



# "OVER THERE"

## The Thrill and the Hell of the Trenches, Described by an American Boy.

Sergeant Alexander McClintock of Lexington, Ky., and the Canadian Army Has a Gripping Tale That Every American Will Read, For He Tells the Facts—Unadorned. Wounded, a Distinguished Conduct Medal Man, He Was Invalided Home, but Is Going "Out There" Again to Fight For Uncle Sam and His Allies. An Inspiring, Interesting, Personal Narrative, Full of the Spirit and Atmosphere of the Trenches in France.

SERGEANT McCLINTOCK.

"Here, you fellows can walk, and I can't. Furthermore, you're not able to carry me because you've got about all any of you can do to navigate alone. It doesn't look as if it's going to be any better here very soon. You all proceed to the rear, and if you can get some one to come after me I'll be obliged to you."

They accepted the proposition because it was good advice, and, besides, it was orders. I was their superior officer. And what happened right after that confirmed me forever in my early, Kentucky bred conviction that there is a great deal in luck. They couldn't have traveled more than fifty yards from the shell hole when the shriek of a high explosive seemed to come right down out of the sky into

"Most of all," I said, "I think I want a drink of rum."

He produced it for me instantly. "Now," said he, "my advice to you is to keep on traveling. You've got a fine special detail there to look after you. Make 'em carry you to Pozieres. It's only five miles, and you'll make it all right. I've got this place loaded up full, no stretcher bearers, no assistants, no adequate supply of bandages and medicines and a lot of very bad cases. If you want to get out of here in a week just keep right on going now."

As we continued toward the rear we were the targets for a number of humorous remarks from men coming up to go into the fight.

"Give my regards to Blighty, you lucky beggar," was the most frequent saying.

"Bil me," said one cockney Tommy, "there goes one o' th' Canadians with an escort from the kaiser."

Another man stopped and asked about my wound.

"Good work," he said. "I'd like to have a nice clean one like that myself."

I noticed one of the prisoners grinding at some remark and asked him if he understood English. He hadn't spoken to me, though he had shown the greatest readiness to help me.

"Certainly I understand English," he replied, speaking the language perfectly. "I used to be a waiter at the Knickerbocker hotel in New York." That sounded like a voice from home, and I wanted to hug him. I didn't. However, I can say for him he must have been a good waiter. He gave me good service.

Of the last stages of my trip to Pozieres I cannot tell anything, for I arrived unconscious from loss of blood. The last I remember was that the former waiter, evidently seeing that I was going out, asked me to direct him how to reach the field hospital station at Pozieres and whom to ask for when he got there. I came back to consciousness in a clean hospital cot the next morning.

I realized as I lay on that cot I was out of the modern hell for a time, and my mind drifted back over the days just passed. Wounded men, grim reminders, were all about me, many of them worse off than I was. I had seen all kinds of bravery—British officers climbing calmly over the top with a monocle in their eyes and a cane in their hands into almost certain death, like a man getting into a tub of water where he knew he would get wet.

"Come on; let's go!" they would drawl. My respects to them.

And also to the enemy. The German officers fight to the last. Few surrender. My hat off to them. And the dead brave Major Lewis and poor Macfarlane, my close comrades. And only the other day I read Lance Corporal Glass, the man I carried in after our first bombing raid in Belgium, had been killed in action in France. I saw it in a Montreal paper.

They vaccinated me for everything while with the army—everything except a bullet being shot. If a man could invent an antitoxin for that, well, he would be a hero.

I WAS taken from Pozieres to Albert in a Ford ambulance or, as the Tommies would say, a "tin Lizzie." The man who drove this vehicle would make a good chauffeur for an adding machine. Apparently he was counting the bumps in the road, for he didn't miss one of them. However, the trip was only a matter of seven miles, and I was in fair condition when they lifted me out and carried me to an operating table in the field dressing station.

A chaplain came along and murmured a little prayer in my ear. I imagine that would have made a man feel very solemn if he had thought there was a chance he was about to pass out, but I knew I merely had a leg pretty badly smashed up, and while the chaplain was praying I was wondering if they would have to cut it off. I figured, if so, this would handicap my dancing.

