not have to wait until night as is usually the case.

After an early breakfast, the battalion was inspected. This is a very important thing and is always done before entering the trenches as it is very important that every man have everything while on the tour in the trenches.

As we went forward that day everyone was filled with thoughts of the good old U.S. A. and wondering if they would be privileged to return down that road after the tour of duty or if they would be brought down in an ambulance as they had seen so many French soldiers. They did not think so much about the possibilities of resting in one of the military cemeteries, of which there are hundreds, as they are right in front where they had never been. These cemeteries are very numerous and one goes by and sees the row of dug graves ready to receive the victims of the next patrol, raid or attack it does not encourage him a great deal. They usually keep several dug ahead as they can never tell how many will be needed nor how soon.

We followed the highway to a point about 2 miles distant from the front line, then we left the road and entered the long winding trenches that would enable us to get almost within hearing distance of the Boche without being seen. The third line positions were also at this point and located on a hill. The side farthest from the enemy was nothing but dug-outs and all about soldiers were sunning themselves for, strange to say, it was not raining. The opposite side of this hill was nothing but barb wire entanglements and, on the top, trenches were dug which, should the enemy break the other two lines in front, would be quickly manned by the men who were staying and as the Germans would try and break through the barb wire they would kill them with rifles, grenades, machine guns, etc. until they had enough of it. The men who were there, were men who had been in the front and who were resting for ten days before going back again.

Reached the Second Line Trench.

When we reached the second line positions it was quite late and we had to wait for our guides who were to guide us through the trenches until we came to the end of them and to the "G.C." or stronghold.

The company is divided into platoons or sections and sub-divided into half sections. It is one of these half sections that occupy a G.C. Our guides arriving, the half sections started off in various directions.

One section remained at the second line or what is known as reserve and also the field kitchen and Co. headquarters. I was Supply Sergeant at the time and remained with Co. headquarters.

It was my first time in a dug-out and I became disgusted the first night. I had always imagined a dug-out as a large circular room with a fire built in the center which served to light as well as heat the room.

Instead I found them to be tunnels with three tiers of bunks on either side and, although it is not always the case, I found that all the dug outs were lighted by electricity.

There seemed to be a row of hills in this sector and on each one there had been established a line of defence. The front line was on a hill facing a valley which was at the time "No Man's Land" and on the next hill facing us were the Germans. On the safe side of these hills were little dug-out cities and the

second line had its own power house with power enough to light all the dug-outs. They would start the engine just before dark and stop it at 10 p.m.

My bunk was an upper one and I had no sooner gotten in it than I discovered that it leaked terribly owing to sweat, but I would not give in and so I slept until I got so cold and wet I could sleep no longer.

In the morning I went to the kitchen and while there saw the mess details as they came from the 1st line for their breakfast.

It had been a quiet night and aside from a little machine gun fire and the star shell light of the Germans, everybody had found things much better than expected and so it was quite a high spirited group of men who related their particular experience to the fellow in some other G.C. as they waited for the cooks to issue their rations.

Strongholds Well Supplied.

In each of these G.Cs., there is ample ammunition to last several days should circumstances force them to lose connection with the P.C. (French abbreviation for Post Commandant) which is a company headquarters. There are all sorts of tools and equipment at these advanced positions to meet all needs, such as rubber boots for working parties when wet, pumps to pump water from the dug-outs, barb wire to repair any that might be destroyed by the shells, large metal boxes filled with emergency rations to be used when supplies are cut off in the rear. Those boxes are sealed and are not to be opened except by orders of an officer. When there is a heavy gas attack and Yperite or another of the most deadly gasses used all food becomes poison and when this happens it has to be buried and then sometimes the emergency food is eaten. People wonder why one gets gassed after being trained to put on a mask in less than 10 seconds. If nothing but cloud gas were used I have no doubt but that everyone would be able to don the mask before getting gassed, but the Germans found out, before America entered the war, that cloud gas was costing too much considering the few who would get gassed during an attack that cost several thousand dollars, so they began sending it over in shells which upon bursting would liberate the deadly fumes.

Gas Attacks.

All sentries on post in a G.C. are on the alert for gas, and cloud gas is easily seen at great distance, resembling a dense fog. It can only be released under favorable conditions, usually a wind blowing from their trenches toward ours at from 6 to 20 miles being the best.

When the gas is released it resembles a dense fog and as soon as it is seen sentries being giving the gas alarm by ringing bells, gongs or blowing large automobile horns that are fastened on posts for this purpose. As soon as these warnings are given everyone immediately dons his mask and does not take it off again until given orders by an officer who knows that all danger is over.

In the early days of the war the Germans would send men over who would in the midst of an attack, tell them to take the masks off as the gas was over. The men could not tell and being anxious to breath freely again, would do so. A great many have been killed in this way.

The French soldiers who were holding the sector remained there and we simply put our men on the same post with them to see what they did and to become accustomed to the new work.

One has a very strange feeling the first night as he stands at his post and sees the rockets go up that he knows are from the German lines.

First Night in Front Lines.

You speak to one another in whispers as a patrol might be near and if heard would learn your position. I remember the first night I spent in the front lines. I had been in the reserve position two nights and as it was very quiet I decided to see I couldn't find a little more activity. Accordingly the following evening I saw the company commander (Captain H. Fish, Jr.) and told him I wanted to go up to the front for the night. It happened that a sergeant who was up there was wanted in the rear to take part in an entertainment so I was sent up to relieve him which I did. We had several men on posts at points quite distant from one another and it was my duty to from one to the other all night and see that reliefs were made and that everything was alright. It was nearly dark as we went into position and we locked ourselves in the G.C. by closing gates which dropped in the trenches and fastened from the inside.

All night long the enemy kept sending up rockets which made No Man's Land as light as day, except for about two hours during which time they had a patrol out. They wanted it kept dark as possible then so their men would not be seen. We could hear them as they would signal from time to time. The signalling is done by whistling to imitate some bird and if a patrol separate, each part knows just what to do by the information given by the pre-arranged signals.

Patrols.

Patrols are sent out every night by every unit that is in the front line and quite frequently two enemy patrols meet. When this happens a battle takes place in which no assistance comes to either side. Both sides know, by the grenading, etc., that patrols have met but they dare not fire as the chances would be equal as to whether they would kill friend or foe and so, when they meet they must fight it out alone.

These patrols are sent out for the purpose of securing information and are exactly the same thing as scout duty in the days of the Civil War with the necessary changes that present conditions have forced them to make.

The number of men of a patrol differs, though from 6 to 10 is usually a fair-sized patrol. These men meet at a given point and there they are told what they are going to do. Each man carries a bag of grenades and an automatic pistol, but grenades are the weapons, most used because they can be thrown in the midst of a group of men and no one knows anything about it until it explodes and then they can do nothing because they do not know from which direction it was thrown. These men go across No Man's Land and lie around the Huns' G.Cs. and find out all that they can. Sometimes they go behind them, passing very quietly between two, and watch them at work for hours. They note conditions and many things that would seem of little importance to a great many people are of the greatest importance there as they are sent to the Intelligence Department along with information

gathered by other patrols at other points and the whole thing put together is in many cases an open book to these men of the Intelligence Department, who helped win the war with photographs, sketches, etc., just as much as the fellow who was at the front. If it had not been for these men we would not have known when the Germans were about to make their attacks and, not knowing, would not have been prepared. To have not been prepared would have meant annihilation but we always knew when an attack was coming and always prepared for it by strengthening the positions in the sectors where the attack was coming, being reinforced with additional troops, artillery, etc.

When one of these patrols goes out they have a place selected for their return and the troops at that point are informed at which hour the patrol will return. Some signal is agreed upon so that there can be no doubt as to their identity when they return which might be either earlier or later than anticipated, all depending upon whether everything develops according to plans. I can truthfully say that it doesn't always and many times a patrol comes in carrying and dragging dead and wounded comrades.

Once discovered, a patrol has a very difficult task ahead as rockets are sent up one behind the other keeping it as light as day and a harassing machine gun fire is kept up, which forces you to crawl all the way back and is no pleasant job to drag a dead or wounded comrade in this way. While you can drag a dead man without hurting him you have to be very careful with a fellow who may be mortally wounded and you usually have a certain amount of respect for the body of one you had grown to like. The identity of troops is concealed as much as possible and so dead men are never left unless absolutely necessary as the enemy would discover them the next day and go out the following night and get them in order to get as much information as possible from any papers, marks, etc. that might be on them. Occasionally it happens that a patrol is forced to leave a body and the next night both sides go for it. Great battles have resulted from such causes but will not go down in history. Although to those engaged they presented as excitement as any of the larger ones, they dwarf into insignificance when compared to some of the battles which lasted for several days.

Seeing the value that is put upon a dead body one need not wonder why men spend half of the night crawling two or three hundred yards with a corpse exposing themselves to enemy fire and a similar fate.

As one stands at his post in the blackness of night and hears that whistle which he knows comes from the lips of a German his nerves are all atingle and he strains his eyes to catch a glimpse of the patrol that he knows is there somewhere. You also send up rockets but is it only luck if you ever see anything as all patrol men know enough to throw themselves flat and remain there until the last bit of light is gone before moving again. Should you happen to send one up at a particular time when they would be in an exposed place you might catch them but rarely ever as exposed places are always avoided by them.

When morning comes you breath a sigh of relief and as you are relieved by the few men who are needed during the day when everything is quiet, you go to the dug-out and get your drink of hot coffee which the day guards went to the rear and brought up before going on duty, and smoking a cigarette you go to bed.

TO BE CONTINUED

Next week's installment will tell how a raid is conducted

"My Year in France", Putnam County Courier, May 23, 1919, Vol. 78, No 4, page 6

Observation Balloons Used Extensively.

During the day, it is usually quiet, except for an occasional shell from the artillery where a battery happens to be well concealed. If it should be so situated that the smoke could be seen, they cannot fire during the day, as their position would be easily located by the aeroplanes that are always looking for these things, or the observation balloons that are up from daylight until dark, taking careful note of every sign of life that is shown behind the enemy lines, as far as their powerful glasses will permit.

These observation balloons or sausages, as they are called, because of their shape, are located about five miles behind the lines and from five to eight miles apart. One or two men go up in the basket and all day long they watch the enemy. When the artillery fires, they tell them what effect the shot had and in this way the range is corrected. They are held in place by cables and they telephone to the station underneath them all the information that they secure. Because of these sausages, all movements of supplies, ammunition, guns and troops have to be accomplished at night. The men who are engaged in this work are usually men who are no longer fit for active service at the front.

The French Army had lost so heavily that they had to find ways of using some of the partially disabled men and this is one of the jobs that many of them do.

The men who go up in the basket, have a parachute attached to them which is adjusted ready for instant use at all times, and very often a German plane will swoop down out of the clouds, set it afire and go back to its own lines. I have seen several of these big balloons set afire and, unless you happen to see the plane maneuvering around it and anticipate what is going to happen, it is gone before you can turn around. I do not think that the observers have any means of defense, relying upon the anti-aircraft guns to protect them, and when the Boche succeeds in getting over our lines that far; which is easily accomplished by flying so high that they can barely be seen and the motor not heard at all; he (the observer) is at the mercy of the German, and the instant he notices the balloon settling, he has to jump as the gas in it is inflammable and it is gone in less than a minute.

An observer is rarely ever caught napping, as he can hear the whirr of the motor before it reaches the balloon.

Sleep and "Chow" in Trenches

There are many things to be done during the day by the men in the front lines and reliefs are so arranged that everyone gets an equal amount of time, both on and off duty. A few guards are maintained during the day and, as soon as it begins to get dark, this number is increased. But from midnight until daylight, the time during which most of the raids and surprises are carried on, a very heavy guard and the greatest vigilance is maintained, and all men who are not on actual duty are in

readiness for immediate action, fully dressed and equipped with rifle at hand. Although they may be lying down and asleep, the sleep that one gets from midnight until daylight in the front line is not what one would term as the most profound slumber.

About 10:30, those who have been sleeping more or less since midnight begin to stir about and soon everyone is up and ready for dinner, the first meal of the day which usually reaches the front about 11:30 or 12:00. There is no certainty about the food as the details occasionally get in direct line with one of the H.Es. (high explosives) of the Austrian artillery, which so ably assisted the Germans during the war. When this happens, another detail is sent out to investigate, and they bring the sad news that we will be unable to get any food until the evening meal, as the dinner was all spilled on the ground and there is no more prepared at the kitchen. They might add that incidentally the men, who had been on the detail, were lying scattered about where they had been blown. The result is that we are S.O.L. (Army slang, meaning, soldiers out o'luck). Everyone feels down hearted the remainder of the day, as it is generally known that a meal missed in the army can never be made up.

Making Dugout Habitable.

After dinner, everybody gets busy cleaning up the dugouts, trenches, etc. The ammunition expended during the night has to be replaced and camouflage has to be repaired and improved. In the early days, the trenches were the muddiest places imaginable, but before the close of the war, they were, almost everywhere, duck-boarded, and travelling was made much easier. These boards were made by taking two 2x4s and nailing narrow strips across them. As the earth loosens from the sides of the trench and drops, it gets underneath these boards and prevents water from running and these have to be taken up and cleaned out very often. When there is no other work more important, troops are always set at this.

All officers are instructed to better the conditions of these G.Cs. during their tour of duty, so that when they leave, they will be better than when they came. As troops are constantly changing sectors, they are constantly improving with the result that in some places, where there have been no drives and no advancing or retreating, one finds quite comfortable places.

I shall never forget my first night in a dugout in a G.C. I was very tired and the fact that the water kept dripping down on my bed was enough to discourage anyone. The bunk itself was made of five wires stretched across and one of these was broken. I was very sleepy and would sleep a few minutes and the pain caused by the wires cutting into my side would wake me up. Turning over, I would try the other side until again waked up. I did this until I could stand it no longer, and so I got up and watched the rockets until day.

Most bunks are made of chicken wire and are fairly comfortable. The dug outs are very damp and two or three days after a heavy rain, it begins to soak through the roof and then you are uncomfortable until it all soaks through. Since it rains nearly all the time over there, you are usually uncomfortable in this respect.

In the Champagne sector, the soil is almost pure chalk to a depth of from 18 inches to 2 feet in many places and the least little rain makes it very sticky. Sometimes one gets eight or ten pounds of this on

his feet and, with eighty or ninety pounds on the back, one has little fear of being blown off his feet by anything less than an Austrian "88."

Conduction of Raids.

The third night we were in the trenches, the French regiment, with whom we were getting our final training before taking a sector of our own, made a raid on the Germans and as all raids are, in general, the same I shall describe this one so that the reader may know the purpose of same, how it is conducted and what the result is – sometimes.

