



"OVER THE TOP"

AN AMERICAN SOLDIER WHO WENT

ARTHUR GUY EMPEY

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 Tommy.

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 mind."

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.

CHAPTER XI—Empey goes "over the top" for the first time in a charge on the German trenches and is wounded by a bayonet thrust.

CHAPTER XIII.

My First Official Bath.

Right behind our rest billet was a large creek about ten feet deep and twenty feet across, and it was a habit of the company to avail themselves of an opportunity to take a swim and at the same time thoroughly wash themselves and their underwear when on their own. We were having a spell of hot weather, and these baths to us were a luxury. The Tommies would splash around in the water and then come out and sit in the sun and have what they termed a "shirt hunt." At first we tried to drown the "cooties," but they also seemed to enjoy the bath.

One Sunday morning the whole section was in the creek and we were having a gay time, when the sergeant major appeared on the scene. He came to the edge of the creek and ordered: "Come out of it. Get your equipment on, 'drill order,' and fall in for bath parade. Look lively, my hearties. You have only got fifteen minutes." A howl of indignation from the creek greeted this order, but out we came. Discipline is discipline. We lined up in front of our billet with rifles and bayonets (why you need rifles and bayonets to take a bath gets me), a full quota of ammunition, and our tin hats. Each man had a piece of soap and a towel. After an eight-kilo march along a dusty road, with an occasional shell whistling overhead, we arrived at a little squat frame building upon the bank of a creek. Nailed over the door of this building was a large sign which read "Divisional Baths." In a wooden shed in the rear we could hear a wheezy old engine pumping water.

We lined up in front of the baths, soaked with perspiration, and piled our rifles into stacks. A sergeant of the R. A. M. C. with a yellow band around his left arm on which was "S. P." (sanitary police) in black letters, took charge, ordering us to take off our equipment, unroll our puttees and unlace boots. Then, starting from the right of the line, he divided us into squads of fifteen. I happened to be in the first squad.

We entered a small room, where we were given five minutes to undress, then filed into the bathroom. In here there were fifteen tubs (barrels sawed in two) half full of water. Each tub contained a piece of laundry soap. The sergeant informed us that we had just twelve minutes in which to take our baths. Soaping ourselves all over, we took turns in rubbing each other's backs, then by means of a garden hose, washed the soap off. The water was ice cold, but felt fine.

Pretty soon a bell rang and the water was turned off. Some of the slower ones were covered with soap, but this made no difference to the sergeant, who chased us into another room, where we lined up in front of a little window, resembling the box office in a theater, and received clean underwear and towels. From here we went into the room where we had first undressed. Ten minutes were allowed in which to get into our "clabber."

My pair of drawers came up to my chin and the shirt barely reached my diaphragm, but they were clean—no strangers on them, so I was satisfied.



A Bathroom at the Front.

At the expiration of the time allotted we were turned out and finished our dressing on the grass.

When all of the company had bathed it was a case of march back to billets. That march was the most uncongenial one I imagined, just cussing and blinding all the way. We were covered with white dust and felt greasy from sweat. The woolen underwear issued was itching like the mischief.

After eating our dinner of stew, which had been kept for us—it was now four o'clock—we went into the creek and had another bath.

If "Holy Joe" could have heard our remarks about the divisional baths and army red tape he would have fainted at our wickedness. But Tommy is only human after all.

I just mentioned "Holy Joe" or the chaplain in an irreverent sort of way, but no offense was meant, as there were some very brave men among them.

There are so many instances of heroic deeds performed under fire in rescuing the wounded that it would take several books to chronicle them, but I have to mention one instance performed by a chaplain, Captain Hall by name, in the brigade on our left, be-

cause it particularly appealed to me. A chaplain is not a fighting man; he is recognized as a noncombatant and carries no arms. In a charge or trench raid the soldier gets a feeling of confidence from contact with his rifle, revolver, or bomb he is carrying. He has something to protect himself with, something with which he can inflict harm on the enemy—in other words, he is able to get his own back.