The first formality in a shrapnel case is the administration of an anti-tetanus inoculation, and when it is done you realize that they are sure trying to save your life. The doctor uses a horse syringe, and the injection leaves a lump on your chest as big as a baseball, which stays with you for forty-eight hours. After the injection a nurse fills out a diagnosis blank with a description of your wounds and a record of your name, age, regiment, regimental number, religion, parentage and previous history as far as she can discover it without asking questions which would be positively indelicate. After all of that my wounds were given their first real dressing.

Immediately after this was done I was bundled into another ambulance and driven to Contay, where the C. C. S. (casualty clearing station) and rail head were located. In the ambulance with me were three other soldiers, an artillery officer and two privates of infantry. We were all ticketed off as shrapnel cases and probable recoveries, which latter detail is remarkable, since the most slightly injured of the four had twelve wounds, and there were sixty odd shell fragments or shrapnel balls collectively imbedded in us. The nurse had told me that I had about twenty wounds. Afterward her count proved conservative. More accurate and later returns showed twenty-two bullets and shell fragments were in my leg. They took these out and presented them to me. I have been giving them away for souvenirs.

We were fairly comfortable in the ambulance, and I especially had great relief from the fact that the nurse had strapped my leg in a sling attached to the top of the vehicle. We smoked cigarettes and chatted cheerfully, exchanging congratulations on having got "clean ones"—that is, wounds not probably fatal. The artillery officer told me he had been supporting our battalion that morning with one of the "sacrifice batteries."

A sacrifice battery, I might explain, is one composed of field pieces which are emplaced between the front and support lines and which in case of attack or counterattack are fired at point blank range. They call them sacrifice batteries because some of them are wiped out every day. This officer said our battalion that morning had been supported by an entire division of artillery and that on our front of 400 yards the eighteen pounders alone, in a curtain fire which lasted thirty-two minutes, had discharged 15,000 rounds of high explosive shells.

I was impressed by his statement, of course, but I told him that, while this was an astonishing lot of ammunition, it was even more surprising to have noticed at close range, as I did, the number of Germans they missed. Toward the end of our trip to Contay we were much exhausted and pretty badly

shaken up. We were beginning also to realize we were by no means out of the woods surgically. Our wounds had merely been dressed. Each of us faced an extensive and serious operation. We arrived at Contay silent and pretty badly depressed. For twenty-four hours in the Contay casualty clearing station they did little except feed us and take our temperatures hourly. Then we were put into a hospital train for Rouen.

### Germans Bomb Hospital Train.

Right here I would like to tell a little story about a hospital train leaving Contay for Rouen—not the one we were on, but one which had left a few days before. The train, when it was just ready to depart with a full quota of wounded men, was attacked by German aeroplanes from which bombs were dropped upon it. There is nothing apparently that makes the Ger-

mans so fearless and ferocious as the Red Cross emblem. On the top of each of the cars in this train there was a Red Cross big enough to be seen from miles in the air. The German aviators accepted them merely as excellent targets. Their bombs quickly knocked three or four cars from the rails and killed several of the helplessly wounded men. The rest of the patients, weak and nervous from recent shock and injury, some of them half delirious and nearly all of them absolutely helpless and in pain, were thrown into near panic.

Two of the nursing sisters in charge of the train were the coolest individ-

| Trains into Monmouth   |      |
|--|------|
| L'Ve Portland 7:35, a m, Gerlinger 10:20, Independence 10:32, Monm'th 10:50    |      |
| " Salem 9:35, " " " " " " " "  |      |
| " " 1:40, p m, " " " " " " " "   | 3:10 |
| " " 3:45, " " Gerlinger 4:38, Independence 4:55, Monmouth 5:05                 |      |
| " " 6:00, " " " " 6:45, " " 6:57, " " 7:10                                     |      |
| " Portland 3:20, Connects with above   |      |
| " Corvallis 6:45, a m " " Independence 7:35, " " Arrive Monmouth 7:45          |      |
| " " 1:15, p m " " " " 2:14 " " 2:35  |      |
| " Dallas 7:00, a m, Arrive Monmouth 7:25                                       |      |
| " Airlie \$30, a m and 3:40, p m, Arrives Monmouth 9:05 a m and 4:13 p m       |      |
| Leave Independence, 6:50 a m, 7:35, 8:45, 10:55, 1:30, p m 2:20, 4, 4:40, 7:00 |      |