The purpose of a raid is to secure prisoners, who, when captured, are taken behind the lines and questioned by the Intelligence Department and in this way an army is able to get news not only from the front but from miles behind the lines where patrols cannot reach and where the aeroplane or the eye of the observer cannot go. Careful notice is taken of the general appearance of these prisoners and the changes from time to time are noted, and in this way, a good idea of conditions can be ascertained. For instance, it was seen that the new steel helmets worn by men captured in the summer of 1918 were not as heavy as in 1917. Why weren't they? We could come to but one conclusion and that was they were getting short of material.

It is quite an easy matter to send a party of men across No Man's Land with orders to kill one or two men who, patrols have found, are stationed at a particular point which they can exactly locate on a map. But it is a far different more difficult task to get these men alive, as they will fight until they die in nearly every case unless so attacked that they have no chance to do so.

In this particular raid, they decided to use thirty men and the patrols had found out that a short distance from the main body of the G.C., there was a small post occupied by two men armed with rifles and grenades. It was connected to the main part of the G. C. by a trench and was well protected by barbed wire in front, the rear and sides.

The raiding party moved out from our lines around midnight and, with absolutely no noise, made their way to a point near the wire surrounding this position.

The artillery had dropped two or three shells in the wire at this point and made a sort of pathway through and expert wire cutters did the rest. To be an expert wire cutter, means to be able to cut this wire under the very nose of the enemy without making a sound, and anyone who has ever cut a piece of wire knows how difficult this is. These men have specially padded wire cutters and a man on either side holds the wire so that, when severed, it will not jump and, hitting other wires, attract the attention of the men in the post.

A raiding party gets at the designated point sufficiently early to enable it to do anything that may be needed preparatory to the raid, but not so early that they may be unnecessarily exposed, should an illuminating rocket be set up near by. It is so planned that the men will be in a concealed place while waiting for the raid, but, if the terrain is of such a nature as to make this impossible, then they must trust to luck and the war Gods.

The artillery had been instructed as to the exact location of the post and the time they wished the barrage as well as the length of time it should last. This last is based upon the length of time it is estimated they will be from the moment of starting until they have made their get-away.

The watches of both parties are synchronized and as the moment approaches, the raiders get ready to spring into action at the bursting of the first shell.

They know, of course, that the smoke and noise of the bursting shells will be intense. Shells will be bursting all around the position except at the point where the party is to go in. It is impossible for these men to get away or for reinforcements to come up as so many guns are concentrated on this little spot that not an inch is left untouched.

Anyone, who has been near a large stone quarry when they are putting off a series of blasts, can get some idea of the noise made by several batteries firing at the same target, by imagining something ten times greater than the quarry blasts, can get some idea of the noise made by several batteries firing at the same target, by imagining something ten times greater than the quarry blasts.

The success of the raid depends upon the amount of surprise this terrific bombardment creates. Usually, before the men have time to collect their wits, they are prisoners.

An Unsuccessful Raid.

This particular raid, to which I am referring, worked out as planned up to the point when the barrage started. Immediately, and before the raiding party had time to approach and capture the two men, they began firing their rifles and one bullet striking a bag of hand grenades, which was carried by one of the men, exploded them, killing three instantly. The officer, who was in charge, was wounded by another bullet and soon everything became confusion. The two men on the post continued firing and that was sufficient to deter any attempt at capturing them alive and, in order to get away, they had to be killed, which was quickly done.

The raiding party lost no time in getting back with their dead and wounded. One of the men, who assisted in the killing of the Germans, brought back a helmet and rifle which he proudly exhibited and the following day, as he boastfully told of how he killed their owner.

There are several reasons why this raiding party lost no time getting back to their own lines, perhaps the most important being the following:

Should daylight find them still on No Man's Land, the Germans would easily kill them all. As soon as their barrage stopped, the men in the G.C. proper could rush out to this post and attack them. As soon as the Germans realize that a raid is being made upon them, they get word back to the artillery and immediately they place a barrage in front of the position that entirely encompasses the raiders.

Then, when our barrage dies down, they rush out and make a fight that can have but one result to the raiders, whose retreat has been cut off and who can seek no cover, but must stand without protection and fight the Hun who is in trenches or a well fortified position.

These, I think, are the three paramount reasons why a raiding party must work quickly.

A raid is a matter of surprise entirely and its success or failure depends upon the degree of surprise with which the raided are forced to meet the raiders.

Possibly this raid the first one I ever knew anything about, with its poor ending, together with sight of the victims as they went to the rear on their way to cemetery and hospital, left an impression that had a tendency to cause me to look upon raids as a part of the war game where the raider was taking all the chances.

While I have known of many raids that were successful, I have known of a great many more that were not. My regiment was in the front lines 191 days and, although raided several times, we came back without having a prisoner captured. Perhaps a prisoner is worth several lives. If he isn't, I think most prisoners captured by raids have been dearly bought. The day following the raid, we had three of our men taken to the rear seriously wounded by the explosion of some hand grenades in a dug out. A Frenchman kicked them downstairs as he was coming down, while the men tried to get a little sleep after a hard night on post.

Disposal of Wounded.

During big battles, men sometimes lie wounded on the battle field for days without attention, and a great number of lives were lost that might have been saved had the "First Aid Packet" been applied at the time and thereby stopped the flow of blood or kept out the infection which result in so many deaths from what were, at the time of occurrence, simple wounds.

When holding a sector, things are done differently. The wounded receive immediate attention and many wounds that would result in certain death on the battle field are cured, because of their timely treatment.

In the foremost position, there are what is known as "First Aid Men." These men are members of the regiment, who have received special instructions in giving first aid and who dress the wound as soon as received.

Most casualties are during the night when holding sector, the result of raids or shrapnel wounds caused by artillery, which is also most active at night for reasons previously stated. Wounded men are placed in dugouts, bandaged and made as comfortable as possible to await the coming of day and the trip back to the first aid station, where a doctor makes an examination and, if necessary, redresses the wound.

The name, rank, number, regiment, company, etc.; of the wounded, are taken and entered on records of the station. A cloth tag is wired to each man's coat which also bears the above data and he is then ready for the ambulance that shall take him to the field hospital, which is located as close to the front as is practicable with safety. Here he remains until ready to return to duty with his organization, if not too seriously wounded. Should he be, he is sent to one of the base hospitals, as soon as he is able to stand the trip. A soldier, upon entering a base hospital, is transformed from his original organization and, when well, is transferred to a casual detachment, from which he goes to one of the replacement

companies. These supply men to the units that have to get men to replace those wounded or killed. In this way, the soldier finds himself back at the front ready to start over again. He does not always return to his former regiment which is nearly always his desire.

The reason for this transferring is to keep regiments at fighting strength at all times. A regiment can only have so many members according to regulations and, if three-fourths of them were in the hospital, it would not be in very good shape to go into battle. Regiments are quite frequently reduced to that extent during an engagement and, by transferring, they can get men from Replacement Companies to bring them up to strength and in that way keep their duty strength the same as company strength.

On our fourth day in the trenches, we saw our first dead and wounded and naturally our morale lowered but the following day we were unexpectedly taken out and returned to our rest billets in Maffrecourt.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Next week will tell of our entry into the **"Argonne."**

"My Year in France", May 30, 1919, Vol. 78, No 5, page 6

Transferred to Rest Billets.

Everyone was tired out after the long hike from the front, and when, at last, we reached our rest billets at Maffrecourt and were assigned to them, all hands threw off their equipment, undressed and, in twenty minutes, the entire village was wrapped in slumber.

No one, except those who have been in similar circumstances, can realize how a person enjoys the first night's sleep after coming out of the lines. Up there, one can remove none of the clothing and always has to sleep with one eye open. When any unusual activity is noticed in any of the G. Cs. near by, a "stand to" is ordered and everyone must get up and go to his post. In some sectors, where troops are uneasy, (which is noticed by frequent raids, daring ambush parties, etc.) these "stand to," are ordered every night at midnight, and then all hands remain on their posts until daylight.

There is nothing whatever to worry about the first night when returning from the front. The people, who stay in some of these villages, are in constant fear, and justly so, for airplanes bomb these villages nightly, and occasionally the Germans send over some gas or a few H. Es., but to those who have just come from a place as bad as "Dante's Inferno," at least, it looks and seems like heaven, and they undress and let every nerve and muscle relax and sleep, sleep.

Everyone is allowed to sleep the next day until nature says enough and, when they finally get up, the remainder of the day is devoted to the cleaning of equipment which is usually in pretty bad shape after the tour of duty. All broken, worn-out, or lost equipment is checked and ordered so that everyone will be fully equipped when the organization goes to the front again.

Toward night, an inspection is made by the officers, and woe be unto the man who has not cleaned his equipment. A certain amount of rivalry exists between the men and this keeps everyone within the limits.

Meeting the "Cootie."

We were located about 5 kilometers from a delousing plant, and, the following morning, we started to get rid of our newly found acquaintance, the "cootie". Who has not heard of the cootie? This animal is sometimes called "seam squirrel" by the American troops and, by the French, he is known as "to-to." The only difference between the cootie and an ordinary louse is that one has military training and the other hasn't.

He inhabits any place where soldiers have slept at the front, as well as the clothing of soldiers of every nation. He feeds on the blood of any soldier he can get on and has a wonderful appetite. As soon as troops get in the line, they get lousy and, from that day, they look forward to the time when they will be relieved and given an opportunity to get rid of them. The process is very simple. These delousing plants have ovens where clothing is put, then steam is turned on for thirty minutes, and at the end of this time, no cooties are left alive. While this is being done and the time needed to identify clothing, everyone takes a good shower bath, and, as he marches back to camp, he enjoys himself and hates to think of going back to get them all over again. But he does, and it is only a couple of days after going to the front, that he is just as bad as ever.

Work While "at Rest"

While in the rest billet, the time is utilized for drilling and training the men in finer points of warfare. As time passes, the method of defense against a certain offense that has been successfully used for a long time is of no use, as the enemy schemes a way to overcome said defense. Consequently new methods have to be employed, and it is while in the rest camp that they are taught to the men.

Perhaps the reader pictures a rest camp as a place where soldiers go to have a good time and to have their time occupied largely by eating and sleeping. Far from it. The word "rest," as used here, only applies to the nerves which are constantly on the alert when in line. While they are resting, the other parts of the body are kept busy. Every day, the troops drill and learn more and more about how to kill and how to avoid being killed.

Any activity, either offensive or defensive, that might have occurred while in line will be discussed in detail, all mistakes pointed out, and the correct procedure explained, so that the same one will not occur again.

In this way, the men gather many points, and each time they turn their faces toward the Hun, they are better fighters than before. All new regiments that go into the lines are sent to quiet sectors at first, and there they do little except defensive fighting. But, as they become seasoned, they gradually get on the offensive and soon they patrol, conduct raids and finally go over the top in real battle.

Instructed by Sham Battles.

One night, while we were in rest after our first tour of duty, the order came for everyone to be up for an early breakfast, as we were to have special maneuvers and we were to watch an experienced French regiment go over the top at daybreak in the same formation and under conditions as near like the actual thing as possible.

Accordingly, the following morning at daylight found us out on the drill ground to watch the battle and to do the same thing ourselves, as soon as we saw how it was done. Our battalion was placed on a side hill overlooking the would-be battle field, and, on top of the hill were the officers of the French regiment who were to tell our officers, who were also there, why every act of the maneuvers was made.

Aeroplanes flew overhead and signaled to the soldiers below by means of rockets and received replies by the same means.

These sham battles are very interesting and instructive and the machine gun nests are very easy to capture, being nothing but flags stuck in the ground in concealed places and offering no resistance. They are much different from the ones they represent. Drilling kept up until one night when we were told to prepare for the trenches, as we were to go in the next day. So once more, we packed our equipment and again we turned our faces east. This time, we entered the Argonne forest near the edge at a place called "Bois de Hanzy."

On Duty in the Argonne.

We had spent five days in the trenches and were under the impression that we had learned all there was to know about it, but, as soon as we entered the wooded section, we saw everything was different. In Champagne, the troops were hidden from the enemy by deep trenches, but in the Argonne, the trees formed a natural camouflage, which concealed all signs of life and activity.

In the Champagne, the G.Cs. were deep trenches and, when attacked, one would throw grenades onto the ground above and around the position, for in many cases, the average man would not be able to see the earth from the trench, unless he stood on the firing step. In the forest, one found things about G.C. much different. Instead of the trenches, they had breastworks made of various things, such as ammunition boxes filled with earth and piled one above the other to the required heights. Occasionally, you would find breastworks on the side of the paths which were exposed to the enemy. We relieved a regiment of French infantry at this place, and, by dark, they had all left and gone on their way either to rest or to another part of the front, and we found ourselves feeling very much alone, as it was to be our first night in the trenches without French soldiers, and, if attacked, we wondered if our inexperienced men, would be able to withstand it or if we all would be slaughtered. Daylight finally came, however, and from each G.C. came the message, "Nothing to report."

Daily Reports Made.

Reports are sent in from each combat unit each morning at daylight to Company headquarters. There they are consolidated and sent to the next higher unit. They are consolidated and forwarded in this

manner until they reach General headquarters. There are several methods employed to get these messages to their destination, chief among them being runners, liaison dogs, pigeons, telephone and wireless. These reports cover the activity of the Infantry, Artillery and Aeroplanes of both sides, work accomplished, ammunition expended and losses suffered, and are submitted every twenty- four hours.

Kitchens Cause New Problem.

One thing which caused the officers a great deal of worry in this sector was the problem of the kitchens. They were heavily camouflaged by the trees, but the trees made good fuel, and the closer they stood to the kitchen, the better they suited the "K. P." and he would not stop to think of the great danger he was exposing himself to but cutting them. The result was that avions flying overhead would notice a small clearing in the forest and that clearing would become a target for some of the long range guns as soon as he conveyed the information to the artillery. They became more careful after the Germans succeeded in landing one shell directly in a pot of chow and wounded three cooks. Needless to say, a new rolling kitchen was ordered at once and three more men were promoted to the grade of cook to replace those wounded in action. When the artillery gets ready to fire on one of these positions, an aeroplane circles over and, as each shot is fired, it signals the artillery by means of rockets until they can put them exactly on the spot. In this way, they find the range on various objectives and when the shadows of night camouflage the battery positions, they hammer away until nothing is left.

Getting the Elusive Aeroplane.

