



"OVER THE TOP"

AN AMERICAN SOLDIER WHO WENT

ARTHUR GUY EMPEY

MACHINE GUNNER, SERVING IN FRANCE

CHAPTER V.

Mud, Rats and Shells. I must have slept for two or three hours, not the refreshing kind that results from clean sheets and soft pillows, but the sleep that comes from cold, wet and sheer exhaustion.

Suddenly, the earth seemed to shake and a thunderclap burst in my ears. I opened my eyes—I was splashed all over with sticky mud, and men were picking themselves up from the bottom of the trench. The parapet on my left had toppled into the trench, completely blocking it with a wall of tumbled-up earth. The man on my left lay still. I rubbed the mud from my face, and an awful sight met my gaze—his head was smashed to a pulp, and his steel helmet was full of brains and blood. A German "Minnie" (trench mortar) had exploded in the next traverse. Men were digging into the soft mass of mud in a frenzy of haste. Stretcher-bearers came up the trench on the double. After a few minutes of digging, three still, muddy forms on stretchers were carried down the communication trench to the rear. Soon they would be resting "somewhere in France," with a little wooden cross over their heads. They had done their bit for king and country, had died without firing a shot, but their services were appreciated, nevertheless.

Later on, I found out their names. They belonged to our draft. I was dazed and motionless. Suddenly a shovel was pushed into my hands, and a rough but kindly voice said:

"Here, my lad, lend a hand clearing the trench, but keep your head down, and look out for snipers. One of the Fritz's is a daisy, and he'll get you if you're not careful."

Lying on my belly on the bottom of the trench, I filled sandbags with the sticky mud, they were dragged to my rear by the other men, and the work of rebuilding the parapet was on. The harder I worked, the better I felt. Although the weather was cold, I was soaked with sweat.

Occasionally a bullet would crack overhead, and a machine gun would kick up the mud on the bashed-in parapet. At each crack I would duck and shield my face with my arm. One of the older men noticed this action of mine, and whispered:

"Don't duck at the crack of a bullet, Yank; the danger has passed—you never hear the one that wings you. Always remember that if you are going to get it, you'll get it, so never worry."

This made a great impression on me at the time, and from then on, I adopted his motto, "If you're going to get it, you'll get it."

It helped me wonderfully. I used it so often afterwards that some of my mates dubbed me, "If you're going to get it, you'll get it."

After an hour's hard-work, all my nervousness left me, and I was laughing and joking with the rest.

At one o'clock, dinner came up in the form of a dixie of hot stew.

I looked for my canteen. It had fallen off the fire step, and was half buried in the mud. The man on my left noticed this, and told the corporal, dishing out the rations, to put my share in his mess tin. Then he whispered to me, "Always take care of your mess tin, mate."

I had learned another maxim of the trenches.

That stew tasted fine. I was as hungry as a bear. We had "seconds," or another helping, because three of the men had "gone West," killed by the explosion of the German trench mortar, and we ate their share, but still I was hungry, so I filled in with bully beef and biscuits. Then I drained my water bottle. Later on I learned another maxim of the front line, "Go separately with your water." The bully beef made me thirsty, and by tea time I was dying for a drink, but my pride would not allow me to ask my mates for water. I was fast learning the ethics of the trenches.

That night I was put on guard with an older man. We stood on the fire step with our hands over the top, peering out into No Man's Land. It was nervous work for me, but the other fellow seemed to take it as part of the night's routine.

Then something shot past my face. My heart stopped beating, and I ducked my head below the parapet. A soft chuckle from my mate brought me to my senses, and I feebly asked, "For heaven's sake, what was that?" He answered, "Only a rat taking a promenade along the sandbags." I felt very sheepish.

About every twenty minutes the sentry in the next traverse would fire a star shell from his flare pistol. The "pop" would give me a start of fright. I never got used to this noise during my service in the trenches.

I would watch the ace described by the star shell, and then stare into No Man's Land waiting for it to burst. In

its lurid light the barbed wire and stakes would be silhouetted against its light like a latticed window. Then darkness.

