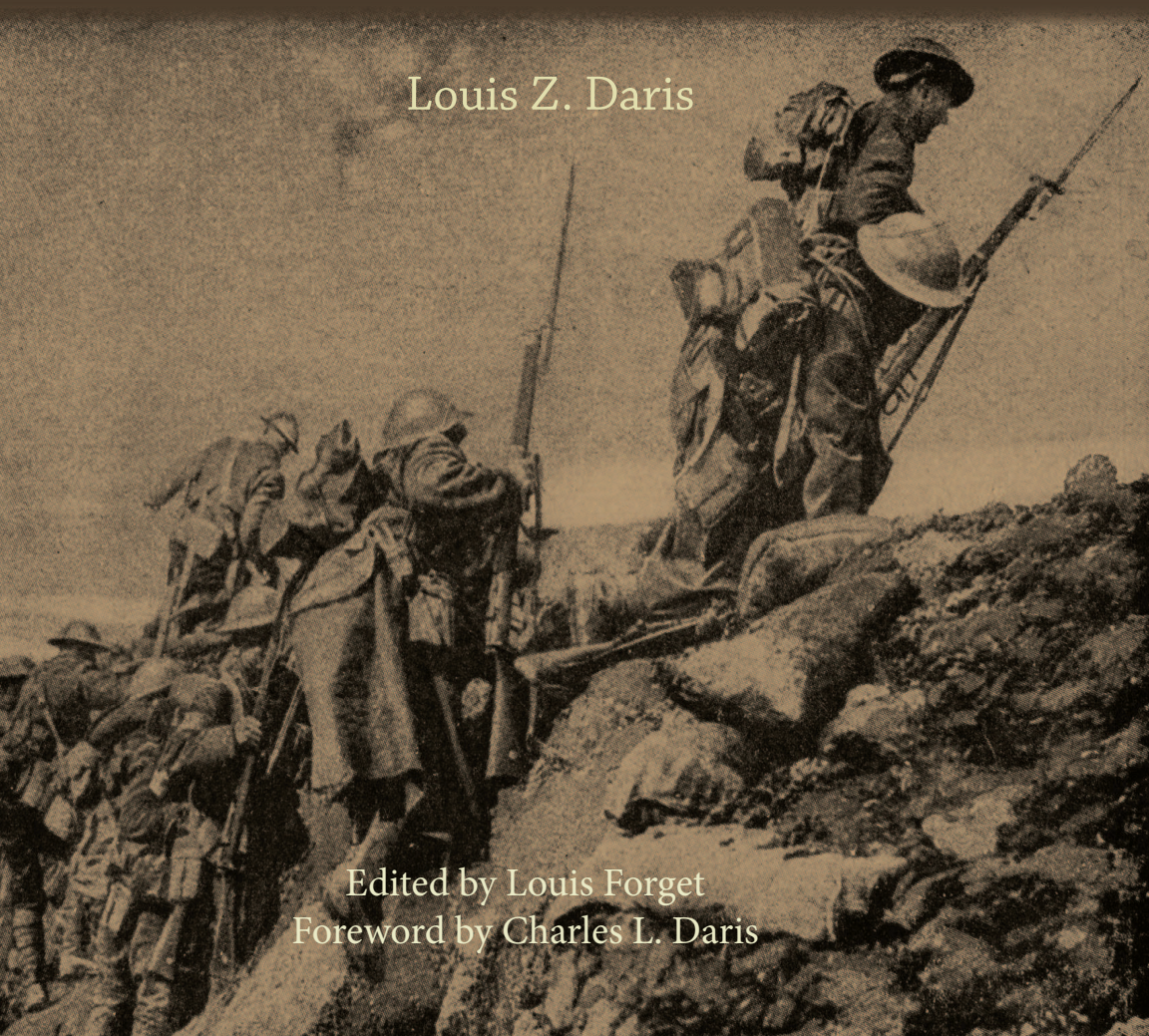
A Memoir of the War

A Doughboy's Journey
Through France
And Germany
In World War I

Louis Z. Daris



Edited by Louis Forget
Foreword by Charles L. Daris

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Arlington, VA, 2018

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Illustrations

This project is dedicated
to the memory of my father, Louis Z. Daris.
Charles L. Daris

Foreword

Writing the memoirs of his participation in the American Expeditionary Forces twelve years after the end of the First World War, my father proudly declared that the time he was in uniform was "the greatest experience of my life." Reading them, one can sense that he relished every minute of it, including terrifying moments in combat or coping with mind-numbing mud whether in the trenches or on his many marches. But he never lost his sense of humor. The ubiquitous mud and frequent rain often prompted him and his buddies to remark with no little irony, "Sunny France!"

The young man from a small New England town arrived wide-eyed in Old Europe and absorbed it all with fascination and curiosity. He wrote of the cobblestone streets, the charming chapels, the seemingly endless quantities of wine, the pretty French girls. He continued to marvel when, after the Armistice, he was part of the American Army of Occupation in the enchantingly picturesque Rhine valley in Germany.

He wrote copious notes in the small diaries he kept with him. These treasured memories made it possible for him to narrate his adventures in detail years later. He also researched the origins of the United States participation in the war and the history of his own regiment, and incorporated his findings in his memoirs.

He told me that one of his sisters had typed the narrative for him on the onion-skin parchment that I kept in a box for a very long time. In addition to the narrative, he created a set of four scrapbooks that included photos and postcards annotated in stunning relief in white ink on black

construction paper, written in his impeccable penmanship. The collection—the narrative and the photo books—have been recreated and are presented herewith in more readable format in two volumes.

My father was one of ten children, the offspring of humble French-Canadian immigrants who spoke virtually no English. Their house was lively and bustling with activity, accompanied always by great hilarity. I recall having my first taste of cold beer in that house when my mustachioed grandfather mischievously let me have a sip. Dad's sense of humor was nurtured in that house, and it resurfaced time and time again in his descriptions of his war experiences.

Dad's brother Ted was one of ten from the village who signed up for the Army as a group after America declared war on Germany. They were all full of raw patriotism and pride in America. The brothers and most of the group were together during the fighting, participating in the first American effort at St. Mihiel. Subsequently Dad, who had been promoted to Sergeant, saw serious combat in the bloody Meuse-Argonne fighting that preceded the Armistice.

In between these times he managed to enjoy a memorable night out in "Gay Paree," had his appendix removed at an Army field hospital on the Longchamp racetrack in Paris, and was wounded twice; in the second instance, he was knocked unconscious by a bomb from a German warplane he had taken a potshot at with his Springfield rifle. I have a fragment from that rifle, which was shattered by the blast.

His comments on the relative merits of English military rations as opposed to French food are droll. And his awe over the beauty of the Rhine valley and the opulence of German spas and casinos are tempered by his sober comparisons to the utter devastation the Germans wreaked on neighboring France.

Although I had casually read the Memoir years ago, revisiting it more intensely in this project brought new focus on my father's character and left me feeling that I know him better now than I ever did when he was alive. It is a little sad that we think we know our parents when we are growing up, but there are always facets that elude us. In my case, my absence abroad for many years in the Foreign Service compounded my lack of awareness.

In his Memoir, Louis Zephern Daris comes across as an honest, humble, devoted, and courageous young man who lived in an America notably more innocent than what it has become. He experienced fear of U-boats

during his Atlantic crossing, and bravely led a patrol on a reconnaissance mission behind enemy lines. Throughout, he did his job well, was promoted twice, and, unlike so many of our soldiers, he was fortunate enough to live to return home and write about his experience. In this Centennial Year, his Memoir is a gift to remind us of the ordeal the soldiers endured for America and the world. What better occasion could there be to salute my father's bravery, and that of over two million other young Americans, who participated in that war.

Charles L. Daris
January 2018

Acknowledgments

I HAD BEEN sitting on Dad's writings for years, promising to do something with them but always daunted by the task and ignorant of the processes involved in exploiting them.

A major inspiration for me to do this project was the urging of two good French friends. When I served as President of the Arlington-Reims Sister City Committee, I became very close to my Reims counterpart, Arnauld Desplanques. One of his committee members was an amateur historian, Jacques Pernet. Jacques was the author of a number of books on American military participation in the two world wars, in which Reims figured centrally. Both Arnauld and Jacques were passionate friends of the United States. When I showed them my father's notes and scrapbooks, they literally begged me to publish them before the WWI centennial celebrations. Each time thereafter that I would see or correspond with Jacques, he would ask me whether I had begun yet. Alas, since that day when I showed them the material, each has perished from untimely illness. So this project is also dedicated to them.

I also have my good friend Louis Forget to thank for inspiring me to dare move forward. He did all the formatting and conversion to manageable text and illustrations, and his suggestions as to organization were invaluable.

C. L. D.

Editor's Note

As Charles Daris states in the Foreword, his father wrote his Memoir of the War around 1931, and one of his sisters typed it on onionskin parchment paper. It is this hundred-and-thirty-odd page document that served as the basis for the present edition. The intent was to make the work generally accessible by putting it in book form, and by bringing the text to contemporary editorial standards, while preserving the author's original "voice."

As a technical matter, the typewritten pages were scanned into PDF files and run through an optical character reader (OCR). The resulting Word file was then corrected of OCR misreadings, and spelling and punctuation were brought to modern American usage. The text also received limited editing for grammar and style, while maintaining the tone of the original. The editing was particularly limited in the spoken dialogues, leaving most colloquial expressions in place.

During the editing process, we noticed that in a number of places, the author had integrated passages from published accounts of the war. These are shown as quotations, but no attempt was made to bring back the quoted texts to their original form.

In addition, the author borrowed passages from H. C. Witwer's fictional *From Baseball to Boches*, a humorous novel in the form of letters from the baseball-player-turned-soldier Edward Harmon to his friend Joe, published in 1918. While these borrowings introduce an element of fiction in what is otherwise a factual account of the author's war-time experience,

Louis Daris evidently found them sufficiently interesting, and probably close enough to his own experience, to include them in his *Memoir.* We have flagged these quotations with an opening "Dear Joe...", as in the original.

We have added a few pictures from the author's photo albums that are being published at the same time, as they provide additional elements of interest to the narrative. Finally, we have added footnotes to explain a few names and terms whose meaning may have been lost over time.

Louis Forget
January 2018

Books mentioned in the text:

James E. Pollard, *The Forty-Seventh Infantry, A History, 1917-1918*, 1919, Saginaw, Michigan, Press of Seeman & Peters, 1919 (Pollard);

Christian A. Bach and Henry Noble Hall, *The Fourth Division, Its Services and Achievements in the World War*, Issued by the Division, 1920 (B&H);

Gen. John J. Pershing, *Final Report [of the Commander-in-Chief, American Expeditionary Forces]*, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1919 (Pershing);

Gen. John J. Pershing, *General Pershing's Story of the American Army in France*, New York, Herzig & McLean, 1919 (Pershing's Story);

H.C. Witwer, *From Baseball to Boches, A Bubbling, Cheerful, Stimulating Book of Fun, Full of the Spirit of Joy and Youth*, New York, Grosset & Dunlap, 1918 (Witwer).

1. Before the War

Events Prior to the Entry of the United States in the War

The Austrian Crown Prince was assassinated at Sarajevo, in the Austrian Province of Bosnia, on June 28, 1914. After a diplomatic correspondence with Serbia which was absolutely uncompromising on Austria's part, Austria declared war, with Germany's backing, on July 28. Russia, Germany and France were involved immediately afterwards.

Germany violated Belgium's neutrality August 4, which also brought England into the War.

On February 5, 1915, Germany announced a submarine blockade of England, and all British ships were to be sunk without warning. The United States addressed a warning to Germany a week later, that she would hold Germany to a strict accountability for any American lives lost through the sinking of merchant ships without the previous visit and search required by international law.

Within two months, the American ship *Gulflight* and British *Falaba* were torpedoed without warning and Americans went down with them. But these minor atrocities were almost forgotten in the "*Lusitania*" outrage of May 7, 1915, in which 137 American men, women and children, in addition to a thousand of other nationalities were killed. An exchange of notes followed, marked by President Wilson's patient firmness and the German Government's quibbles and falsifications. The latter finally promised to obey the law.

Germany renewed her promises and by early February 1916 finally agreed to make reparations for the *Lusitania*. President Wilson, who had been against preparedness as a threat of force which would handicap his plan for the United States to become the arbiter of a lasting peace, now reversed his position. His call for preparedness in his message to the Congress in December 1915 was followed by a preparedness tour of the country in which he said there was no time to be lost, and that he would be ashamed if he had not learned something in fourteen months.

On March 24, 1916, the English Channel steamer *Sussex* was torpedoed without warning, with heavy loss of life. President Wilson sent a note which was practically an ultimatum on April 18, and Germany on May 4 gave a definite pledge to give up her unlawful method of warfare. There was now a considerable lull.

The National Defense Act

On June 3, 1916, the preparedness bill called the National Defense Act was passed. It was heralded as strictly a defense act. No member thought of it as anything else. Even the European armed camps had never increased their military establishments by anything but "defense legislation."

Secretary of War Baker had anticipated the passage of this Act and had prepared to hasten the expansion of the regular army and the National Guard for which the bill provided.

Previous to the passage of this bill there was no way (legal) that the National Guard could in time of peace, be governed, officered, or trained by the National Government.

The objection was now overcome in the simplest manner by the National Defense Act. When the National Guardsman took the usual State oath he also took an oath to the United States which put him under the command of the President. In the World War the Guard became immediately and automatically a part of the National Forces under the orders of the President. The National Defense Act called for an increase of the regular army by five annual increments from its 5,025 officers and 100,000 men (actual strength on June 30, 1916) to 11,450 officers and 223,000 men by 1921, if enlistments responded up to that number. The National Guard was to be increased to 17,000 officers and 427,000 men. This made on paper, subject to enlistment, a total equal to more than England had at any

one time in France in the first year of the World War. A third force was to be volunteers who would answer the President's call. The number of West Point cadets was increased and collegiate military training extended. There was also provision for enlisted technical reserve corps.

On November 6, 1916, the English ship *Arabia* was torpedoed and Americans drowned under the same circumstances as the *Lusitania*. Meanwhile, Austria had joined her ally by illegally destroying the Italian ship *Ancona* on November 8, 1916 and the *Persia* soon afterwards, with the loss of American lives.

