

# "OVER THE TOP"

By An American Arthur Guy Empey  
Soldier Who Went Machine Gunner, Serving in France

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## EMPEY LEARNS HOW THE TOMMIES ARE FED IN THE FRONT-LINE TRENCH AND BACK OF IT.

**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." After a brief period of training Empey's company is sent into the front-line trenches, where he takes his first turn on the fire step while the bullets whiz overhead.

### CHAPTER VI.—Continued.

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. 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.

### CHAPTER VII.

#### Rations.

Just dozing off; Mr. Lance Corporal butted in.

In Tommy's eyes a lance corporal is one degree below a private. In the corporal's eyes he is one degree above a general.

He ordered me to go with him and help him draw the next day's rations, also told me to take my waterproof.

Every evening, from each platoon or machine-gun section, a lance corporal and private go to the quartermaster sergeant at the company stores and draw rations for the following day.

The "quarter," as the quartermaster

sergeant is called, receives daily from the orderly room (captain's office) a slip showing the number of men entitled to rations, so there is no chance of putting anything over on him. Many arguments take place between the "quarter" and the platoon noncom, but the former always wins out. Tommy says the "quarter" got his job because he was a burglar in civil life.

Then I spread the waterproof sheet on the ground, while the quartermaster's batman dumped the rations on it. The corporal was smoking a fag. I carried the rations back to the billet. The corporal was still smoking a fag. How I envied him. But when the issue commenced my envy died, and I realized that the first requisite of a non-commissioned officer on active service is diplomacy. There were 19 men in our section, and they soon formed a semicircle around us after the corporal had called out, "Rations up."

The quartermaster sergeant had given a slip to the corporal on which was written a list of the rations. Sitting on the floor, using a wooden box as a table, the issue commenced. On the left of the corporal the rations were piled. They consisted of the following:

Six loaves of fresh bread, each loaf of a different size, perhaps one out of the six being as flat as a pancake, the result of an army service corps man placing a box of bully beef on it during transportation.

Three tins of jam, one apple and the other two plum.

Seventeen Bermuda onions, all different sizes.

A piece of cheese in the shape of a wedge.

Two one-pound tins of butter.

A handful of raisins.

A tin of biscuits, or as Tommy calls them "jaw breakers."

A bottle of mustard pickles.

The "bully beef," spuds, condensed milk, fresh meat, bacon and "Maconchle rations" (a can filled with meat, vegetables and greasy water), had been turned over to the company cook to make a stew for next day's dinner. He also received the tea, sugar, salt, pepper and flour.

Scratching his head, the corporal studied the slip issued to him by the quarter. Then in a slow, mystified voice he read out, "No. 1 section, 19 men. Bread, loaves, six." He looked puzzled and soliloquized in a musing voice:

"Six loaves, nineteen men. Let's see, that's three in a loaf for fifteen men—well, to make it even, four of you'll have to muck in on one loaf."

The four that got stuck made a howl, but to no avail. The bread was dished out. Pretty soon from a far corner of the billet, three indignant Tommies accosted the corporal with:

"What do you call this, a loaf of bread? Looks more like a sniping plate."

The corporal answered: "Well, don't blame me, I didn't bake it; somebody's got to get it, so shut up until I dish out these blakin' rations."

Then the corporal started on the jam.

"Jam, three tins—apple one, plum two. Nineteen men, three tins. Six in a tin makes twelve men for two tins, seven in the remaining tin."

He passed around the jam, and there was another riot. Some didn't like apple, while others who received plum were partial to apple. After a while differences were adjusted and the issue went on.

"Bermuda onions, seventeen."

The corporal avoided a row by saying that he did not want an onion, and I said they make your breath smell, so I guessed I would do without one too. The corporal looked his gratitude.

"Cheese, pounds, two."

The corporal borrowed a jackknife (corporals are always borrowing), and sliced the cheese—each slicing bringing forth a pert remark from the on-lookers as to the corporal's eyesight.

"Raisins, ounces, eight."

By this time the corporal's nerves had gone west, and in despair he said that the raisins were to be turned over to the cook for "duff" (plum pudding). This decision elicited a little "grousing," but quiet was finally restored.

"Biscuits, tins, one."

With his borrowed jackknife, the corporal opened the tin of biscuits, and told everyone to help themselves—no body responded to this invitation. Tommy is "fed up" with biscuits.

"Butter, tins, two."

"Nine in one, ten in the other."

