



"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 Tommies.

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 "Sulicide 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 XII—Empey joins the "sul" as the bombing squad is called.

CHAPTER XIII—Each Tommy gets an official bath.

CHAPTER XIV—Empey helps dig an advanced trench under German fire.

CHAPTER XV—On "listening post" in No Man's Land.

CHAPTER XVI—Two artillerymen "put one over" on Old Pepper, their regimental commander.

CHAPTER XVII—Empey has narrow escape while on patrol duty in No Man's Land.

CHAPTER XVIII—Back in rest billets Empey writes and stages a farce comedy.

After the first night and aimed at the right of the line of bottles instead of the left, and the poor boob behind the scenes started breaking the bottles on the left, and then the boxholders turned loose; but outside of this little fiasco the performance was a huge success, and we decided to run it for a week.

New troops were constantly coming through, and for six performances we had the "S. R. O." sign suspended outside.

CHAPTER XIX.

On His Own.

Of course Tommy cannot always be producing plays under fire but while in rest billets he has numerous other ways of amusing himself. He is a great gambler, but never plays for large stakes. Generally, in each company, you will find a regular Canfield. This man banks nearly all the games of chance and is an undisputed authority on the rules of gambling. Whenever there is an argument among the Tommies about some uncertain point as to whether Houghton is entitled to Watkins' strance, the matter is taken

to the recognized authority and his decision is final.

The two most popular games are "Crown and Anchor" and "House."

The paraphernalia used in "Crown and Anchor" consists of a piece of canvas two feet by three feet. This is divided into six equal squares. In these squares are palated a club, diamond, heart, spade, crown, and an anchor, one device to a square. There are three dice used, each dice marked the same as the canvas. The banker sets up his gambling outfit in the corner of a billet and starts bally-hooing until a crowd of Tommies gathers around; then the game starts.

The Tommies place bets on the squares, the crown or anchor being played the most. The banker then rolls his three dice and collects or pays out as the case may be. If you play the crown and one shows up on the dice, you get even money, if two show up, you receive two to one, and if three, three to one. If the crown does not appear and you have bet on it, you lose, and so on. The percentage for the banker is large if every square is played, but if the crowd is partial to, say two squares, he has to trust to luck. The banker generally wins.

The game of "House" is very popular also. It takes two men to run it. This game consists of numerous squares of cardboard containing three rows of numbers, five numbers to a row. The numbers run from one to ninety. Each card has a different combination.

The French "estaminets" in the villages are open from eleven in the morning until one in the afternoon in accordance with army orders.

After dinner the Tommies congregate at these places to drink French beer at a penny a glass and play "House."

As soon as the estaminet is sufficiently crowded the proprietors of the "House" game get busy and, as they term it, "form a school." This consists of going around and selling cards at a franc each. If they have ten in the school, the backers of the game deduct two francs for their trouble and the winner gets eight francs.

Then the game starts. Each buyer places his card before him on the table, first breaking up matches into fifteen pieces.

One of the backers of the game has a small cloth bag in which are ninety cardboard squares, each with a number printed thereon, from one to ninety. He raps on the table and cries out: "Eyes down, my lucky lads."

All noise ceases and every one is attention.

The croupier places his hand in the bag and draws forth a numbered square and immediately calls out the number. The man who owns the card with that particular number on it, covers the square with a match. The

one who covers the fifteen numbers on his card first shouts "House." The other backer immediately comes over to him and verifies the card by calling out the numbers thereon to the man with the bag. As each number is called he picks it out of the ones picked from the bag and says, "Right." If the count is right he shouts, "House correct, pay the lucky gentleman, and sell him a card for the next school." The "lucky gentleman" generally buys one unless he has a miser trace in his veins.

Then another collection is made, a school formed, and they carry on with the game.

The caller-out has many nicknames for the numbers such as "Kelly's Eye" for one, "Leg's Eleven" for eleven, "Clickety-click" for sixty-six, or "Top of the house" meaning ninety.

The game is honest and quite enjoyable. Sometimes you have fourteen numbers on your card covered and you are waiting for the fifteenth to be called. In an imploring voice you call out, "Come on, Watkins, chum, I'm sweating on 'Kelly's Eye.'"

Watkins generally replies, "Well, keep out of a draft, you'll catch cold."

Another game is "Pontoon," played with cards; it is the same as our "Black Jack," or "Twenty-one."

A card game called "Brag" is also popular. Using a casino deck, the dealer deals each player three cards. It is similar to our poker, except for the fact that you only use three cards and cannot draw. The deck is never shuffled until a man shows three of a kind or a "prile" as it is called. The value of the hands are, high card, a pair, a run, a flush or three of a kind or "prile." The limit is generally a penny, so it is hard to win a fortune.

The next in popularity is a card game called "Nap." It is well named. Every time I played it I went to sleep. Whist and solo whist are played by the highbrows of the company.

When the gamblers tire of all other games they try "Banker and Broker."

I spent a week trying to teach some of the Tommies how to play poker, but because I won thirty-five francs they declared that they didn't "fawncy" the game.

Tommy plays few card games; the general run never heard of poker, euchre, seven up, or pinochle. They have a game similar to pinochle called "Royal Bezique," but few know how to play it.

Generally there are two decks of cards in a section, and in a short time they are so dog-eared and greasy, you can hardly tell the ace of spades from the ace of hearts. The owners of these decks sometimes condescend to lend them after much coaxing.

