"OVER THE TOP"

By An American Soldier Who Went

Arthur Guy Empey

Machine Gunner, Serving in France

EMPEY GETS INTO THE FRONT LINE TRENCH—AND WISHES HE WERE BACK IN JERSEY CITY.

Synopsis.—Fired by the sinking of the Lusitania, with the loss of American lives, Arthur Guy Empey, an American living in Jersey City, goes to England and enlists as a private in the British army. After a short experience as a recruiting officer in London, he is sent to training quarters in France, where he first hears the sound of big guns and makes the acquaintance of "cooties."

CHAPTER II.—Continued.

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The greatest shock a recruit gets when he arrives at his battalion in France is to see the men engaging in a "cootie" hunt. With an air of contempt and disgust he avoids the company of the older men, until a couple of days later, in a torment of itching, he also has to resort to a shirt hunt, or spend many a sleepless night of misery. During these hunts there are lots of pertinent remarks bandied back and forth among the explorers, such as, "Say, Bill, I'll swap you two little ones for a big one," or, "I've got a black one here that looks like Kaiser Bill."

One sunny day in the front-line trench, I saw three officers sitting outside of their dugout ("cooties" are no respecters of rank; I have even noticed a suspicious uneasiness about a certain well-known general), one of them was a major, two of them were exploring their shirts, paying no attention to the occasional shells which passed overhead. The major was writing a letter; every now and then he would lay aside his writing-pad, search his shirt for a few minutes, get an inspiration, and then resume writing. At last he finished his letter and gave it to his "runner." I was curious to see whether he was writing to an insect firm, so when the runner passed me I engaged him in conversation and got a glimpse at the address on the envelope. It was addressed to Miss Alice Somebody, in London. The "runner" informed me that Miss Somebody was the major's sweetheart and that he wrote to her every day. Just imagine it, writing a love letter during a "cootie" hunt; but such is the creed of the trenches.

CHAPTER III.

I Go to Church.

Upon enlistment we had identity disks issued to us. These were small disks of red fiber worn around the neck by means of a string. Most of the Tommies also used a little metal disk which they wore around the left wrist by means of a chain. They had previously figured it out that if their heads were blown off, the disk on the left wrist would identify them. If they lost their left arm the disk around the neck would serve the purpose, but if their head and left arm were blown off, no one would care who they were, so it did not matter. On one side of the disk was inscribed your rank, name, number and battalion, while on the other was stamped your religion.

C. of E., meaning Church of England; R. C., Roman Catholic; W., Wesleyan; P., Presbyterian; but if you happened to be an atheist they left it blank, and just handed you a pick and shovel. On my disk was stamped C. of E. This is how I got it: The lieutenant who enlisted me asked my religion. I was not sure of the religion of the British army, so I answered, "Oh, any old thing," and he promptly put down C. of E.

Now, just imagine my hard luck. Out of five religions I was unlucky enough to pick the only one where church parade was compulsory!

The next morning was Sunday. I was sitting in the billet writing home to my sister telling her of my wonderful exploits while under fire—all recruits do this. The sergeant major put his head in the door of the billet and shouted: "C. of E. outside for church parade!"

I kept on writing. Turning to me, in a loud voice, he asked, "Empey, aren't you C. of E.?"

I answered, "Yep."

In an angry tone, he commanded, "Don't you 'yep' me. Say, 'Yes, sergeant major.'"

"I did so. Somewhat mollified, he ordered, "Outside for church parade."

I looked up and answered, "I am not going to church this morning."

He said, "Oh, yes, you are!"

I answered, "Oh, no, I'm not!"—But I went.

We lined up outside with rifles and bayonets, 120 rounds of ammunition, wearing our tin hats, and the march to church began. After marching about five kilos, we turned off the road into an open field. At one end of this field the chaplain was standing in a limber. We formed a semicircle around him. Overhead there was a black speck circling round and round in the sky. This was a German Fokker. The chaplain had a book in his left hand—left eye on the book—right eye on the airplane. We Tommies were lucky, we had no books, so had both eyes on the airplane.

