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**WAR'S HISTORY TOLD BY VETERAN**

(By a Free-Lance)

From the Notes and Memory of one who Fought, Suffered and Lived thru the "First Two Years of Hell". Do not miss a word of this story, told by an actual eye witness and participant.  
First Installment—Issue of April 19  
To Be Continued

**TWO YEARS OF A LIVING HELL**

The tenseness of the nerves tightened as Major Morphy acquainted us with the approach of the enemy, yet it had been what we were expecting for the rain of shells that were bursting overhead told only to well what to expect, for we had in the course of a few weeks come to learn that there never was to be a counter attack in day light but that the enemy would first try to kill the moral of the opposing force, by presenting us with a rapidly fired rounds of "scrap" and "junk" in order to prepare a resting place for his men, when they came over our tops.

Leaving the Major and the Captain in the "Bay" where we were I sauntered down the traverse and into the next "bay", and not finding there that which I was looking for went down still further into the trench. I was perhaps some three bays away from the remainder of the squad, when looking over the top of the parapet, I found that I had got in the position that I was hunting for. Yes it was an ideal place for the coming fray, for the enemy had to pass through the high entanglements that the previous detachment had rudely constructed, and with the fore sight of "angles" or of "demons" left to my right a gap of some twenty yards between the structures. This is what I called luck it saved me the return trip back to the squad and also gave a clear vision of the field, where as their vision was blurred. This meant I would be able to check their passage through the gap, with rapid fire, and could wait at leisure for the squad to come down the line when they had heard the firing, for the sound of the Lee-Enfield can rapidly be heard when there is not a over much or load from the opposite field. It was this that I now depended upon to kill the crack and sound of fire, for with the enemy in mass formation it was a simple matter to stop the force with a few well directed shots, and it is these shots that I was aiming to put over.

They arrived at the gap fully twenty deep and in width at least sixty—what targets,—(Prussian Guards). Laying my rifle over and in between two loosely piled sand bags, I cut loose, amply protected from their fire by the inner sight of some comrad's neglect to lay that last row of bags lengthwise.

I had jammed some five or six bullets in the magazine of the gun, having once unloaded, when the remainder of the squad showed up, the boys laughing swearing, and all in good humor.

By this time there had fallen some six or eight of the enemy, and their bodies were blocking the way of those behind when as if by pre arranged plans the entire squad sent over "three apid" in succession. They faltered and there seemed to be a ripple as they began falling, some distance in the advance of where they had been undoubtedly shot. Was it that the remaining force cowered them forward, I have often wondered as to this, for it had often occurred, not only on this field but elsewhere on other lines.

The direct fire of our boys soon began to tell, our guns were getting a trifle warm, and in some cases jammed. In such cases, we would pick up the rifle of some comrade who for the time being was out of the fray. We had fought for the greater part of an hour, and still the enemy were persisting in coming through the gap, always emmassed, gaining nothing except the honor of the field. Some would relate their experiences to those at home and then there were those that got it clean.

We had been fighting for some twenty minutes, when Captain De Sales left the squad with Major Morphy, and went north up the trenches, such as they were, and when we had fought on but for a short time returned with another detachment, who were under Sergeant McGill of the 5th division. Sergeant McGill always had a nack of being in the right place at the right moment, for it was he with his little squad that had turned many a fight nearing its climax and end to that of a victorious counter. We boys were sure glad to see that it was our old reliable, and when they got into the stridle they too laughed as the rest.

My experience had always been that as soon as the Sergeant made his appearance on the scene, I would be called to do something else, and so it was to be this time too. The Sergeant had but placed his men when on glancing up the "bay" I saw Major Morphy coming down, just leaving the traverse who catching sight of me beckoned me to him. Leaving my post on the rudely constructed "firing step" I went to meet him. We circled the traverse that he had but lately turned and said, "Corporal—Report at once to headquarters for reinforcements, allow a safe factor, and bring them by the shortest route. Take these papers with you to the General."

Saluting, I turned and walked up the bay for some ten feet where I had seen a crumpled spot, and there waving to the boys, cleared what at one time was the parapet of the trench. Gee! I had got into it, from the frying into the fire, for in front to either flank, and in my rear shells were dropping, bursting and scatter-

ing hate in every direction. Running low to avoid any direct gauge on my advance, I had proceeded some eighty yards when a "baby" landed. Glancing over my shoulder to determine its character, I'll swear by all that's living or dead that its appearance resembled a "dud" but my judgment was at error, it was a live one, and as I dropped to the ground in a prone position, thirty or forty feet from where I lay, I too learned it was a throbbing, rendering "Live Baby" for I had no more than got in position, than I was bodily lifted and sent in the air for some twenty feet, shrapnel hissed, and the broken fragments of a shattered shell filled the air. I landed, yes and landed none to gentle, the force of contact had undoubtedly sent me in the air for twenty feet, and in returning to mother earth, it was on my right side. As I layed there for a few moments getting back my breath, and seeing that I was all there that old saying came to me "A miss is as good as a mile" and so it was.

Breath regained I once again set out to get cross that stretch of ground that laid in my immediate front. It was the longest four hundred yards that was ever measured, for in getting across that distance I was hurled twice to the ground by the concussion of shells, and was made to run, and run I did, seeking cover in shell hole to shell hole for I did not dare to present to much of a target to the enemy and know that the boys at my rear were depending on me to get in and deliver the message and return with re-inforcements. They could hold out at the rate they were going for a matter of two hours at the very latest and then I knew it would be all off; with them, for they would be without food for the guns and outnumbered three or four to one.