So you see, Mr. Atkins has his fun mixed in with his hardships and, contrary to popular belief, the rank and file of the British army in the trenches is one big happy family. Now in Virginia, at school, I was fed on old McGuffey's primary reader, which gave me an opinion of an Englishman about equal to a "76 Minute Man's" backed up by a Sinn Feiner's. But I found Tommy to be the best of mates and a gentleman through and through. He never thinks of knocking his officers. If one makes a costly mistake and Tommy pays with his blood, there is no general condemnation of the officer. He is just pitied. It is exactly the same as it was with the Light Brigade at Balaclava, to say nothing of Gallipoli, Neuve Chapelle and Loos. Personally I remember a little incident where twenty of us were sent on a trench raid, only two of us returning, but I will tell this story later on.

I said it was a big happy family, and so it is, but as in all happy families, there are servants, so in the British army there are also servants, officers' servants, or "O. S." as they are termed. In the American army the common name for them is "dog robbers." From a controversy in the English papers, Winston Churchill made the statement, as far as I can remember, that the officers' servants in the British forces totaled nearly two hundred thousand. He claimed that this removed two hundred thousand exceptionally good and well-trained fighters from the actual firing line, claiming that the officers, when selecting a man for servant's duty, generally picked the man who had been out the longest and knew the ropes.

But from my observation I find that a large percentage of the servants do go over the top, but behind the lines they very seldom engage in digging parties, fatigues, parades or drills. This work is as necessary as actually engaging in an attack, therefore I think it would be safe to say that the all-round work of the two hundred thousand is about equal to fifty thousand men who are on straight military duties. In numerous instances, officers' servants hold the rank of lance-corporals and they assume the same duties and authority of a butler, the one stripe giving him precedence over the other servants.

There are lots of amusing stories told of "O. S."

One day one of our majors went into the servants' billet and commenced "blinding" at them, saying that his horse had no straw and that he personally knew that straw had been is-

sued for this purpose. He called the lance-corporal to account. The corporal answered, "Blime me, sir, the straw was issued, but there wasn't enough left over from the servants' beds; in fact, we had to use some of the 'ay to 'elp out, sir.'"

It is needless to say that the servants dispensed with their soft beds that particular night.

Nevertheless it is not the fault of the individual officer, it is just the survival of a quaint old English custom. You know an Englishman cannot be changed in a day.

But the average English officer is a good sport. He will sit on a fire step and listen respectfully to Private Jones' theory of the way the war should be conducted. This war is gradually crumbling the once insurmountable wall of caste.

You would be convinced of this if you could see King George go among his men on an inspecting tour under fire, or pause before a little wooden cross in some shell-tossed field with tears in his eyes as he reads the inscription. And a little later perhaps bend over a wounded man on a stretcher, putting him on the head.

More than once in a hospital I have seen a titled Red Cross nurse fetching and carrying for a wounded soldier, perhaps the one who in civil life delivered the coal at her back door. Today she does not shrink from lighting his fire or even washing his grimy body.

Tommy admires Albert of Belgium because he is not a pusher of men; he lends them. With him it's not a case of "take that trench," it is "come on and we will take it."

It is amusing to notice the different characteristics of the Irish, Scotch and English soldiers. The Irish and Scotch are very impetuous, especially when it comes to bayonet fighting, while the Englishman, though a trifle slower, thoroughly does his bit; he is more methodical and has the grip of a bulldog on a captured position. He is slower to think; that is the reason why he never knows when he is licked.

Twenty minutes before going over the top the English Tommy will sit on the fire step and thoroughly examine the mechanism of his rifle to see that it is in working order and will fire properly. After this examination he is sat-

isfied and ready to meet the Boches.

But the Irishman or Scotchman sits on the fire step, his rifle with bayonet fixed between his knees, the butt of which perhaps is sinking into the mud—the bolt couldn't be opened with a team of horses it is so rusty—but he splits on his sleeve and slowly polishes his bayonet; when this is done he also is ready to argue with Fritz.

It is not necessary to mention the colonials (the Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders), the whole world knows what they have done for England.

The Australian and New Zealander is termed the "Anzac," taking the name from the first letters of their official designation, Australian and New Zealand army corps.

Tommy divides the German army into three classes according to their fighting abilities. They rank as follows: Prussians, Bavarians and Saxons.

When up against a Prussian regiment it is a case of keep your napper below the parapet and duck. A bang-bang all the time and a war is on. The Bavarians are little better, but the Saxons are fairly good sports and are willing occasionally to behave as gentlemen and take it easy, but you cannot trust any of them overlong.

At one point of the line the trenches were about thirty-two yards apart. This sounds horrible, but in fact it was easy, because neither side could shell the enemy's front-line trench for fear shells would drop into their own. This eliminated artillery fire.

In these trenches when up against the Prussians and Bavarians, Tommy had a hot time of it, but when the Saxons "took over" it was a picnic; they would yell across that they were Saxons and would not fire. Both sides would sit on the parapet and carry on a conversation. This generally consisted of Tommy telling them how much he loved the kaiser, while the Saxons informed Tommy that King George was a particular friend of theirs and hoped that he was doing nicely.

When the Saxons were to be relieved by Prussians or Bavarians, they would yell this information across No Man's Land and Tommy would immediately tumble into his trench and keep his head down.

If an English regiment was to be relieved by the wild Irish, Tommy would

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 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 9:06 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 8:30
" 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 " " 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., 8:15 9:05, 10:50, 12:30, M, 1:45, p. m., 2:35, 4:15, 4:55, 7:10	

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