But on January 31, 1917, the Germans out of a clear sky issued a proclamation that all shipping, neutral or Allied, found in English waters would he sunk without warning. President Wilson at once broke off diplomatic relations, but expressed the hope that Germany would not carry out her threat and would refrain from the overt act which meant war. In the period of suspense that followed, the long series of crimes encouraged by Count Bernstorff,[1] the blowing up of factories in the United States, incitements to strikes, and similar plots which led to the dismissal of Dumba,[2] Von Papen[3] and Boy-Ed[4] and indictments against Von Igel,[5] Bopp[6] and others came to a head with the publication of the intercepted Zimmerman note to the German Minister in Mexico. This note offered Mexico the States of New Mexico, Texas and Arizona, if she would join Germany against the United States. On March, 18, 1917, three American ships, the *City of Memphis*, the *Illinois*, and the *Vigilancia* were sunk without warning with the usual loss of life. Two days later, the Germans attacked two Belgian relief ships to which they had given special safe conducts. The President summoned a

1. Count Johann Heinrich Bernstorff, German Ambassador to the United States (1908-1917), accused of various sabotage acts against the United States.
2. Konstantin Dumba, Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to the United States (1913-1915), accused of acts of espionage against the United States.
3. Franz von Papen, German military attaché to the United States (1913-1915), expelled from the United States for espionage activities, later Vice Chancellor of Germany under Hitler.
4. Karl Boy-Ed, German Naval attaché in Washington (1913-1915), expelled from the United States at the same time as von Papen.
5. Wolf von Igel, an aide to von Papen, accused of spying in the United States in 1916.
6. Franz von Bopp, German consul general in San Francisco, accused of sabotage against the United States.

special session of Congress for action. A joint resolution declaring that a state of war existed between Germany and the United States was adopted by an overwhelming majority and was signed by the President on April, 6, 1917.

The UNITED STATES were at WAR.

Sixty Fifth Congress
of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

At the first SESSION

Begun and held at the city of Washington on Monday the second day of April, one thousand nine hundred and seventeen.

JOINT RESOLUTION.

Declaring that a state of War exists between the Imperial German Government and the Government and the people of the United States of America and making provision to prosecute the same:

Whereas the Imperial German Government has committed repeated acts of war against the Government and the people of the United States of America;

Therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

That the state of war between the United States and The Imperial German Government which has thus been thrust upon the United States is hereby formally declared;

and that the President be, and is hereby, authorized and directed to employ the entire naval and military forces on the United States and the recourses of the Government to carry on war against the Imperial German Government and to bring the conflict to a successful termination all of the resources of the country are hereby pledged by the congress of the United States.

Champ Clark.

Speaker of the House of Representatives

Thos. R. Marshall

Vice Pres. of the United States, and President of the Senate.

Approved, 6 April, 1917

Woodrow Wilson

On May 8, 1917, Secretary of War Baker notified General Pershing, who was in command of an expeditionary force in Mexico, to report to him in Washington at once. He was assigned the task of organizing the American Expeditionary Forces, which he was to command.

War Sentiment

Unlike Germany and France, with every home sending forth its able-bodied sons on mobilization day, we had no departing troops on whom to expend our war emotion, no thought of casualty lists which would soon he reported, and we held that emotion taut and still.

We must expend it in hanging out flags, in vocal individual and mass demonstrations of our unity and determination.

In a land of societies, all of them, from the daughters and son of the Revolution to fraternal orders, labor, capital, trade, and the professions, bar, banker, medical associations, chambers of commerce, and religious organizations, passed resolutions. The German language papers, and Socialists and pacifists who had decried our entry into the War were either cooing to patriotic grace in resolutions of their own, or allowing silence to speak assent in the face of the tidal wave of public opinion. The League to Enforce Peace found that now the first step of enforcement was to defeat Kaiserism. Reports of German plots within our borders, of German agents trying to start a race conflict in the South, of a German plan to kidnap President Wilson, spurred conviction in the hesitant that it was really our war. The war was old, but we were young in the war. We had to go through the stages of emotion and learn through our own experience. In the mirror that the emergency had held up we were seeing ourselves as a whole, exalted, wondering measure of our power, so near to us and so distant from the trenches; and the patriotic chant of the one hundred and ten million people, which was not yet a trained chorus when there were so many volunteer cheer leaders, seemed to us to represent a potentiality so evidently irresistible that Germany would soon recognize the wisdom of capitulation.

The Allied countries had sent missions who were publicly confirming the view. Balfour, head of the English mission, who so urgently presented the grave danger in private to the War Department, said in an address to the Senate that our entry into the war assured victory; Joffre, of France

who had warned our General Staff of the necessity of bringing all our manpower to bear, was as optimistic as Viviani of the Italian mission, or Lloyd George, in England, in his public speeches. The weary French, Italians, and Serbians, the disillusioned Romanians, and the demoralized Russians must never doubt that the last nation to enter the war on the side of the Allies would soon turn the tide. Least of all must they know the truth of the rapid rise of submarine sinkings which our own Admiral Sims had reported to our Navy Department.

Censored news from Europe fed our public with the same cheer as the British enjoyed in August 1914 in the advance of the Russian steamroller in Eastern Germany, and the Belgian resistance at Liege before the main German Army was in action. The French and British communiques continued to report gains and the capture of prisoners on the Western Front. The British had beaten two Turkish Armies. It was reported from Berlin that Germany was near the end of her manpower; she was sending children and old men to the trenches; her peoples were at the starvation point; food riots were in prospect; and the Socialists, those most useful German Socialists in the war days in aiding to lull enemy preparations and alarms, were again demanding peace.

The new Kerensky Government in Russia was promising to keep faith with her Allies in not making a separate peace with Germany, and foreseeing great victories for the reorganized Russian Army. Austria was said to be in a mood when Prussian domination would no longer hold her from asking for terms. Turkey would follow her example. Germany, in economic collapse would soon be left isolated in the throes of a revolution. The talk of showing our flag in France, Joffre's request for a contingent because he said there was nothing the German so dreaded as the sight of American soldiers at the front, all tended to the same view that the British public had in early August 1914 about the part of French's little British Army in France [*sic*]. It would be a glorious gesture to have some of our regulars in at the surrender of the Kaiser, which America's balance [*sic*] against him had compelled. There was some concern lest the war should be won and the ceremony of capitulation be over before they arrived.

We thrilled, our purses fat to our touch in our generous impulse, as the Secretary of the Treasury, W. G. McAdoo signed checks for two hundred million dollars to Great Britain, and two hundred and fifty million to France and Italy as initial loans to the Allies; we thrilled over the first Lib-

erty Loan, with Rockefeller's five million leading the subscription; over the funds pouring into the Red Cross and other welfare drives; over Edison at work in his laboratory to find magic ways of ending war without using soldiers or submarine chasers, minesweepers, or mine layers; over the magnitude of our industrial resources; over Roosevelt's plea for the privilege of leading a volunteer army to France. Russia should have her loan, too. The wisdom of Elihu Root, who was at the head of the mission on the way to Russia, would supply the young Russian republic with statesmanship to steady her leaders and people. American railway experts were on the way to organize her transport; American financiers to organize her finances; American newspapermen to carry on propaganda among her people. Our consciousness of our might was quickened by all the allied world's acknowledgment of dependence upon us.

The rotogravure supplements of the Sunday papers carried pictures of society women and actresses adding glamour to the numerous drives and in recruiting the Army and Navy. Two hundred members of Congress asked Lloyd George to free Ireland. The Academy of Political Science, in profound discussion, found that the militarists and pacifists were disagreeing as to America's object in the war. The United Iron Workers asked more pay as a war measure; the soft coal miners received a raise of twenty percent.

The Allies needed food as well as money. Britain and France were on rations, Britain in fact, very seriously so. The appointment of Herbert Hoover, in the glow of his prestige as head of the Belgian Relief,[7] as food administrator was held as ideal. When everybody wanted to know how to win the war, he said that food economy was the way. It was springtime, planting time. Vacant lots should yield crops. Farm gardens became a public passion. Here was the opportunity for the Boy Scouts, and grandfather and grandmother, who could not find a place in welfare work. Boys were released from school to take up the hoe. All this was good in the statesmanship of war. It gave patriotic emotion an outlet in welding us together in national effort. It meant certainly that there would be food enough. The

7. The Commission for Relief in Belgium—known also as Belgian Relief—was an international (predominantly American) organization that arranged for the supply of food to German-occupied Belgium and northern France during the First World War. Its leading figure was chairman Herbert Hoover (later president of the United States) (Wikipedia).

Shipping Board[8] sent word that it would be building a ship a week to carry the food.

What of soldiers, in case we should need more than enough to show the flag? What of the Army of a million men that was planned before our entry into the war? Despite all the speeches, all the efforts of the society women and actresses, the regular army had enlisted 4,355 men, an average of 435 a day, in the first ten days after our entry into the war. At that rate, it would take three years to enlist five hundred thousand. To stimulate enlistment, Secretary of War Baker announced that the term would be only for the war. By April 24, 32,000 had enlisted, or one-sixth of the total quota. The Allied missions observed politely that America was very calm about the war, and they found in their travels more earnestness in the west than in the east. Publicists saw that it was time for a "Wake Up, America" day. This gave enlistment a stimulus, which subsided. Yet the War Department was not greatly worried by the results and was far from drawing sectional inferences. Its eye was on the Capitol, where the Draft Bill was being debated.

8. The United States Shipping Board, established by act of Congress in 1916 as an emergency agency to revitalize the United States merchant fleet.

2. Enlisting

Enlisting

Co. A. Forty Seventh U. S. Infantry,
Fourth Division, A. E. F.

Enlistment Record

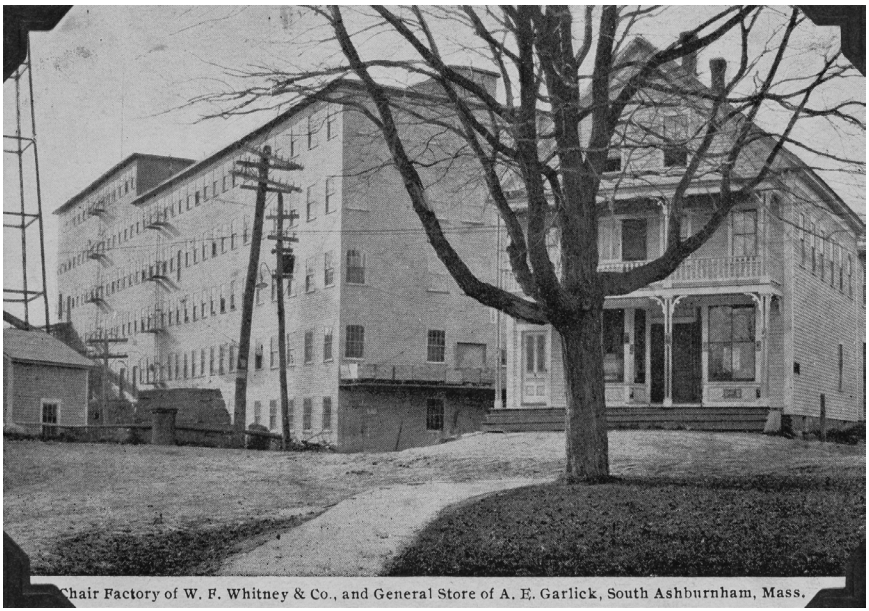
Enlisted, July 28, 1917, Fitchburg, Massachusetts

Promotions	Private 1st Class	September, 1917
	Corporal	April 29, 1918
	Sergeant	Nov. 1, 1918

Battles, Engagements, Skirmishes, Expeditions.
Served in A. E. F. from May 10, 1918 to July 26, 1918.
Toulon Sector, (defensive), Sept. 6th. to 13th. 1918.
St. Mihiel, (offensive), Sept. 12th. to 16th. 1918.
Meuse–Argonne, (offensive), Sept. 26th to Oct. 19th. 1918.
Army of Occupation, Germany, Nov. 20th. 1918, to July 13th. 1919.
Wounds Received in Service.
Gun Shot Wound, Left side, Sept. 29th, 1918.
Character: Excellent.
Discharged, Honorably, Aug. 1, 1919, at Camp Devens.

Some people are born to write, some acquire the art, others have it thrust upon them. Being of the latter class, I want to make it clear to those who may read this that you have no treat coming in a literary sense, but just the usual line one buddy might pass on to another on some evening when you're in the mood. I have that feeling sometimes, especially when my listener is someone who didn't have the chance to try his luck in the "Big Game." If you were trying to tell it to someone who had been there you knew how it would be. When I'd say we turned right, he would say he turned left, and so it would go. When I write this, or tell it under the conditions as stated above, I know I can say it as I want to and let the arguments start after.

So here goes.



Chair Factory of W. F. Whitney & Co and General Store,
South Ashburnham, Mass

It all happened this way:
Since the entry of the United States in the World War conflict, not a day passed but the subject was freely discussed by us of military age. The time had now arrived for America to put an army in the fight.
While enjoying our noon smoke on Garlick's store steps, a sudden desire to enlist made its appearance. Rab, Boisse, Mac, Shorty and myself resolved that we'd do so at once. Rushing in the shop, we informed our bosses that from now on, we would take orders from Uncle Sam. The word of our action spread over the village and when we arrived at the station to take our train for Fitchburg, two more volunteers had decided to follow us. These were Ted and Pete. Before the train departed, Joe Pelletier and Wild Bill McClenathan and about the same time Henry Bennett put in an appearance. Harry Lock who was engineer of the factory caught the spirit of the occasion and completed the party.
440 Main St, Fitchburg, Mass. where the recruiting station is located was a busy place for the next hour. A large crowd, attracted by our chatter and joking was assembled outside.

En Route to Camp Syracuse

July 26, 1917, B. & M. R.R.[9] station, the gang's all here. There is plenty of excitement, somebody starts singing:

> "Oh, Uncle Sammy he needs the Infantry, he needs Artillery, he needs the Cavalry, and then by gosh we'll all go to Germany,
> Poor old Kaiser Bill,
> Poor old Kaiser Bill, poor old Kaiser Bill.
> Uncle Sammy he's got his Infantry, he's got his Artillery, he's got his Cavalry, and now by gosh we're going to Germany,
> Poor old Kaiser Bill."

