

**MY FOURTEEN MONTHS  
AT THE FRONT**  
Continued from first page

time of the gas attack was one of the most remarkable men I ever met. For several years before the war he had been in the British secret service in Germany, so he spoke German almost as well as he did English.

One day we stopped at a hospital in Bailleul, and one of the orderlies told us that there were some German wounded there. The officer asked me if I would like to go in and see them. I said I would like it very much, so we went in. There was one poor devil all by himself among some English patients. The officer went over and sat on the edge of his bed and began to talk to him.

If you could have seen that poor fellow's face when he heard himself addressed in his own language! His whole countenance lighted up, and he began to talk. Pretty soon the tears began to run down his cheeks, and I felt awfully sorry for the poor chap, who was away from all his own people, severely wounded.

He said that he had just been married before the beginning of the war, and he and his wife had saved all they could, and two days before he was called up they had bought a cow. He was as worried as he could be for fear something had happened to the cow.

The bombardment of Ypres began the night of the April day we experienced the gas, and with the bombardment began the infantry attack. I was up at a little place called Rheninghiest, and I could hear the rifles and machine guns at it for all they were worth. I was thanking my lucky stars that I was on my car instead of a motorcycle machine gun, when an orderly rode up and told me that I was to report at headquarters at once.

All the way back to camp I had the feeling that something was going to happen, and when I arrived there I was told to report myself to the signal company for duty with my motorcycle. Then I knew that I was to carry dispatches through the coming battle.

I wish to make particular note of the fact that at the beginning of this battle, which lasted three weeks, we dispatch riders numbered thirty-one in all for our corps. Half an hour later we were fully equipped and on our way to the advanced report center, which would be the scene of our activities until the fight was over.

We were about 800 yards to the rear of the first line of trenches and were given an old barn to ourselves, and we laid out our blankets and made our beds, for it was 10:30 o'clock. The attack was increasing in fury, all kinds of shells landing around us, and the Germans were using their same old tactics of hurling great masses of troops against our position.

Our machine guns gave the usual good account of themselves, and the German dead were piled up over our wire entanglements in great heaps. The Germans would fall back, reform and come on again in their usual close formation. So it went all night, and when the morning came the "dead ground" between the two lines of trenches was a gruesome looking place. During the day the Germans bombarded our first and second line trenches with high explosives and shrapnel all day, and at night they resumed their infantry attack on our position. Day after day and night after night the battle continued until we all felt dead and numb all over.

Sometimes the Germans would penetrate our lines for a few yards, and then we would immediately "counter" before they had a chance to strengthen their position. We lost an awful lot of men, but even though I don't know the exact figures I know I am safe in saying that the German losses were more than double what ours were.

We dispatch riders were certainly kept busy during this time. Our work was to be standing by every minute of the day and night, and the moment we were wanted to sling the dispatch case over our shoulder and get away for the headquarters to the rear.

The riding at night was terrible. The Germans were shelling all the roads in the vicinity, and we had to go dashing along through the inky blackness at breakneck pace. It was impossible to see more than a yard or two ahead, and so it was a case of ride like the dickens and trust to luck. The road was covered with shell holes, and the first intimation we would get of the fact was when we would feel the motorbike drop beneath us and feel ourselves shooting through the air like amateur skyrockets.

We would pick ourselves up, drag the motorbike out of the hole and, if it would still run, jump on it and get away again. We certainly got some terrible spills, and there were a good many who got broken bones and a few who had their necks and backs broken.

Imagination cannot conceive of our utter misery. Everywhere I looked at all hours of the day and night it was just nightmare. Most of the time we were kept too busy to sleep, and we would be so tired we could hardly move. The constant din of the guns of all sizes and of the exploding shells was enough to drive nearly all of us insane.

Perhaps this little incident will show what condition our nerves were in. A young fellow named Lewis and I had chummed together for the time being, and we rode the same route during the entire battle. One night he came down to headquarters just ahead of me, and, I assure you, we came through some mighty hot territory. I was in awful condition myself, but I think he was even worse.

I handed my case in, and while I was waiting for orders I went out to the petrol stores to fill up the tank on my bike. Lewis was talking to the officer in charge of the riders and was standing with his back to the door. Another fellow came in carrying two empty petrol tins, and—unintentionally, of course—he dropped them just behind Lewis. They made quite a racket, and, coming so suddenly, Lewis jumped over a table and fainted dead away.

We were all in about the same condition, and it didn't take much to get a rise out of us. Poor Lewis was killed the next night by falling into a shell hole.

Continued Next Week.

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