The anti-aircraft guns keep the areoplanes from flying at low altitude, but occasionally one gets pretty bold and flies low enough to take a photo which shows soldiers quite distinctly. These anti-aircraft guns are placed in concealed positions in every imaginable place, but especially on the hill tops, and are usually of about three-inch calibre. These guns throw shells which are filled with shrapnel and explode by time fuse. They throw the shells just ahead of the areoplane and can fire in the neighborhood of fifty shots before a plane can get out of range.

I saw thousands of shots fired, but never saw one hit its mark. It is a difficult target and, besides estimating its speed, one has to guess at altitude and gauge the projectile so it will explode at the proper distance. A great number have been brought down by this type of gun, however. They have a tendency to make aeroplanes fly high and thus prevent them from getting too clear a photo. It was not a rare thing up at the front to see a long patch composed of puffs of smoke graduating from the first shot fired, which has been in the air sometime and is very large, to a very small puff from the last shot fired, and just in front of this last puff, if you look closely, you are apt to see a plane travelling "full speed ahead." As it goes, puffs of smoke keep appearing just behind it, denoting that the anti-aircraft is on his trail.

Occasionally a plane gets low enough to be in range of a machine gun. The only chance they have of hitting him is to set it so as to fire in a space through which he will pass. Aiming at the airman would be worse than useless.

First Days in Trenches Lucky.

We were very fortunate while in the Argonne, losing comparatively few men in the three months that we held a sector there, much to the amazement of the French, who could not understand it. On our right, there was a regiment of troops from Morocco, led by French officers. These men may not make ideal soldiers, but they are excellent fighters and absolutely fearless.

On our left, there was a regiment of Alpine chasseurs or "blue devils," as they are called. France looks upon her blue devils with the same respect that Germany does her Prussian Guard, or the United States her marines, and the fact that both of these regiments were being raided frequently, suffering heavy losses, while we between the two went unharmed, was more than the French could see into.

We were in the trenches perhaps three weeks before we had any casualties at all, and then only one man was killed when the Germans fired on a patrol that he unfortunately was a member of.

It was a while in this sector that two of our men defeated and put to flight a German raiding party of twenty-four (according to newspapers) in a hand to hand encounter with bolo knives and hand grenades as the main weapons. This incident proves to what degree of danger men will go when on a raid (previously described) to secure a prisoner.

Colored Troops Excite Hun Curiosity.

No one cares to believe two men can whip such an overwhelming number under circumstances at all normal, and they couldn't.

This is the explanation: We had not been in the trenches long before the Germans knew that a strange organization was opposing them, but they did not know who we were nor from whence we had come. They had seen and learned to fear the black soldier who came from the colonies of Africa and who delighted in cutting off ears, fingers and noses from their prisoners and tying them around their necks. But here was a regiment of black soldiers wearing the United States uniform, English gas mask, French helmet and equipment and who spoke English. There was only one way. That was to get a prisoner and let him solve the mystery. This I think, explains why these men did not kill the two men when they offered resistance, hoping that they might be able to capture them without killing. They were of no use to them dead and, and in trying to capture them, they suffered so heavily, they were forced to withdraw before reinforcements came and killed all of them.

The Monotony of Holding Sector.

We remained in this sector until the last of June, quietly holding sector, and each week it became more and more monotonous. Now and then a raid with its large or small toll of dead, depending upon how unsuccessful it was, it occurred. Occasionally, a man or two would get killed by a shell and a few sent to the hospital with gas, but really nothing happened to break the monotony of trench life. One would become thoroughly disgusted when he sat and thought it over. Sitting and lying around with the enemy within calling distance was enough to discourage anyone. The war could have gone on forever in this way, and the French seemed quite contented. While they got a permission which gave them a week

home every four months, we had to be content with letters which arrived at irregular intervals and sometimes not at all, dated sometimes six weeks prior to date of receipt, during which time the writer could have died of old age or almost anything else.

The latter part of June, it became generally known that the Germans were planning the biggest drive of the war and, about July 1st, we were taken out of the trenches, being relieved by French Troops, and were told that we were going to another part of the front to help hold the Germans back. We all felt that the monotony was broken.

TO BE CONTINUED

Next week will tell the part we played in the Germans' last attempt to reach Paris, and how Marshal Foch outwitted the Hun.

"My Year in France", June 6, 1919, Vol. 78, No 6, page 6

Evacuating Towns in War Zone.

After being relieved by a regiment of French soldiers, we returned to our rest billets at Maffrecourt again.

Here we found that everything indicated that an attack was expected. The few families that had been living here all through the war were at last forced to leave by orders of the French Government, who made all civilians vacate the villages that were in the zone they figured would be heavily shelled by the enemy.

It was a pitiful sight indeed to see these poor people with their horses harnessed to their largest wagon, loading on as much as they could of their earthly possessions. As the wagons would get to the point where they would not hold much more, they would look at first one piece of furniture and then another, undecided which they would take. I remember the old man and his wife, (the last to leave the village), with whom I had become quite well acquainted, whom I watched as they loaded their wagon. They had, upon all previous occasions that I had seen them, seemed to be rather contented with everything as it came, but to me it looked as if the leaving of their home was taking all the joy out of life for them. After they had loaded as much of their furniture and small farming implements as they could, they tied two boxes on the rear of their wagon which contained their winter supply of meat in the form of tame rabbits which a large majority of the people raise over there. After they had given them an abundant supply of grass they got on the wagon and started on their journey, which would end when they came to a place where they could find suitable shelter.

As we watched them going down the road, we wondered if they would ever have the privilege of coming back to their home again, and, as they turned around for a last look at the home they were forced to leave, it filled everyone with a determination to do everything within his power to preserve

those homes, so that some day they could come back and enjoy in their old age, that which they had toiled for in youth.

Preparing for the Drive.

Things were rather quiet for the next few days, as is always the case just before a big drive, when it seems as if both sides are resting and saving ammunition for the big event. During these few days, our sides kept bringing up guns, both big and small. It seemed to us as if all the artillery in the world was being concentrated on this particular sector. We were taken from Maffrecourt to a small village known as Courtemont. Here we found that they were doing the same thing. All night, artillery would pass on the way to the front. These guns were taken into the fields and camouflaged, so that, when daylight came, the German aviator could see nothing.

Each cannon has quite a large force of workers to keep it in operation and, besides the men, there are several horses (at least six) that are used to move it about from place to place and to keep it supplied with ammunition after being placed. These horses are kept in the rear out of danger and each night they bring up ammunition with them and take a load of empty shells back. This is very hazardous work for the drivers, who must make this trip each night, as the Germans shell all the roads at about the time they think these ammunition trains are on them.

Although this extra artillery that was placed to reinforce the regular batteries did no firing, they were getting their loads every night and one can imagine that those which were placed two weeks ahead had an abundant supply.

In addition to the horses, motor trucks were also running all night bringing their loads of death and destruction.

Although we knew that the Germans were concentrating all their best divisions along this sector to make the drive a success, we felt pretty safe after seeing all the artillery that would begin firing on No Man's Land the instant they began stepping over their parapet.

It would be quite a difficult matter for me to picture the way this mass of artillery looked and to describe the feeling of security it gave us men of the infantry who had to go up in front of it and stop those, who lived to pass the heavy barrage, with bullet and bayonet.

These guns were placed according to calibre; in lines parallel to the front, with very little interval between them; beginning with the 75s which were within 3 miles of the front to the mammoth naval guns, mounted on railroad cars, which fired shells weighing 1400 pounds and were several miles back.

Plans Made to Fool the Hun.

From the best information, the intelligence was able to get, the drive was supposed to be launched early in July, but the first ten days passed without any signs of activity, except the usual patrols and raids.

My regiment was billeted perhaps six kilometers from the front and each night, as it began to get dusk, we would sling our equipment and march about three kilometers to positions from which we were to make the supreme sacrifice trying to defeat the Huns. The positions at the front, which were quite a distance from ours, were occupied by French soldiers during the day and until 12:00 o'clock at night. Then they would retire to other positions on a line with us, leaving us as the foremost troops, and the first the enemy would meet when they came over. This plan of defense was worked out by Marshal Foch, because, if the front line positions were held everyone would be killed during the artillery preparation as there were no dug outs at the front, except those on top of the ground, which resembled somewhat the old-fashioned dirt cellar.

When the drive started, the Germans would rush over and by the time the newly established line would be reached the men would be fatigued, consequently, they could not fight so well. Besides, all the artillery preparation would be wasted on positions that were not occupied and from which everything of value had been taken. This was the reason these positions were held until midnight. Perhaps you wonder why they held them at all. It was done so that the enemy would not know of the method by which they were to be defeated. Their patrols would have soon discovered that the front was not occupied and then they would have penetrated our lines until they came to occupied positions. Of course, the Germans would not have been foolish enough to waste hundreds of thousands of dollars in ammunition on empty trenches.

Awaiting the Attack.

As days passed and no attack was made, the French began to wonder what was the matter. About this time, information was collected from prisoners captured at various points to the effect that it would be made on "Bastille Day," which is a holiday occurring on the fourteenth of July. Each night we kept going up to our positions, reaching there between 8:00 and 10:00 p.m. and remaining until daylight, when all danger of attack was over. We would then return to Courtemont and spend the day in sleep. In these positions which we went to each night, there was a large quantity of emergency rations to be used in case we were forced to remain there for several days. Every one carried a canteen of water but the weather was so extremely hot that there would be little left by the time we reached the positions. On the 12th or 13th of July, the Intelligence department gave out the information that the attack would start the morning of the 15th. The artillery preparation, which they said would be very heavy, would start on the evening of the 14th at 11:53 p.m.

The 14th being a holiday, the French Government issued champagne to all her soldiers, and my regiment, being with the French, received it also to the extent of one bottle for every four men. This had a tendency to cheer the boys so that everyone seemed in the best of spirits and, apparently, were eager for the fray in order to know what the fates held in store for them.

The Drive Begins.

That night we started as usual for our positions, but were ordered to move back. We returned to our billets and went to bed to enjoy a good night's rest. At exactly seven minutes of twelve, we were

awakened by what seemed to us an earthquake but, upon getting awake, we found the cause was shells exploding.

In a very short space of time, the orders came for us to get up and fall in with full equipment and proceed to the front as the drive had started.

In a few minutes we were on our way and everyone experienced that strange feeling that comes to everyman before going into battle. We had gone about half the distance when we came to the edge of a large field through which we had to pass. This field was filled with cannon and the Germans were evidently trying to put them out of business before they started over the top. As we came to the edge of the field, we could see the flashes of light as shells bursted here and there. We were marching four abreast and were at once ordered to spread out, as a shell dropping in the midst of a large group would kill many. We began going to the right and left and the cry of "Gas" went out. Everyone immediately put on his gas mask and in the darkness of the night and the dense smoke we became lost and separated. But as all knew the way, everyone reached his destination in a short time except a few who were killed and wounded.

The Company was divided into four parts and stationed separately. As soon as company headquarters were established the company commander began sending out liaisons to see if the various units reached their destinations. It was at this place that I decided I would never become a liaison, unless forced to become one. Their work is unusually easy but when traveling is most dangerous and they travel most of all.

We were forced to send out three before any returned. The shelling was intense, the air was full of smoke and gas, to say nothing of the darkness which made travelling difficult enough.

One of the runners reached the first post of the three he was to visit and fell at the door of the dug-out overcome by gas. He was taken inside and delivered his message before becoming unconscious.

As we sat in the dug-out waiting for the first streak for dawn and the first wave of German infantry, everyone examined rifles and bayonets and filled cartridges belts with ammunition from the supply kept in the dug-out, while the shells were whistling and bursting outside.

The men felt better than the officers, because they did not know certain things which the officers did. The enlisted men knew that we were about three kilometers from the front and were under the impression that there were French regiments in front of us. Believing this, as they did, they felt quite safe, as they knew that the Germans would have difficulty in reaching us in great force. In reality, we were the first line of defense as all the troops in front had withdrawn at midnight. The officers knew that it would be nothing short of a miracle if any of us were left to tell the tale, as troops have lots of spirit at the first part of an attack, being usually half crazed by drink and they come forward with such momentum that they go through several lines of resistance before they are stopped. To be taken prisoner was not thought of in Marshal Foch's plans, and we expected to fight until killed.

We had just one chance. Along with other information gathered by the intelligence department, was that of the miles of front along which the Germans expected to drive. We were told that they figured the infantry would come no further than about two kilometers on our left. This was not to be depended upon, however, and, although we knew that the artillery would extend a considerable distance beyond this to protect their flank, we thought that the bombardment would be lighter than at the point of attack. This bombardment was not at all light and we felt that there was little hope in this respect. At last, it began to get a little light and we listened to hear the machine guns and rifles which would indicate that they were coming. It kept getting lighter and lighter and yet no Germans appeared.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Next week will tell what I saw and describe some of the things that took place in the liveliest sector I was ever in.

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Safety at Daybreak.

The boys began stepping outdoors to look around, not venturing far from the door as shells were still falling all about. German Aeroplanes came over in large numbers to see the result of their bombardment and to note our activity.

We knew then, that we would see no infantry, as it was daylight, and the machine gun and rifle firing which we could hear on our left told us plainer than words that they had come over at that point and that, as we stood and listened, men were giving their lives to make the world safe for democracy. I shall never forget the sounds of those guns that morning, as I stood and tried to picture in my mind the terrible scenes which were so close to me.

The Tragedy and Humor of War.

About 6:00, the bombardment began to slacken a little and a runner came from a section of our company which was stationed on our left to report that they were alright and that the runner who had been gassed during the night was being brought in. He was on stretchers and in bad shape, foaming at the mouth, eyes closed and breathing like one who had just finished a marathon. We also had at our post a man who had been slightly gassed and wounded with shrapnel in the leg. It was decided to get them to a little village about a quarter of a mile away from there was a doctor. Four men carried the stretchers and another fellow put the wounded man on his back and, at about the same time they started, the artillery began to increase again. They had gone about one-quarter of the distance when shells began falling a short distance in front of them so fast that they did not advance. They would start to the right and a shell would land in front. Then they would turn to the left, only to be forced to turn again by another one. Everyone was in the dug-out except Captain Fish (now Major) and myself who were watching their progress. We were up near the top of the hill and could tell about where the shells were going to land by the sound of their whistling. Finally one came along which was very low. The

stretcher bearers evidently thought it was coming near them for they stopped. A burst of smoke enveloped them and, when it blew away, all that could be seen was a mangled mass of what had but a moment before been men. A few minutes later, one moved and finally got up and hobbled back to us. He was wounded in many places but none of them were serious.

There was nothing for him to tell. The shell, he said, struck about three feet in front of them and, when he came to, the other four were dead.

