

Joe Despain Has Had Thrilling Service With Canadians at Front; Was Wounded Once

The first man in his company over the top every time is the record of Joe Despain, Pendleton man who has been in active service in the front line with the Canadian army for a year and a half.

He good a soldier is Despain that when he tried to win his transfer to the American army, it was refused on the grounds that he is too valuable to the Canadian army to permit his removal. Joe is still trying to get a transfer, but his brother, Lieutenant Charles Despain, who is in the head staff office in London, says that the Canadians are determined to keep their man. Efforts to secure his transfer being only letters of commendation.

Despain, who saw service on the Mexican border, found driving into the line after experience in the United States army. He spent just one day in Pendleton after his release from border service, then left for England, Canada, two years ago last August. Determined to get into the big fight, he enlisted at once in the 47th Battalion, Canadian Infantry. Four other comrades from border service enlisted with him, and of the five Despain is the only one living, the rest having met their deaths on the firing line.

The November following his enlistment he was sent to France and began active fighting in January. It was at this time that he received his only wound, which took him to London for a month which he spent in a hospital. Immediately upon his recovery he returned to the firing line and has been there constantly.

He fought in the last drive from March 24 to April 15, and says it was the hardest of any of the drives he has been in. He has had many miraculous escapes, but beyond a slight attack of "trench feet" he is sound in health. A picture taken when he entered the army at the age of 19, and one taken recently, shows that the army service has made a "huskier" man of him. However, he weighs only about 150 pounds at present, and attributes his good fortune in escaping death to luck, as stronger men than he have fallen in his regiment.

At one time Despain was in an army hut which was blown up by the enemy. Every one of his 12 comrades were killed but Joe escaped without a scratch.

He has met the Boche at close range, and has sent several souvenirs taken from Hun prisoners to his brother, Grover Despain, of this city. Among the relics which have arrived here is a German cap which showed hard service, and which shows where a bullet cut through the cap band. On the lining are several blood stains. Other articles of interest are a number of shoulder straps cut from the uniforms of German soldiers and officers, as well as buttons from their clothing.



Lee Caldwell on Long Tom

Joe also sent a few pressed flowers, picked from one of the main battlefields in France. He suggested that the articles be displayed in the window of Griggs Grocery store, where his brother is employed, and added that perhaps some day the Kaiser might be exhibited there.

enemy artillery to practice on two bluffs.

Working in gas masks because the Germans threw mustard gas shells into the village where they were working as Y. M. C. A. war work secretaries on the western front, Ward N. Blane of Palestine, Ill., and A. W. Peet of Pittsburg, Mass., were compelled to run their canteen at night as the soldiers were not allowed to collect about the dugout in daytime.

During the daylight hours they packed chocolate and cigarettes on their backs to the front line trenches. They were constantly under sniper fire and shells burst all about them. The hut in which these men worked offered no protection from shell fire and the nearest dugout was 100 yards away. It was so close that it was within range of the German guns of small caliber. They were two of a party of fifty Y. M. C. A. men who worked constantly under shell fire with the American soldiers carrying to them small comforts and a knowledge that in spite of all the death and destruction someone took a personal interest in them.



MOVING A PIANO UNDER MACHINE GUN FIRE IS HARD

PARIS—Trying to carry off a piano on which the Hun were playing with a machine gun at the time was the unusual night's experience of the Y. M. C. A. secretaries and three Anzac privates in the Australian sector, as reported here recently. Music had such charms for this quartette that, after finding the ponderous piano too heavy to carry through the ruins of the "Y" hut, the five adventurers tried to remove a smaller upright, only to have it stick to the doorway. Without waiting for the exit to be widened by the shell which were coming over, the soldiers and Red Triangle men ran with a moving picture machine, just as the Boche began putting down explosives in all perfections.