Someone asks, "What's the big idea?"

"We're going to enlist."

"You mean you're going to war?"

"Sure, what do you suppose we've been drilling at the Club for?"

"Aw, read about it in the papers, it's train time."

Me and "my gang" had just about decided that Uncle Sam needed us. The news had spread around town of our intentions and an "epidemic" was the result, as when the train pulled in there were twelve of us in the gang.

Well, the papers had this for a story that night:

> CHAIR MAKERS FLOCK TO THE FLAG.
> SOUTH ASHBURNHAM BOYS ARE LOYAL.
>
> South Ashburnham, July 25, 1917.
> South Ashburnham never has witnessed such a patriotic and yet pathetic scene since Civil War days as was participated in this morning at the railroad station, when nine of the town's finest young men bade good bye to their loved ones en route to some Regular Army training camp.
>
> Yesterday the plans were all made for the sendoff to be given to the town's drafted men, sometime later this year. Last night when a delegation of the young men came back from Fitchburg and said, "We have enlisted," the enthusiasm ran high.

9. Boston & Maine Railroad.

With one exception, the young men are the sons of French Canadian parents and have been employed in the Whitney chair shops.

Plans were made overnight and the nine young men who expected to go with only the food and tearful good byes of their immediate families, were astounded to find that practically everyone in So. Ashburnham was at the station to bid them farewell.

Cigars, cigarettes, small tokens and articles of comfort to the enlisted men were suddenly produced. No man went without. Everyone was remembered and as the thought came that perhaps none would ever return, tears were mixed with the laughter and joking. Men who have grown hardened to sadness, gripped the hands of the town's brave boys and wished them "good bye and good luck" wiping away the tears. Mothers, brave until the train pulled out, made for the quietness of their homes to cry and offer prayers. Sisters did likewise and as the young sweethearts, every one of the young men realized there was at least one young woman they liked better than the rest. Strange to say the young women seemed to know it but bore their secret sorrow bravely. (As I write this, the only sweetheart that shed any tears was Shorty's). South Ashburnham was proud of its hoys. Their employers while hard put to replace the skilled workers, were proud of the town spirit which caused them to enlist in a body.

The children of the town, not impressed with anything but the patriotic spirit of the occasion, did much to make the scene merry, but as the train pulled out, their laughter and cheers failed to lift the gloom that fell when all realized the town had lost nine of its favorite young men, boys who had grown up from barefooted lads to defenders of democracy.

The men who left are: Louis Daris, Alfred Daris, Edward Boisse, Emil Robichaud, George Caouette, Amedee Duval, Joseph Pelletier, Henry Bennett, and Wm. McClenathan. There are twelve others who tried, but could not pass the examinations. They are much disappointed at the failure to pass.

> Sergt Samuel Rose was alone in his office when the young men came in. The little room and stairway at 440 Main St. soon filled up and the rest of the boys stood out on Main St. and soon attracted a crowd their chatter and joking. With the aid of Sergt Berban Huffeim, U. S. A. Medical Corps, on a visit to Sergt Rose, and a newspaper man both of whom came in, order was made out of chaos and four men at the time the boys were put thru the necessary examinations, the rest waiting outside for their turn.
>
> They were allowed to return to their homes last night and reported early this morning for transportation to Springfield. Upon their reporting to the office this morning the nine declared that another delegation was coming and it was likely that a bunch from Ashburnham Center would appear during the day.
>
> Two brothers, Louis and Alfred Daris, one of them the Daily News correspondent, were among the accepted men.

The paper told the story of the successful ones, but Poor Herb MacDonald, who was by far the huskiest and healthiest of the bunch was thrown down on account of his feet. They later drafted Mac as physically fit.

Shorty Duval was not accepted; contrary to the newspaper, he was rejected on account of his eyesight. The recruiting officer however advised Shorty to try Springfield, which he did. He was the life of the party and we sure wanted him to make good. At Springfield, we had memorized the eye chart enough so that when Shorty would hesitate on a letter we would glance over and in French would tell Shorty what letter it was.

I was a little underweight and on advice of the Sergeant I drank a quart of milk before I was examined in Springfield.

Rab, Boisse, Shorty and myself were chums; every dance, show or trip of any kind as well as camping we would always be found together.

The evening of the day of our enlistment, a party was quickly made up for a farewell trip to Greenville, N.H., the scene of many of our good times, and also the home town of Shorty. I'll never forget that trip! Mr. W. D. Miller had loaned us his seven passenger Stevens Duryea for whatever purpose we wished. Harry Locke, an occasional member of our gang volunteered as Chauffer [*sic*]. He had made a hurried trip to Gardner and was well prepared in the "refreshing line." As near as I can remember there were

twelve in that Stevens that night. The only ones I can recall right now are, Bab, Shorty, Boisse, Mac, Locke, Wilfred Beaugrand, Edgar Beaugrand and myself. Wilfred and I were riding the top, which had been folded down. We spent a pleasant evening featured by the performance of the "Sob Quartette." Locke's liquid refreshments took effect early in the evening and at Shorty's home where we were celebrating was as nice a bunch of crying jags as I've ever seen. Berty started it, followed by his dad, then Locke, and the rest of us even to hard boiled Ed. Beaugrand. The party broke up about midnight and the trip home was a thriller. Locke our driver was still crying, in fact he cried all the way home. Shorty was so overcome we had to load him into the car. He didn't want to stay on a seat, so we gave him a lower berth. With Wilfred and myself perched on our grandstand seats, our legs hanging over the side of the car we finally got away. Things went pretty well until we came to Stacey's corner. Locke still crying failed to slow down enough to make the sharp turn but managed to pull the car around on two wheels. He forgot to straighten out and the car climbed up a bank, glancing a stonewall his right front tire blew and somehow, he kept the car from overturning, guided it back into the road, continuing as if nothing had happened. Something had happened. When Wilfred and I saw the car wasn't going to make the turn, we jumped. What a spill we took! Both of us were unhurt however and taking to our feet we ran in the direction of the disappearing car. We had walked about a half a mile when we spotted the car coming our way, backwards. About two miles up the road someone had noticed we were among the missing. We finished the trip home on a rim. Locke didn't seem to care. Shorty slept all through the excitement.

The next morning, farewells to the family, mother, dad, brothers and sisters. Ted my brother had insisted on enlisting with the gang. Mother and Dad were holding up bravely. All of the Catholic boys had received communion at the morning Mass, and had received the blessing of our beloved pastor Father Casey. Father Casey told us at this time that he was sure God would spare us and bring us safely home. His prediction was fulfilled, not one of our boys were called upon to sacrifice their life, several were wounded but all came home to their loved ones. I am sure that the prayers of our pastor were united with God and the thought of his message to us was one great consolation to me, especially when I was in my greatest of dangers.

The trip by train was Fitchburg via Worcester to Springfield.

What a time we had on that train. Shorty raised h…l all the way. Harmonica solos, dancing of jigs and comic songs kept us and the occupants of the cars in an uproar.

Arriving at Springfield a little after noon we reported to the Army Recruiting Station where we went through a final examination.

Dear Joe...

We had found the army recruiting station without much trouble, because there was a soldier outside and a big picture of what the doughboys wishes life in the army really was.

We hailed the soldier. "Where's the guy that hires the volunteers?" we asked him. He gave us a grin. "Wanna join up, eh?" he says. "Well, that's fine. Army life is the greatest life in the world, the food is something marvelous. The living is elegant, the clothes are knockouts, the experience is worth money in after years, there is a great chance to save, and…" "Hey," we butt in. "What are you, a broadcaster for the army? Lay off that stuff and show us the guy that does the hiring and firing." "Every young man should do his bit for his country," he goes on without batting an eye. "We gotta make the world safe for the Democrats, and then look what Belgium has been through. We…"

I grabbed him by the arm. "Listen," I said, shutting him off.

"Will you kindly cease that patter of yours and show us where your boss is! We want to get into this brawl in Europe before it's over."

"…and last of all remember the *Lusitania,*" he says. "You'll find the office four flights up to your left."

"Where's the elevator?" I ask.

"There aint none!" he tells me. "You get a chance to advance yourself mentally and physically. A willing young fellow can raise himself to be an officer if…"

We left him talking and three steps at a time we reached the fourth floor.

There's a bunch of guys sitting in a room with a soldier. They look like a gang in a dentist's office waiting their turns. The soldier gives us the once over and points to a

room. We breeze in and there's a soldier sitting at a table. He's dressed like the recruiting posters.

"Slip me a gun, general," says Shorty. I wanna get in this fight."

"Sit down," he says. "And hats off." We did bo, that is those who could find seats.

As Shorty had not been accepted in Fitchburg, he had to fill out his application all over again.

"Married?" the officer asks Shorty.

"No, it aint that," he says. "I wanna go over to Germany as quick as possible because…"

"France, you mean?" he smiles.

"Is it France?" asks Shorty. "Excuse me, I thought we were fighting Germany. Well, that's neither here nor there. Wherever it is, it don't make no difference to me; gimme a gun and…"

"Fill this out first," handing Shorty a sheet of paper, "and we shall see."

"I don't even need a uniform, just gimme a gun and a couple handfuls of bullets and…"

He waves Shorty off and points to the paper.

Shorty gives the paper the once over. Those papers didn't want to know nothing but the history of your life from the nursery to the undertakers. The US is also interested in your parents, and there are a lot of personal questions on it, like how long since you laid off the booze and did you ever have diphtheria and why. Shorty finally filled it out, and the officer looked it over as if he wanted to learn it by heart. No doubt he had most of the questions answered right, for we are all passed into another room that looked like a doctor's office. It was.

A little guy in his shirt sleeves orders us to take off everything we have on.

"Wait a minute!" says Shorty, "I guess we've got the wrong joint. I have got all the insurance a sane man can carry, and…"

"Strip!" bellows the little guy, who had pinched his voice from a lion somewhere. "You fellers have the idea that you're doin' Uncle Sam a favor by enlisting, eh? I

> suppose you think we take anybody and everybody, well, we don't, understand that? You gotta be pretty fit to get a chance to do your bit in this man's army!"
>
> Before that bird got through with us we were satisfied that a guy has not only got to be fit to get in the US Army; he's got to be lucky. This medico had got us right. Like a lot of other guys, we really did feel we were doing the country a favor by enlisting, but when they got thru with us we were glad they took us. I felt just a little better than those birds that can't get in or wouldn't go in.
>
> The officer outside must have gotten word that he had a bunch of future generals, because when we got outside he shook hands and smiled. He said we must be the luckiest fellows he ever heard tell of.
>
> It seems they need twenty guys to fill out a regiment that's going to the front right away, and we come along just in time to make up the set. Us and the other eleven, could probably fall over Niagara Falls without getting damp on account of being so lucky, are to leave for camp in an hour. (Adapted from Witwer 21-27)

All of us including Shorty as mentioned before passed the tests and we were given transportation orders and money for our food.

The Sergeant told us we were to be sent to Syracuse, N.Y., which was a mobilization point for this district. (Camps such as Camp Devens were not even under construction at this time.) At the railroad station, we met another group of about fifty, all recruits and waiting for the same train as we. In the group were Murray of Winchendon, and two lads from Athol. (These fellows were later members of our Regimental Band.) The Red Cross had somehow got word that there was a bunch of recruits at the station and just before our train pulled in we were each handed a box containing sandwiches and doughnuts.

There were no dull moments on that trip to Syracuse. These were the days before prohibition and at each stop the nearest barroom was hurriedly visited.

Arriving in Syracuse we were surprised to note our train was going right up what we thought was Main Street. The trains here (the N.Y.C.) go through the heart of the city on the street. It was a funny sight as I had never seen a railroad track on a city street before.

Looking through the windows just as our train came to a stop we spotted a barroom. Alighting we were met by a soldier in uniform who informed us that when we got in camp we would be members of the now famous "dry army." "Better get your drinks now if you want any," he said. Oh boy, what a rush for the swinging doors! Shorty went under them, he being in the lead. Fifteen minutes later our uniformed escort had managed to coax the last man out of the place and had us loaded onto a streetcar that had a sign, "Fairgrounds." How that car ever got to the fairgrounds is beyond me. Someone had taken the conductor and motorman's hats and had by force taken control of the car. The cord used to register fares was yanked plenty even though no fares were collected. A wild bunch out for a wild time.

3. Training

Camp Syracuse

Reaching the fairgrounds, we staggered off. Bag and baggage in a column of twos, we were led to the building that houses the reception committee, better known as the mill. Here we were sworn in and told we were in the army now. From that time on our popular ditty was:

> You're in the Army now,
> You're not behind the plow.
> You son of a b…,
> Eh, you'll never get rich.
> You're in the Army now!

Finishing the process of going through the mill, we were grouped into squads and my squad was led to a cattle barn. Straw had been thrown on the floor of the stalls and two men were assigned to a stall. Blankets had been handed us and we proceeded to make some kind of a bed. A bugle sounded and a soldier shouted, "Outside for chow!" Not knowing what the command was, we hesitated but when our soldier friend explained that "chow" meant "eat" we needed no further command.

On what was, and is still used as a race track, a cook's tent had been set up. Taking our place in line, which seemed to be a mile long, mess kit in our right hand, canteen cup in our left, we finally arrived at the tent. Here lined up serving out, were soldiers who were soon to be known as KPs.

One plastered our mess kit with beans, the next one slapped in some spuds, another placed two slices of bread on top of the food. Last of all, dished out of an ash can, we got our coffee.

Looking around for seats, we note everyone is sitting on the ground. Eagerly, we hurry to find a place to sit and taste our first Army meal. Seated at last, I look at my beans. They look pretty tough.

Black, and evidently hard.

Being thirsty, I grab my cup and take a swallow of coffee. A swallow is enough. I set the cup down and glance around at the other rookies, wondering if their food and coffee is better than mine. They don't appear to be enjoying the meal any more than I am. I spot a couple of soldiers, oldtimers I guess. They make short work of what is in their kit, and are heading back for seconds.