Once, out in front of our wire, I heard a noise and saw dark forms moving. My rifle was lying across the sandbagged parapet. I reached for it, and was taking aim to fire, when my mate grasped my arm, and whispered, "Don't fire." He challenged in a low voice. The reply came back instantly from the dark forms:

"Shut your blakin' mouth, you bloomin' idiot; do you want us to click it from the Boches?" Later we learned that the word, "No challenging or firing, wiring party out in front," had been given to the sentry on our right, but he had failed to pass it down the trench. An officer had overheard our challenge and the reply, and immediately put the offending sentry under arrest. The sentry clicked twenty-one days on the wheel, that is, he received twenty-one days' field punishment No. 1, or "crucifixion," as Tommy terms it.

This consists of being spread-eagled on the wheel of a limber two hours a day for twenty-one days, regardless of the weather. During this period, your rations consist of bully beef, biscuits and water.

A few months later I met this sentry and he confided to me that since being "crucified," he had never failed to pass the word down the trench when so ordered. In view of the offense, the above punishment was very light, in that failing to pass the word down a trench may mean the loss of many lives, and the spoiling of some important enterprise in No Man's Land.

CHAPTER VI.

"Back of the Line."

Our tour in the front-line trench lasted four days, and then we were relieved by the — brigade.

Going down the communication trench we were in a merry mood, although we were cold and wet, and every bone in our bodies ached. It makes a lot of difference whether you are "going in" or "going out."

At the end of the communication trench, limbers were waiting on the road for us. I thought we were going to ride back to rest billets, but soon found out that the only time an infantryman rides is when he is wounded and is bound for the base or Blighty. These limbers carried our reserve ammunition and rations. Our march to rest billets was thoroughly enjoyed by me. It seemed as if I were on furlough, and was leaving behind everything that was disagreeable and horrible. Every recruit feels this way after being relieved from the trenches.

We marched eight kilos and then halted in front of a French estaminet. The captain gave the order to turn out on each side of the road and wait his return. Pretty soon he came back and told B company to occupy billets 117, 118 and 119. Billet 117 was an old stable which had previously been occupied by cows. About four feet in front of the entrance was a huge manure pile, and the odor from it was anything but pleasant. Using my flashlight I stumbled through the door.

Just before entering I observed a white sign reading: "Sitting 50, lying 20," but, at the time, its significance did not strike me. Next morning I asked the sergeant major what it meant. He nonchalantly answered: "That's some of the work of the R. A. M. C. (Royal Army Medical Corps). It simply means that in case of an attack, this billet will accommodate fifty wounded who are able to sit up and take notice, or twenty stretcher cases."

It was not long after this that I was one of the "20 lying."

I soon hit the hay and was fast asleep, even my friends the "cooties" failed to disturb me.

The next morning at about six o'clock I was awakened by the lance corporal of our section, informing me that I had been detailed as mess orderly, and to report to the cook and give him a hand. I helped him make the fire, carry water from an old well, and fry the bacon. Lids of dixies are used to cook the bacon in. After breakfast was cooked, I carried a dixie of hot tea and the lid full of bacon to our section, and told the corporal that breakfast was ready. He looked at me in contempt, and then shouted, "Breakfast up, come and get it!" I immediately got wise to the trench parlance, and never again informed that "Breakfast was served."

It didn't take long for the Tommies to answer this call. Half dressed, they lined up with their canteens and I dished out the tea. Each Tommy carried in his hand a thick slice of bread which had been issued with the rations the night before. Then I had

the pleasure of seeing them dig into the bacon with their dirty fingers. The allowance was one slice per man. The late ones received very small slices. As each Tommy got his share he immediately disappeared into the billet. Pretty soon about fifteen of them made a rush to the cookhouse, each carrying a huge slice of bread. These slices they dipped into the bacon grease which was stewing over the fire. The last man invariably lost out. I was the last man.