A. J. Gould, a "Y" secretary with the Anzacs, who tells the story says that when the Hun advance forced a retirement, the hut was burned. The Germans quickly were pushed back to the outskirts of town. Believing the pianos and other moving picture machine intact, Gould with another secretary and an orderly, cycled by a back road into town under cover of night to inspect the piano. The Germans put over a shell on speculation which burst above a bunker in which they took shelter. On reaching the ruined "Y" hut, they found the piano and movie apparatus in usable condition.

The two secretaries with three orderlies who volunteered got a motor lorry and started for the hut the following night. Two miles from town a sentry advised them against proceeding, saying that Fritz had been shelling the place twenty minutes before, but the adventurers went forward, cautiously, stopping to listen for shelling, dodging and

lers. The lorry's engine back-fired suddenly, challenging an artillery reply, and because the side lane was blocked by debris the truck was driven up the main street to the hut door, under direct observation by the Boche. One man was left to back the lorry up to the door while the others went into the roofless hut.

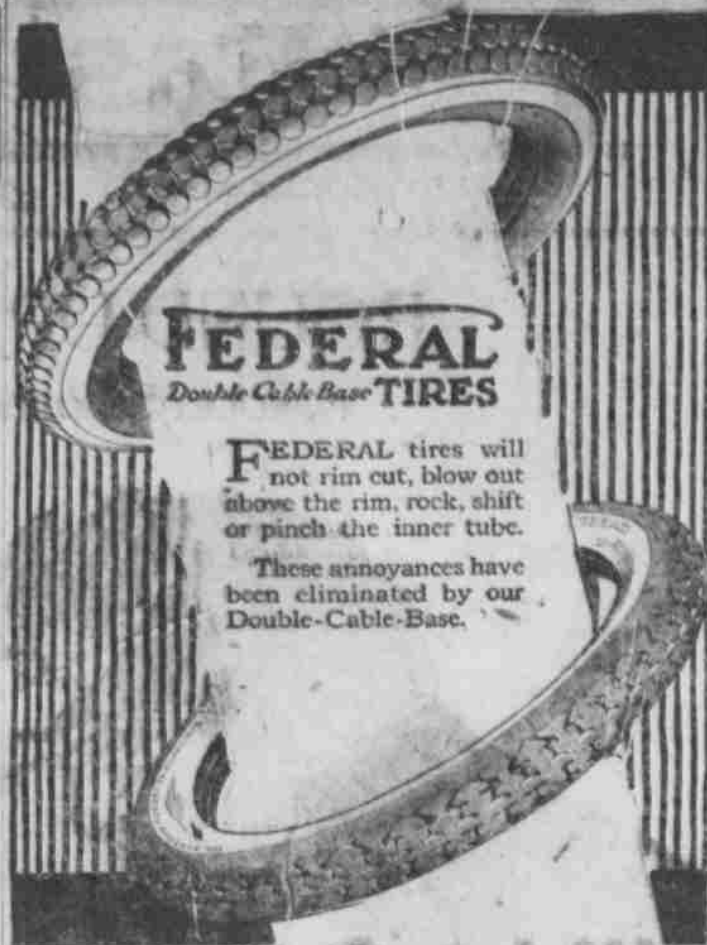
The piano proved too heavy for four men to carry over 200 yards of wreckage, so they turned to the motion picture machine and kicked off its supports. A machine gun was chattering but the men worked on, one carrying the switchboard, another a box of tools and the other three the machine. They had passed over the interior debris and had gone 100 yards when the whole neighborhood was lighted up by a German flare. Each stood dead still until the betraying glare had died out.

With the cinema safely in the lorry, the men started back after a second piano stored in a nearby house, when they ran into a blinding beam of light playing down the main street—an enemy searchlight. The machine gun began rattling briskly again. Its deadly tone caused the volunteer piano-movers to speed the piano through the narrow door up their work, but they could not push. To make the dramatic interest more intense the lorry driver shouted that he was going to leave because the Germans had sent up red rocket signals for the artillery to search the town for the music-lovers and three shells had been dropped.

So, with the shells curving overhead they violated the speed regulations, saving axes from their carrying the picture machine and leaving the



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