



"OVER THE TOP"

AN AMERICAN SOLDIER WHO WENT
ARTHUR GUY EMPY
MACHINE GUNNER, SERVING IN FRANCE

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—Fired by the news of the sinking of the Lusitania by a German submarine, Arthur Guy Empey, an American, leaves his office in Jersey City and goes to England where he enlists in the British army.

CHAPTER II—After a period of training, Empey volunteers for immediate service and soon finds himself in rest billets "somewhere in France," where he first makes the acquaintance of the ever-present rum.

CHAPTER III—Empey attends his first church services at the front while a German Fokker circles over the congregation.

CHAPTER IV—Empey's command goes into the front-line trenches and is under fire for the first time.

CHAPTER V—Empey learns to adopt the motto of the British Tommy, "If you are going to get it, you'll get it, so never get it."

CHAPTER VI—Back in rest billets, Empey gets his first experience as a mess orderly.

CHAPTER VII—Empey learns how the British soldiers are fed.

CHAPTER VIII—Back in the front-line trench, Empey sees his first friend of the trenches "go West."

CHAPTER IX—Empey makes his first visit to a dugout in "Suicide Ditch."

CHAPTER X—Empey learns what constitutes a "day's work" in the front-line trench.

At about the time he expected to arrive at Waterloo station he was laid to rest in a little cemetery behind the lines. He had gone to Bilghy.

In the trenches one can never tell—it is not safe to plan very far ahead. After "stand down" the men sit on

the one step or repair to their respective dugouts and wait for the "rum issue" to materialize. Immediately following the rum comes breakfast, brought up from the rear. Sleeping is then in order unless some special work turns up.

Around 12:30 dinner shows up. When this is eaten the men try to amuse themselves until "tea" appears at about four o'clock, then "stand to" and they carry on as before.

While in rest billets Tommy gets up about six in the morning, washes up, answers roll call, is inspected by his platoon officer, and has breakfast. At 8:45 he parades (drills) with his company or goes on fatigue according to the orders which have been read out by the orderly sergeant the night previous.

Between 11:30 and noon he is dismissed, has his dinner and is "on his own" for the remainder of the day, unless he has clicked for a digging or working party, and so it goes on from day to day, always "looping the loop" and looking forward to peace and Bilghy.

Sometimes, while engaged in a "cootie" hunt, you think, Strange to say, but it is a fact, while Tommy is searching his shirt serious thoughts come to him. Many a time, when

forming this operation, I have tried to figure out the outcome of the war and what will happen to me.

My thoughts generally ran in this channel:

Will I emerge safely from the next attack? If I do will I skin through the following one, and so on? While your mind is wandering into the future it is likely to be rudely brought to earth by a Tommy interrupting with, "What's good for rheumatism?"

Then you have something else to think of. Will you come out of this war crippled and tied into knots with rheumatism, caused by the wet and mud of trenches and dugouts? You give it up as a bad job and generally saunter over to the nearest estaminet to drown your moody forebodings in a glass of sickening French beer or to try your luck at the always present

game of "house." You can hear the sing-song voice of a Tommy droning out the numbers as he extracts the little squares of cardboard from the bag between his feet.

CHAPTER XI.

Over the Top.

On my second trip to the trenches our officer was making his rounds of inspection, and we received the cheerful news that at four in the morning we were to go over the top and take the German front-line trench. My heart turned to lead. Then the officer carried on with his instructions. To the best of my memory I recall them as follows: "At eleven a wiring party will go out in front and cut lanes through our barbed wire for the passage of troops in the morning. At two o'clock our artillery will open up with an intense bombardment, which will last until four. Upon the lifting of the barrage the first of the three waves will go over." Then he left. Some of the Tommies, first getting permission from the sergeant, went into the machine gunners' dugout and wrote letters home, saying that in the morning they were going over the top, and also that if the letters reached their destination it would mean that the writer had been killed.

These letters were turned over to the captain with instructions to mail same in the event of the writer's being killed. Some of the men made out their wills in their pay books, under the caption, "Will and Last Testament."

Then the nerve-racking wait commenced. Every now and then, I would

glance at the dial of my wrist watch and was surprised to see how fast the minutes passed by. About five minutes to two I got nervous waiting for our guns to open up. I could not take my eyes from my watch. I crouched against the parapet and strained my muscles in a deathlike grip upon my rifle. As the hands on my watch showed two o'clock a blinding red flare lighted up the sky in our rear, then thunder, intermixed with a sharp, whistling sound in the air over our heads. The shells from our guns were speeding on their way toward the German lines. With one accord the men sprang up on the fire step and looked over the top in the direction of the German trenches. A line of bursting shells lighted up No Man's Land. The din was terrific and the ground trembled. Then, high above our heads we could hear a sighing moan. Our big boys behind the line had opened up and 9.2's and 15-inch shells commenced dropping into the German lines. The flash of the guns behind the lines, the scream of the shells through the air, and the flare of them, bursting, was a spectacle that put Pain's greatest display into the shade. The constant pop, pop, of German machine guns and an occasional rattle of rifle firing gave me the impression of a huge audience applauding the work of the batteries.

Our 18-pounders were destroying the German barbed wire, while the heavier stuff was demolishing their trenches and bashing in dugouts or funk holes. Then Fritz got busy.

Their shells went screaming overhead, aimed in the direction of the flares from our batteries. Trench mortars started dropping "Minnies" in



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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 9:25, " " " " " " " "	" " " " " " " " " " " "
" " 1:40, p. m., " " " " " " " "	Dallas 2:45, " " " " " " " "
" " 3:45, " " " " " " " "	Gerlinger 4:24, Independence 4:37, Monmouth 4:55
" " 6:00, " " " " " " " "	" 6:45, " 6:57, " 7:10
" 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
" 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, 10:35, 12:20, 1:30, p. m., 2:30, 3:50, 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. " " " " " " " "	" 2:14, " 2:27, Salem 3:10
" Same as above " " " " " " " "	Portland 5:50
" Monmouth 4:05, " " " " " " " "	" 4:40, " 4:55, Salem 5:30
" " 9:05, a. m. " " " " " " " "	Dallas 10:00, " " " " " " " "
" " 4:30, p. m. " " " " " " " "	" 4:45, " " " " " " " "
" " 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, 12:30, M., 1:45, p. m., 2:35, 4:15, 4:55, 7:10	

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