After church parade we were marched back to our billets, and played football all afternoon.

CHAPTER IV.

"Into the Trench."

The next morning the draft was inspected by our general, and we were assigned to different companies. The boys in the brigade had nicknamed this general Old Pepper, and he certainly earned the sobriquet. I was assigned to B company with another American named Stewart.

For the next ten days we "rested," repairing roads for the Frenchies, drilling, and digging bombing trenches.

One morning we were informed that we were going up the line, and our march began.

It took us three days to reach reserve billets—each day's march bringing the sound of the guns nearer and nearer. At night, way off in the distance we could see their flashes, which lighted up the sky with a red glare.

Against the horizon we could see numerous observation balloons or "sausages" as they are called.

On the afternoon of the third day's march I witnessed my first airplane being shelled. A thrill ran through me and I gazed in awe. The airplane was making wide circles in the air, while little puffs of white smoke were bursting all around it. These puffs appeared like tiny balls of cotton while after each burst could be heard a dull "plop." The sergeant of my platoon informed us that it was a German airplane and I wondered how he could tell from such a distance because the plane seemed like a little black speck in the sky. I expressed my doubt as to whether it was English, French or German. With a look of contempt he further informed us that the allied anti-aircraft shells when exploding emitted white smoke while the German shells gave forth black smoke, and, as he expressed it, "It must be an Allemand because our pom-poms are shelling, and I know our batteries are not off their bally nappers and are certainly not strafeing our own planes, and another piece of advice—don't chuck your weight about until you've been up the line and learnt something."

I immediately quit "chucking my weight about" from that time on.

Just before reaching reserve billets we were marching along, laughing, and singing one of Tommy's trench ditties:

I want to go home, I want to go home,
I don't want to go to the trenches no more
Where sausages and whizz-bangs are galore.
Take me over the sea, Where the Allemand can't get at me,
Oh, my, I don't want to die,
I want to go home—"

when overhead came a "swish" through the air, rapidly followed by three others. Then about two hundred yards to our left in a large field, four columns of black earth and smoke rose into the air, and the ground trembled from the

A Bomb Proof.

report—the explosion of four German five-nine's, or "coalboxes." A sharp whistle blast, immediately followed by two short ones, rang out from the head of our column. This was to take up "artillery formation." We divided into small squads and went into the fields on the right and left of the road, and crouched on the ground. No other shells followed this salvo. It was our first baptism by shell fire. From the waist up I was all enthusiasm, but from there down, everything was missing. I thought I should die with fright.

After awhile, we reformed into columns of fours, and proceeded on our way.

About five that night, we reached the ruined village of H——, and I got my first sight of the awful destruction caused by German Kultur.

Marching down the main street we came to the heart of the village, and took up quarters in shellproof cellars (shellproof until hit by a shell). Shells were constantly whistling over the village and bursting in our rear, searching for our artillery.

These cellars were cold, damp and smelly, and overrun with large rats—big black fellows. Most of the Tommies slept with their overcoats over their faces. I did not. In the middle of the night I woke up in terror. The cold, clammy feet of a rat had passed over my face. I immediately smothered myself in my overcoat, but could not sleep for the rest of that night.

Next evening, we took over our sector of the line. In single file we wended our way through a zigzag communication trench, six inches deep with mud. This trench was called "Whisky street." On our way up to the front line an occasional flare of bursting shrapnel would light up the sky and we could hear the fragments slapping the ground above us on our right and left. Then a Fritz would traverse back and forth with his "typewriter" or machine gun. The bullets made a sharp cracking noise overhead.

The boy in front of me named Prentice crumpled up without a word. A piece of shell had gone through his shrapnel-proof helmet. I felt sick and weak.