But the chaplain is empty-handed, and is at the mercy of the enemy if he encounters them, so it is doubly brave for him to go over the top, under fire, and bring in wounded. Also a chaplain is not required by the king's regulations to go over in a charge, but this one did, made three trips under the hottest kind of fire, each time returning with a wounded man on his back. On the third trip he received a bullet through his left arm, but never reported the matter to the doctor until late that night—just spent his time administering to the wants of the wounded lying on stretchers.

The chaplains of the British army are a fine, manly set of men, and are greatly respected by Tommy.

CHAPTER XIV.

Picks and Shovels.

I had not slept long before the sweet voice of the sergeant informed that "No. 1 section had clicked for another blinking digging party." I snubbed myself with deep satisfaction. I had been promoted from a mere digger to a member of the Suicide club, and was exempt from all fatigues. Then came an awful shock. The sergeant looked over in my direction and said:

"Don't you bomb throwers think you are wearing top hats out here. 'Cordin' to orders you've been taken up on the strength of this section, and will have to do your bit with the pick and shovel, same as the rest of us."

I put up a howl on my way to get my shovel, but the only thing that resulted was a loss of good humor on my part.

We fell in at eight o'clock, outside of our billets, a sort of masquerade party. I was disguised as a common laborer, had a pick and shovel, and about one hundred empty sandbags. The rest, about two hundred in all, were equipped likewise: picks, shovels, sandbags, rifles and ammunition.

The party moved out in column of fours, taking the road leading to the trenches. Several times we had to string out in the ditch to let long columns of limbers, artillery and supplies get past.

The marching, under these conditions, was necessarily slow. Upon arrival at the entrance to the communication trench, I looked at my illuminated wrist watch—it was eleven o'clock.

Before entering this trench, word was passed down the line, "no talking or smoking, lead off in single file, covering party first."

This covering party consisted of 30 men, armed with rifles, bayonets, bombs, and two Lewis machine guns. They were to protect us and guard against a surprise attack while digging in No Man's Land.

The communication trench was about half a mile long, a zigzagging ditch, eight feet deep and three feet wide.

Now and again, German shrapnel would whistle overhead and burst in our vicinity. We would crouch against the earthen walls while the shell fragments "slapped" the ground above us.

Once Fritz turned loose with a machine gun, the bullets from which "cracked" through the air and kicked up the dirt on the top, scattering sand and pebbles, which, hitting our steel

helmets, sounded like raindrops.

Upon arrival in the fire trench an officer of the Royal Engineers gave us our instructions and acted as guide.

We were to dig an advanced trench two hundred yards from the Germans (the trenches at this point were six hundred yards apart).

Two winding lanes, five feet wide, had been cut through our barbed wire, for the passage of the diggers. From these lanes white tape had been laid

on the ground to the point where we were to commence work. This in order that we would not get lost in the darkness. The proposed trench was also laid out with tape.

The covering party went out first. After a short wait, two scouts came back with information that the working party was to follow and "carry on" with their work.

In extended order, two yards apart, we noiselessly crept across No Man's Land. It was nervous work; every minute we expected a machine gun to open fire on us. Stray bullets "cracked" around us, or a ricochet sang overhead.

Arriving at the taped diagram of the trench, rifles slung around our shoulders, we lost no time in getting to work. We dug as quietly as possible but every now and then the noise of a pick or shovel striking a stone would send the cold shivers down our backs. Under our breaths we heartily cursed the offending Tommy.

At intervals a star shell would go up from the German lines and we would remain motionless until the glare of its white light died out.

Continued next week



Trench Digging.

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, " " " "	" " " " " "	" " " " " "
" " 3:45, " "	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, " "	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, 10:35, 12:20, 1:30, p. m., 2:20, 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 8:50
" 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	" 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 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, 7:13		

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