



# MY FOURTEEN MONTHS AT THE FRONT

An American Boy's Baptism of Fire  
By WILLIAM J. ROBINSON  
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The most graphic account of the great war that has yet been written comes from the pen of a twenty-two-year-old Boston boy, who has just returned from France, where as dragoon guardsman, dispatch rider and motor-car driver he served fourteen months under the British flag. Out of thirty-one motorcycle dispatch riders he was one of four survivors.

The "best dump," as it is called, is a place cleared away on the side of the road where the men may deposit the supplies so that it will be convenient for the horse transport to come and get them. Here the goods are unloaded, and the motor column returns to headquarters. After it is dark the horse transport comes down from the trenches, loads its wagons and immediately returns to the trenches, where the supplies are issued to each unit for distribution to the smaller units.

The motors complete their work in an incredibly short time. They have seven or eight miles to carry their loads and in some cases even farther, yet within two or three hours from the time they leave their camps in the morning they are back again, and the army has been provided for another day.

To each motor vehicle three men are assigned. They are known as the first, second and third drivers and are all of them qualified chauffeurs. In case anything happens to the first driver the others are there to take his place. The first driver has the care of the engine and the driving of the truck, while the other two men have the greasing and oiling and cleaning of the vehicle, and they also assist in the loading and unloading of supplies. The motors are inspected daily, and if not in perfect running order they are at once taken care of by the column workshops. These workshops are very efficient, and it is remarkable what thorough work they can turn out. They are each fitted with a lathe, forge, benches, etc., the lathe being run by a small motorcycle engine provided for that purpose. If for any reason the column is unable to repair a motor, that vehicle is sent to one of the bases where there are stationary workshops, and a new truck is sent back to replace it. The mechanics in these workshops are all trained men and are obliged to pass severe tests before being accepted for the work.

Many of them are men who have worked on the building of cars in the factories in England, and in cases like this they are allowed to specialize on the cars they are familiar with. The only other mechanics who can claim to be their superiors are those of the Royal Flying corps, and they are absolutely the cream of the mechanical world and are one of the highest paid bodies of men in the British army.

Another branch of the mechanical transport which is very much up to

two garrison units. These units are seated when they are filled, and if a seal is



Then I Took Another Look and Saw the Cavalrymen Were Germans.

broken when a tin of petrol is issued to a driver, or if it appears to have been opened he may refuse it and demand one with the seal intact. In this way the chance of receiving defective or impure petrol is avoided.

There are practically all known makes of motor trucks and cars at the front, as many of them were commandeered at the beginning of the war. Then again, all the motor manufacturers in England are working day and night to keep the armies supplied with these vehicles. There are also a good many American makes in use there.

The work of the chaplains at the front is not spoken of very much, yet they work as hard and do as much good as any men in any other branch of the service. They are usually attached to the royal army medical corps. I have seen a chaplain holding service in a field on a Sunday morning, and during the service the enemy commenced to shell some huts close by. I firmly believe that if it had not been contrary to orders he would have continued to worship just the same as though nothing was happening.

The royal army medical corps is a tremendous unit, and there, too, will be found some of the bravest men in the army, even though they are non-combatants. This corps is always referred to as the R. A. M. C., and the British Tommy speaks of it as the "Rob All My Comrades."

There is a reason for this, of course, and as near as I can make out it is this: When a man is sick or wounded and is obliged to go into hospital all his belongings are taken from him. He is supposed to get them back when he is discharged from hospital, but when one considers the thousands that are taken care of by the hospitals it is only reasonable to believe that a great many of the little bundles are bound to go astray. Tommy cannot see this, however, so he grumbles and growls and often refers to the corps in complimentary terms.

### CHAPTER V. The "Mad Major."

THE nurses in the hospitals are worshiped and adored by the soldiers, and surely this is as it should be, for they are suffering almost as much as the men, and yet they keep cheerful and supply the tender womanly sympathy which means so much when in physical anguish. They are a wonderful body of women, and their work is appreciated. Some of

them are close enough to the front to be under fire, and they are brave as the men when it comes to facing dan-

During an aeroplane raid last fall I had a chance to watch some of the nurses. We had about thirty German aeroplanes over our encampment dropping bombs. As they went back to their own lines they flew over a hospital located in an open field. There were huge red crosses painted on the top of every tent, so it would seem that any mistake as to the nature of the camp would be impossible. Nevertheless as the taubes passed over they dropped several bombs in the hospital and killed quite a number of the poor chaps who were already wounded. The nurses worked as hard as they could trying to quiet the rest of the men, and it is no easy task, for, while a soldier may face almost anything when he is well, it is a very different matter when he is lying helpless, wounded and in pain, on a stretcher.

I was very much interested to learn how a man's mail was taken care of when anything had happened to him. It seemed to me that the chance of his letters being returned before his people could be notified was very great. On asking about this I found that when a man has been killed his letters are marked "Killed," but instead of being sent directly to his people they are returned to the war office and are sent from there, after the casualty has been made known, to his relatives. In this way many people are saved a great deal of premature worry and uneasiness.