In about thirty minutes we reached the front line. It was dark as pitch. Every now and then a German star shell would pierce the blackness out in front with its silvery light. I was trembling all over, and felt very lonely and afraid. All orders were given in whispers. The company we relieved filed past us and disappeared into the blackness of the communication trench leading to the rear. As they passed us, they whispered, "The best o' luck mates."

I sat on the fire step of the trench with the rest of the men. In each traverse two of the older men had been put on guard with their heads sticking over the top, and with their eyes trying to pierce the blackness in "No Man's Land." In this trench there were only two dugouts, and these were used by Lewis and Vickers machine gunners, so it was the fire step for ours. Pretty soon it started to rain. We put on our "macks," but they were not much protection. The rain trickled down our backs, and it was not long before we were wet and cold. How I passed that night I will never know, but without any unusual occurrence, dawn arrived.

The word "stand down" was passed along the line, and the sentries got down off the fire step. Pretty soon the rum issue came along, and it was a Godsend. It warmed our chilled bodies and put new life into us. Then from the communication trenches came dixies or iron pots, filled with steaming tea, which had two wooden stakes through their handles, and were carried by two men. I filled my canteen and drank the hot tea without taking it from my lips. It was not long before I was asleep in the mud on the fire step.

My ambition had been attained! I was in a front-line trench on the western front, and oh, how I wished I were back in Jersey City.

Empey takes his first turn on the firing step of the trench while the machine gun bullets whiz over his head. He soon learns why Tommy has adopted the motto, "If you're going to get it, you'll get it, so never worry." Don't miss the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

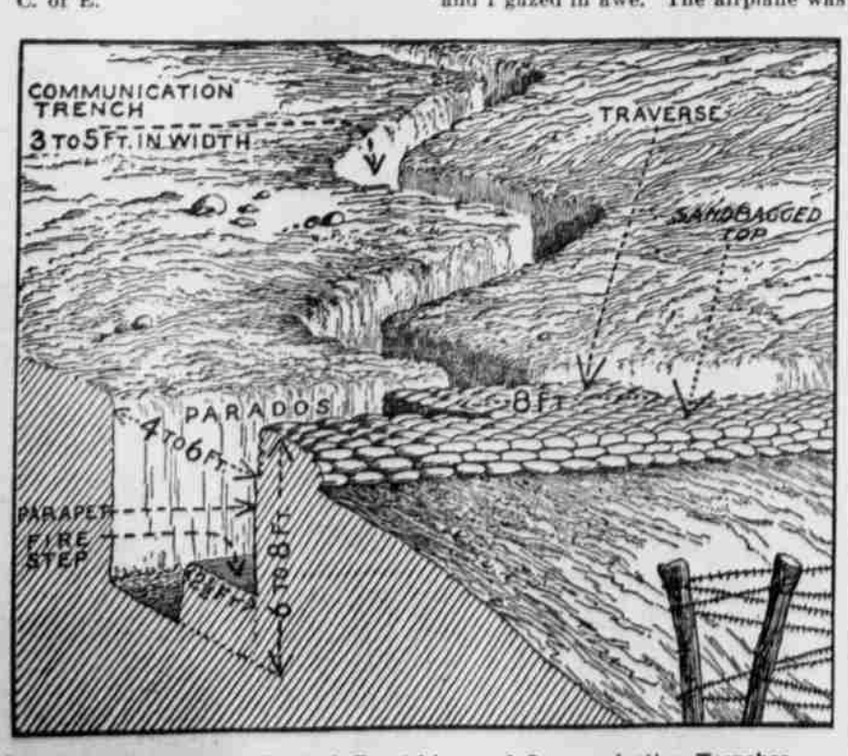

Diagram Showing Typical Front-Line and Communication Trenches.

NEW AND GREATER THINGS

Possibility Ever Open to Mankind as the Periods Dividing Life Are Successively Crossed.