I say to myself, if they can eat it, I can. The wind starts to blow, dust from the dry race track flies all over my food. So this is the Army! I was soon to learn that a little dust on food is just an appetizer. I took a couple of mouthfuls of beans. I couldn't gobble them.

I resolved that I'd go to town and eat in a restaurant. Observing that as each one finished eating, they would form in another line with their mess kits, I joined them. In due time, I reached the head of the line. Here I found two ash cans! One was for refuse and the other contained what had once been boiling water. Dipping my kit in the water, meanwhile noting that the water had a scum of grease on the top, I washed my kit the best I could. Thus ended my first army meal.

Getting back to my cow stall, I called a council of war. The gang like myself hadn't enjoyed the feed. We all decided to go downtown and get some real food. While we were discussing the food, an Italian rookie joined the grumbling and talked about starting a strike. Can you imagine starting a strike in the Army!

The whole bunch from So. Ashburnham, Rab, Shorty, Bill McClen, Boisse, Bennett, Pete, Joe Pelletier, Ted and myself start out for town. Reaching the main gate, we are halted by a sentry and he demands our passes. He tells us we can't leave camp without passes. Having none, we were forced to turn back. Our first experience and lesson. We were soon to learn that there was one big word in the Army book, and that word is discipline. Gone are the days of come and go as we please. But wait. Necessity is also a word. We wanted grub. We were used having what we wanted. An

old-timer passes by. We hail him and explain our predicament. "Easy," he says. "You birds are all in civvies. All right, see that fence? He was pointing to the rear of the grounds. First you split up in twos. There's a sentry that patrols that beat. Watch him. When he's headed toward the farthest end of the fence, two of your guys climb over the fence. The rest of you birds do the same. Outside of that fence is the railroad tracks. Cross them and you come to the salt mines. Go to the road that leads through the mines and it will take you out in a place called Solvay.

"But suppose we are picked up by soldiers in town," we ask.

"You won't have to worry about that, you're in civvies aint yer?"

We thanked the old-timer and watching our chance, we scaled the fence by twos as told.

Going through the salt mines, a place I'd never seen was pretty tough. Salt is hard stuff to walk through, especially in the dark. My low shoes soon got filled and what a smell! Lucky Rab had a flashlight. We would slip from time to time into the ditches on each side of the narrow road. Reaching Solvay with no trouble other than ruining our shoes, we went into a barroom instead of a place to eat. Where we filled up on beer and pickled pigs' feet. About ten o'clock, feeling pretty happy we trooped toward camp. Rab and I were still chewing away at those pig feet. We got back into camp safely and after some difficulty we located our cow stalls. There wasn't much sleep that night. Our beds didn't seem quite natural. So ended my first day in the army.

The next day we wondered about our uniforms. But we didn't get them. We got something else, though. At the infirmary, we received our first of a series of three jabs in the arm. During the day, we busied ourselves by writing home. Our food somehow seemed to be better today or was it the fact that we conquered our imagination? Late in the afternoon, the jab I had received in my arm began to work and by night I thought sure I was going to die. I was really very sick, very feverish. This condition lasted until late the following day and I took very little interest in what was taking place in camp. The inflammation in my arm lasted several days. At one time my arm was swollen twice the normal size. All of the boys felt the effects of those jabs. Soon, they had to take me to the camp hospital.

Several days passed and we wondered when we were to start soldiering. We were finally told that we were in quarantine and must not mingle

with the other soldiers until released. All recruits must go through this form.

In the meantime, we had also learned that we were to be assigned to the 47th Infantry.

The Ninth Infantry having just been relieved from service on the Mexican Border had arrived in this camp. Already, arrangements had been completed to form two new regiments from their members. The 47th and 48th Regiments (Infantry) were thus formed. All recruiting done in every state was for the purpose of filling up these newly created regiments. We were a part of 1,166 recruits that had arrived during June and July. In the case of the 47th Infantry, the organization was formed by transferring fifteen officers and six hundred and seventy-six men from the Ninth Infantry.

> The personnel of this old and famous Regiment was thus divided into three groups. One group was designated to be the nucleus around which the parent regiment would be continued, and each of the other two was used to constitute a new regiment. Thus each had for a foundation a strong element in the men who had served in the old army and who were certain to infuse the new army with the spirit and traditions of the old. (Pollard 11)

Each day new recruits would pour into camp. Having little else to do, we would scan the faces of the new comers, hoping to catch a glimpse of someone we knew. One afternoon, who do we see but Billy Sunday (Wilfred Beaugrand). Shouting ourselves hoarse, we managed to attract his attention. Running toward the group we followed them to the "Hill." We told Billy what we'd been through and some we hadn't. "What, you in the Army!" I greeted him. "This war must be a frame up!" "What d'ye mean, frame up?" Billy says.

"Why you big stiff, if the Allies were really trying, do you think they would have taken you?"

Billy made a pass at me. We all had a good laugh. That made ten So. Ashburnham boys now in this camp.

Well, we were finally assigned to the regiment. We were told to take our blankets and fall in. A Sergeant from the regiment, Sergeant Wendell had charge of our group, which was Co. A.

We were all assigned to the same regiment but to different companies. Ted and myself went to Co. A., Rab and Beaugrand to Co. B, Pete to Co.

D, Shorty to Co. N, Joe to Co. M., Boisse to Co. H., and Bennett and Bill McClen went to Co. D.

> Dear Joe...
>
> Our first stop after the Sergeant had taken us in charge was the Quartermasters. Here we were given uniforms. You'd ought to see us. I looked as good as $500 a week would look to a motorman. It fit me like an eel's skin, and it's got that suit I used to wear looking like overalls. After I had given myself the once over when I was all togged out, dressed to kill (the Germans), I felt like sitting down and sending a telegram to that recruiting Sergeant, thanking him for taking me in the army.
>
> After a couple of more days they staked us to a lot of other furnishings like more blankets, shoes, and so forth, and by the end of the week we had more stuff than the average young married couple starts out life with. Uncle Sam is sure good to his nephews, take it from me! I don't see how they can afford to give us all of this stuff, and some of these guys are living better right now than they ever did in their lives.
>
> We won't leave on a minute's notice for France, like that recruiting officer told us. (Witwer 35-36)

We haven't got enough men who know soldiering enough yet to do guard duty.

Ted and I are in the same tent. Our Corporal is a fresh Polander. Corp. Dluzak is his name. His name will be mud if he doesn't stop socking us rookies around. He's always picking on either Ted or me. The other day, I was busy writing a letter home, sitting on my bunk, when suddenly an ink bottle flew by my head. I ran out of the tent in time to see that Corporal ducking behind my tent. If I could have caught him, the Allies would have been one man short.

Ted got fed up on him one day, and he picked that Corporal up bodily and threw him out of the tent into the company street. We were both scared stiff: it is a crime in the army to lay a hand on a noncommissioned officer and I could picture Ted in the guard house. Well he had it coming to him and I was ready to explain to the officers who we were expecting to show up any minute.

The Corporal got the surprise of his life, and he showed he was yellow because he didn't come back into the tent; instead, he went straight to the orderly room, the office, and reported the matter.

A few minutes later, we heard someone coming down the company street calling, "Where is that rookie?" Poking his head through the tent opening was husky Top Sergeant. Chewing tobacco, he spit and asked, "Which one of you rookies threw a Corporal out of this tent?"

Ted spoke up, a trifle scared, "I did, Sir."

Sizing up Ted and the rest of us, the Sergeant said, "Corporals are to be obeyed, and respected. They must not be thrown out of tents, especially bodily." Turning to Ted, he lowered his voice and said, "I'll overlook this breach of discipline this time but don't let it happen again." Then he added, "You saved me a job, I was just about ready to throw that pest out of my own tent."

Such was our introduction to our good old Top Kick, Tal Fraser.

Our Top Kicker

As strict as iron, as tough as rust.
A bulging bean, a hard-boiled crust.
He growled like hell, he cussed like smoke.
He made the KPs snap and broke
The Sergeants, corporal to first class blokes
Some woof
Was our top kicker!

He pulled it rough-some eggs one guy.
On guard, in ranks, that eye, that "I,"
We toed the line, we held the mark!
He dressed us, pressed us with a bark.
And took the joy from many a lark.
Some "*œuf*"
Was our top kicker!

He warned the shill, "up there out front"
With soft like hand in steel that's blunt.
He fed us, led us, picked bon slopes [*sic*]
And plugged the gore from us poor mopes,
And on our way jerked up our hopes.
Some heart

Had our top kicker!
He's busted now, he's in the ranks
With Jims and Joes and Toms and Hanks,
All marked with crosses true and straight.
We love him now where once 'twas hate
And this we writ upon his slate:
"Some sojer[10]
Was our top kicker!"

> Syracuse early adopted our regiment, the 47th for its own and knew the new unit as the "Quality" regiment. Both our officers and men enjoyed a large degree of freedom. The officers were at liberty to go into the city at almost any time. For us enlisted men a card system was instituted on the basis of good behavior. Those whose conduct was rated good were permitted to be absent without question from retreat to reveille and from inspection on Saturday until reveille Monday morning. Some were free to be absent until eleven o'clock each night, while others, not as fortunate, were confined to camp. (Pollard 12)

Every chance we had to visit town we'd utilize. I as well as Ted and the gang had "good conduct" passes. Theatre parties, beer parties, ball games both in camp and downtown we'd attend. On our beer parties, we would wear our civilian clothes as it was forbidden to serve soldiers in uniform. We even had our pictures taken in a group. What a picture!

There was always plenty of excitement downtown every night around ten o'clock. The boys, especially the old-timers would at this hour be lit up like Christmas trees. The return trip to camp would then start. The trolley cars would be packed to the roof, with a lot of pushing, arguments and sometimes fights.

One night, a scrap started that nearly wrecked the trolley car, conductor and motorman, to say nothing about having our passes to town taken away from us.

Two well soused guys started it. They were arguing about as follows:

Dear Joe...
"How did you happen to enlist?" one asked.

10. Pronunciation spelling of 'soldier' (Wikitionary)

"I didn't!" said the other. "I came to get some dope about being exempted, and the big stiff in the office talked me into joining."

"Sure," said the other guy. "This country's about as free as diamonds at Tiffany's! A man has got to fight whether he wants to or not. All them well-to-do millionaires are back of this war, and…"

"Aw, dry up!" several soldiers cried.

A big soldier next to me said, "I think both you guys is so yellow that if you were round you could pass for grapefruit! If you birds make any more cracks about the US Army, I'm gonna see if you'll bounce."

"You aint man enough!" piped one of the knockers.

The big soldier landed him one on the chin, and he flopped on top of another soldier.

"Hey, you!" bellowed the last-named party, "call your shots, will you?" The soldier picked himself up and pushed the big soldier into a seat. "Lay off!" he said. "You'll git all the scrapping you can handle when you get over to France!"

"There aint no harm in rehearsing a little, is they?" the big soldier replied at the same time taking a sock at the other. (Witwer 32-33)

A free-for-all then took place. The motorman stopped the car at the sound of stashing glass, and with the conductor they both took a hand [*sic*]. There were neutrals in that car and I was one. I fought my way out and for fifteen minutes watched the battle from the outside. Four men was all that remained in that car and they were soldiers! Minus the motorman and conductor who had found a neutral position with us, the four soldiers started the car and rode into camp.

This racket came pretty near meaning no more passes, but on investigation, the camp officials located the guilty parties and after giving all fair warning that a recurrence of such an affair would take away our privileges, the affair was forgotten.

That same night downtown, "Big Nick" of our company got arrested by the cops. After they had placed him in the patrol car and were on the way to the station, Big Nick got wild and kicked the side of the patrol car out. He then proceeded to clean up the cops. He arrived in camp after midnight

singing his loudest. What a sight he was, and battered but still happy go lucky. His battle song was "Illinois." For this celebration, he was confined to camp for a week.

I had heard a soldier giving a toast in the barroom that night and I managed to learn the words. Here they are:

The Doughboys' Steel

A cannoneer, an engineer and a yellow corded man
Were drinking with a doughboy in the "Golden Pelican."
The engineer, he ups his beer and drains the foaming stein
To the glory of the cavalry,
The smashing, dashing cavalry,
Where sabers clank and shine.

The yellow leg proposed a toast to the field artillery.
Who spill their gore where the cannons roar
In hateful savagery.

The wagon soldier rose and bowed and gave three hearty cheers
And pledged his toast to the gallant host
Of fitting engineers.

And all this time the doughboy sat and never a word spoke he.
For there is no shining romance in the stolid infantry,
The stolid, plodding, gravel trodding,
Marching infantry.
But when the foe gets hostile and his guns are set and laid
You can't go into action like you go on dress parade.
Or when they come a'chargin' 'cross a field of grain
And their bullets are a'flyin' like a blast of leaden rain

You can take your sacred oath on it, and set your hand and seal
That the only thing to stop'em is the doughboys' shining steel.

Dear Joe...

That's what we are now, "doughboys." A doughboy is the nickname for a private in the Infantry. I don't know why they call us that, because thirty-three dollars a month

> aint much dough. Still, when you figure you're getting food, clothes, a place to sleep, doctors, medicine (C. C. pills[11] and Iodine), and a chance to see the world, changing the map here and there if you don't like it the way it is now: it really looks like Uncle Sam is a sucker to pay us at all. (Witwer 37)

First Sergeant Fraser had become very friendly with both Ted and myself. With his and Sergeant Wendell's advice and suggestions we were much interested and progressed rapidly.

> Dear Joe...
>
> Oh well, up to now I have learned how to march a couple dozen different ways, salute, the manual of arms, how to keep myself and a gun clean, how to take care of my kit, and how to fire off a rifle without killing a colonel. Every one of these things looked like a cinch right off the bat, and every one takes about a month before you can do them right, and that's if you've got more brains than there is in Harvard College. (Witwer 37-38)

> Early in August we moved to Pleasant Beach, a summer resort located a short distance from the city, where we are housed in squad tents. Just before we moved our regiment lost nearly a thousand men, most of whom went back to the Ninth Infantry and to the 48th Inf. The 9th was being whipped into shape for an early departure overseas, while the 48th was to be sent to Newport News, Va. (Pollard 12)

Boisse and Joe Pelletier were among those transferred to the 9th, and Bennett went to the 48th. We felt pretty bad to be separated and I tried hard to get transferred with Boisse and Joe but couldn't work it.

