



WILLIAM J. ROBINSON

The next day we stopped in a little village called Pradelles, the place where the Germans had stood a priest up against the wall of his own church and shot him because he wouldn't give them the information they wanted.

Across from this church was a little "estaminet," where I went to buy a bottle of wine to have with my dinner. You can imagine my surprise when the Frenchwoman in charge called me an "English pig" and said that she would sell nothing to the English. I told her what I thought of her, and she told me what she thought of me.

She said the English were thieves, murderers and other nice things and informed me also that the only true gentlemen in the world were the Prussians. She certainly had me aroused, and I was going to arrest every one I could find in the house until her daughter came in.

She saw at once how things were and led the old lady upstairs and then explained that the Germans had taken her two youngest sisters away and that since that time her mother had been insane.

It was outside of Pradelles that we ran into the Germans and had a long distance scrap. We were not strong, and we didn't know how strong they were, so we were not pressing them very hard until some reinforcements came up. I think they were in the same position, for they didn't try to get to close quarters. So we kept at it all afternoon until at night the Germans retired, and we camped a little farther on and waited for our main body to come up. Our casualties numbered only about twenty dead, and we buried them in the churchyard before we left.

I passed through Pradelles about two months later, and I went into the churchyard where those chaps were buried. The people of the village have set little white crosses at the head of each grave. On each cross are the name, number and regiment of the soldier lying below, and under that is "Mort de la Champ d'Honneur." It was a most thoughtful thing for those poor peasants to do.

It was in a village called Outraesteene, quite near Pradelles, that I first saw the Prince of Wales. He was with Sir John French, and they were reviewing a brigade that hadn't been in the country very long. He is a nice looking fellow, but very boyish in appearance. He is liked by the men and quite often will go and sit among them and talk to them.

Soon after this I received orders to prepare for a two day journey in the car. I didn't know where I was to go until the night before I was to start.



The Prince of Wales, with Sir John French, reviewing a brigade.

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 dragon guard, 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.

and then I was told that I was to go to Paris to get an officer who was waiting for me there. Of course I was delighted, for I hadn't been in any large city for a long time.

Paris is more than 200 miles from where we were then, and my orders were to make it in one day. While it was a long journey, I felt that it would be well worth it, so I set out with a light heart. At Lillers I hit the main Paris road, and it was glorious. There is no speed limit for a dispatch car, and you bet I was flying my blue and white flag that day. Straight down through St. Venant, St. Pol, Bouillens and Amiens I flew, and about 6:30 I came to the outskirts of Paris. I was surprised on entering the capital to find so few British soldiers. I knew that we had several permanent bases in the vicinity, and I expected to find the place swarming with Tommies.

CHAPTER VI.

Bomb Throwing Perilous Work.

SOON found the reason for Tommy's absence, for as soon as I left the car and started out on foot I was continually being stopped and asked who I was, what I was, where did I come from, what was I doing and what was I going to do. Being on special duty, I had a pass in my possession which bore the French stamp as well as the British. This pass would take me anywhere in France or Belgium, and a flash of it, coupled with the words "special duty," permitted me to go where I pleased. Had I been without it I would have been arrested about every ten minutes.

The defenses in Paris against hostile aircraft attack were a revelation to me. I never saw anything more thorough in my life. Any of the more venturesome Germans who care to make an attempt against Paris are in for a hot reception.

Two days after my arrival the officer whom I was to take back to the front said he was ready to start and to prepare the car for the return journey on the morrow. The ride back was uneventful, but when we arrived we found that the headquarters were going to be moved north across the Belgian frontier the next day. We were to take over the job of holding the town of Poperinghe, which the French had been occupying. We were then taking over more front than we had been holding previously.

At this time the roads were in a terrible condition. They are made of cobblestones in the middle, but either side is nothing but mud, so after a few days' rain if one slips off the stones he finds himself in a regular quagmire and will sink in over the axle.

We took Poperinghe from the French, and while we were moving in they were moving out, and the two lines of transport, each going over the same road, resulted in some fine mixups.

Eventually we arrived all right and found that this place was much better than Hazebrouck, which we had left. Hazebrouck was the junction of seven railroad lines and consequently a popular target for German aircraft.

There was every facility for quartering the men and horses, good offices for the staff, and we were much nearer the firing line at Poperinghe. In my car I have made the run from our trenches to Poperinghe in less than twenty minutes, so you can see that we were not very far behind the actual fighting.

The people in Poperinghe, while they had seen British troops before, had never had them in the town for any length of time, and they seemed to be very glad to see us. We had several Scotch regiments in our corps, and when they came out of the trenches the first time they created a great sensation in the town. Their kilts were a never failing source of astonishment to the Belgians. The woman in the house where I was billeted thought that it was cruel to make them wear the "little dresses" in the cold weather. She wanted to know what they wore underneath them, and when I told her that they were nothing she wouldn't believe me. I explained to her that it was against orders for them to wear trousers under the kilt, but still she re-

fused to believe.