All this time, the man who had been carrying the gassed and wounded fellow had been zigzagging back and forth trying to get forward when suddenly a shell burst about sixty feet from him. The fellow, who was on his back and who had not been able to walk at all, got off his back and the last I saw of him, he was leading the first aid man in one of the fastest foot races I ever saw.

We remained in this place until afternoon when orders came for us to go back to Courtemont. We got there and were ordered to go to a place called Hous. Arriving there, everyone threw himself down and slept. We were about five kilometers behind the lines and to the left of Courtemont. Directly in front of us was the place where we had heard the machine gun and rifle fire in the morning when the attack started. About 11:00, we were awakened and ordered to fall in with full equipment. We were going forward and to the place I had tried to picture in my mind earlier in the day. Little did I think, then, that I was going to see it so soon.

March to the Front.

I shall never forget the march to the front that night. We had been under the most trying nerve strain for the last twenty-four hours, being under the shell fire almost constantly. To march up to the front that night on a road that was being kept hot by shrapnel from the enemy was not a pleasant thing to think of, much less to do, and I feel sure I speak for everyone when I say we were not at all anxious to do it but orders have been obeyed and under darkness of night we went forward. A real sportsman enjoys entering into a game when he can match his wits against that of the adversary, but travelling on a road swept by shells of guns miles away offer little chance for brain work. There is no chance to fight back. All one can do is proceed and if anyone gets wounded or killed, let the Medical Department care for him.

The three battalions of my regiment had been placed, during the drive, one behind the other, in what are known as first line, support line and reserve line and as we had been on first line for several days it was our turn to go in as reserve.

To equalize the strain on all, these units keep rotating, being in each position ten days. It was now our turn to go in reserve, which we did and we were behind the other two battalions of the regiment. After marching about to or two and one-half hours were halted along the road and it seemed hours before the Frenchmen, who were in the dugouts near by, vacated them, so we could get in.

In reality it was only a few minutes but shells were bursting in the air above and shrapnel was falling all about. Occasionally one would "clink" as it struck a steel helmet and bounced off.

The men were exhausted and were satisfied to lie anywhere under cover. I well remember the dug-out I was in, was made of elephant iron, as it called, and was about twenty-five feet long. The men were so packed that no one could say that some one was not lying on some part of him. My legs furnished head rest for two fellows but no one protested and soon everyone was asleep. A large number of dug-outs are made of this iron, as it is easy to construct a fairly safe shelter in a short time. It is made of heavy corrugated iron and bent so as to form a half circle about twelve feet in diameter. These are bolted together and then covered with earth.

The kitchen crew brought food to us in the morning but everyone preferred sleeping to eating and so the food was left untouched.

In the afternoon another supply of food came up from the kitchen and as everyone had awakened it was eagerly devoured. Soon after eating, preparations were made for moving as our battalion was to go into reserve position of the regiment.

The kitchens were located about three-fourths of a mile to the rear and as the officers did not know whether there were suitable places for kitchens where they were going it was decided to leave details to locate kitchens, get food and then find the battalion.

As the battalion moved forward that night I was told to remain behind and was given twelve men with orders to find the kitchen and bring food to them on the morrow, providing I could find them.

Bringing Up Food.

The next morning we went to the kitchen and getting several cans of coffee and a good supply of bread we started to find the battalion. The men of my detail were all new men, who had recently come to us as replacements, and were under the fire for the first time. It matters little how brave a man may be, until he has become accustomed to having shells burst about him, he is apt to do considerable dodging until he gets used to it. I shall never forget my first trip with food. When a shell would whistle, no matter how far away it might be they would drop their burdens and throw themselves in the gutter. It would take quite a lot of talking to get them out again and when they would get out they would fairly fly until another shell would cause them to take cover. We carried food in this way for several days until the kitchens were moved forward. The battalion was located in and near a small town called Mineacourt, which was sheltered from shell fire, somewhat, by hills. We would carry the food to this village and under a shed which afforded shelter from shrapnel we would distribute the food. This shed was also used as a morgue and each morning we would get there with breakfast as they were bringing in the dead or shortly after. The first ten days after we arrived in this sector there was not a single morning that the morgue had less than five dead in it and one morning sixteen. These bodies would be buried the following night, consequently new faces kept it from getting tiresome, as we used to examine these dead Germans (sometimes Frenchmen or men of our own regiment) very carefully to see if they had anything of interest to us on them and to see where they had been hit. The second or third day we began to get some news from the first line and support positions from the boys who came back for supplies. When the drive had started the enemy had come over and finding our artillery too heavy, had been forced to halt after coming two or three kilometers. They found plenty of good dug-outs that had

been abandoned by the French and they took possession of them. These dug-outs that had been mined and several hours after the drive started and at a time when the French knew they would be well occupied they were exploded and the artillery was trained on them when our men went into these positions, they found dug-outs and trenches filled with dead soldiers, who had been caught in Marshal Foch's trap. As is the case immediately after all attacks there is plenty of activity. Raids and counter-attacks are nightly occurrences and our men found this to be equally true with this one. The enemy had gained lots of valuable information during the few hours they had been in possession of our lines and snipers had found out the various portions of our trenches that were exposed. As a result we lost several men in certain sections of trenches as they were passing from one point to another. German aeroplanes would fly close to the earth over our trenches, defying the machine guns, and would pour their deadly volley into our men at the rate of 500 shots per minute. In this way we lost some men.

Many German Souvenirs.

Any of the boys we chanced to see would have plenty of German souvenirs, which they had taken from the dead up where they were, where, they said, the Germans were heaped in some of the dug-outs and in others had been buried alive. I had some rather exciting times with my food detail as they would become frightened and spill whatever they might be carrying and on several occasions the men at the front had to be content with half rations. I remember one place along our route in a swamp there was a shell hole filled with water and around the hole laid the rifles, helmets and equipment of three French soldiers. It was not necessary for anyone to tell us what had happened there and it mattered not whether there was any shelling going on or not when the men of my detail passed this spot they always quickened their step as if they were afraid this might become the scene of a second tragedy. At the end of ten days we went into support and ten days later into the first line, which, though not as lively as it had been, was still lively enough. Every night or two the Germans would come over and try to take a "G.C." with all its occupants. Our kitchen was located a little over a half mile from us which we reached by winding trench about eight feet deep.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Just how severe the modern battle is will be told next week.

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Relieving the Units.

As the roads were shelled so heavy at night that the supply trains did not always get through one of my jobs was to go to the kitchen each night and find out if they came O.K. It was while I was on one of these trips that the boldest raid I ever heard of was attempted by the Germans and defeated by the courageous fighting of one man. We have been in this sector for several weeks when the orders came to Regimental Headquarters, one day, that we would be relieved by French troops that night. As the enemy had been getting information about reliefs in some mysterious way every time they were made,

the greatest secrecy was maintained in regards to this one as the Germans would shell the communicating trenches so that losses would be suffered by relieving party going out. None of the enlisted personnel knew of this except the very few "all wise," ones who were connected with the various units' headquarters. The lieutenants and sergeants in charge of combat groups were notified as to the approximate time at which they might expect to be relieved.

Later in the evening and not long before the time planned word came that the relief would not take place. This word was not conveyed to all the small units in the foremost positions as no one could leave until they were relieved.

I had gone to the kitchen after finding that we were to remain, to see if supplies came alright. I stayed there until about 1:00 a.m. and as that was long past the time for them to come I decided I would not wait for them and so started back to PC. I had gotten about two-thirds of the way back when I heard a noise, which, upon listening, proved to be someone approaching at top speed. Before I had time to decide what to do he came around the corner and I saw that he wore an American helmet. Perhaps by this time he was the more scared of the two and as he slowed up I asked him where he was going. He didn't tell me but said that I had better not go up there as the Germans had come over and wiped out one company. After giving me this advice and information he rushed on leaving me as much in the dark as if he had said nothing. I had heard no artillery and only a few machine gun reports and could not believe that there was much fighting without some noise so I went on. When I got to our P.C., I found everyone up and ready for action. This surprised me still more and upon inquiry I found that the Germans had raided a G.C. and that part of my company had gone to reinforce them. It seemed that the Germans had found out, in some way, which will always remain a mystery, that we were to be relieved. They had come over and got behind a G.C. and into the trench leading up to it, and deliberately walked in saying that they were French soldiers to relieve. Another party in the meantime had captured the lieutenant and five men. The sergeant to whom the German lieutenant spoke, did not, for an instant, recognize the difference in uniform. As soon as he did however, he succeeded in reaching an automatic rifle and killed the Lieutenant and four men. Then he assisted in recapturing the men who the Germans were starting back with. The following night we were relieved and from the terrible amount of shelling along the roads and trenches it was evident that the enemy knew it. I was left to look after the kitchen and supplies and when we finally got loaded we found that a good sized van would have had no spare room. As it was we had everything piled in and on the rolling kitchen. The next thing was to get someone to ride on the kitchen to see that the things did not fall off. No one cared to do this as it made so much noise (being all metal) rolling over the macadam road, that it would be impossible to hear a shell. I took my place on the little step on the rear which is provided for that purpose and we were off. The driver was a little anxious to get out of the danger and he soon had the horses running. We lost five cases of bacon but he would not stop to pick it up and I, being anxious to get out also, did not urge him. Under ordinary circumstances each company has a supply wagon on which to carry these things but we could not use ours as we were short of horses, having had a shell fall in our stables which was five miles behind the lines and kill three men, thirty-six horses, wound six so badly that they had to be shot and slightly wounded several others. We kept moving until daylight when we came to a village and billeted. We remained for a couple of days and then started to a camp at St. Ouen, which is near Vitry-la-

Francois. We were about a week making the trip. The weather was very warm and with our equipment which was quite heavy from twelve to fifteen miles a day was enough for all.

This was about the first of September and was the first time we had been out of hearing of the guns along the front since February.

To Join French Army.

We had been in this camp but a day or two, when it was rumored that we were to become a part of the French army. We had up until this time only been attached to it but while we were in this camp we were permanently assigned to the 161st Division of the Fourth French Army.

All visions of American equipment, food etc. vanished with this news. On our way from the front we had been told that we would probably go back into the American army and everyone was delighted with the thoughts of once more getting real fighting equipment and food that tastes natural.

The French army rations are substantial but very, very plain and not to be compared with that of Uncle Sam's.

As soon as we had been assigned to this Division we were ordered to move and we at once left and started back for the front after having spent ten days in the quietest place we had been for months.

Troops are always carried up toward the front and after one day's march we were carried to within a few miles of the place we had left but a few days before.

The reason troops are carried up is so that they will not become discouraged by long tiring hikes and have no spirit when they go into battle and we knew that we were soon to go into battle as we had been told that our division was waiting for us to join them for that purpose. I shall never forget that all-night ride. There were perhaps one hundred and twenty five trucks and their noise, together with that of the pouring rain, drowned any other noise. We reached our destination about 2:30 a.m. and unloaded just outside a little village. No one knew in the darkness where we were but everyone was feeling fine after such a beautiful ride. As trucks drove on and the noise of their motors died away we could hear the rumbling of the cannon at the front and we realized that once more we were back. It all seemed like a dream from which we wished we had not been awakened.

The following day we marched up to Camp les Maigeux, where we had been so many times before and at once began for open warfare, for we were to go into real battle, worse, perhaps, than that of any previous war.

Training for an Attack.

While we were training in Camp les Maigneux for the attack, we were treated much the same as all shock troops are prior to entering battle.

We were given new clothing throughout and nearly everyone was given a pass to one of the cities or large towns nearest the front. The training was not hard nor were the hours long. Sometimes we would

start out in the morning and go cross country four or five miles in exactly the same formation as we would in actual battle with aeroplanes flying overhead signalling to us so that we would become familiar with them. We would signal in return and as we were not at it long enough for the novelty to wear off no one ever became tired of it. The food was unusually good and plentiful and with all this unusually good treatment everyone was in the best of spirits.

This was the way they wanted us to be and is the condition they strive to put all troops in just before going over the top as disheartened men are half beaten before they start.

Everything possible was done to make the men feel confident of the success of the attack.

Daily bulletins were sent to all organizations at or near the front, telling of all important operations. These rarely ever reach a bulletin board, but while we were at Camp les Maigneux all encouraging bits of information were read to the men daily and I feel certain that every enlisted man in camp felt sure that we would be successful. In fact we were led to believe that this would be the last big drive of the war and we all had visions of being home for Christmas. While it came very near being true in our case it was not because we had been told so or because we believed it as every regiment that has ever gone in battle has been led to believe as we did.

Americans Have Success.

The Americans had just been very successful in gaining a lot of ground near Metz and a man from each company of our regiment was taken there and shown the well fortified positions and that the Huns had been driven from and to hear about how it was done, by the boys who had helped to do it.

This particular drive had been very successful and although the Germans lost many in killed, wounded and captured, the Americans lost less than a hundred killed. The men who went from our regiment were picked privates, so chosen because it would be easier for the men to believe them than officers or N.C.Os.

The fellow who went from my company had many tales to tell when he came back; how the Germans were discouraged and ready to surrender at the first opportunity. He had some of their rations that had been left behind when they retreated and everything he said had a tendency to make our men more anxious to get at them and finish the job.

Marching to the Front.

Sunday night, Sept. 22, 1918, at ten o'clock, with a large per cent of the regiment comfortably sleeping, while the rain was pouring down outside, we received orders to pack and prepare to move out at once, and at 10:45 we were going toward the front under heavy marching orders. I have seen a great deal of rain in France; spent seven weeks in Brest and it rained some almost every day. Army statistics claim that out of 365 days of 1918 it rained 342 in Brest, but I feel safe to say that it rained harder this night than I had ever seen before or since.

We marched about 6 kilometers and bivouaced in a field just outside of Somme Bionne, a small hamlet where our Divisional Field Hospital (French) was located, and about four hours march from the front lines. It was not a pleasant prospect that confronted us as we marched into the field and, being halted, were told to make ourselves comfortable for the night. Under ordinary circumstances, every man would have had a half shelter tent which, when joined to another half, made a fairly good shelter for two men; but we had received no ordnance property for seven months from the U.S. Government, being equipped with French equipment, and many of these shelter tents had been lost, or destroyed during several months' active service at the front, so now we found ourselves forced to spend a night out in the open with no means of protection except the wet earth and our equally wet blankets.

There was nothing to do but make ourselves as comfortable as we could. This we did, some lying down and others walking about until morning. Everything was so wet that it was ten o'clock before the cooks were able to give us some luke warm water which bore the name of coffee.