Another rumpus.

"Pickles, mustard, bottles, one."

Nineteen names were put in a steel helmet, the last one out winning the pickles. On the next issue there were only 18 names, as the winner is eliminated until every man in the section has won a bottle.

The raffle is closely watched, because Tommy is suspicious when it comes to gambling with his rations.

When the issue is finished the corporal sits down and writes a letter home, asking them if they cannot get some M. P. (member of parliament) to have him transferred to the Royal Flying corps where he won't have to issue rations.

At the different French estaminets in the village and at the canteens Tommy buys fresh eggs, milk, bread and pastry. Occasionally when he is flush, he invests in a tin of pears or apricots. His pay is only a shilling a day, 24 cents, or a cent an hour. Just imagine, a cent an hour for being under fire—not much chance of getting rich out there.

When he goes into the fire trench (front line), Tommy's menu takes a tumble. He carries in his haversack what the government calls emergency or iron rations. They are not supposed to be opened until Tommy dies of starvation. They consist of one tin of bully beef, four biscuits, a little tin which contains tea, sugar and Oxo cubes (concentrated beef tablets). These are only to be used when the enemy establishes a curtain of shell fire on the communication trenches, thus preventing the "carrying in" of rations, or when in an attack a body of troops has been cut off from its base of supplies.

The rations are brought up at night by the company transport. This is a section of the company in charge of the quartermaster sergeant, composed of men, mules and limbers (two-wheeled wagons), which supplies Tommy's wants while in the front line. They are constantly under shell fire. The rations are unloaded at the entrance to the communication trenches and are "carried in" by men detailed for that purpose. The quartermaster sergeant never goes into the front-line trench. He doesn't have to, and I have never heard of one volunteering to do so.

The company sergeant major sorts the rations and sends them in.

Tommy's trench rations consist of all the bully beef he can eat, biscuits, cheese, tinned butter (sometimes 17 men to a tin), jam or marmalade, and occasionally fresh bread (ten to a loaf). When it is possible he gets tea and stew.

When things are quiet, and Fritz is behaving like a gentleman, which sel-

dom happens, Tommy has the opportunity of making dessert. This is "trench pudding." It is made from broken biscuits, condensed milk, jam—a little water added, slightly flavored with mud—put into a canteen and cooked over a little spirit stove known as "Tommy's cooker."

(A firm in Blighty widely advertises these cookers as a necessity for the men in the trenches. Gullible people buy them—ship them to the Tommies, who, immediately upon receipt of same throw them over the parapet. Sometimes a Tommy falls for the ad, and uses the cooker in a dugout to the disgust and discomfort of the other occupants.)

This mess is stirred up in a tin and allowed to simmer over the flames from the cooker until Tommy decides that it has reached sufficient (guelike) consistency. He takes his bayonet and by means of the handle carries the mess up in the front trench to cool. After it has cooled off he tries to eat it. Generally one or two Tommies in a section have cast-iron stomachs and the tin is soon emptied. Once I tasted trench pudding, but only once.

In addition to the regular ration issue Tommy uses another channel to enlarge his menu.

In the English papers a "Lonely Soldier" column is run. This is for the soldiers at the front who are supposed to be without friends or relatives. They write to the papers and their names are published. Girls and women in England answer them, and send out parcels of foodstuffs, cigarettes, candy, etc. I have known a "lonely" soldier to receive as many as five parcels and eleven letters in one week.

Empey realizes for the first time how death lurks in the trenches when a comrade falls by his side. He tells about it in the next instalment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## NOT THEIR FIRST MEETING

British Officer and Privates, Home From the Front, Had Same Memories of "Tight Corner."

Two privates in "Blighty" blue were limping their way along Regent street, London. Each had his badge of honor—two and three eloquent gold stripes. They were in London town again—in it, but somehow not of it. Only the accident of war made them Regent street saunterers.

From the opposite direction there approached a young officer with a lady companion. He, too, had the gold stripes of the twice wounded. Eager and bright, he seemed absorbed in his companion, apparently not noticing the two privates. Indeed, he was almost by them when in a flash he darted from the side of his companion, seized the hand of one of the privates in a hearty grip and ejaculated:

"Great heavens! fancy meeting you here! Bit different when we were together before, eh? What a tight corner! And only we two left—and here we are again. And how are you, and how are you getting on?"

Succeeded a string of other questions, culminating in "Getting better, eh? Feel as if you'll soon be ready to go out again? How do you feel about it? Will you be glad to go?"