I shall never forget the time I saw the Royal Horse artillery go into action. For a more thrilling sight would be hard to imagine. I was out alone in the car, and I had been doing patrol duty. I went rather closer to our firing line than I intended to, but decided to push on until I struck the "route nationale," so I would have a good road all the rest of the way back to camp.

I had to go through the village of Dickbusch, and as I came to the crossroads just outside the village a sentry stopped me and said I could not go on. It seems that some Germans had got a machine gun in the steeple of the church and were cleaning up everything that tried to pass. The horse



When a Man Has Been Killed His Letters Are Marked "Killed."

artillery had been sent for, and I learned that they were on their way even then.

I decided to wait around and see what happened, so I pulled in to the side of the road. I had hardly stopped when I heard a rush and rattle that sounded like an old flyover in the distance. Around the curve dashed eight horses on the dead gallop, pulling an eighteen pounder behind them. They dashed by, but about fifty yards ahead of me they swung around and trained that gun on the church.

There was a moment's pause, and then she spoke, and away went steeple, Germans, machine gun and all. The first shot had been a direct hit, and it couldn't have been better if they had tried a thousand years.

It was the very next day after this event that I got into as tight a fix as I ever care to find myself. I was ordered to take three officers to a place called Kemmel. I had been there before, and from what I had seen then I wasn't eager about making the trip again.

We started off about 1 o'clock and expected to be back by 5. I noticed as I came to the Kemmel road that there were two sentries on duty there, but as they only saluted the officers and didn't say anything I thought no more about it. Now, Kemmel lies at the foot of a hill and is tucked in between Mount Noir and Mount Kemmel. It would be a cozy little place in peace time, but it is an awful trap to get caught in when there is a war on.

I sent the car up the hill as fast she could go, and it was a long climb. As we went over the brow and started on the down grade we ran right under the nose of the German artillery observers. This road was officially closed, and those sentries should have stopped us.

Well, it scared me so that I went down that hill so fast those officers must have thought they were in a parachute. As we entered the village the shells commenced to drop in on us, and we ran for the nearest shelter, which happened to be a brewery.

There wasn't much left of the place anyway, as it had been in German hands, and we had shelled them out of it, and when we had taken it they had shelled us out of it. Anyway, we left the car and crawled into the cellar. It was wet and filthy, but it looked just like heaven to me that day.

We lay there in all this fifth hour after hour, while the shells literally

pooured in all around us. They certainly wasted a lot of good ammunition trying to get us, but the best of it was that they didn't succeed. One of the officers remarked during a moment's silence that the crown prince of Germany must have made his headquarters in the place when it was in German hands. Another officer replied that he wished the crown prince was there now.

We lay there till the fire let up, which it did about 5 o'clock. I was worrying about getting back, and I was also wondering what had become of the car. If it was gone we might just as well kiss ourselves goodby, for our chances of getting out on foot would be slim.

When the fire had abated we came out and looked around. The enemy certainly had made a mess of the place, for even the top story of the brewery had been shot away from over our heads. I went to look the car over, and you can just believe I was relieved to find that, aside from having a few holes through the body, it was all

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### Trains into Monmouth

L've Portland 7:15, a m.	Gerlinger 10:20,	Independence 10:32,	Monm'th 10:50
" Salem 9:35, "	" " " "	" " " "	" " " "
" " 1:40, p m.	Dallas 2:45	" " " "	" 3:10
" " 3:45, "	Gerlinger 4:24,	Independence 4:37,	Monmouth 4:55
" " 6:00, "	" " 6:45, "	" " 6:57, "	" 7:10
" Portland 8:30,	Connects with above	" " " "	" " " "
" Corvallis 6:45, a m.	Independence 7:35	Arrive Monmouth 7:45	" " " "
" " 1:15, p m.	" " 2:14	" " 2:30	" " " "
Dallas 7:00, a m.	Arrive Monmouth 7:25	" " " "	" " " "
" Airlie 8:30, a m and 3:45, 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, 11:50, 1:30, p m, 2:20, 3:50, 4:00, 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.	" " 2:14,	" " 2:27,	Salem 3:10
" Same as above	" " " "	" " " "	Portland 5:50
" Monmouth 4:05,	" " 4:40,	" " 4:55,	Salem 5:35
" " 9:05, a m.	Dallas 10:00	" " 11:00	" " " "
" " 4:30, p m.	" " 4:45,	" " 5:35	" " " "
" " 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 pm	" " " "	" " " "
Leave Monmouth 7:05, a m, 8:30 9:05, 10:50, 12:00, M, 1:45, p m, 2:35, 4:05, 4:55, 7:10	" " " "	" " " "	" " " "



The Horse Transport Comes Down From the Trenches.

date is the department of stores and accessories. The men in this department are not necessarily trained men, but they must be good managers, as they keep in stock all spare parts which are likely to be called for. Besides this, they have charge of the petrol oil, grease, carbide, tires for light cars and, in fact, everything that is likely to be used on an automobile. The petrol is all sent from England in

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BILLY POSTER'S SIGNS ARE CATCHING - BOTH OF THOSE GENTLEMEN HAVE THE FACTS STRAIGHT.