There being no definite information as to when we would leave, we began making preparations for the night and, with the help of the sun, which came out about three o'clock, we dried out some and erected various kinds of shelter, and spent Monday night a little better, though not pleasantly by any means. We received orders on Tuesday morning to heap our packs up in the field with our names written plainly on them, together with the various things that we did not want to take into battle. They assured us that they would be returned to us afterwards. Many of the men put their watches, etc., into them, rather than take them and risk losing them. No one ever received his pack again and almost everyone left his toilet articles, as no one expected to be able to have time to use them. When the battle was over, the men were marched by a heap (all that was left) of the packs, about 100 kilometers from where we had left them, and after we had received several hundred replacements, and each man was ordered to take a pack. When my company arrived, all the packs were gone.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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Preparations for Launching Drive.

We received that afternoon such as we had not received before, while in France. As we were lounging around, a Ford car drove in the field and two ladies got out and, opening the back of the car, began serving cocoa and cigarettes to the crowd that had already assembled. Soon everyone was in line and the two girls had no difficulty in getting rid of their stock.

Wednesday, we were issued our iron (emergency) rations and everything that we lacked in the way of firearms, ammunition, signals, etc. There seemed to be an abundant supply of everything and everyone had five gas masks. It was evident that the drive was not far off, as all caution had been thrown aside and artillery, ammunition, field hospitals, etc., were not only being moved up all night long, but all day as well, although enemy planes were constantly flying overhead, finding out all they could.

That night we moved up toward the front and entered tunnels that ran between the first and second lines, and we were not permitted to step out in the open the following day at all. We had left our kitchens behind and were now dependent upon our iron rations, which we ate that day. These rations consisted of fourteen hard tack, one cube compressed coffee, two cans corned beef, one cake chocolate, one cup sugar and one can solidified alcohol for making coffee.

As it began to get dark Wednesday evening, we began making preparations for moving up to the front line and then we knew that the attack would start the next morning. We had already experienced considerable suffering since leaving Camp Les Maigneux, Sunday night and were much lower in spirit than when we had left there. Realizing, however, that we would not get any rest until the battle was over, the orders to go forward were gladly received by all, and, as we went forward, not a single sound was made, as we did not want the enemy to know that there was any circulation of troops in our lines. They knew, of course, that we were going to make a drive. Neither side made a drive during the war that the other didn't know about, but they did not know exactly when we were going to make it, and, even though it could not be a complete surprise, the greater the degree the greater the success.

The Drive Begins.

We had just reached our position, where we were to wait until the zero hour, which was but a few rods behind the foremost positions and were at the time held by a battalion of French troops of our division, when our artillery preparation, which was said to be the heaviest that had ever been given any troops, started. These shells were falling just in front of the first line and not many rods from where we were, and the bombardment began just as we had halted. It seemed as if every gun along the front fired with the first one and the men, not knowing it was our own artillery, rushed into the dug-outs

pell-mell. Even down in the earth twenty-five feet, this terrible noise penetrated until one had to shout to make himself heard. All night long this steady fire was maintained along a front of ninety kilometers, and, as we sat waiting for morning, we felt that there would be little for us to do as it did not seem possible that life could exist under such fire.

I will not attempt to describe the feelings and thoughts a soldier has, as he sits waiting for the fray, except to say that sinner and Christian alike believe that their fate rests with the Almighty One and that no man goes over the top without having offered up some kind of a prayer. It was quite noticeable, while we were waiting in the dug-outs for moving, that there was no swearing or gambling going on, as there usually is when a bunch of soldiers get together in a dug-out with nothing to do.

About 2:30, the boys made a little coffee and ate some hard tack and began to get ready, as no one knew the zero hour. This is kept secret as long as possible, so that the enemy cannot find out. If they should, they would, at the time, place a barrage on No Man's Land so heavy we could not get through. This is one reason why the first waves of an attack are best, as there is little artillery to bother them.

As it began to get daylight, we began arranging the men in the proper points so as to be ready. We (my battalion) were the second wave, following at 800 meters the French battalion that had been holding

the position, and we were followed at the same distance by the other two battalions of my regiment, while, behind them, came other battalions (French) of the division.

The formation employed for attacks in the latter part of this war was much different than that used fifty years ago. The deadly machine gun had made it impossible to advance in mass formation or even in the extended order as taught by our government in 1917.

Companies are divided in two parts, one forward and other following at a distance of several meters. Each part contains eight squads of eight men each. (This is in accordance with French tables or organization, which we were under. American companies are larger and consequently have a larger number of squads). These squads are placed one man behind the other and one hundred feet between squads. To the enemy it appears as if there is one man by being so placed, and these men are taught to always keep behind the leader. Should he turn to right or left, they do likewise at the same time, and thus afford a very small target at all times.

The Zero Hour.

As we were arranging the men, stretcher bearers began coming back with wounded Frenchmen and we knew that the drive had started.

At about the same time, a liaison came up from Regimental Headquarters to give us the zero hour. The note said that we should start at 5:25. The captain looked at his watch and saw that it was just 5:25. The noise was so terrific that the human voice was of no use, so, making the sign "forward," we were off.

Formation of the Battling Troops.

As we started forward that morning, my company consisted of five officers and one hundred and ninety-six men. This is much less than an American company, which has six officers and two hundred and fifty-four men, but, as we were in the French army, we had to conform to their tables of organization.

We were deployed (extended, spread out) according to the French system, which, after trying many ways, they found to be the one in which troops could advance with least losses. The companies were divided into two lines, one three hundred meters in advance of the other, and each squad (eight or nine men) marched in signal file lead by the corporal, with an interval of one hundred feet between squads.

The officer, who commands the company, marches in the center of this formation and has what is known as "company headquarters group," which consists of runners, signallers, stretcher bearers, etc., with him. These runners keep going from one section (platoon) to another, carrying messages.

The other two battalions were behind us eight hundred meters apart, and behind them came the Engineers and Pioneers to reconstruct roads, bury dead, salvage clothing and equipment, etc.

First Advance Made Safely.

We knew that after we had gone a few hundred meters we were to halt one hour and forty minutes and everyone felt that he could make the distance to the first halt. Our barrage had lifted and everything was quiet, except for an occasional shell from the enemy, but we could hear the rapid and steady fire of machine guns some distance in front of us where the first wave was meeting feeble resistance. The atmosphere was nothing but smoke and gas and one could not see more than a quarter of a mile away. In the low spots, this was so bad that we had to don our masks before entering them, and this made it very much harder for us to advance.

We traveled at a very slow walk, and we had gone but a few yards when a shell landed near a squad, wounding three men, and this lowered the morale of all. We reached the "dead space" where we were to halt and, being out of the gas, everyone took off his mask and breathed a sigh of relief and a prayer of thanks for having finished the first lap of our trip safely.

By "dead space" is meant that part of the terrain that is safely sheltered from enemy fire by reason of hills, etc., and it is always selected for stopping places, when possible, as troops are safe when in them.

As we sat there, waiting for the time to start again, we saw strings of German prisoners marching to the rear. In one of these groups there were about 225, who were guarded by two Frenchmen, one in front and one in the rear. Often times, they were sent back without any guards at all, as they abandoned all arms at the time of surrendering and were too glad to be out of the fight to make any trouble.

Watching these men go by brought back all spirit that may have left us when the three boys were wounded, and everyone became uneasy to be up and after them.

We advanced a distance of about five kilometers without mishaps and had begun to think that we would never catch up to the Germans in order to fight when, as we reached the top of a hill, we saw shells falling everywhere in the valley below and could hear the machine guns of the Germans on the hill across the valley, which was less than a mile away.

Death Encountered in the Valley.

In the center of this valley there was a small stream which was known as Ripont River and along its bank grew shrubbery to a height of about eight feet. Aside from this shrubbery, there was no cover between the two hills, and to advance in the face of shot and shells under such exposed conditions at 10:00 a.m. with a hot sun to help fatigue one, was no pleasant prospect. However, we went on and got to the edge of the river when the terrific fire caused us to halt. We had no sooner reached this point than Major Spencer was grievously wounded by bullets, and simultaneously the firing increased, forcing everybody to lay low. It soon became evident to us, that the Germans, who were up on the hill, had seen us as we advanced and had let us get to the river where they knew we had to cross by one of two bridges, both of which were kept under the most incessant fire.

As we lay hidden behind the brush, the bullets kept getting closer and closer and now and then some one would cry out that he had been hit and, with the shells that were bursting all around, it was plain to

all that, unless we got out of there and up against the steep bank of the hill in front of us, we would all be killed. Going back was out of the question. It was either cross one of the two bridges and dash across a very bad swamp about three hundred yards wide, or lie where we were and be killed.

The Dash for Life.

The men began going forward by ones and twos, rushing across the bridge and throwing themselves in shell holes and the tall grass of the swamp as they began to draw fire by their activity. After lying a few minutes the firing would ease up and they would make another short dash. As we lay in the field we could see the French battalion, who were ahead, resting on the side of the hill smoking and talking. They had very few casualties in crossing this place, which, at that time, seemed impossible for us to do; because they were closely following the creeping barrage which kept the Germans under cover and reached the dead space before they could get out to use their deadly weapons.

I had been lying near battalion headquarters group, but after the Major, Adjutant and a runner had been wounded and another runner killed, all within twenty feet of me, I decided that I had better locate in a safer place. I was quite heavily weighed down and made up my mind that I would dispose of some of it, as I had seen several fall trying to get forward, because of the weight prevented them from running fast.

I had been taught the value of everything that a soldier carries and was at a loss to know which I could best part with, but finally decided on to leave three of my five gas masks, which I did, after selecting the two best ones; and my blankets, which were really the greatest burden. These blankets, I reasoned with myself, I would not need if killed and, if I kept them, they would be the cause of my death anyway. I was quite willing to sleep a few nights without covering if, by so doing, I could prolong my life.

After abandoning this equipment, I crawled near the bridge and remained quiet. I could hear the bullets as they whistled by and I noticed that at times there would be intervals of a few seconds during which no bullets would come near the bridge. I got this exactly timed and during one of these periods I made a rush. I had no sooner hit the bridge than the bullets followed suit and, as there was nothing for me to do but keep going, I did so, throwing myself in a shell hole as soon as I got across. I kept advancing by short rushes when it was quietest until I reached a place of safety.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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Casualties Many on First Day.

This swamp was strewn with dead and wounded men of my battalion and of the French battalion that had preceded us. When I finally reached the dead space that evening, it was eight o'clock.

I shall never forget a lieutenant who had been wounded by a machine gun bullet that morning and who had been carried to a place of safety where the wound was dressed and he was made comfortable.

During the aerial activity in the afternoon, a German plane swooped down and began firing at us. Although there were perhaps fifty of us, only one bullet found a mark and that instantly killed the lieutenant, who was bearing up so bravely.

After it got dark, all who had not done so came forward to the dead space, and, when they had all reached there, I got the remainder of the company together and took the name of every man. When I finished, I found that I had 76 names, just 120 less than that morning at 5:45 o'clock.

The one hundred and twenty lay in the valley below, either dead or wounded, and those who were left worked untiringly until the last wounded man was carried out. It would be pretty hard to describe the feelings of these men as they went back and forth carrying them out, and, in the darkness, would occasionally step upon the dead body of someone hidden by the darkness and tall grass, or, upon going to a spot where they had left a wounded friend, would find that he had later died.

The Germans and Frenchmen kept putting up illuminating rockets all night to guard against counter-attacks and surprises. When one of these would go up, making the swamp and river as light as day, all working parties would throw themselves flat on the ground and remain there until it went out.

Although I do not know the exact casualties of the other companies of the battalion for that day, I do know that they were little better off, and that not less than four hundred men fell that day.

Solemnity of Facing Eternity.

It was easy to see that, if this continued, we would all be wiped out in a few days and that night, as we lay down under the hill thinking of our dead comrades lying close by, we were changed men; far different from what we were that morning as we started over the top. Days like this add years to one's age and cause one to look upon life in a more serious light. Men, who had never thought of praying before, prayed that night, and why shouldn't they?

We all knew that, with the first gray streak of dawn in the morning, would come that command, "Forward" again, and who knew but that was the last night they would ever spend on earth.

Methods of Locating Troops.

The next morning we were held up quite late as we had advanced ahead of the outfits on our right and left and had to wait until they caught up with us. These orders came from divisional headquarters, where the location of each unit is known at all times, except in very rare cases like the "Lost Battalion." There are several ways of getting information as to the location of the troops, even in the thickest fighting. As troops advance, telephones are kept right up on the firing line and operators take all sorts of risks to maintain connections. Homing pigeons are carried and released with messages in a small tin can strapped on the leg. Dogs are also used for this purpose, but, when all these fail, they still have the aero plane which flies over and signals by means of rockets for troops to give their location.

About fifty per cent of the men carry pawels of jalon, which is a piece of white oil cloth about ten inches by twenty inches fastened on two sticks, rolled up and carried in a little case when not in use. At the

signal from the aeroplane, these are exposed and present a white line along the ground when seen from the aeroplane, from which it is photographed.

This is done each night, after the advancing for the day is over and during the night, these negatives are developed and printed and then the orders are issued for the various parts of the line to wait until other parts of it have advanced on a line with them, so that all may go forward together, evenly.

Beginning the Second Day.

As we lined up to go over the top the second morning, the battalion looked very small, with less than forty per cent of our original number, and everyone looked worn out after the nerve racking scenes and experiences of the past twenty-four hours. The men did not possess the spirit they had the previous morning, but their faces showed determination and everyone was ready long before the order. The sanitary men were using German prisoners to carry back our wounded, who had been dressed at a first aid station established during the night. As we saw those poor fellows being carried back on stretchers, all wrapped up in bandages and with arms and legs missing, we could hardly wait for revenge.

It was on top of the hill of which we were at the foot, that the machine guns were located which had been used so effectively against us the day before. They had been silent since the early part of the night and we were wondering if they were saving their ammunition to use as we started up after them that morning.

We had some difficulty in arranging squads, as so many specialists had been either killed or wounded. Every soldier cannot operate a machine gun or automatic rifle and, as these various kinds of groups must be placed so that any needed weapon will be available for use against any obstacle, only men who understand them can be used. However, after arranging them as nearly right as possible, we were off.

As we started, our barrage preceded us and as we neared the top of the hill, we could hear the machine guns popping away but they were on another hill across a valley much like the one we had crossed the day before with the exception of the river. There was no firing from the machine guns on the first hill, and as we advanced, we found out why. They had all been killed by our artillery, which had kept up a steady fire all night, mowing everything out of our path to make the advance easier.

Hindered by Barbed Wire.