Meanwhile, more So. Ashburnham boys had arrived in camp. Mike Cousi[neau] was assigned to Pete's Company and Joe Goudreau and Otis St John are in camp with the 23rd. Infantry.

I am busily occupied with my general orders. So far, I've had more success with the general orders of "Chow Hound", which are as follows:

1. To take charge of all the spuds and gravy in view.

11. Compound cathartic pills.

2. To watch my plate in a military manner, keeping always on the alert for any sausages that may stray within sight or hearing.

3. To report to the mess sergeant any cases of punk being sliced too thin.

4. To repeat any calls for seconds.

5. To quit the table only when I'm satisfied that there is nothing left to eat.

6. To receive, but not pass on, any meat, slum or beans left by the non-coms, bucks or gold bricks.

7. To talk to no one that eats onions.

8. In case of fire in the mess hall, to grab all the eats left by the others when they make their escape.

9. In any case not covered by instructions to call the company clerk.

10. To allow no one to get away with more than their share of the show.

11. To salute all beef steaks, fried chickens, pork chops, ham and eggs, and pies.

12. To be especially watchful if we have hot cakes, and to challenge anyone who gets more than I do.

13. Only a few weeks ago, on that race track I couldn't eat my grub, but put some in front of me now! It's sure funny what an appetite a soldier can work up.

First Call! Outside for drill!

We had completed training with the "rookie squad" under the expert guidance of Sergeant Wendell and had been assigned to duty with the company.

First Sergeant Fraser taking his stand in front of the company barks, "Fall in!" "Right Dress!" Hands on hips, eyes to the right, a scuffle of feet. The top barks "Pull in those guts!" The line properly dressed, the top barks, "Front!"

"Re-port!" The squad leaders report, a weird medley of voices: 1st squad all present or accounted for! 2nd squad all present, etc.

"Squads, Right! Hard!" We tramp down the company street, turn and swing onto the drill field. Close order, platoon and squad drills are in order, and during the month of August we got plenty. In addition to this we were receiving a lot of special instruction in the new Canadian method of bayonet fighting.

Road marches without packs were also part of our routine. Some of these marches were up to nine and ten miles.

September brought the New York State Fair to Syracuse at which bayonet experts from our company gave exhibitions.

Colonel Leon S. Roudiez was assigned to command our regiment on September 24.

The Big Boy was a stern and efficient commander. He thought a lot of his noncoms, especially the corporals.

I recall an occasion at Syracuse while the regiment was out on the drill field for regimental parade. Our officers, the majority being "Thirty day wonders," were making a mess of things. The Colonel in his desperation turned the companies over to the noncoms and compelled his officers to look on from the sidelines. The men in the ranks, glad of the chance to show up the officers, went through the various movements without a hitch, the Colonel all the while razzing the officers. At the conclusion of the drill the colonel addressing the noncoms, said, "You men are little Napoleons! Remember Napoleon was once a private in ranks." Complementing the noncoms on the showing they had made, he dismissed them and told the officers that they should consult their IDR's[12] in regard to regimental drill.

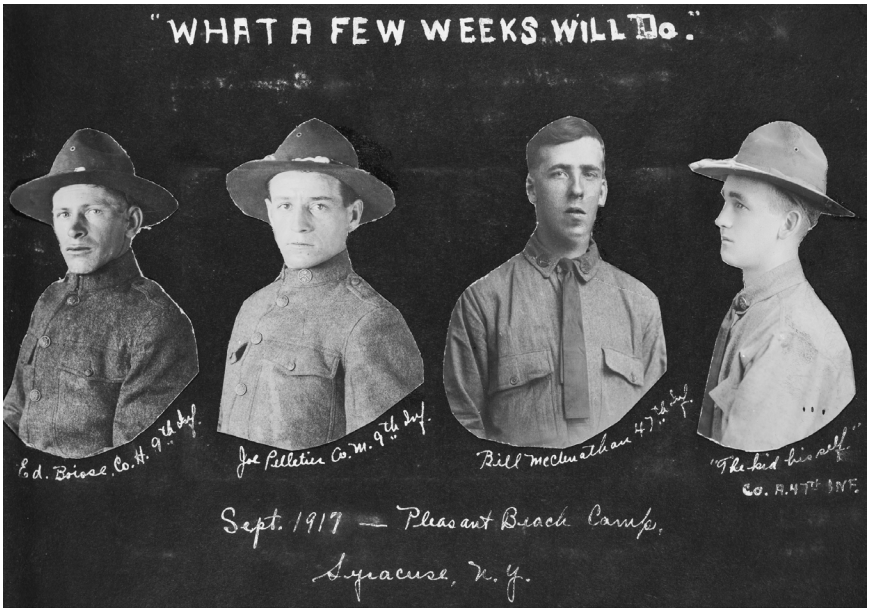
At this stage, I was acting Corporal and had my own squad.

October brought increased activity in the form of the construction of a trench system which required three weeks for completion.

We had in the meantime paraded twice for the benefit of Syracuse and had left our mark on the fall social calendar with a regimental dance at the Onondaga Hotel.

Cold rains had put in their appearance and in our summer khaki suits we couldn't keep warm.

12. Infantry Drill Regulations



What a Few Weeks Will Do

Sept. 1917 - Pleasant Beach Camp., Syracuse, N.Y.
Ed. Boisse, Co. H, 9th Inf, Joe Pelletier, Co. M, 9th Inf, Bill McClenathan, 47th Inf., "The kid hisself", Co. A, 47th Inf.

Camp Green

On October 25, we entrained at Syracuse for the "Sunny South." Camp Greene, Charlotte, N. C. was our destination. Riding in day coaches we arrived two days later.

It does not require the lilting strains of "Dixie" or "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny" as rendered by a cabaret orchestra these tranquil days to rouse my recollection of the "Sunny South." Any snow drift half full of tin cans or a sudden draft takes care of all that.

"Oh, yes," the beaming Southerners used to tell us when a foot of snow blanketed the ground and we were wearing our OD[13] overcoats in their parlors. "It's really warm here in the winter. No snow or anything. But bad weather, ha! ha! always follows the troops." We agreed that it did, yeah, just like bad salmon.

So we'd put our feet on their radiators and go home at night when the pass expired, to a tent full squad mates and the mud and ice they had brought in.

The memories of those canvas tents and those Sibley Stoves![14] The kind that waxed red-hot up to the peak hole of the tent and in half an hour the water was freezing again in the canteen swinging alongside your cot. Even now a smile comes at the thought of the genius those tents possessed for catching fire whenever the mercury fell below ten. Something woke you and you put your head out from under cover and found yourself regarding an ever-widening hole in the roof through which the stars twinkled. A cheery little red fringe appeared, making the hole larger and larger, and the smoke began to be annoying.

By the time you had thrown off two blankets the supply sergeant gave you, two the family had sent down from home, two you had bought yourself in town, an overcoat and last Sunday's newspaper and were sitting up, the fire was doing splendidly.

Our trip down here was my first experience in a troop train.

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13. Olive Drab.

14. In 1856, Henry Hopkins Sibley patented the "Sibley Tent," which could accommodate twenty soldiers and their gear and was widely used in the frontier afterwards. Sibley also invented the "Sibley Stove" to heat the tent. These sheet iron stoves were being used until the advent of World War II. (Wikipedia).

Three men to a seat and no lights in the cars. But three months of army experience had taught me something. Two of us would jackknife ourselves across our pair of seats when the time came for slumber. The odd man was then elected to go down two cars and spend the night in a blackjack game with all our money. It was very simple. The two of us arrived in camp with twenty new dollars.

Somewhere below the Mason-Dixon Line, our train had stopped on a side track to let another train by. The engineer being anxious to get somewhere started with a jerk and out comes a draw bar. It was after midnight and without giving us time to dress we were ordered outside. In our stocking feet and on those cinders, we were obliged to push our car onto the main, and then back far enough to clear the switch. The engine backed onto our train once more and we pushed our car down the track so that the engine could couple us on ahead. They then pushed us into the next town where we were obliged to change cars.

When we arrived in Camp Greene, we found regiments of the Sunset Division (National Guard) already there. We were the first regular army troops to arrive here. Other infantry units and artillery regiments which were to form our division, the 4th, soon followed us into camp. These units were: the 39th, 58th, and 59th Infantry, the 4th Engineers, the 13th and 77th Field Artilleries, and the 8th Field Signal Battalion.

The Fourth Division was actually formed as such early in December with Major General George Cameron in command. The Division was one of the first nine regular army divisions to be formed and trained. There was no formal ceremony indicative of the formation of the Division; neither did the daily program of my regiment reflect any great changes as a result of the divisional organization.

> It was our fortune to face one of the most severe winters North Carolina had experienced in years. Early in December, with the advent of wet weather, the camp was turned into a sea of mud which froze and thawed and froze again, to the discomfort of everybody. The camp was without streets except the usual dirt roads, and these became almost impassable as the winter wore on and the snow melted from time to time.
>
> As a result, except for possible fatigue and guard duties and such indoor work as was possible, the regiment, with other organizations, was practically inactive during

> the winter. A huge pine forest which stretched on all sides of the camp during the winter practically disappeared by spring to furnish fuel to keep the men warm. The mud was usually from six to ten inches deep and active work was out of question.
>
> To offset this inactivity as much as possible specialists schools were established, many of which were taught by experts from the British and French Military Missions which had come to the camp. (Pollard 16-17)

On October 31, 1917, I was given my first assignment as Corporal of the guard. I had the third relief which was as follows: Acting Corporal L. Z. Daris, #1 Murphy, #2 Caldow, #3 Drowne, #4 D. Lampen [?], and #5 A. J. Daris.

The camp was a lonely place at night. Having drilled all morning, mounted guard and posted the sentries after wallowing in the "Carolina Mud," one gets tired and sleepy. We can't undress, but as Corporal must stay awake in case of a call from any post. The officer of the day comes into the guard house. I hear him tell the Sergeant of the guard to wake him up at one o'clock. Somehow the sentries on post find this out. The result is some of them sneak a nap. Oh well, I might as well take a snooze. All the supernumeraries are asleep, I count the prisoners, twenty-five of them, mostly all in the "jug" for having overstayed their pass or for talking hack to officers. Minor offenders that had been put in the "jug" as an example to others. The Colonel believed that the time for a stern hand was when the soldier was fresh to the service. I was just about to take a snooze when I hear #1 challenge. The OD was trying to put one over. Old-timer and wise to all the tricks, what he told the Sergeant about waking him up at one was bait.

"Where's the Corporal," asked the OD of #1.

"#1" told him I was inside. Meeting the OD at the door of the guard house, I saluted him.

"I want you to make this round with me, Corporal," he said.

Starting out we approached #2. Emerging from the shadows of the officers' mess shack, he demanded our business in the approved manner.

"That fellow is up on guard duty, certainly," said the OD.

We went on to #3 by the Corrals. We were both half to sleep, and had walked clear to the corrals of another regiment before we realized we had not been challenged.

"Now where is that son of a gun?" demanded the OD. "We must have crossed his post. Maybe we went by him in the dark."

"He should have challenged us," I replied. "It's up to him to see us, not us to see him."

"I don't know," muttered the OD. "I don't like this idea of prowling around in the night among a lot of bohunks[15] with loaded rifles. Suppose one of them got rattled and let go at us? Suppose we didn't hear his challenge?"

"Don't let's get scared," I replied. "One o'clock in the morning is a bad hour. Now let's find that number three. If he isn't there I'll go back to the guard house and get another sentry."

At that instant, we heard someone walking near the water trough.

"Who's there?" demanded the OD.

"Number Three, sir."

"Number Three? Where have you been? We've been looking for you for half an hour!"

"I been right here, Sir." "I see you go by," he added.

"Saw us go by? Why didn't you challenge us then?"

"I knew who you vos, sir. I seen you at guard mount. You vos der officer from der day."

There was a pause, for neither of us knew what to reply.

"That makes no difference," said the OD finally. "You should challenge just the same. This is war, remember, and never take any chances."

We went on to the next, not finding anything wrong, we returned to the guard house. Relief coming the next afternoon, I went back to my company with the feeling of a released prisoner.

November 6, 7, and 8, the North Carolina State Fair was held on the fairgrounds which are only a short way from camp. A picked battalion of troops from our regiment staged exhibition drills on each day. The men representing my company were: L. Z. Daris, A. J. Daris, Hilburn, Caldow, Murphy, and Chapman.

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15. Bohunk, immigrant from central or southeastern Europe, especially a laborer; a rough or uncivilized person (Google dictionary)

On Saturday November 10, the Regiment was presented with their regimental colors. A brief ceremony took place.

Before the winter set in, Colonel Roudiez had instituted a series of regimental reviews for which he was famous. We used the race tracks on the fair grounds for these reviews, where there was room for double time. On one occasion, he was credited with parading the regiment three times in one afternoon. The "Old Boy" sure was exacting.

Several divisional reviews were held, one of them in honor of Assistant Secretary of War Crowell.

> The city of Charlotte had evidenced a desire to be "mother, father, sister, and brother" to the regiment in the belief that being a Regular Army unit, the regiment was composed of professional soldiers and was therefore "hard-boiled." The National Guard units that were in camp before us had circulated all sorts of stories among the natives about the Regular Army and it took us sometime to establish ourselves with these people. Fights among the two units were a common sight and due to these conditions, [we] Regulars were confined to camp until the National Guard units had left. (Pollard 18)

I recall one night I was standing on the corner of a busy street when two Guardsmen walked up to me. Taking a look at my collar ornaments, they gave me a push into the gutter. "Regulars, huh, one side!" they said. This was on a Saturday afternoon. I went back to camp and that night after retreat the whole platoon, sixty strong decided to take matters in their own hands. We didn't even wait for a trolley, but started walking down the streetcar tracks to the city.

Every street in Charlotte was combed over that night and every Guardsman we saw was soon headed out of town.

When the last outfit of Guardsmen had left camp, the same card system that was in vogue at Syracuse was reinstituted.