Wanting a rest, short of wind, my heart beating a rapid tattoo, I reached the fringe of the wood that was my destination for the time being, when Zing, a whine a burning sting, a full swing to the left, and as if some one had dropped a ton on my shoulder, I dropped to the ground, only to be up and away the next moment as the rain of leaden fire encircled me, and forced me to seek cover in the brush, and near trees of the wood I was new into, Throughing my right hand to the left shoulder I took it away covered with blood, I felt no pain, but that of a burning sensation, and going over my entire body I found that it was the only place they had got me, just how severe I could not say, and for the time being was to mad to care. My remaining cloths were torn to shatters, and I must have been a sight to the sentry, who was tationed a few yards away, cap gone rifle gone, and clothes streaming in the wind, with more or less mud and blood mixed on my entire person.

"It was hell buddy, I have been watching you for the last five minutes 'What's up?' said the sentry as I got to my feet again for I had tripped over a fallen tree trunk, and was sprawled on the ground in a very awkward position, for I had been running with my head over my shoulder the greater part of the time, and did not pay much attention to my immediate front, for there I knew I would be among friends and comrades. I answered in jerky words "Hell—counter—four—to me, Bruce and Fifth squads holding—must get to headquarters—for re-inforcements.—Will be back—this way."

On again. But in front of me now were my friends and so to the rear, all caution was thrown to the wind and having gained my second wind I went down the trail to the road on the double, reaching the road I severed to the left sharply and began to catch my stride as in old track days gone by, when again I was stopped by a command to "Halt" and a sentry standing in the center of the road way I broke and coming up close enough so that he could hear me distinctly I said "Dispatch to Headquarters."

He nodded and I gathering speed carried on. I could not see the town and turning sharply half left, proceeded to make time. It takes longer to tell than the actual time in which it was accomplished. I had gained the entrance of Headquarters, when I met an orderly, and saying to him. "Is the Adjutant in? If so the compliments of Major Morphy on dispatch Corporal—Urgent."

Swinging on his heel, he entered the office only to return the next moment, "Corporal—the Adjutant wishes to see you at once, this way." As we entered the room, there were several officers that I knew, and the Adjutant looking up returned the salute as given and I placed on his desk the papers that were given to me to deliver. He glanced over them rapidly, then looking up said, "What are the conditions briefly, reinforcements needed? Corporal—." Answering I said "500 men, and hell; can hold an hour or two no more" Turning to the officers that were in the office he said, "Boys Major Morphy is in it, you Major Kingsley take your your company and proceed at once to their aid, Captain O'Hara take your command and proceed to follow that of Major Kingsley's in twenty minutes." The two officers had but left the room when the bugles sounded the "Fall in" The Adjutant turning now in my direction, said "The general is in the next room Cor-

poral—and should be acquainted with the information at once, and the conditions as they are—here man your wounded" I had turned white and faint and was dropping to the floor when he reached my side steadying me to the floor, at the same time calling for the orderly. It was only momentary, the twinge in the shoulder caught me, and with the exertion I had undergone in reaching quarters had sent me faint. "I'm all right, Sir, have the others wait, I am to go back with the reinforcements, only a slight 'blightly' no harm."

As he turned to give orders to the orderly who had by this time appeared on the scene, another voice was heard, and looking up and in the direction from which it came, the General was half way across the room. "Adjacent; the Fall in, what are the conditions and —." Then seeing me on the floor, some what the worse for wear, said, "So, it is you Corporal—Major Morphy must be in need of additional aid. Carry On, Adjutant."

And the General stooping over me spoke in the voice, that all of us men knew well, for he knew his men and they knew him, man for man, no pomp outside of the regular routine of army orders and the K. R. O. He was all man, and it was for him that we boys went through hell, our everyday life was linked with that of his, and we all swore by him. I do not believe there was another general on the field that the men loved as they loved General French. Many of the boys had been with him in South Africa in 1902, and there learned that he never asked others to do that which he himself would not do in person. He asked "Corporal—are you hurt badly?" and turning to the orderly that still stood at attention, said "Call Major King at once."

I looked up from the floor where I was resting, and laughing, said "No, Sir, nothing but a twinge in the left shoulder—will be alright in a few minutes; must return to Major Morphy."

He laughed, and turning to the Adjutant who by this time had returned to his desk, gathering up the reports, said to him "Would we had more, such as he is, always ready, and only knowing orders. All right, Sir, report to me any information from Major Morphy at once, and see that Corporal—is tended to before he leaves."

At that Major King entered the door, saluting the General and seeing me laying on the floor, turned toward my direction, and as he stripped the left shoulder bare, laughingly said, "Corporal—some of these days we won't be at hand as ready as now,—why man it is only a crease, good for you; but they will get you yet," continuing the examination and dressing the scratch, for that is all that it was, he asked if I had seen my father and brother, "No, Sir. Is Dad and Frank in quarters. I've been in the southern divisions with the 10th and only just got here. Won't have time to see them this trip, for I go right out with the reinforcements to the aid of Major Morphy, but will see you and them when we finish, and I get back; What billet are you in? Regards to Dad and Frank if you see them."

The steady tread of marching feet, and the clear call of the commands could now be heard, and knowing that it was Major Kingsley, I got to my feet, not without some twitching, and calling the attention of the Adjutant, said "Will report in detail when I return, Sir." Saluting I left the office, only to bump into my brother, now a commissioned officer, "Hello, Frank—see you later—see Major King—am with Major Morphy and Captain De Sales—don't tell the girls at home—only a scratch."

By the time I reached the door I could see Captain O'Hara coming up with his command, and the tail end of the Major's disappearing up the road, and joining this attachment, I dropped in step with Captain O'Hara and we were off.

(To Be Continued)



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