After breakfast our section carried their equipment into a field adjoining the billet and got busy removing the trench mud therefrom, because at 8:45 a. m., they had to fall in for inspection and parade, and woe betide the man who was unshaven, or had mud on his uniform. Cleanliness is next to godliness in the British army, and Old Pepper must have been personally acquainted with St. Peter.

Our drill consisted of close-order formation, which lasted until noon. During this time we had two ten-minute breaks for rest, and no sooner the word, "Fall out for ten minutes," was given than each Tommy got out a fag and lighted it.

Fags are issued every Sunday morning, and you generally get between twenty and forty. The brand generally issued is the "Woodbine." Sometimes we are lucky and get "Goldflakes," "Players" or "Red Hussars." Occasionally an issue of "Life Rays" comes along. Then the older Tommies immediately get busy on the recruits and trade these for "Woodbines" or "Goldflakes." A recruit only has to be stuck once in this manner, and then he ceases to be a recruit. There is a reason. Tommy is a great cigarette smoker. He smokes under all conditions, except when unconscious or when he is reconnoitering in No Man's Land at night. Then, for obvious reasons, he does not care to have a lighted cigarette in his mouth.

Stretcher bearers carry fags for wounded Tommies. When a stretcher bearer arrives alongside of a Tommy who has been hit the following conversation usually takes place: Stretcher bearer—"Want a fag? Where are you hit?" Tommy looks up and answers, "Yes, in the leg."

After dismissal from parade, we returned to our billets and I had to get busy immediately with the dinner issue. Dinner consisted of stew made from fresh beef, a couple of spuds, bully beef, Maconochie rations and water—plenty of water. There is great competition among the men to spear with their forks the two lonely potatoes.

After dinner I tried to wash out the dixie with cold water and a rag, and learned another maxim of the trenches—"It can't be done." I slyly watched one of the older men from another section, and was horrified to see him throw into his dixie four or five double handfuls of mud. Then he poured in some water, and with his hands scoured the dixie inside and out. I thought he was taking an awful risk. Supposing the cook should have seen him! After half an hour of unsuccessful efforts I returned my dixie to the cook shack, being careful to put on the cover, and returned to the billet.



Resting Back of the Lines.

Pretty soon the cook poked his head in the door and shouted: "Hey, Yank, come out here and clean your dixie!" I protested that I had wasted a half-hour on it already, and had used up my only remaining shirt in the attempt. With a look of disdain he exclaimed: "Blow me, your shirt! Why in — didn't you use mud?"

Without a word in reply I got busy with the mud, and soon my dixie was bright and shining.

Most of the afternoon was spent by the men writing letters home. I used my spare time to chop wood for the cook and go with the quartermaster to draw coal. I got back just in time to issue our third meal, which consisted of hot tea. I rinsed out my dixie and returned it to the cookhouse, and went back to the billet with an exhilarated feeling that my day's labor was done. I had fallen asleep on the straw when once again the cook appeared in the door of the billet with: "Blime me, you Yanks are lazy. Who in — a-goin' to draw the water for the mornin' tea? Do you think I'm a-goin' to? Well, I'm not," and he left. I filled the dixie with water from an old squeaking well, and once again lay down in the straw.

(To Be Continued.)

One cent a word is all a little Want Ad will cost you.

Something to sell? Advertise in The Bulletin's classified column.

CABIN BOUGHT FOR STOCKMEN

UPPER DESCHUTES ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE BOARD COMPLETES ARRANGEMENTS FOR RIDING CRANE PRAIRIE RANGE

(From Friday's Daily.)

Arrangements for purchasing the cabin at the old cow camp on Crane Prairie, formerly owned by the Stanley ranch company, were completed yesterday at a meeting of the executive board of the Upper Deschutes Stockmen's association held in the local forest service office. The building will be used exclusively as a summer camp for the riders and users of the Crane Prairie range.

This is the second stock association to secure a cabin of its own.

Jack Harvey and Bob Crandall were appointed riders for this section and another man will also be picked later for the lower Deschutes district. The three will also act as state fire wardens, cooperating with the forest service in checking fires.