What the private said may be inferred from the resumption of the officer's talk.

"That's the right spirit. Shouldn't wonder if we meet again in another hot corner. Well, good luck and cheerio!"

### A Change for the Invalid.

If you have a friend lying ill, try taking some daintily prepared edibles next time you make a visit.

Nourishing broths and soups, wine jellies, delicately browned custards and light puddings made of eggs and milk are good. Or a small jar of marmalade or half a dozen lightly browned biscuits for the invalid's tea. Or creamed chicken and creamed oysters delivered in a charming blue bowl and all ready to be heated up by the nurse.

Grapefruit is always appreciated and mandarin oranges and white grapes in a pretty basket are an appetizing combination, and there are some invalids who would be delighted with a jar of preserved ginger for occasional nibbling.

### "Kl" in the Navy.

Navy cocon, which Princess Mary thought might be good to eat as chocolate, is known aboard ship as kl. It is served out on the first dog watch every Thursday, and it is drunk whenever circumstances (in other words, the ship's "crusher," or policeman) permit. The men grate down a liberal quantity of it (for kl is less concentrated than shore cocon) and drink it mixed in basins with sugar and condensed milk. At sea a special caudron or kl, prepared by the ship's cook, is sent round action stations in "fanlies," or large pitchers. Midnight for the guns' crews of our fleet is the hour when the kl boat arrives.—London Chronicle.

# POULTRY FACTS.

## SUITABLE SHELTER FOR HENS

House of Appropriate Size, With Nests, Roosts and Feeding Appliances Is Needed.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Every flock of hens needs a suitable shelter—a coop or house of appropriate size, furnished with roosts, nests and appliances for feeding and watering. A flock that is to be used for breeding should also have a yard where the birds can exercise on the ground and in the open air. Hens kept only for eggs for the table may be confined to their house continuously for as long a time as ordinary hens are profitable layers. It is better to give them an outdoor run, but when space is limited it can be dispensed with.

Small flocks need a little more floor space per bird than large flocks, and birds confined constantly to the house should have a little more floor space per bird than others. A coop for six hens should allow five or six square feet of floor space for each; a house for twenty to thirty hens, three or four square feet to each. Yards are usually planned to give not less than 20 square feet of land per hen.

Small coops which can be cleaned without entering them may be built only three or four feet high. This height is most comfortable for the hens. Coops for flocks of more than six or eight birds must be of such height that a grown person can move about in them. In a low coop the same opening will answer for door and window. In high coops with larger wall



A Boy's Backyard Poultry House, Built by Himself.

surfaces a full-sized door and one or more windows are needed.

Roosts are commonly made of small scantling or narrow strips of board, about eight or ten inches length of roost being allowed to each fowl. In small, low coops the roosts should be placed about twelve to fifteen inches from the floor. In larger coops wide boards, to catch the droppings of the birds, are generally used under the roosts, the droppings board being from twenty to thirty inches from the floor and the roost a few inches above the droppings board.

The simplest form of nest is a box a little over a foot square and not less than five or six inches deep. When space is limited the nests should be attached to the wall, the bottom of the nest being a foot or more from the floor. For flocks of five or six hens two nests are needed; for larger flocks one nest for each four or five hens.

The feeding utensils required are: Hoppers for dry mash, trough for table scraps or moist mash, small hoppers for shell and grit, and drinking pans or fountains. For flocks containing not more than 30 birds one of each kind of utensil, if of appropriate size, is enough.

## HOW TO BREAK BROODY FOWL

Confine Hen in Small Coop With Slat Bottom and Give Her Plenty of Water to Drink.

When hens become broody and it is not desired to allow them to hatch chickens, they should be "broken up" as quickly as possible. The sooner this is done the sooner they will resume laying. To break a hen of broodiness she should be confined to a small coop, preferably with a slat bottom. Give her plenty of water to drink; she may be fed or not, as desired. Not much difference will be found in the time required to break her of broodiness whether she is fed or made to fast. Usually three to six days of confinement will do the work, but some hens require ten to twelve days. The broody hen will be recognized by her inclination to stay on the nest at night, the ruffling of her feathers and her desire to pick anyone who approaches her, and by the clucking noise she makes.

### Habits of Turkeys.

Young turkeys usually remain with the mother hen until about October or November, when the males ordinarily separate from the females and range by themselves.



Taking Provisions to the Front.