The poetry of all growing life consists in carrying an oldness into a newness, a past into a future, always. So only can our days possibly be bound "each to each by natural piety." I would not for the world think that 20 years hence I should have ceased to see the things which I see now, and love them still. It would make life wearisome beyond expression if I thought that 20 years hence I should see them just as I see them now, and love them with no deeper love because of other visions of their lovableness. And so there comes this deep and simple rule of any man as he crosses the line dividing one period of his life from another, the same rule which he may use also as he passes through any critical occurrence of his life. Make it a time in which you shall realize your faith, and also in which you shall expect of your faith new and greater things. Take what you believe and are, and hold it in your hand with a new firmness as you go forward; but look on it with continual and confident expectation to see it open into something greater and truer.—Phillips Brooks.

Rehabilitation of Holy Land.

Immediate plans for the rehabilitation of the Holy Land, to fit it for the home of the Jews of the world, are now under consideration by the officers of the New York Zionist organization. A medical unit will be dispatched to the stricken land, loans will be made to the colonists to rebuild and refit their farms and vineyards, and irrigation and sanitation problems must be solved. The $1,000,000 fund now being raised will be used for immediate purposes, and it is believed the reconstruction work will involve an expenditure of approximately $100,000,000.

Advance by Retrogression.

The rookie was being taken to the guardhouse.

"Quick promotion," he muttered to himself. "I am already in charge of a squad of men."—Boston Evening Transcript.

Women Will Tell.

Mrs. Bacon—I see English banking institutions employ over 54,000 women.

Mr. Bacon—Of course. Where would you expect to find tellers?

POULTRY FACTS

LITTLE TROUBLE WITH GEESE

Many Farms Adapted for Raising Small Number of Fowls—Pasturage Is Quite Essential.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

In our efforts to increase the production of poultry, which is being urged by the department of agriculture, we should not ignore turkeys, ducks and geese. Many farms are well adapted for geese-raising. They

Flock of Toulouse Geese.

may be raised in small numbers successfully and at a profit on farms where there is low, rough pasture land with a natural supply of water. Geese are generally quite free from disease and insect pests, but occasionally are affected by ailments common to poultry. Grass makes up the bulk of their food, and for this reason pasturage is essential. A body of water, while not absolutely essential, is valuable where geese are raised, and some breeders consider it important during the breeding season. Geese are good foragers, and for this reason many farmers in the South keep them to kill the weeds in the cotton fields.

Geese need little protection in the way of a house, except in winter and during stormy weather. Some kind of a shelter should be provided for the young goslings, and the same precautions taken in raising chickens as to keep the coops and houses clean and provided with plenty of straw scattered about the floor, should be taken.

Geese like other kinds of poultry, should be selected for size, prolificacy and vitality. They should be mated several months prior to the breeding season to obtain the best results. Good matings are not changed from year to year unless the results are unsatisfactory. A gander may be mated with from one to four geese, but pair or trio matings usually give the best results. When mated, geese are allowed to run in flocks. From four to twenty-five geese may be kept on an acre of land, and under most conditions ten is a fair average.

PREPARE GEESE FOR MARKET

Young Fowls Can Be Fed Advantageously While on Grass or Confined in Small Yards.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Before marketing the young geese the average farmer can feed advantageously a fattening ration either while the geese are on grass range or confined to small yards, but it is doubtful whether it would pay him to confine them to individual or small pens and make a specialty of fattening unless he has a special market or retail trade for well-fattened stock.

Geese are usually killed and picked in the same manner as other kinds of poultry. Some markets prefer dry-picked geese, while in other markets no difference is made in the price of scalded or dry-picked geese. When feathers are to be saved, fowls should not be scalded but should be picked dry before or after steaming.

RAISING GEESE FOR PROFIT

Fowls Earn Their Own Living by Foraging in Pastures—Alfalfa Field Is Ideal.

That there is big money in raising geese is conceded by every one who has had anything to do with the raising of them. They earn their own living by foraging in the pastures and meadows, and where great quantities of alfalfa are raised would be an ideal place for them.