> The entire camp was quarantined for spinal meningitis late in January, the isolation remaining in force for twenty-six days. There was a lot of sickness among the troops all during the winter. A modern sewerage system was lacking, while the roads were in terrible shape. (Pollard 23)

Fires were numerous. Many times, the camp was aroused in the dead of the night. On some occasions, the alarm was repeated several times during the same night. I remember well one bleak two a. m. in January when the squad awoke to discover its home, sweet home, ablaze.

"Yell for the bugler!" ordered the corporal with brisk efficiency of the born noncommissioned officer who does not have to consult the IDR to

Camp Greene

Arrows point to Ted's and my tent. Looking at the photo brings back many incidents. My first assignment as corporal of the guard. The night my tent blew away, the wind carrying it into B Company's street. The night my tent caught fire trying to burn the Carolina pine trees we had chopped in order to keep warm. The night the OD and myself tried to find the sentry at the corrals. The day I was an orderly for the Supply Officer and I tried to ride his horse back to the corrals. The day Billy Sunday and I visited Gastonia and we got pinched for being out of bounds. The fight downtown with the National Guardsmen. The night I told the big six foot Vegas cowboy to pipe down, and what not.

know what to do in an emergency. "Tell him to sound fire call!" Nobody moved or yelled. "Shoot off your gun, Callahan," suggested a voice in the back cot.

"Can't reach it," said Callahan and put his head back under the covers. "Too dammed cold to get up."

"The guard will see it," volunteered another drowsy voice. "It's his business to see fires."

It was, however, the guard three company streets over who turned loose the alarm about the time one side of the tent had gone and we decided perhaps, after all, it would be better to get up. We spent the rest of the night in the mess shack comfortably close to a stove that was square and whose pipe did not rise glowing to the roof.

On another occasion, the base hospital caught fire, but the blaze was soon extinguished. The pneumonia patients confined to the hospital at the time suffered somewhat from exposure.

Shortly after we had arrived in camp, work was begun on an elaborate trench system which was not finished until spring, the mud and general conditions of the winter being responsible for the delay. A bayonet course was also constructed and a rifle range was built which had seventy-seven targets.

In anticipation of the call to be ready for overseas service, which was expected early in the spring, replacements began pouring into camp soon after the first of the year. By March our personnel numbered ninety-one officers and two thousand nine hundred ninety-four men. Some of the officers were attached temporally.

These replacements were separated in a number of casual camps within the camp. Here under the tutelage of one officer and two noncommissioned officers from each of the companies in the regiment, those who were designated for the 47th were given elementary training after the regular army idea.

Lieutenant McDonald, Ted and I had charge of the men for our company. We spent a month in instructing at this camp. We must have been pretty good instructors as out of our group nearly all attained at least the rank of Corporal and in one case one man was later commissioned a Second Lieutenant.

> March was spent in whipping the regiment into shape so that by April first, the organization was ready for the final three weeks of intensive training before it was sent to the embarkation camp. In the meantime, the specialists in signaling, liaison, bombing. bayonet work, automatic ri-

> fle, Stokes Mortar, one pounder, and other branches were given the task of imparting their newly acquired knowledge to others. About the middle of the month the casual camps were broken up and the men assigned to duty to their companies. For the first time the companies were broken up into platoons.
>
> For a period extending over two weeks we were engaged in target practice on the newly built rifle range. This was located in the river bottom where the sand was from six to eight inches deep. The Springfield rifle was used. We shot all the ranges up to and including four hundred yards, while those who showed special proficiency and turned in scores of 198 or better for these ranges were given an opportunity to fire on the 500 and 600 yard ranges. (Pollard 19)

In addition to firing my own courses, I was on special duty as an instructor. All day long, I would lie on the wet and cold sand.

One day, one of the men shooting couldn't even hit the outside of the frame. From observation, I noted he was the flinching type. One cure in these cases was as follows. First, I'd ask him what kind of a gun he had there, trying to give him the impression that it was the gun's fault. Taking his gun, I would, unobserved, place an empty shell in the chamber and hand the gun back to him, telling him to try that. He would jerk his trigger and there would be only the click of the firing pin, but even at that he'd flinch. I then would take out the empty shell and show him what I had done. Firing a few shots with his rifle, I soon convinced him that the gun was OK and that he was afraid of it.

Another time one of the men was having the same trouble. Taking his rifle which he had laid on the sand, I wanted to show him that he was afraid of it. Now this gun had, unknown to me, sand in the barrel. I fired and was kicked back off from the firing pit so hard that I thought a mule had kicked me. Here was one I couldn't convince that his gun didn't kick. In fact, the Springfield rifle does have an awful kick to it. Until your shoulder gets hardened and you are careful in keeping the butt firmly against your shoulder, you soon get the hang of handling the baby.

Some of the points I learned in this art of shooting are briefly: take a good breath and hold it, align the sights, squeeze the trigger (not jerk). Call your shot.

The final three weeks at Camp Greene were of intense activity for all of us. When not engaged in training, we were busy in drawing and checking equipment. The first inkling of the long marches and the field service which was in store for us was the issue of hobnail shoes to replace our russets. The final week saw but little drill, tiresome field inspections taking most of our time.

I can remember the care we took to prevent anyone from getting wind of our departure, how craftily we painted the divisional insignia and the letters "AEF" on the companies' boxes to divert any suspicion that we might be going abroad.

We had been at Camp Greene almost six months to the day when we got our secret orders to move.

We cheered. We shouted. We danced around. Anything was better than this business of camping in tents in the Southland or anywhere else. We banged each other on the back and shook the mud off from our feet. Good Bye, Camp Greene! We're on our way to help make history in the most bitter war the world has known.

One of the boys summed up this camp life as follows:

"A Hitch in Hell"[16]

I'm sitting here a'thinking o'the things I leave behind.
An' I hate to put on paper what's a'running through my mind,
I've dug a million trenches an' I've cleared ten miles of ground.
An'a meaner job this side of hell, say it can't be found,
But there's still some consolation.
Listen to this tale I tell.
When I die I'm bound for heaven,
For I've had my hitch in hell.
I've built a million kitchens for the cooks to stew the beans,
I've stood a million guard mounts an'.
I've drank some from canteens,
I've washed a million mess kits an'
I've peeled a million spuds

16. A variant of the ballad "Our Hitch in Hell" by F. B. Camp (*American Soldier Ballads*, 1917).

I've rolled a million blankets an' I've washed a million duds.
An' the number of parades I've made I aint a'going to tell.
But I'll do my bit in heaven because I've done my bit in hell.
When the final taps is sounded an' I lay aside my cares.
I'll go the last parade a'climbing up the golden stairs.
When the angels bid me "Howdy" and the band begins to play,
I'll draw a million canteen checks to pass the time away.
So now I'm bound for France boys.
I'm going to wish you well.
Until we meet in heaven,
We've had our hitch in hell.

En Route to Port of Embarkation

Early in the morning of April 25, we boarded our train which was awaiting us. Pullmans with porters! Hot Ziggady, some class.

As our train pulled out of the yards, a colored mammy standing on the banks of the railroad was waving a farewell.

Our train was routed via Philadelphia and Jersey City, which took us through Washington DC. At the Capitol, we were served with coffee and sandwiches by the Red Cross. We were enthusiastically greeted en route.

We reached Camp Mills, Long Island, New York, at two p. m. the following day.

For ten days following our arrival, we were even busier than the final days in Camp Greene. Six hundred replacements to take the place of those who had been weeded out for physical defects, and those who were nationals of Germany and her Allies.

Property and equipment were checked for the last time and every man was issued regulation overseas clothing.

In the meantime, we had been given permission to visit New York City on eighteen hour passes. Later, we were given twenty-four hours. This wasn't long enough to enable me to make a trip home so my Dad made a flying trip over to see me and Ted.

"Rab", Ted and I went to the big city with Dad and spent the day.

While at Camp Mills, we were housed in tents. There were no mess halls.

On May 8, the First and Second Battalions, Regimental Headquarters, Supply and Machine Gun Companies, and Headquarters Co. got order to get going. Lined up before our Colonel, we listened to a speech that was a knockout! He said our Regiment had made a name for itself here and there, and he knew we'd be a riot once we got to France. He also reminded us that there were other reasons for us going over outside of the ocean voyage, and not to think this was going to be the same the regular monthly clambake of the Bartenders Union. We were due for some rough going, but he knew we'd make it rougher for whatsoever blocked traffic when we were tearing across France.

When he got through, we gave him a cheer that must have woken up cemetery inmates all over the United States.

Then the Chaplain tried out a prayer on us, and we beat it for our trains a happy bunch of guys.

Our boat was the US Naval Transport *Princess Matoika*. We weren't allowed at this time to mention names of boats, towns or destinations, in any of our letters back home under penalty of arrest. As one doughboy put it, "It's just the same as throwing rocks at the President as far as the Judge is concerned."

Hoboken, N. J. was the name of the port where we embarked and there was only a couple of cops and Immigration officials on deck when we loaded on. We couldn't even tell them "So long!" because we had to keep our mouths shut and keep out of sight once on board. If those German spies knew we were going across, they would no doubt date us up with a U-boat somewhere on the ocean.

On Board Ship

> Dear Joe...
>
> The whole boat was painted by a bunch of maniac painters who evidently were opposed to prohibition, and the foreman must have seen there was no one died of thirst while they were on the job. There's a swab of pink here and a swab of blue there, and in between they've got samples of chocolate, strawberry, orange, vanilla, and allied flavors. This is called camouflage and is supposed to keep the sub-

marines from seeing the ship, and in the event they do see it, to scare them away.

Among the bunch on board are about forty horseshoes, a hundred and four-leaf clovers, a gross of rabbit's feet, and a lot of other A#l charms to keep off torpedoes. In case them charms quit cold on us we've got an ace in the hole in the shape of a bevy of six-inch guns. I didn't knock the charms, but those guns looked good to me! (Witwer 30-31)

Graced by wonderful weather except for a couple days, the trip across was uneventful. Our boat pulled out on May 10 at 6:30 p.m., the *Caserta*, which had the rest of the Regiment having sailed about four in the afternoon. We met at a designated rendezvous and formed a convoy consisting of thirteen transports and the cruiser *Frederick* of the US Navy. Our course had been South until we had reached the rendezvous.

We were soon out rolling around in the deep blue and so far, everything had been elegant. We were plowing along with nothing to look at but all the water in the world. When I went out on deck and gazed around, I could realize how Noah must have felt.

On May 13, there was a calm sea. The use of fresh water was curtailed on account of the excessive use of it by the men. We were in the Gulf Stream our course being East. Only two meals a day were served on account of the inability of the cooks to serve three meals per day during daylight.

The trip so far has been kind of dull, because we hadn't seen a sign of a U-boat or even as much as hit a mine, but I was told that things would pick up when we got in the war zone, as there was a chance of some excitement, so we were all trying to bear up until then.

Dear Joe...

I haven't been seasick a bit, but a lot of these guys are wishing there was some way of going across outside of on a boat.

We've got so much to keep us busy on the way over that the blues or nothing else gets a chance to hang around us. The first thing in the morning, we get setting up exercises right out on the decks. You've got to take off everything but your lingerie down to your waist and go to it. Every muscle in a guy's body gets a chance to limber up! "One, two, three, four. . . one, two, three, four," sings the Ser-

geant, and we doughboys move arms, legs, and everything like the whole outfit was one man. After about a half-hour of this with the air off the ocean blowing all over you, you feel you would be willing to fight the German Army all by yourself in the middle of Berlin! And what an appetite!

Then the guys that aren't standing the trip as well as the ship is, call out for the doc to look them over, and the rest of us go down and pack away a breakfast fit for a king. There isn't anybody in the world can eat as much as a doughboy when he's in mid-season form, which is always.

Next comes lifeboat drill. Everybody puts on one of those trick life preservers and double-quicks to his boat. Each one of the boats is supposed to hold forty-eight doughboys, if they are good and thin. One wisecracker says if those boats can hold forty-eight guys at one sitting, he could stop the war. Every man is supposed to go to a certain boat and sit in a certain seat, and I'll bet a ticket speculator could make a million dollars the first five minutes, selling front rows if anything happens.

The first day we came up for drill there was a lot of kidding and joshing about it. Then the Lieutenant in charge of our boat came along. He looks like a middleweight champ, and is tougher than any doughboy on the ship. He pops up while all the laughing is going on, and he says this: "Attention, I want you men to listen very carefully to what I'm going to say, because I'm only going over this once. There is very little chance of anything happening that would cause us to take to the lifeboats in earnest, but it might. If anything does happen, the signal will be five sharp blasts on the ship's whistle. You will proceed to this deck with your life preservers on and take your boat stations in an orderly manner. Upon my command, the men assigned to the oars will board, the men assigned to lowering the boats will take their positions, and the others will take their seats in the boat. There is to be no pushing and shoving, no running, and, above all, absolute silence from the time you leave your bunks until you enter the lifeboats!" He stops and, drawing his gun, breaks it and shows us a handful of bullets. "I want you all to see that my revolver

> is loaded with ball cartridges," he says, sticking out his jaw, "and the first man that allows as much as a murmur to escape him will be shot down instantly!" (Witwer 43-49)

There was no more laughing and joshing about lifeboat drill from then on.

> A rough sea prevailed on May 16 and 17, which resulted in a good deal of sickness among the guys. (Pollard 27)

For two days, we had to catch our meals on the fly. Our "table" hung suspended from the ceiling by chains and every time the boat would rock we would sway back and forth, at times almost losing our balance. When the sea calmed down and we thought we were sitting pretty, all of a sudden, we'd run into a swell and then came confusion. This swell as we rode over it threw the ship sideways and it seemed as if we were to tip completely over. As the ship tipped we began to slide, all in the same direction. Macaroni was part of our menu that day and when the rolling and sliding had ceased, every man was on the floor with macaroni hanging over his ears and soaked with coffee. Mess kits, knives, forks and spoons littered the floor. Each man's equipment is properly marked according to company and is charged to the individual. Knowing this, I attempted to secure what belonged to me, but the best I could do was a Co. D knife, Co. B fork, and Co. C cup. The rest of my outfit, I had to wait until the mess hall had been cleared to find.