At this time bomb throwing was becoming more and more popular, and besides using the hand bombs we were using larger ones, which were thrown by a catapult arrangement. They could be thrown a long distance and in many cases proved to be very effective. Bomb and grenade schools for every division were opened, and the men were trained to throw bombs scientifically.

In some places we started using the catapult arrangement with which the French throw bombs, but it didn't turn out as well for us as it did for them. I saw one case in which the using of one of these things was very disastrous. One of our fellows put a bomb in the sling and started swinging it. As he tried to let it go the whole thing hit the man standing next to him full in the jaw. Of course it exploded and killed several men who were standing near, including the fellow who had tried to throw it.

During an attack in the Menin trenches I saw an incident that I will never forget. Our fellows had taken two lines of trenches in a very few minutes. In some places there were Germans occupying a part of a trench while we held the other part.

A big Irishman came dashing up with a load of bombs, and as he came forward I saw these Germans raise their rifles to fire at him. The Irishman was too quick for them, though, for he chucked a bomb into the trench they were in, and I heard his yell, "Split that between ye, ye swine."

It wiped out the whole crowd of them, of course, and the best part of it was that the Irishman didn't alter his stride the least bit. The expression has become quite popular among "bombers."

We hadn't been in Poperinghe many days before the German aeroplanes began coming over us. They didn't do any damage at first, and I wondered why they didn't drop any bombs. Every morning about 5 o'clock two or three taubes would appear and fly back and forth for a few minutes, and then they would go away, and we wouldn't see any more of them until the next morning at the same hour.

At last we got used to them, and they didn't bother us at all. Once in awhile our guns would bring one of them to earth, and then there would be one grand rush to the place where the machine had fallen. I saw one fellow fall one morning, and as I had by motor-bike I hopped on and dashed down the road to try and find him. He had come to earth safely, but his engine had been put out of commission by a piece of shrapnel. He had set fire to the machine and was calmly sitting on the ground some distance from where it was burning.

Some flying corps fellows were there just a few seconds ahead of me, and they made him prisoner. As he got to his feet he remarked in perfect English, "I had a presentiment that I wouldn't get back this morning. Oh, well, c'est la guerre, do with me what you will."

However, he was a German; a great many of our enemy could speak the king's language.

We knew that sooner or later these aeroplanes were going to take a good stiff crack at us, and we were expecting it every day. The first air raid on Poperinghe came about a month after we had taken the town over. I had a new car, and I had been out with it for a trial run. When I got back to Poperinghe I ran into the Grand place and stopped in front of the general billet, where the corps and guards were living. I had the engine still running and was just sitting in the driving seat listening to it.

It was a cloudy day, and I remember hearing an aeroplane, but I thought it was one of our own, for one of our flying grounds was close by. Suddenly a taube shot down through the clouds, and a second or so later there was a deafening explosion, followed by two others in quick succession. The first bomb landed about thirty yards away from where I was, and the pieces flew



The Irishman yelled, "Split that between ye, ye swine."

all around me.

Altogether there were forty-six casualties from that raid; eleven were killed. There was only one British soldier and one French gendarme killed among the military; the remainder were all civilians. A military funeral was given them all, and it was one of the most solemn and impressive ceremonies I ever witnessed. British sol-

diers carried our poor chap and French soldiers carried the Frenchman. The civilians were carried by their own townsmen.

Each coffin was wrapped in the national flag, and escorts and firing parties of each of the three nations were in attendance. The Belgian Old Guard, the old veterans, turned out with their band and in dress uniform. During the service in the church, and in fact until the whole funeral was over, three aeroplanes, one Belgian, one French and one English, circled back and forth over the city. The streets were lined with soldiers, all with reversed arms, and the band played the dead march all the way to the cemetery.

This was only the first of many raids on us in this town, and many a poor civilian who had harmed no one met his death in this way.

If it is still standing there is very near the front at Vlamertinghe, not far from Poperinghe, a chateau where one of our divisions had their headquarters, the corps headquarters being at Poperinghe. It was a beautiful place built on the old style, with enormous grounds

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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., " " " " " " " "	
" " 3:45, " Gerlinger 4:24, Independence 4:37, Monmouth 4:55	
" " 6:00, " " " " " " " "	
" Portland 3:30, " Connects with above	
" Corvallis 6:45, a. m. " Independence 7:35, " " " " " "	
" " 1:15, p. m. " " " " " " " "	
Dallas 7:00, a. m., Arrive Monmouth 7:25	
" Airline 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 " " " " " " " "	
" Monmouth 1:45, p. m., " " " " " " " "	
" Same as above " " " " " " " "	
" Monmouth 4:05, " " " " " " " "	
" " 9:05, a. m., " " " " " " " "	
" " 4:30, p. m. " " " " " " " "	
" " 9:05, a. m., Independence 10:32, Corvallis 11:20	
" " 4:55, p. m., " " " " " " " "	
" " 7:25 a. m. and 3:10 p. m., Arrives Airline 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	

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