| Trains out of Monmouth  |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| L'Ve Monmouth 7:05 a m, Independence 7:35, Gerlinger 7:49, Ar Salem 8:30      |                      |
| " Same as above " " " " " " " "   | Portland 11:10       |
| " Monmouth 1:45, p m, " " " " " " " "   | Salem 3:10           |
| " Same as above " " " " " " " "   | Portland 5:25        |
| " Monmouth 4:35, " " " " " " " "  | Salem 6:00           |
| " " 9:05, a m " " " " " " " "   | Dallas 10:10 " 11:10 |
| " " 4:30, p m " " " " " " " "   | " 4:55, " " 6:00     |
| " " 9:05, a m, Independence 10:32, Corvallis 11:20                            |                      |
| " " 4:55, p m, " " " " " " " "  | 6:57, " " 7:45       |
| " " 7:25 a m and 3:10 p m, Arrives Airlie 8 a m and 3:40 p m                  |                      |
| Leave Monmouth 7:05, a m, 8:15 9:05, 10:50, 1:45, p m, 2:35, 4:15, 4:55, 7:10 |                      |

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I Tumbled In on Top of the Four.

my ears, and the detonation which instantly followed shook the slanting sides of the shell hole until dirt in little dusty rivulets came trickling down upon me. Wounded as I was, I dragged myself up to the edge of the hole. There was no trace anywhere of the four men who had just left me. They have never been heard of since. Their bodies were never found. The big shell must have fallen right among them and simply blown them to bits.

It was about a quarter to 7 in the morning when I was hit. I lay in the shell hole until 2 in the afternoon, suffering more from thirst and cold and hunger than from pain. I only hoped the Germans wouldn't drive our men back over me. At 2 o'clock a batch of sixty prisoners came along under escort. They were being taken to the rear under fire. The artillery bombardment was still practically undiminished. I asked for four of the prisoners and made one of them get out his rubber ground sheet, carried around his waist. They responded willingly and seemed most ready to help me. I had a revolver (empty) and some bombs in my pockets, but I had no need to threaten them. They half dragged me toward the rear.

### Carried to the Rear.

It was a trip which was not without incident. Every now and then we would hear the shriek of an approaching "coal box," and then my prisoner stretcher bearers and I would tumble in one indiscriminate group into the nearest shell hole. If we did that once we did it a half dozen times. After each dive the four would patiently reorganize and arrange the improvised stretcher again, and we would proceed. Following every tumble, however, I would have to tighten my tourniquets, and, despite all I could do, the hemorrhage from my wound continued to flow so profusely that I was beginning to feel very dizzy and weak. On the way in I sighted our regimental dressing station and toward it my four bearers to carry me toward it. I couldn't talk German. The station was in an old German dugout. Major Gilday was at the door. He laughed when he saw me with my own special ambulance detail.

**No. 6. Decorated For Bravery; Home and Uncle Sam.**

By Sergeant Alexander McClintock, D. C. M., 87th Overseas Batt., Canadian Gren. Guards.

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This is the concluding article of the series of six by Sergeant McClintock, an American boy of Lexington, Ky., who has seen service in France, was decorated for bravery and invalided home. He has been promised a commission in our army. The first five installments told of the fighting in Belgium and on the Somme, where he was desperately wounded. This final installment describes his journey to the rear with twenty-two pieces of shrapnel in one leg and his meeting with the king in a London hospital.

uis present. They walked calmly up and down its length, urging the patients to remain quiet, directing the male attendants how to remove the wounded men safely from the wrecked cars and paying no attention whatever to the bombs which were still exploding near the train. I did not have the privilege of witnessing this scene myself, but I know that I have accurately described it, for the details were told in an official report when the king decorated the two sisters with the Royal Red Cross for valor in the face of the enemy.