Due to the shortage of beef 1700 head of cattle will run on Crane Prairie this year, an increase of 300 steers over the previous season. The forest service feels that though the improvements in management of the range its carrying capacity may actually be increased.

The men in yesterday attending the meeting were M. S. Mayfield, S. S. Stearns, Leland Casey, M. H. McCoy and R. E. Grimes

"It Sure Does the Work"

Mrs. W. H. Thornton, 3523 W 10th St., Little Rock, Ark., writes: "My little boy had a severe attack of croup and I honestly believe he would have died if it had not been for Foley's Honey and Tar. I would not be without it at any price, as it sure does the work." Best remedy known for coughs, colds, whooping cough, Sold everywhere. Adv.

LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE OF SALE OF ESTRAY
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to an order made and entered in the Justice Court of Bend, Oregon, on the 23rd day of February, 1918, the following described estray will be sold to the highest bidder for cash, to-wit:
One Bay Mare, weight about 1200 pounds, branded with G on left shoulder, to satisfy costs of keeping cost of advertising, cost of sale and all cost in connection with this proceeding, said sale to be held at my said ranch at the hour of ten o'clock in the forenoon of the 20th day of March, 1918.
Dated this 23rd day of February, 1918.
L. C. Young.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.

Department of the Interior, U. S. Land Office at The Dalles, Oregon, February 18, 1918.
Notice is hereby given that Charles F. Brennan, of Millican, Oregon, who, on September 11, 1914, made Homestead Entry No. 0132849, for lots 3, 4, 5 1/4 NW 1/4, N 1/2 SW 1/4, Sec. 1, SE 1/4 NE 1/4, NE 1/4 SE 1/4, Sec. 2, T. 20 S. R. 16, E. W. M., has filed notice of intention to make final three year proof, to establish claim to the land above described, before H. C. Ellis, U. S. Commissioner, at Bend, Oregon, on the 28th day of March, 1918.
Claimant names as witnesses: Herbert E. Moore, Frank Percival, and John H. Israel, all of Millican, Oregon, and Ernest R. Edmunds, of Bend, Oregon.
H. FRANK WOODCOCK, Registrar.
51,5p

Notice of Publication

Department of the Interior, U. S. Land Office at The Dalles, Oregon, March 1, 1918.
Notice is hereby given that William Spencer, of Millican, Oregon, who, on December 27, 1912, made H. E. 011108, and February 2, 1914, made additional entry No. 012482,

THE RED CROSS NURSES OF EUROPE ARE GIVING TOASTED CIGARETTES TO THE BOYS

To anyone who doesn't know of the wonderful advances that have been made in the preparation of smoking tobaccos in the last few years it may sound strange to speak of toasted cigarettes.

Strictly speaking, we should say cigarettes made of toasted tobacco; the smokers of this country will recognize it more readily by its trade name, "LUCKY STRIKE"—the toasted cigarette.

The American Tobacco Company are producing millions of these toasted cigarettes and these are being bought in enormous quantities through the various tobacco funds conducted by the newspapers of the country and forwarded through the Red Cross Society to the boys in France.

This new process of treating tobacco not only improves the flavor of the tobacco but it seals in this flavor and makes the cigarettes keep better.

The Red Cross nurse is always glad to have a cigarette for the wounded soldier, as, in most instances, that is the first thing asked for.

—Adv.

for SE 1/4 NE 1/4, E 1/2 SE 1/4, Sec. 12, NE 1/4, SE 1/4 NW 1/4, Sec. 13, Township 20, S., Range 14, E., Willamette Meridian, has filed notice of intention to make Final Three Year Proof to establish claim to the land above described, before H. C. Ellis, U. S.

Commissioner, at Bend, Oregon, on the 25th day of April, 1918.

Claimant names as witnesses: Aaron D. Norton, Fred G. Kiger, Louis H. Gless all of Millican, Oregon and Burton E. Davis of Bend, Oregon. 1-5-p

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