As we reached the crest of the hill and became visible, the machine guns began in earnest from the hill across the valley and our progress was again checked. Up until this time, we had no barb wire to contend with, so thoroughly had every inch of ground been swept by our shell fire, but here, just over the top of this hill, was an entanglement about 20 feet wide which had only been partially destroyed. The bullets were whistling rather closely and quite often finding their mark. Everyone was lying in shell holes here and there and the experience of the previous day had taught all to be cautious, but we knew we could not stay there, so one by one we began going forward, running and jumping through the entanglement and down to the valley where it was safe. After we got in the valley, we were out of range and slowly, worked our way to the side of the other hill where dead space made it safe. After

reaching there, we halted and remaining until next day, as it was next to impossible to take the large number of machine guns with our greatly reduced force.

Looking back on the hill we had left, we could see the unfortunate ones hanging on the wires where they had been caught when trying to make their dash to safety.

Advancing Under Difficulties.

It is pretty hard to die on the point of a bayonet, but one at least has the satisfaction of fighting back. Here, we could do absolutely nothing but advance until we fell. The distance between hills was such that we could not locate the Germans who were heavily camouflaged, and all we could do was to advance to the foot and, when our planes came over in the afternoon, give them our location with the panels of jalon and let the artillery shell them all night.

They had no dug-outs to go in and were at our mercy when the big shells fell. Occasionally there would be a concrete pill box, but these were either destroyed or captured after all the others were silenced. We kept going in this manner for five days, each one seeming like years, until on the sixth morning we lay behind a hill, on the opposite side of which lay a village. As we went forward and reached the top of the hill, a beautiful plain stretched out before us. Shells were falling all around and the smoke made it difficult to see a great distance, but as far as we could see was level and we were able to distinguish three villages. One was perhaps four miles away and looked to be quite large, (perhaps 3,000 population during peace time). Occasionally a burst of smoke would float up showing that our artillery had the range and were trying to drive the soldiers out of it. Another one was about three-fourths of a mile from us, to the right, and forward and into this village, the French troops on our right were already entering. It was evident that there were no Germans in it as they were proceeding without any trouble. The third lay directly in front of us and about one-half mile from the foot of the hill.

Our barrage was falling between us and the village and everything looked quiet down there. The buildings were in fairly good shape compared with many towns in the war zone. They were, as a matter of fact, about twelve kilometers from the front lines, although we did not realize it at the time. The sense of reckoning time and distance is lost by men in battle.

Hampered by Own Barrage.

The order to go forward was given and, as we went forward, it was noticed that this barrage did not move. There was a series of trenches at the foot of the hill, and, as the shelling was so heavy, we took shelter in them, not knowing what was wrong but beginning to think that it was a German barrage, laid down to prevent us from entering the village. The shells were throwing dirt on us as we crouched in the shallow trenches, and, just as it began to look pretty bad for us it was discovered that it was our own barrage and immediately we began sending up red rockets which, at that time (the code changes often), meant, "Your light artillery is falling short." At about this time, machine guns began firing at us from hidden places in the village less than a half mile away. The barrage still fell short and it began to look as if we would soon be released from the duty in the trenches. More red rockets were sent up and green ones meaning, "Your heavy artillery is falling short," although there was no heavy artillery doing so. We

kept sending up rockets and waiting for results, while machine gun bullets and flying schrapnel carried on.

At last the supply of rockets were gone and then we used three stars which meant, "Lift the barrage, we are going forward." After we had used the last one, we were no better off than before we started. It was then that men saw the advantage of holding on to the rockets, which are usually the first thing thrown away when the load becomes heavy after a long march.

It was possible, being behind the hill, that they did not go high enough to be seen by artillery observers. Sometimes though, when they are seen, they are not heeded as there are several guns covering the same objective and, when an order of that kind was given, each gun crew thinks that they are firing alright and that it must be one of the others. Consequently no one makes any changes.

TO BE CONTINUED

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More Losses Before Victory.

As we could not go forward and bullets were flying too close to stay where we were, it was decided to go back on top of the hill and wait. We were able to follow the trenches and thus we got out without any losses. On the top of this hill, there was a sort of basin about eighty feet across at the top and fifteen or twenty feet deep. The hill gradually sloped from this on three sides and opening on one side made it easy to get in. What was left of the battalion huddled in this, not knowing what to do.

By dividing the officers up, there was one to each company but, with the exception of one, they were all juniors who had taken the place of the commanders when they had fallen.

We had been travelling six days on our emergency rations and it is needless to say that they had been exhausted some time previous, as there was only enough for two days. While we were wondering what to do, Captain Fish came up with two loaves of bread under his arms and the good news that he had a hundred loaves that he had secured and brought up with men who were in the rear, where they had gone with prisoners. Before he could take the bread from under his arm, it had been taken and eaten by the half starved men. We were arranging to send a guide back to show the food detail the way up when a German shell dropped in the hole killing four instantly and wounding three or four so they died within a few minutes, besides gassing and slightly wounding several others. It was decided to wait a few minutes before sending anyone out, but another shell falling in the open side of the basin, killing one man, was sufficient to cause all to move, which we did; going back to the dead space on the other side of the hill.

That afternoon we went forward again and succeeded in taking the town at about six o'clock that evening. Our losses had become so great that it was necessary for another battalion to go forward in front of us and we were placed in reserve, where we remained until the tenth of October.

Removed From the Drive.

We were then taken out of the drive and marched back to billets, behind which the lines had been before we started. Did it seem good to get in a bunk that was made of chicken netting and a couple of army blankets as lousy as lousy could be? I might ask you that, after sleeping for twenty days, with at least eight of them rainy; on the ground with the heavens for a roof, shells falling all about while you tried to sleep, practically no food and nothing about you but dead and dying and the horrible stench that prevails on a battle field in the hot September sun? I shall never forget those fields covered with their silent, motionless figures clad in the khaki of the United States, the horizon blue of France and the field gray of the Germans. Many of these bodies lay for ten days in the hot sun before the pioneers, sappers and bombers, etc., came along to bury them, and to eat and sleep in such a place was not at all pleasant.

Did I sleep that first night? All I can say is that Rip Van Winkle, with his great love for sleep under even normal conditions, would sleep for all eternity after an experience like that. I slept in proportion.

Discomfort of Suspicion.

After resting for three or four days, we were taken in motor trucks to the cleanest village I saw in France; at least it appeared that way to me. We stayed there about ten days and almost everyone was anxious to get out of it. It may seem strange that we should want to get away from such an ideal spot, but we had only been in there a couple of days when one of the civilians reported the loss of a watch. Our major, who detested anyone who stole or who knew of it and would not tell, ordered the battalion to fall in with full equipment. No one knew what was up but supposed we were moving again. We were marched out in a field near the town and while we stood there listening to his speech a guard was posted around us.

He said that a watch had been stolen and that we should not enter the town again until the thief had been found. As the barns had plenty of the hay in them, which was much nicer than lying on the ground in the cold October rains after all we had been through, it was, he said, to everybody's interest to find the guilty party. I have reasons to believe that many French people, after finding out the liberal ways of Americans, and being paid for things they claimed were stolen without question, worked this "gag" to the limit. Be it as it may, we never entered the town again and were happy when we entrained for Belfort.

Traveling to Belfort.

The trip to Belfort was quite a long one, taking about fifty hours. The weather was quite chilly, being the latter part of October, but as we were given our bale of straw for each car, we were fairly comfortable in our "side door Pullmans."

Once or twice during the trip, we stopped at coffee stations and were given coffee and sandwiches by the Red Cross. On one occasion, as we were jolting along, we came to a sudden stop about midnight and coffee was passed the entire length of the train. It had enough cognac in it to give one a slight

feeling of warmth, but, as a whole , I think the men would have preferred to have been left asleep, as it is quite a hard matter to get asleep in one of the French troop trains. During the day, every one wants to view the scenery, and, as soon as darkness prevents this, singing is in order. This usually continues well until midnight, and, once awakened, it takes several hours to get all hands quieted down again.

Upon detraining, we passed through the center of the city on our ten kilometer hike to our billets.

Belfort City Well Protected.

Belfort is a beautiful city of several thousand inhabitants and is protected by a large wall which encircles it, in addition to the many forts which are located on the near-by hills. Large gates operated by machinery open and close the various entrances to the town.

It would be a very hard city to capture, and no one knows this any better than Germany, who sacrificed 35,000 men just outside the city during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 in trying to capture it.

We were very glad when we finally reached a small village and were assigned billets, and everyone had visions of a few weeks' rest in comfortable quarters.

No one seemed to know just what we were going to do, but it had been rumored that we would get two or three months behind the lines, as was customary with all French troops after a long campaign. Then, too, it was found that the colored troops of the French colonies did not do well in the trenches during the extremely cold weather, and were usually taken to southern France and used for other purposes during the winter.

We had had enough of war for a while and felt confident that we would see no more of it for a time, at least. This was the general impression of officers and men.

Disillusion of Troops Bitter.

That night, I was awakened at 11 o'clock and given an order requiring all officers and first sergeants to report to battalion headquarters at once. I got up and, in the pouring rain, summoned the officers of my company. Reporting at headquarters, I found that we were to enter another sector at once, leaving there at 7 o'clock the next morning. I think the hardest job I had during the war was the one that night, of going and telling the men to be up at 5:30 next morning for breakfast and ready to fall in at 6:00 with full equipment, as we had a short march to get to the place where we were to meet the camions that were to carry us. About the only ones who welcomed this news were some of the officers and enlisted men, who had come to us to fill the place of those killed and wounded; surely none of us, who had so lately come out of battle, some, whose wounds had not yet fully healed.

Sent to Alsace.

We had a ride of about six hours and travelled only about thirty kilometers, owing to the mountains which we had to cross, and finally brought up in Moosch, a small village in Alsace, which lies in a long valley alongside the Vosges Mountains.

Here we found everything much different than anything we had seen in our travels about France. Alsace and Lorraine are beautiful countries, and, when one sees them, he doesn't wonder that so many lives have been given for the possession of such a rich country. Nearly everyone is interested to know a little about the two countries that are called the "nightmare of Europe," and I shall mention a few facts of interest that I have been able to gather.

The Coveted Provinces.

In 1881, the Kaiser, in speaking of this country, gave utterance to these words: "Germany would leave her eighteen army corps and her forty two million people on the field of battle, rather than surrender a single stone of the territory won in 1870."

They are located at the northeast corner of France. Together, they are about as large as Yellowstone National Park, or the size of six Iowa counties. The soil is the most fertile to be found in central Europe. The hills are richly wooded with fir, oak and beech, as well as other varieties. Corn, flax, tobacco, grapes and various fruits are grown. The great wealth, however, is in the minerals. Iron, lead, copper, coal, rock salt and even silver are there. Manufacturers of cotton and linen are plentiful.

After the Franco-Prussian war in 1870-1871, a provision in the Treaty of Frankfurt allowed those who wished to cross the line into France to go.

Of course, this meant leaving their homes, their farms, their old neighbors and everything else they could not take along. More than a year was given for this, and, on the last day of grace, one author says: "All those who had means of transportation rode in carts, wagons, carriages, running over the black roads. Whole families drove on their cattle. Old men dragged themselves on, leaning on the shoulders of young women, who bore at the breast new born children. Sick men, who wished not to die German, were carried bodily that they might draw the last breath on the frontier of Nancy and thank heaven to die on French soil."

Then the Germans tried to blot out all traces of France. The French language was forbidden in schools, on advertisements, or even on tombs.

Police and secret service men watched the inhabitants and men were imprisoned for any demonstration that exalted France.

I have been told by people who lived there during this period that children could not even go to school with a hair ribbon on containing the French colors.

All French flags that could be found were destroyed. Occasionally, one was so well hidden that it could not be found.

It is said that when General Joffre and the French army entered Alsace in August 1914, the joy of the people knew no bounds. French flags that had been hidden away for forty-three years were brought out, and such scenes of rejoicing have rarely been witnessed.

As might be expected, when the French army was driven out of Alsace later on, the people suffered untold misery. Thousands were condemned to prison for years for the awful crime of maintaining their French sentiments. A single word that reflected upon what Germany had done in any way would send one to prison.

The number of women condemned to prison was enormous for the women of Alsace were more outspoken and less respectful to Germans than the men. Women of the noble class filled the prisons. One woman with tear dimmed eyes was brought to a jailor, who said: "Do not weep, madam, you will find yourself in excellent company. Our house is the only one in which you can speak French with impunity." It is said that thirty thousand of these people were deported into Germany and their lot was worse than death.

After we had been assigned billets, and as soon as we had laid our equipment away, we began to look about the town.

TO BE CONTINUED

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American Girl in Store Near Front.

I chanced to go into a small store where a sign announced English cigarettes for sale, and to my surprise and delight, I was greeted by the proprietress who said "Good Afternoon" in excellent English. Upon inquiry, I found that she was an American girl whose home was on Seventh ave., New York city, before her marriage to a Frenchman. Soon after their marriage, they had left America and opened this little store in Alsace. When war was declared, he had responded to the call to arms and she being unable to return to America, as was her desire, was forced to remain in Moosch and so we found her running the little store as a means of livelihood. Her husband was killed and she was waiting for the war to cease, so that she might return to her home in New York.

During our conversation, I asked her how far we were from the front, and she coolly replied that it was but two miles.

At first I could not believe her, as the village was in a better state of preservation than any I had ever seen ten miles behind the lines in the various parts of the front that I had been located in. There were no signs that would indicate that a shell had even burst in the town.

She assured me that I would find fighting enough "up on the hill," as she called it, and I found out later that she knew what she was talking about.

Alsace Villages Spared.

In Alsace the French and Germans have intermarried, and, for the most part, they speak "Alsatian," which is a combination of the two languages. The sympathies of these people were, I think, nearly

equally divided at the beginning of the war and, in many instances, brothers, fathers and sons, etc., joined opposing forces. As French people are living behind the German lines in the nearby villages and vice versa, these villages are not shelled by either side. All the inhabitants are provided with gas masks as a precautionary measure, however.

Mountain Sector Dangerous.

On the day following our arrival, we entered the trenches on the top of the "Grosse Belchen," the highest point of the Vosges Mountains, which rises to an altitude of 4,677 feet.

All supplies had to be taken to the trenches on pack mules and about five hours were required for troops with equipment, although the distance was little more than two miles.

It was much colder on top of the mountains, even in October, than one would think from the valley below, and, while it was very pleasant down in the villages, we had very heavy frosts each night up in the trenches.

The artillery of our division were preparing for a long vacation as they would not shell the towns and the only firing, excepting rifles and grenades, was by the small calibre cannon of the "mountain artillery," which were transported by pack mules.