The trip from Contay to Rouen was a nightmare—twenty-six hours traveling 150 miles on a train which was forever stopping and starting, its jerky and uncertain progress meaning to us just hours and hours of suffering. I do not know whether this part of the system for the removal of wounded has been improved now. Then, its inconveniences and imperfections must have been inevitable, for in every way afterward the most thoughtful and tender care was shown us. In the long rows of huts which compose the British general hospital at Rouen we found ourselves in what seemed like paradise.

In the hut which constituted the special ward for leg wounds I was lifted from the stretcher on which I had traveled all the way from Pozieres into a comfortable bed with fresh, clean sheets, and instantly I found myself surrounded with quiet, trained, efficient care. I forgot the pain of my wounds and the dread of the coming operation when a tray of delicious food was placed beside my bed and a nurse prepared me for the enjoyment of it by bathing my face and hands with scented water.

On the following morning my leg was X rayed and photographed. I told the surgeon I thought the business of operating could very well be put off until I had had about three more square meals, but he couldn't see it that way. In the afternoon I got my first sickening dose of ether, and they took the first lot of iron out of me. I suppose these were just the surface deposits, for they only got five or six pieces. However, they continued systematically. I had five more operations, and every time I came out of the ether the row of bullets and shell scraps at the foot of my bed was a little longer. After the number had reached twenty-two they told me that perhaps there were a few more in there, but they thought they'd better let them stay.

My wounds had become septic, and it was necessary to give all attention to drainage and cure. It was about this time that everything for awhile seemed to become hazy and my memories got all queerly mixed up and confused. I recollect I conceived a violent dislike for a black dog that appeared from nowhere now and then and began gawing at my leg, and I believe I gave the nurse a severe talking because she insisted on going to look on at the ball game when she ought to be sitting by to chase that dog away. And I was perfectly certain about her being at the ball game, because I saw her there when I was playing third base.

### The Alarming Cablegram.

It was at this time (on Nov. 25, 1916, ten days after I had been wounded) that my father in Lexington received the following cablegram from



Two of the Nursing Sisters Were the Coolest Individuals Present.

cer in charge of the Canadian records in England:

Sincerely regret to inform you that Sergeant Alexander McClintock is officially reported dangerously ill in No. 5 general hospital from gunshot wound in left thigh. Further particulars supplied when received.

It appears that during the time of my adventures with the black dog and the inattentive nurse my temperature had ascended to the stage when the doctors began to admit another method of treatment might have been successful. But I didn't pass out. The one thing I most regret about my close call is that my parents in Lexington were in unrelieved suspense about my condition until I myself sent them a cable from London on Dec. 15. After the first official message, seemingly prepared almost as a preface to the announcement of my demise, my father received no news of me whatever. And, as I didn't know that the official message had gone, I cabled nothing to him until I was feeling fairly chipper again. You can't have wars, though, without these little misunderstandings.

If it were possible I should say something here which would be fitting and adequate about the Englishwomen who nursed the 2,500 wounded men in general hospital No. 5 at Rouen, but that power isn't given me. All I can do is to fall back upon our most profound American expression of respect and say that my hat is off to them. One nurse in the ward in which I lay had been on her feet for fifty-six hours, with hardly time even to eat. She finally fainted from exhaustion, was carried out of the ward and was back again in four hours, assisting in an operation. And the doctors were doing their bit, too, in living up to the obligations which they considered to be theirs. An operating room was in every ward, with five tables in each. After the fight on the Somme, in which I was wounded, not a table was vacant any hour in the twenty-four for days at a time. Outside of each room was a long line of stretchers containing patients next awaiting surgical attention. And in all that stress I did not hear one word of complaint from the surgeons who stood hour after hour, using their skill and training for the petty pay of English army medical officers.

On Dec. 5 I was told I was well enough to be sent to England, and on the next day I went on a hospital train from Rouen to Harlow, where I was