Our band was bravely trying to provide music during this roughness; most of them were, but some thinking they were leaning over the ship's rail would "spray" their instruments.

> On the eighteenth, a destroyer was picked at night while the convoy passed about two hundred miles north of the Azores during the afternoon. This destroyer remained with us two days. (Pollard 27)

> Dear Joe...
>
> That night, we breezed into the war zone. We were told by our officer to sleep with our clothes and life preservers on, and if there was anybody had insomnia, now was a good chance to let it run wild. It was only a waste of breath to tell that to some of those guys, because there was a good thousand of them that hadn't shut an eye since we said goodbye to the Statue of Liberty. No pains are spared to

help you remember there's a war in full swing. The decks are so dark at night that a man's eyes are as much use as his appendix, from six o' clock on. If you light a cigarette you get thrown in the "brig" clutch and in irons, because they claim the flicker of a match can be seen three miles away.

The first night we were in this war zone our decks were crowded with doughboys that wanted to do everything else in the world but sleep. From the creaking of the deck above us I saw there were also a few officers that had decided not to drown in their bunks either. (Witwer 52-53)

This may sound funny to one who hasn't been through the experience, but I for one don't blame those officers a bit. It isn't hard to fight something you can see, but here's a sneaking, yellow skunk that's liable any minute to pop up out of the water, and without warning, not even giving us a chance to go to the mat with them, send us all to hell, heaven or Hoboken with a torpedo! And all you can do about the matter is to wait until you get it. That's all, just wait and wish! Just like the guy before the firing squad with his blindfold on, waiting to get bumped off. I don't care if a guy's name is Mr. Hero, it gets on his nerves.

Dear Joe...

But God willing, we'll get on them Huns' nerves when we get to France.

The second day we were in the U-boats' playground, the only submarine scare of the voyage occurred. Most of us were below deck, when all of a sudden there was a terrific explosion from the side of ship I was on. Just one great big B….A…N…G…! "Good night!" I said to myself, "Here's where we all get soaking wet!"

Well, we all had our life preservers where they would do the most good, which was wrapped around our chests, and without waiting for a command we all fell in very quietly along the deck. The Sherlock Holmes's in our midst had it all figured that a U-boat had finally got us, and they were giving us the low down on the whole work while we were awaiting orders to abandon ship. All of us were thinking of the speech the Lieutenant had given us and there wasn't one of us that as much as dared to start up the stairs until we got the command. There wasn't a sound

from that line of doughboys, that stretched along the deck as far as you could see. A buck private standing next to me, who shakes his fist towards the ocean and growls, "What d'ye know about them dam big German stiffs crabbing a guy's supper! They better get that submarine thing away from here before I take to the water, because I'm telling the world I can trip a Dutchman on land or sea!"

Army training is a wonderful thing. If all of us doughboys had started milling up those stairs at once, it would have made a race riot looking like a checker game. Here it is as black as ink and all you can hear is the Naval gunners up above, scurrying around at hoarse orders from the bridge. Excitement? Plenty!

But in spite of all of this, we doughboys aren't making a sound or moving a foot. For all we know we've been torpedoed, but we haven't got the order to abandon ship yet, and until we get it were standing pat! No noise or nothing, because we are American doughboys, and it's up to us to show the Huns that we can die the same way as we can scrap. Oh no, we wouldn't let those German rats kid themselves that they had thrown a scare into us!

We stand there about five minutes, when the buck private whispers to me do I think the officers have forgotten we were all going over together? A guy in back of me giggles and says we've got to take our bath without it even being Saturday night.

The boat doesn't seem to be sinking and it seems we've been standing here for five years, when the Lieutenant comes along and tells us that the danger is all over with and to fall in for mess. Well that announcement didn't make any one sore, and we managed to hide our disappointment.

It seems that one of the lookouts had seen something in the water and gave the alarm. The gunner also thought he saw the wake of a submarine, and not caring to take any chances, he played his ace, the ace being a six-inch gun. That was what had made all the noise. If it really was a submarine it quit like a dog, and if it wasn't, it quit anyway

and passed the word down the line, because we weren't pestered anymore for the rest of the trip.

The Colonel came down while we were going to mess, and told us how proud he was of the way we acted when it came to what looked like a showdown, and he said he was going to see that it gets as far as Washington anyway.

I found out later that there were some English officers aboard ship and the Colonel was anxious to have them see that even though we hadn't had actual war experience as yet, we could stand the gaff with anybody when it came to a showdown. His orderly told us that when the gun went off the only thing that was bothering the Colonel was what we would do, we being way down in the cellar of the ship, where we couldn't get an idea of what was coming off. The way we acted tickled the old boy silly, and after that we could have had anything he had, except maybe his shoulder straps.

On May 21, a bunch of little dots appeared on the water and kept circling around us, getting bigger and bigger every minute.

We thought at first they were sharks or the like, and then again it looked like all the submarines in the world had come out to knock us cold! One of our lookouts ran to the bow and began waving his arms around in the air; I thought at first he was shadow-boxing to keep warm, and then I realized he was signaling the dots. They came closer and closer, dashing around like mosquitoes, and then we saw they were destroyers.

The cruiser *Frederick,* which convoyed us over had left us and was headed back home. Now we were to have plenty of company and amusement in watching these mosquitoes. I've never seen anything so funny as the way they played around us. They reminded me of a bunch of ocean going flivvers![17] There were nine or ten all told.

17. Flivver, a cheap car or aircraft, especially one in bad condition. (Google Dictionary)

> Boy, they certainly looked good to us doughboys, who were sick and tired of this U-boat thing. We cheered back and forth until we were hoarse! (Witwer 54-62)

The next day, our convoy split up. Some went North, bound for England, while we continued East which would bring us to France. During the night, distress signals were picked up from two vessels, but we couldn't go to their help.

Land was sighted about six thirty in the morning of May 24, and three hours later, we arrived in the harbor of Brest. Officers of the Port boarded our ships giving our officers instruction in matters pertaining to debarkation. We stayed aboard all day waiting for orders to unload but didn't get them. That night our baggage was taken off.

Before dark, additional transports had arrived, bringing the total in the harbor up to twenty-one.

We left our transport the morning of May 23, debarking by ladder and proceeding to Fort Bouguen, about two miles outside of Brest.

Raising our legs about knee high, we were trying walk. We had what the sailors call sea legs and it was quite a stunt to walk on land after that trip.

We didn't wait on the dock very long when they marched us off. We were in full pack, extra shoes, slicker, overcoat, and three blankets, in addition to our rifles. We continued to march, and uphill! Up and up, like the side of a house. All cobble stones, too, that hurt our feet. It was early morning, and the French people opening their blinds would look at us, or sometimes wave, but we didn't pay much attention. The worst skirt-scouts in the outfit had nothing to say. Cleopatra could have walked right down through the whole regiment with nothing on but a smile and never even get a second look.

We'd halt every half-hour and there'd be one big crash where everyone fell right down in his tracks. Along about this time a lot of us were contemplating suicide, when one of the officers keeled over. We didn't know just what ailed him, but most of us thought he'd gone under from exhaustion, but we got a rest while all gathered around, and the pill rollers tried to revive him. He was pretty sick, we could see that when we marched by where he lay. We heard the next day he had double pneumonia and died shortly after.

The discussion of this event made things more bearable, and then we arrived at where we were going. Here were a lot of stone barracks. They'd had glass in the windows at one time, and oiled paper at a later date, but very little trace remained.

Passing through the Fort we found out these barracks weren't for us. Instead we pitched tents along the banks of the moat that surrounded the Fort. Anyway, there was a chance to throw off the heavy packs and flop without having to fall in again. We got into our stomachs outside of a gallon or so of hot slum and good coffee, after a little while, and things looked better. We slept most of the day too, and that afternoon we bought our first *vin rouge* and champagne from the French that came to the outskirt of our camp. The rest of the day and night we felt more like living.

The next morning, a cyclone must have struck the camp overnight, tents down everywhere, and the casualties! There were so many that it was useless to hold formation at reveille. Most of the boys had favored champagne and every time they'd take a drink of water they'd be cockeyed again. Boy, wasn't the Colonel mad! He took the whole regiment out for a two-hour hike to sober them off, and then posted sentries all around the camp to stop the bootlegging.

This fort where we are camped was built in the thirteenth century, to replace a Roman fort, fragments of which are incorporated in the base. Present day visitors are shown only the various cells and dungeons about each of which some special tale of horror or suffering of the political prisoners formerly entombed therein is told.

4. France

Training Period in France

It doesn't require an extended military service to discover that a soldier must develop a sense of humor or go mad.

> Dear Joe...
>
> Incidentally, there's one thing over here we get lots of in spite of war, and that's rain. It was raining when we landed and it's still raining. One wisecracker said, "The weatherman over here must have a cinch. He can hang up a sign, 'Rain today and tomorrow,' and go on a vacation for the rest of his life without hurting his reputation as a guesser." (Witwer 64)

Another says, "If it doesn't stop raining over here pretty soon, they'll have to call off the war on account of wet grounds."

In fact, there must be millions in the umbrella game here, and mud pie bakers would never have to look any further for a steady job.

> Dear Joe...
>
> A cold and a uniform is the same thing in France… everybody got one!
>
> And there's no use in kicking, there's no doubt about this being a tough war, but then, it's better than none at all. (Witwer 71)

Three days in this camp and then bugle calls. First, officers' call, and then assembly.

The companies fall in. Five minutes later, orderlies deliver emergency orders to company commanders, covering the latest phase of one of the minor horrors of war.

"We entrain immediately," the Lieutenant announces after a brief consultation with his superior officer. Then a detail of five men are sent to report to the Mess Sergeant and they beat it over to the supply depot, for an issue of emergency rations to eat on the train.

Soon we were climbing into the dark interior of a train of cars built to accommodate eight horses, or forty men (now famous as "Forty *Hommes*").

In the crowded darkness, "Move over, you elephant! You'd think them eight horses was in here with us forty men."

"When do we eat?"

"Kill them cooties before you throw them away! And listen, boy, don't throw any more of them cooties this way or I'll bust your back.

Stumbling along in the dim lantern light beside the train came the chow detail on the final lap of its race. "Take these here boxes. Reach down and grab this stuff. Go easy on it. Bust it open and eat it whatever the hell it is."

In the darkness, after the first heavy cases of tin cans had been delivered to each carload of ravenous victims of "rest camp" regime, there came smaller boxes, and these were not as heavy as the ones which contained the goldfish and the bully beef.

"Handle this mighty easy."

"What you got?"

"Listen, boy… it's vinegar to go on your alligator pears."

To our car one of the chow detail men delivered one of the cases of vinegar. "Try this vinegar on your salmon, Sergeant. I got a few cases of it out of that supply depot. They tell me it's plenty good vinegar.

By the light of the lantern, we read the label, "Very Old Vatt."

The corks were out of every bottle of "Very Old Vatted Scotch" by this time. In the dark, you could hear gratifying gurgles coming from somewhere around the Sergeant's vocal organs, and then, "You must have made a mistake, Buddy," the Sergeant said. "That isn't vinegar. It tastes more like maple syrup."

"Sergeant, yes sir. That's the way that malt vinegar tastes."

The Sergeant took another crack at the vinegar. "Here's luck! I'm mighty glad you made that mistake," he says to the chow detail man. "So is everybody else from the way they sound. Listen…

Up and down the train, rising high above the clanking of the ear wheels, sounded various voices raised in song. "One keg of beer for the four of us!"

Hearing these song birds, back in his car the Colonel smiled at his adjutant. "The morale of the regiment seems to be all that one could desire."

"Yes indeed, Colonel. There were some welfare workers in camp, distributing chocolate and cigarettes just before we entrained. It takes so little to make our soldier boys happy."

At midnight in the long rumbling train, in spite of cooties and hunger, in spite of being wet and dirty and on our way toward life's big question mark, the gang slept peacefully, trusting lady luck to carry us through whatever awaited us ahead.

For two days, we rode passing other troop trains as well as Red Cross trains carrying the wounded. We were headed Northeast and following the coast we finally arrived in Calais.

It wasn't necessary to inform us that we were within a few miles of the front lines. The constant roar of nearby British batteries told us all we needed to know. As to what lay ahead of us, veteran British "limeys" supplied more specific details.

"It's a bit of a nasty show, you fellows," the limeys would say.

"Yeh?" was the usual American reply. "Well what do we care, Buddy! We're kinda tough too!"

Marching into camp, the limeys lined up on both sides of the road, would send one dig after another. But they always got back as much as they gave. For example:

Limey: "Hi say Yank, (addressing some small guy with a big pack) what 've ya got on your back, Woolworth Building?"

Yank: "Naw, you limey, that's Bunker Hill monument you British couldn't get!"

Limey: "A.E.F., After Everybody's Fought."

Yank: "Like hell it is! It means, After England Failed!"

This camp known as Rest Camp #6 West, of the British Army, was to be our home for a few days. We are also told that we are to become a part of that noble British Army.

Well, give us something to eat and we'll worry about that later.

Getting our eats didn't ease our worries any, and we made up our minds right away that we didn't care a damn about being a part of the British Army if that was the way they fed. Here's what we got: TEA, boiled potatoes, a little marmalade made out of orange peels, and a side order of bread. "Bread if you can call it bread. More like rubber. Bite off a piece and if you don't bite it off square, it'll fly back at you."

That night, our first in camp, the Jerries must have heard of our arrival, or maybe they heard the holler we put up about our feed, anyway they greeted us with two air raids during the night. Anti-aircraft guns repulsed them on each occasion and although they dropped their calling cards in the form of bombs, there were no casualties.

> Here was a taste of real war. Utter darkness, the dull drone of the motors, the roar of bombs as they crashed down on city and camp shaking the stoutest buildings; the sound of falling masonry and breaking timbers; the rattle of anti-aircraft guns, like pneumatic riveters, then a short silence followed by the tinkle of breaking glass as an occasional anti-aircraft bullet fell through a window or skylight. The droning of the motors grew fainter and fainter. The raid was over. Every one of us wanted to see it. Some came out and peered aloft but could see nothing except the fitful bursts of shrapnel in the sky, the long fiery lines of tracer bullets and the probing beams of searchlights seeking to find the invader. We stood and listened to the menacing hum of the aero plane motors overhead. Others, more reckless, disregarding the advice of the British soldiers to get "under cover," stood out in the open and fired rifles at imaginary objects in the air. (B&H 48)

Rest Camping we were.