We were told by the French that this was regarded as the worst sector of the entire front, as the infantry was constantly making raids using grenades for their barrages instead of artillery, and men were captured every day by ambushes. The dense foliage of the firs made trenches or breast-works unnecessary and the only fortifications were where the men slept. Around these places, stone walls were built and resembled old time stockades.

The German troops opposing us were men who were skilled in woodcraft and were largely men who had always lived in these mountains. They would come over in the night and lie along the paths and when anyone would pass the following day would capture them and take them back the following night. This had been done with such success that French general headquarters issued an order that not less than eight men travel in the paths as far back as battalion headquarters, and then every man had to be armed with a loaded rifle, cocked and carried under the arm much the same as the hunter carries a shotgun when hunting.

Germany's Methods of Checking Advances.

About this time the allies were making offensives along the entire front, hammering first at one point and then at another.

Germany had no superfluous manpower and when one of these drives would start, all her available men would be rushed to that point to check it. They would no sooner get to one point than a fresh drive launched somewhere else would claim their attention. In this way, they were started backward along the larger part of the line.

Their rear guard action was wonderful. In every conceivable place, they would have machine gun nests so heavily camouflaged that their discovery was impossible until within a few rods of them. They would have an adequate supply of ammunition and were experts in its use. As the main army would fall back, these would be left behind; sacrificed; to enable the main body to retire and take back as much as possible while they hampered the advance of the allies.

It has been said that, in many instances, these men have been found chained to their guns. This may have been so, but I have seen a great many dead gunners lying by their guns when we have been advancing and none were ever chained. My experience leads me to believe that chaining was not necessary, as they rarely gave up except when their supply of ammunition was exhausted. They were led to believe that, if taken, they would be killed and knowing that a like fate awaited them if they returned to their main army there was nothing to do but die at their post.

To prove to them that they were misled was the reason that all allied troops were instructed to conspicuously take those captured to the rear and, in some cases, small groups would be sent alone.

An Instance of Revenge.

I shall never forget one occasion when a battalion commander had suffered very heavy losses and his temper gave way when his adjutant was killed. The machine gunner, who had been doing all the damage, either because his ammunition was exhausted or as his only avenue of escape, surrendered. He came forward and was but a few feet from this officer, when he, (the officer) whipped out his automatic and killed him. The effect that this had upon any other Germans who may have seen it can easily be imagined.

The effect that it had upon me was anything but pleasant. I was but a few feet away and could distinguish the features of the prisoner. It is easy enough to kill men when they are at a distance great enough to prevent this, but in cases of this kind it is different and is nothing but heartless, cold blood murder, forbidden by International Law, every clause of which was broken in the recent struggle.

Undrilled Men Victims in Drive.

The heavy casualties suffered by the allies from this Hun method was unavoidable, as attacking troops are exposed and moving and attacked troops are quiet and concealed.

An incident occurred while we were in the Vosges Mountains which clearly showed the use of thorough training before one should enter the trenches. Troops were being rushed over as fast as possible to fill gaps caused by these repeated drives and we received a number of men, some of whom had only been in the service thirty days. We were badly in need of men, as we were holding positions with many less than we should and were forced to put them in without the several weeks' instruction customarily given.

I instructed men in the use of the rifle and gas mask, while we were in the Alsace, who were in the first line trenches thirty days from the date they were inducted into the service and who received all their

instructions relative to warfare within period of twenty-four hours prior to facing the well drilled soldiers of Germany.

Wherever possible, these men so sandwiched in between seasoned troops that they learned many things in the first few days, but one of our groups, which had an unusually large number of green men in it, was attacked the day following their entry into the lines, and one officer and five men were killed in broad daylight, a thing that could not have happened with well trained troops.

These men were absolutely helpless, although surrounded by all kinds of defensive weapons, and made the supreme sacrifice simply because they had not been taught to defend themselves.

On Permission Leave.

A few days prior to the signing of the armistice, our regimental commander was notified that a leave area had been selected to which "permissionaires" of the regiment might be sent.

I was among the first seventy who were selected to go, and, on the afternoon of November 8th, left the trenches and reported at headquarters where the detachment was to assemble. That evening, we were issued two days' travel rations and also new clothing, as what we had was not in very good condition after being in the trenches some time. It is needless for me to add that they were up to trench life requirements in regards to cooties.

We were to take a train at 5:30 the following morning, but our French guide and interpreter was late and we were forced to walk nine miles and then take a narrow gauge railway that ran over the mountains to Bussang, where we got a main line train that afternoon.

Our train was what is known as a "permissionaire" train and only carries soldiers going on permission.

These trains collect the soldiers near the front and carry them to what is known as a regulating station. These stations were built during the war and are for the sole purpose of aiding soldiers to travel when on leave and helping the government keep in touch with troops.

TO BE CONTINUED.

"My Year in France", July 25, 1919, Vol. 78, No 13, page 6

Entertaining Soldiers on Furlough.

As we arrived at one of these regulating stations, we saw hundreds of soldiers already there waiting for trains. We rushed into the enclosure as everybody was in a hurry, in order to get comfortable seats in the next train. The various buildings in the enclosure included, besides the regulating station itself, large waiting rooms where one could sleep if he had to wait over night and a large canteen, where almost any kind of a meal could be purchased. Bread could be bought, provided you had the essential

bread tickets, as well wine, which sells very well, as every French soldier replenishes his stock at every available opportunity.

The French soldier and his canteen are inseparable, and I never saw one carry water.

As the troops pass through the station, their passes are stamped and their names, regiment, etc., taken; and no one can get on a train on the other side unless his pass has been duly stamped.

Once on this side, however, you find trains going to all the large cities of France and it is only necessary to know what large city your destination is near to get there with all possible speed (which is very slow), as there are through trains and carry nothing but soldiers. To see the enormous crowds that pass through these stations each day, one would think that there could be none on duty at the front, but, upon considering the many million in uniform, you soon realize that this is a very small per cent of them.

The first eighteen months of the war, no French soldiers were permitted to go home under any circumstance, but from then until the close of the war, they were given from seven to ten days every four months.

The Day of Armistice.

We left the regulating station on Sunday afternoon, and the following morning at 8:00, our train stopped to change engines. It had no sooner stopped than everyone in the train began yelling at the top of their voices. We seventy Americans did not know what was the cause of all the excitement for a few minutes, but were soon told by one of the Frenchmen that the war was over. As our train stood there, the entire population turned out to have a look at the soldiers. They acted more like insane people than anything else and we, who had been in the trenches so long and had begun to doubt if it would ever end, were forced to believe that something must have happened to make these poor, suffering people act like little children at play after more than four years of war with all its suffering, of which America knows nothing.

They had assembled at the station as soon as we arrived to pay homage to us seventy Americans and to gaze upon part of a triumphant army.

All that day, as we passed through village after village, the same scenes met our eyes. No work was carried on anywhere. Every factory closed and wine and champagne flowed like water.

It was hard for us to believe, and, while we were forced to do it, we could not remove the thought that when we returned we would find things as we had left them.

Chateau-Thierry.

That day we passed through Chateau-Thierry and the scenes that met our gaze were such as would make the most hardened veteran shudder. The country through there is quite level, with now and then a knoll, and although no Germans had been there since July, their marks still remained and will for a long time.

The villages are all destroyed. Occasionally, one sees a house that has not fallen but the shell holes have ruined it. For miles on either side of the track are the graves of those who fell and here and there they are marked with a rifle and helmet.

On the south-eastern side and less than a quarter of a mile from the railroad station is a grave about fifteen feet by fifteen feet and in the center is a post on which hangs a German helmet denoting that it is filled with Germans. There, as everywhere else you would see bottles sticking neck down in the graves. This is an unofficial way of leaving some mark of identification. It is usually done by a comrade, who writes any bit of information at hand, and, being put in a bottle, it will keep indefinitely.

Enjoying Armistice Celebration and Vacation.

Tuesday morning, we arrived at St. Malo, a sea port town on the north-western coast of France. We were met by an M.P. (military police) who guided us to the provost marshal's office. Here everyone registered and had his permission stamped, and our furlough began.

These leave areas were selected with the greatest care, so that the soldier might enjoy his few days' vacation to the fullest and go back to his command as well as when he went away, instead of the wreck he would be, were he allowed to tour France at will, unprotected against the many forms of evil which are to be found in many of the cities, and to which soldiers are an easy prey.

All the hotels are at the disposal of the government, and we were given tickets at the provost marshal's which were good for seven days' board at the designated hotel. After being given our tickets and a long lecture as to how we should conduct ourselves, we went to our quarters as it was time for dinner.

Soon after dinner, I was called upon by an M.P. who wanted to know if any of the men were lousy. Needless to say, we were; for the changing of our clothes had done little good and the afternoon was spent in bathing and receiving new clothes again.

That night, we took part in an enormous parade which must have included every inhabitant of the town, as well as the 3,000 troops visiting there. The Kaiser was shot, burned and hung in effigy, and we did not get to bed before 11:30.

I cannot describe the feeling we experienced in once more sleeping in an "honest to goodness" bed, and will not attempt it any further than to say that not one of the seventy men got up for breakfast. The theatres of the city were free to all who wore khaki, and a Y.M.C.A. hut furnished all sorts of entertainment for the men. The hut was formerly a large gambling house and was an ideal building for the "Y." There was always something going on, dancing every afternoon, and shows every night, also excursions every day to the various interesting points nearby. It was very amusing to see the boys struggle to get a partner for a dance. This is not to be wondered at, since there were about 3,000 new boys there every seven days, and only twelve girls who were hired for this purpose. Just before the orchestra would start a selection, arm bands would be put on the arms of those who wished to dance. There were twelve each of the many colors and, at the blow of the whistle, one color would dash on the

floor, grab a partner and lay all earthly cares aside for sixty seconds, when the whistle would again blow and another color rush on the floor.

TO BE CONTINUED.

“My Year in France”, August 1, 1919, Vol. 78, No 14, page 6

On Furlough at St.Malo.

The topic of every conversation was the signing of the armistice and everyone wore a happy smile. Each day, the beach would be filled with soldiers, and, as they looked westward toward the land of their dreams, they knew that it would not be long before dreams would be realities, for already the papers were telling of the plans for immediate demobilization.

It was hard for us to believe that it was really over, and almost everyone half expected to find it the same when we returned.

The time for my group to leave St. Malo came all too quickly, and at the set time we reported the R.T.O. (railroad transportation office) and there, along with about five hundred others, had our permissions stamped, received two days travel rations and our furlough was over.

At 5:30 p.m., our train left and as we passed from under the train shed, which is seen at every large station, we bade farewell to St. Malo and the Brittany Leave Area where we spent the pleasantest seven days of our time while in the A. E. F.

The Return Trip.

On our return trip, we passed within three miles of Paris and had a glimpse of the city but it was useless for us to try to get there as M.Ps. were placed everywhere about it to keep soldiers out. Paris was the Mecca of all U.S. troops, and for many months no enlisted men were allowed, except those who were in the hospitals there. Many officers were arrested who stole in as they were going from one point to another.

Had it not been for this, we could easily have stopped off for a day or two, as time of travel is not included in the furloughs.

When we first arrived in France, before the military police system had been so thoroughly established, one could get off at any station and spend a day or two and then continue his journey. Many of the boys have spent a couple of weeks travelling a distance that could have been covered in one or two days.

It became so that at any small town you might want to get off at, an M.P. would find out if you had a pass, and, if you had no authority for being there, you were quickly started on your way. A French soldier with whom I became intimately acquainted told me how, when he would get ten day leave, he

would at the expiration of his time, report and get his permission stamped and return home for a few extra days before actually starting to join his regiment.

French Prisoners Released.

Our two days rations were gone when we reached Favresse, our regulating station, and we were hungry after our two day ride. There was a little money left in the crowd and we bought some food. We could get no train out until the small hours of the morning and time hung heavily on us. There were a few French prisoners who had been released by Germany, and were waiting for trains to their homes. It was enough to touch a heart of stone to see the haggard faces which plainly showed how they had fared. They had no money, but they did not want for food, as everybody was only too anxious to give them food. They wore the old worn out clothing of German soldiers and each one had a large white band on his arm. They had been released at the signing of the armistice, and, without money or food, had to get back to their own country as best they could, many from prison camps a long distance from the border.

Seeking the Regiment.

The following night, we reached Epinal and being very hungry we went to the headquarters of a detachment of U.S. soldiers stationed there and secured some food, after which we got a train to Bussany from which we had to go the rest of the journey by narrow gauge. It was about 11:00 p.m. when we arrived, and freezing cold. There were no trains going over the mountains until the next morning so we made ourselves comfortable in a building nearby.

When we got up the next morning, we found ourselves up against a serious proposition. The only train going over the mountain had gone and we did not feel like "hiking it" without food, as it was at least ten miles to where we had left the regiment, and half the distance was up the mountains. We did not know whether we would find the regiment there or not, but, without money or food, we realized that we must soon find them or starve.

Just when things looked worst, a Y.M.C.A. secretary came along and after much persuasion we succeeded in getting them to take us over the mountains. Arriving on the other side, we found that our regiment had gone forward in the Army of Occupation, but, as the Supply Company had not left yet, we succeeded in getting some food and continued our journey, after getting the name of the place they were located at.

I shall never forget that hike nor the many things of interest I saw on the way, as I went from what had been "no man's land" but a few days before to the Rhine river where the regiment was stationed.

As I came to the ruined villages near where the line had been, I could see that some of the houses were occupied and here and there an old man or woman would be looking at what I supposed had once been their home, but which had not a shingle left to cover them. The roads were lined with these old people who were going back to their homes. Where the road went across "no man's land," the barb wire had been removed and shell holes filled up. The German trenches, dug-outs, etc., were practically the same

as ours. They had, at the point where I crossed the line, a live wire, which ran along in front of their positions, to electrocute any of our men who might get too inquisitive.

Farther back, I found the villages decorated with home-made French and American flags. Some of them were made of paper, and in one place I recall seeing an American flag with eight stars and ten stripes, but it was sufficient to show that their spirit was with us. No matter what the feelings of these people may have been in the period from 1871 until the war, they are now filled with hatred toward Germany because of their sufferings during the recent conflict. They were deprived of the crops that they raised and nearly everything was taken away from them to the point of starvation in many cases.

Ingenuity of the Germans.

At one point I passed through the edge of a forest, and there camouflaged by trees were miles and miles of railroad switches upon which rolling stock and material was safe from observation. The most elaborate dug outs I have seen were in this wood. They were one room affairs about 12 by 16 feet, and had white polished walls such as are found in the American home. The roofs were level with the ground and were of concrete, about three feet thick.

The furnishings of these had evidently been in keeping with the rest, judging by the pictures hanging on the walls and the few remaining pieces of furniture. They had, without doubt, been the headquarters of high officers.

Souvenir hunters would have found rich pickings here, for almost everything imaginable was to be found. They had taken the larger part but a great deal was left in their haste to evacuate.

Food Scarce on the Rhine.

I finally reached my company, which was billeted in a small town called Fessenheim, about two miles from the Rhine and not far from the Swiss border.

I stayed in a room that was used as a meat market one day each week and was greatly surprised when market day came to see the way business was conducted. The meat arrived the night before, brought from a neighboring town on a small wagon drawn by a dog, and the amount would not exceed sixty pounds. This was a week's supply for a town of at least 200 inhabitants.

The following morning, the people would form a line in front of the door and, as soon as the butcher, who was a lady, arrived; the business of the week began. No one could purchase without meat tickets and only a very small amount then.

I have seen one person buy a piece which would weigh between one and two pounds, but do not know how many were in the family. Many times the meat is all sold before the end of the line is reached and in that case they get none and their only hope is to get there earlier next time.

The half loaf of bread which we were issued daily would get almost anything that these starving people had, and many of the boys secured valuable pieces of jewelry, etc., by depriving themselves of bread for one day.

According to the terms of the armistice, all Alsatian soldiers were to be released within thirty days, and every day a few would be seen going to their homes. Some of our men who were wounded in the second battle of the Marne (Meuse-Argonne) came back to us while we were stationed here, and the sight of these returned troops filled them with anger and they would have given anything for the privilege of getting even.

The river was too shallow for navigation at this point, being quite near its source and we had very little to do. Companies would go up and remain for forty-eight hours patrolling the bank and be relieved by other companies. We could see the Germans doing likewise on the opposite bank, but conversations and crossings were strictly forbidden. We were guarded against surprises and had been from the moment actual fighting ceased.

The Trenches on November 11th.

The men of my regiment who were in the trenches received word between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m. that fighting would cease at 11:00 and the joy that this message brought can only be realized by those who were there.

The men could not believe it and decided not to be caught napping. On the very minute, the Germans began climbing out of their trenches yelling like mad, and came over to our lines giving the boys cigarettes, cigars and souvenirs. Our men remained at their posts until they were sure that the Germans had no weapons. Then, and not until then, did they join in the celebration. And such a celebration as those war-sick men had, who had been away from homes and families, amid death and devastation for months and years is beyond the writer to describe. The Germans invited our boys over and many of them accepted and went over and spent an hour or two visiting their enemies of a few hours ago, who were better friends because of the sufferings and privations all had shared alike. Several of the Germans spoke English and a good time was enjoyed by all who accepted the invitation. The nights that followed were far different from what they had been. All the rockets in the trenches were used up and singing extended into the early hours of the morning. Then came the orders to go forward and every precaution was taken lest they caught in a Hun trap. Our division went forward with their advance guard out and ready for instant defense should occasion demand.

While we were on the Rhine, we were so situated as to hold off any ordinary attack the Germans might make; our artillery, machine guns, etc. being all ready to start firing.

About the middle of December, the order came for all American troops who were brigaded with the French and in the French Army of Occupational to be released, and, in compliance with that order, we turned our faces west for the first time since 1917 and started on our journey homeward.

TO BE CONTINUED.

“My Year in France”, August 8, 1919, Vol. 78, No 15, page 6

Starting for Home.

As we started back toward home we could not go fast enough and men who had been suffering from various ills were magically healed.

After a one day hike, we were held in a village for three or four days and during this time everybody was souvenir hunting among the German peasants. The German war cross (“iron cross”) was readily selling at \$10.00. After leaving this village, we went to a little village on the outskirts of Belfort and remained there during the holidays. The weather was very cold and the ground was covered with snow.

We had received no clothing for a long time as the uncertainty of our remaining on the Rhine had prevented any being shipped to us from the Quartermaster Corps and although some of the men were practically barefooted and almost without clothing they would not give up as they were told that should they go to a hospital they would be transferred to labor battalions and might possibly stay another year in France. It was only when a man could hardly stand up that he would give in and be evacuated.

Each day we would drill a little while and to see the men marching with their bare feet in the snow when the shoes were worn out reminded one very much of Revolutionary days when they had no well-stocked quartermaster and the unlimited resources that we have been boasting of since the war began.

During the first week of January, we received orders to proceed to Le Mans and the morning following its receipt found us marching toward “Mor villars” where we entrained. But we could not forget our suffering at Chautenois; exceeded only during battles; nor will it ever be forgotten by those who were there.

The trip to Le Mans was undoubtedly the pleasantest of any that we had on French railroads. At least four times during our forty-eight hour ride we stopped for coffee, sandwiches, cigarettes and candy. And such excellent candy too. It was impossible to get good candy in France owing to scarcity of sugar. Realizing the American doughboys’ longing for sweets resulted in the establishing of an enormous candy factory by the A.E.F. Each soldier was supposed to get a half-pound package every ten days. We had been neglected somewhat in getting our share and it seemed as if they wanted to give us all that we had missed.

These little favors were insignificant when compared with the fact that we were going home. Sixty minutes of every one of the forty-eight hours we were riding, one could hear singing in some of the cars and no one objected.

Arrival at Le Mans.

Arriving at Le Mans, we were assigned to quarters in a small tent city which had been prepared for receiving home bound troops. Le Mans is an inland town and so situated as to be quite easily reached from any part of France except the south.

It was here that the Armies were assembled before going to the front. Practically all troops passed through this camp enroute to the front.

Immediately upon the signing of the armistice and the backward movement of troops, it was turned into an embarkation and forwarding camp through which a large per cent of the homeward bound army would pass.

Troops coming in from the front are kept in the tents until they pass through the delousing plant. After being deloused they are assigned barracks and thus one part of the camp is kept clean and the other dirty as the army passes on. After spending one night in the tents, we were taken to the delouse. After we had laid down all our equipment, we were ready to go through the "mill" as it is called. Entering a long building, you begin undressing as you pass through, throwing one garment here, one there until – well, you get rid of all your clothing just as you find you are at the end of the building and just outside the bathroom door through which you are quickly hurried by the men, who are stationed there, to see that things are properly done. As you step in the bath room, you are given a good covering of something resembling paper hangers' paste. You then get under a shower and for three minutes luke warm water is turned on very sparingly. A generous amount of cold water follows and half freezing, you rush on to the next room where you receive a new supply of clothing. This is sometimes new but too often it is old clothing that has been sterilized. It is a long building with an aisle in the center and on either side the clothing is stacked. You do not stop but yell your size as you pass by. After going into another room you dress and step out into the world free from the worst curse that ever afflicted anyone.

There is another "mill" at Le Mans. This one is for the issuing of equipment and is operated in much the same way. When you come out of this mill, you have all the equipment of a soldier including gas mask and helmet, which although the war was over were issued because they had to be brought back and several thousand troops could be brought over in the space that they would have taken if shipped in cases.

All records had to be correct before any unit could leave the camp and this necessitates lots of hard work by the clerical force as records are apt to get mixed up considerably at the front.

Off for Brest.

We finally surmounted all obstacles and were ready to start the next lap of our journey. This was the trip to Brest where we were to embark and, as we marched to the railroad siding and saw the train that was to take us, our joy knew no bounds, for there on the track was a train made up entirely of American box cars drawn by an American locomotive and mid-way of the train, a flat car with the specially designed A.E.F. railway troop kitchen, and the odor which came from it assured us that we would not be hungry on the journey. No one who has not ridden on a French troop train could appreciate a sight of

this kind. We could hardly believe our eyes but the letters: U.S.A., stood out so plainly against the background of French gray that we could not doubt it.

The trip from Le Mans to Brest is an all-American one, and the road is known as the American shuttle. The track has been laid by American engineers and is operated by men in khaki for the transportation of U.S. troops and supplies. The writer does not know the length of the shuttle but twenty-four hours is required to make the trip.

The cars are somewhat smaller than those in the United States but comfortably accommodate fifty-six men and equipment. Each car is provided with two lanterns and a toilet; something not found very often in day coaches over there; and with no chance for the wind to blow through, they are very comfortable.

Arrival at Brest.

We arrived in Brest about 8:00 p.m. and recognized it, although it was very dark, as soon as we stepped in the mud.

There is mud enough there to last several years even without rain, and since there is no prospect of drought the inhabitants have no worry in this respect.

We detrained and were taken under a large shed to await orders as we did not know whether we were to embark or go into camp. At the end of about two hours we were ordered to go into camp which was on the hill above the town about three miles distant.

It was about 3:00 a.m. when we were finally assigned to quarters which were in the muddiest section of the muddiest place on earth.

In going to our tents, one was compelled to walk in mud from eight to sixteen inches deep. The inside of the tents was little better and into this we were force to lie down and sleep with nothing but our blankets which were in keeping with the surroundings when we were ordered up for reveille two and one-half hours later. We remained in these tents four or five days before being deloused again and given barracks.

Much has been said of the camp at Brest, as it was during the early part of 1919 and everyone knows how the troops were forced to suffer while waiting for transportation until the War Department effected certain changes. The writer read many of the articles that appeared in the press from time to time, none of which exaggerated the true conditions.

All organizations were kept at work and all details were forced to march at attention. Men were called down if caught talking while at work. It was not unusual to stand in line for an hour waiting for mess as four and five thousand men were fed at each kitchen.

During this time it was necessary to stand at attention and if anyone should violate this rule that detachment would be reported by one of the numerous M.Ps. and the entire organization would be placed at the bottom of the sailing list.

Many times men would miss meals rather than stand in line for perhaps an hour in a pouring rain waiting for it.

Bidding France Good-bye.

Our conduct was such, however, that we finally received sailing orders on the first day of February, we embarked. The hike down the hill was made in absolute silence and at attention. We were told that troops had been taken back to camp after reaching the dock because there had been talking on the way down. At the dock we went aboard small boats which carried us out into the harbor where we boarded the "La France," the largest passenger boat of France. Sunday Feb. 2d at 2:20 p.m. we lifted anchor and bade good-bye to France.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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Homeward Bound and the Arrival.

The trip across the ocean was very pleasant. There were no submarines to fear. Lights were kept burning all night and one could walk about the decks and even talk without fear of court-martial. The topic most discussed was the arrival home, and, when we slid into harbor Sunday morning, everybody was out trying to get a look at the Statue of Liberty, which German propoganda said had been destroyed. It was in place, however, and a large number of the boys vowed they were looking at its face for the last time, unless it turned around.

We were met by the Mayor's Committee of Welcome out in the bay, and newspapers, candy and cigarettes were thrown to us by the committee. Arriving at the pier, we were quickly taken by ferry to the Long Island Railroad, where we entrained for Camp Upton, but in the small space of time between debarking and entraining, we received more tobacco, cigarettes and candy than during our entire time in France.

As we boarded the train, we were given each a large cake, and many baskets of sandwiches were passed through the train. Did it seem good to see New York? I'll say so; and add it will always be remembered as the happiest day of our lives, when we recalled the death and destruction that had been all about us; the many comrades who had looked forward to this home-coming until the grim reaper had come along and decided otherwise.

To look back made one feel like coming from death into life, and, happy as we were, we would have been far happier could we have forgotten the awful scenes left behind on the sacred soil of France which serves as a last resting place for many of America's sons.

Good News Learned at Camp.

Arriving at Camp Upton, we were put in comfortable quarters, and on Monday, we were told that we would be discharged on Friday. It was too good to believe for we had been so long with the French that we had become accustomed to their slow and easy-going manner.

However, on Tuesday morning, the process of demobilization began and everybody began planning for the trip home on Friday.

Routine of Disbanding.

It is not as easy to disband an army as some would think, and the Depot Brigades who handle this work are kept busy night and day.

Replacements from every part of the country get assembled in one company, and, when discharged, they must be in the zone nearest their homes; consequently the men have to be segregated by zones.

The men, who are from the zone in which the camp is located, are discharged there. All others are shipped to a proper camp.

Every man's record has to be searched to see that he does not owe the government any thing. Any mistakes in pay have to be rectified, before final payment is made. The men must attend three lectures, each consuming one-half day. These are to acquaint the men with the problems that will confront them as soon as released, and also to help make a better country morally.

A physical examination consumes another half day. This is to determine the degree of one's disability, and is the basis for payments of any compensations. If anyone has an ailment curable, he is not discharged until cured. If permanently disabled in line of duty, he will receive a pension according to degree of disability. In any case, the soldier, upon being discharged, has to sign a statement which prevents him from ever putting in claims other than those existing at date of discharge.

Application for employment is also made, if desired, and the soldier is referred to some company or individual as near his home as possible who wishes men in whatever particular line of work he states. All equipment has to be turned in, and one is kept busy from the beginning to the end of the process. The last morning, you are paid and then taken to the station, and, after you board the train and start, you are an ordinary civilian once more, but disguised in a soldier's uniform.

Parade Retards Demobilization.

Tuesday, we were busy until late at night and Wednesday morning we were at it again, when all at once we were told to go back to our barracks, as orders had been received cancelling demobilization of the regiment.

Later in the day, we were informed that our Colonel, who was with another detachment of the regiment on another ship, had arrived, and, upon hearing that we were being discharged, had telegraphed to G.H.Q. requesting permission to parade.

This we did the following Monday, and were the first intact fighting unit to march under the great Victory Arch, which was then in course of construction.

During a halt in the parade, one of the wounded heroes, who was riding in an automobile, threw up his helmet, and, in an effort to get it, two men were killed.

We were also the first body of U.S. troops to parade in the French mass formation in America.

After a bountiful feast in the afternoon, we returned to camp, and again the wheels of demobilization began rolling.

Discharged from Service.

Friday morning, February 22d, we passed the pay window and received our discharges and final pay. It was a year, seven months and seven days since we had been mobilized by order of the President; not so very long under ordinary circumstances, but when a larger part of it is spent on the battle field, it seems ages. I could not help noticing a recruiting office on the opposite side of the road from where we were discharged, nor could I help noticing how far from it the men tried to get as they stood waiting for their turn.

As we marched to the station, we began to think of the new life we were soon to enter and how much different it would seem to us now with our broadened views and bitter knowledge of the world in general.

It seemed strange to think of having to provide for one's self, after being fed, clothed and housed by Uncle Sam's generous hand so long. With these thoughts and those of home, we boarded the train.

And when it finally started ---Oh Boy! But I will leave the rest to the reader's imagination.

THE END.