"Hell, them aint bedbugs. Get away from me, boy. Don't you know personal insects when you see them? Them's cooties."

"I never seen any before."

"Get a looking glass and ramble over your own geography and you'll see plenty. They never come single. That's a mighty queer thing about cooties."

"Naw sir," another comforter explained, "they travel in tribe, just like Indians."

"What do you do for'em?" Itching now over half his anatomy, the would-be naturalist wriggled here and there underneath his heavy issue underwear.

"They respond to gentle treatment. Three meals a day, bed the herd down at night and you'd be surprised how they flourish. They're mighty easy to raise."

"Hell, I don't want to raise none! I mean, how do you get rid of them?"

"That's different. About the only thing you can do is to hunt up somebody that's equipped with another tribe that's enemies to the ones you got. The trouble is your too green to burn, or I'd advise you to start a forest fire along in the underbrush and when them cooties come out in the open you could pop them off with a sling shot. Failing that, about all I know is soap and water and a good hot bath. The soap gets in their eyes and the water makes'em think there's a flood and they start running for high ground and trample each other to death on account that they can't see good. You better hurry up and try it."

The next morning at our first formation we were told that visiting Calais was "*défendu*" and we couldn't leave camp. I drew a detail on police work however and made the best of my opportunities.

"Oh, Lady, have you any wine, fit for a soldier from the line?"

"*Blanc* or *rouge*," she said in French,

"We don't care which so long it's wine. I'm so thirsty, Mademoiselle, I could drink the fly paper juice,"

"My God," she said, "but you Americans is funnee."

"It's my face," I replied," I was born that way."

"Oh, your poor mother!" she replied.

Remembering I was on police duty, I hurried out of the place and went down to our headquarters in town. The most of the detail had by this time quenched their thirst and I found everyone in a joyful mood.

> Back to camp again, on the next morning, the serious work of war commenced. All barrack bags were confiscated and many cherished personal belongings, never to be seen again, were dumped in one big pile. We realized then that a rifle, ammunition, and a shovel were the essential implements of war, particularly the shovel. The heaviest

> blow was yet to come. The weapon which we knew and loved, the Springfield rifle, was exchanged for the British Lee Enfield.[18] This was almost more than the old regulars could stand, but protests, firm and respectful, passed along the line to our officers, were of no avail.
>
> The British rifle, which is heavier and clumsier than the Springfield, was issued to the whole division and we grumbled as we learned how to care for and use it. Later, when orders were received that we were not to become a part of the British Army as first planned, but were to be sent to help the French in their resistance of the German drive on Paris, the Lee Enfield's were withdrawn and we got our Springfield's back. Even though the gun was full of grease and oil, we went to the work of cleaning in a happy mood. (B&H 48-49)

The day after the limeys took our rifles away we were issued gas masks after listening to an eloquent sermon by the gas instructor beginning with the text "For God's Sake" and closing with a snappy salute. Putting on our gas masks "by the numbers," we were then sent into the gas chamber to test our mask for leaks. It being my first experience with a mask, I was duly initiated. Tear gas filled the chamber and I had neglected to smooth out the rolled edge of my mask which left an air space. Now a violent sneeze, while encased in the tenacious winkles of the mask is very apt to cause internal combustion with serious effects to the sneezer. Well, I got one of those sneezing spells for being careless, and I had to take the air.

The Gas instructor who had delivered the sermon before taking this test was at the door as I sought the air.

"If the sneeze is absolutely unavoidable, let it be through the ears instead of the nose, as the ears are not covered and afford a free air passage," cried the Gas instructor.

"Go to H…l," I sputtered.

18. The issuance of British arms to the unit was part of the highly controversial plan to integrate the AEF into the British and French Armies, over the strenuous objections of General Pershing.

On June 5, we once more entrained, this time we were headed for Samer, via Boulogne, or "Boloney" as we called the place. Here we detrain and in a pouring rain we hike to Enguinehaut.[19] Still with the limeys.

There is a rumor running around, wild about here that the weather is liable to clear up any month now, but nobody takes any stock in the rumor.

> In this village, we had our first experience with French billets. Many of us discovered that a barn, even one in which it was rumored Napoleon had stabled his horses, was worse than no barn. In fact, there were many requests to be allowed to bivouac in the open fields, requests that were not refused. (B&H 51)

I'll have more to say about these billets later.

From May 5 to 8, we were occupied in getting settled, and trying to get used to the British Army rations.

Their food isn't like our "chow" and it doesn't appeal to our tastes nor does it satisfy our stomachs. They substituted tea for our coffee, which was a small matter compared to the jam they served us with our oatmeal in place of sugar. We surely missed our plentiful allowance of sugar. We even missed our "corn willy" and dear old bacon. It was a good thing that those limey mess sergeants didn't catch the drift of the remarks hurled in their direction at meal time.

> Here in this little town the French people saw for the first time the careless smiles of American soldiers who, in the midst of searching for water drawn from wells four hundred feet deep, found time to play with the children and to endeavor to learn the simplest terms of the French language. (B&H 51)

Once again, the rumble of heavy artillery firing away on the front was heard. Training on the edges of woods in order to conceal ourselves from enemy observation planes, was to be our rule from now on.

Limey instructors were busily engaged with us teaching us the game of war. The latest dope on machine guns, bayonet and combat handed us. No bathing facilities were provided, and a small, slimy creek a short distance away had to suffice for the few baths that could be taken. *Vin rouge* and *vin blanc* were easier to obtain than water.

19. The name is misspelled as Engenhaut in Pollard (177) and in the Daris original.

We picked up various French phrases and some settled down, with commendable initiative, to master the French language. The result of these attempts to master the language was what we called "Doughboy French." Witness the "Battle of *Combien*." "*Combien*," a sentence in the French language meaning, "How much?" invariably used in connection with money.

A doughboy has just finished putting away a feed in a French Cafe. Rising, he addresses the waiter with, "*Combien, M'sieu?*"

M'sieu: *"Cinq Francs."*

Doughboy: "*Combien?* Sank frank, me eye! Can't I read? Dat sign sez different!"

M'sieu: "*Ah, oui, M'sieu*, but zat sign he ees before de war!"

The doughboy places a handful of French money on the counter and motions to the waiter to help himself.

The Americans, young, sturdy, eager and willing to learn all about the great game of war, were to the French people the one bright spot in a dark sky. In parts of France where the Fourth Division found a temporary home it's presence infused a cheerfulness into the people which was of inestimable value in the struggle. The menace of possible German success on their drive on Paris made us work harder in the school of training. From high authority, it was said that no division in France could show a finer fighting spirit, a keener desire to meet the enemy in combat, and a greater determination to prove its worth on the battle fields. It was the spirit of the old regular army inspiring the mingled elements of the 4th Division.

> The Germans, discovering a weak spot in the Allied front, quickly concentrated large forces, under excellent concealment, and on May 27, 1918, launched an attack against the French positions on the Chemin des Dames. The French were totally unprepared for this onslaught. Their positions were weakly held, and a number of their divisions were resting in the back area. They were soon driven from the shell-swept heights of the Aisne, across the Vesle to the Valley of the Marne. Opposition to the Germans had almost faded away in the face of the tremendous onslaught and the drive gained such impetus that the enemy moved forward more with the regularity of a procession than like an army fighting its way over the ground. Soissons fell. On June 1st, Château-Thierry was occupied. (B&H 56)

The news spread quickly over the whole front. The road to Paris was open. The Second and Third American Divisions were rushed to the vicinity of Château-Thierry to assist in stopping the drive. Ed Boisse and Joe Pelletier who were with the Second, later told me that when they rushed up to fill the gap, the French had withdrawn completely from the front and were walking away from the Germans. "Turn back," they cried to the Americans, "Boches coming!"

"Turn back, Hell, we've just got here," the Americans replied.

The Second and Third divisions stopped the advance.

This was the situation at the time of training with the limeys. The limeys as well as the French people were greatly dispirited.

We waited with eagerness for the order that would place us in battle and on June 3, things began to happen quickly for us.

On this day, we were relieved from further duty with the English and told to stand by in readiness to move.

It's cheaper to move than pay rent, hence, on June 9 we hiked to Beaurainville and on the tenth, we hiked to the Forest of Hesdin. The following morning, we entrained and headed South. There was much wild speculation among the men as to our destination. We were sadly disappointed during the next day when our train reached St. Denis to the North of Paris, and then swung around the city of Paris without giving us as much as a glimpse of the French capital. In the freight yards at St. Denis we were allowed to leave our cars and stretch. Coffee with rum was served us here also. They shouldn't have done that because every station we'd hit after that we'd rush into the Café that each station had, and come out with armfuls of bottles, wines, champagnes and in one case I got a Hennessey Three-Star Brandy bottle that sure did put pep in the gang.

> Reaching the area of Meaux and the Marne River we detrained at Meaux on June 12th.
>
> The Second and Third Divisions were still fighting in and around Belleau Wood, and their wounded were streaming back to the hospitals in the region where we had detrained. […]
>
> For a day, we were grouped in an area just North of Meaux, while our future movements were being determined by the French Sixth Army. Then on the evening of June 13th, orders were received placing the 7th Brigade, of

which my regiment was part, at the disposal of the Fourth French Infantry Division. (B&H 58)

The sturdy, smart appearance of our men as we marched along the main highway from Meaux to La Ferté, a section of the famous Paris-Metz road, brought encouragement to the hearts of the French people who lined the highway. Tears of joy were in the eyes of many of the people who saw us pass. (B&H 60)

Meaux was less than twenty miles from where the Yanks had stopped the German advance only a few days before our arrival.

Throughout the little villages lying in the junction of the Marne and Ourcq valleys we settled down to a period of intensive training. We were in the meantime part of the reserve for this sector.

Regimental Headquarters was located at Rosoy-en-Multien as were the Second and Third Battalions. My battalion, the First, was located at Vincy-Manœuvre. We were all settled in this area by June 14, which was Saturday. Billets had been assigned us after having bivouacked in the woods outside of town the night before.

The next morning, Sunday was spent in policing.

Dear Joe...

To police something in the army doesn't mean to arrest some guy! Police in the army is just like a street sweeper in any city. Police is to clean up, remove, and burn, and we made this French burg think it had been hit by a cyclone! Now every French farmer is judged in regard to wealth by the size of the manure pile in front of his barn. The bigger the pile, the richer he is. Well we carted all their garbage for them, purified their water, and made everything so neat that a guy could eat a meal off any given road in the village when we got through.

At first the natives thought we had gone nutty, and some of them got sore because they thought maybe we'd wind up by giving them baths or something.

In the afternoon, we visited a little store in the next town that sells American matches, groceries, canned stuff, and in fact, everything but American booze. A young Mademoiselle waits at the counter, and the store does more business than a guy with the ice cream soda concession

would do in Hades. Her name is "Jeanne," and she's going to teach me French in exchange for English. She already taught me one gag in French. It is "*Ma chérie*," which is the same as "Oh, you kid!" in English. (Witwer 79-81)

The money here is hard to figure. You give them ten dollars, American and you get back all you can carry away on a truck in French money. Their money is called Francs and centimes.

Dear Joe...

A centime is nothing at all but a franc is worth just now about eighteen cents in our money. For ten of them you can get everything but elected President of France, which includes champagne.

All our food is furnished by the French, and one day a French officer said, "If you can fight like you can eat, the war's over!" (Witwer 79-82)

Canned horse meat that was very oily and dry-tasting was the meat the French issued to us. Bad as it is, it is even better than the grub served us by the limeys.

The billet in which I slept with about forty-five other doughboys was once a brewery. Every time they pull off a war in this burg the brewery gets the worse of it. The last time there was shot and shell in their midst here the brewery lost everything but the wheat grain, which was scattered all over the place. The roof was gone but in between floors we'd spread our blankets out and made our bunks. I found that by sweeping the wheat in a pile and covering it with a blanket, the bed would be more comfortable.

We met up with everything during our stay here, and a man with a line of insect powder would have been sold out in five minutes.

Dear Joe...

And rats! I've never seen any like these babies in my life. They don't understand anything but French, and they aint afraid of no man. They'd come in the billet at night and sit up on their hind legs right in the middle of the floor, giving us the once over. If you'd holler at them or throw a shoe at them, they'd never turn a hair, but instead they'd sneer at you and commenced waving their whiskers up and down, as if they were Charley Chaplin trying to get a laugh.

> One of the boys said there would be a fortune in it if somebody would train a troupe of them and take them back with him in vaudeville. (Witwer 87-87)

Soon a big French cat would pop up and there was an awful scramble, as if those rats had just remembered they had a date.

> Dear Joe...
>
> There was a sensational thing happened here this morning. It came off so suddenly that half of us couldn't believe it, and the merry villagers were going around shaking their heads, like Heaven knows what will happen next since we Americans came over: IT STOPPED RAINING! (Witwer 91)

The finish of this "forty-two years" downpour was a knockout! There was thunder and lightning enough to suit the most particular and Niagara Falls would have looked like a sprinkling can alongside of what hit us. It was so bad that the officers and instructors laid off from us and we didn't have anything to do all morning but sit around and catch a cold.

> Dear Joe...
>
> The French doughboys, they call them Poilus over here, are very friendly and they visit us often. They get the sum of a nickel a day for fighting, and it isn't any wonder their such good fighters. I guess they get sore every time they think of their wages and for this reason they're ready to fight anybody at the drop of a hat. (Witwer 95)

There was plenty of mail that came in today for us, and everybody got one or more letters. There must have been a thousand sacks of mail, as it took the company clerk over an hour to hand it all out. There isn't anything we like to receive better than a letter from the dear old USA, or a newspaper, and the date is the last thing we'd find fault with.

> Dear Joe...
>
> Another thing we'd like is a piano case full of cigarettes as the ones we get here are not fit for man or beast. (Witwer 99)

It was here that we handled live grenades for the first time and received our Chauchats, or "Hot Cats," otherwise known as automatic rifles.

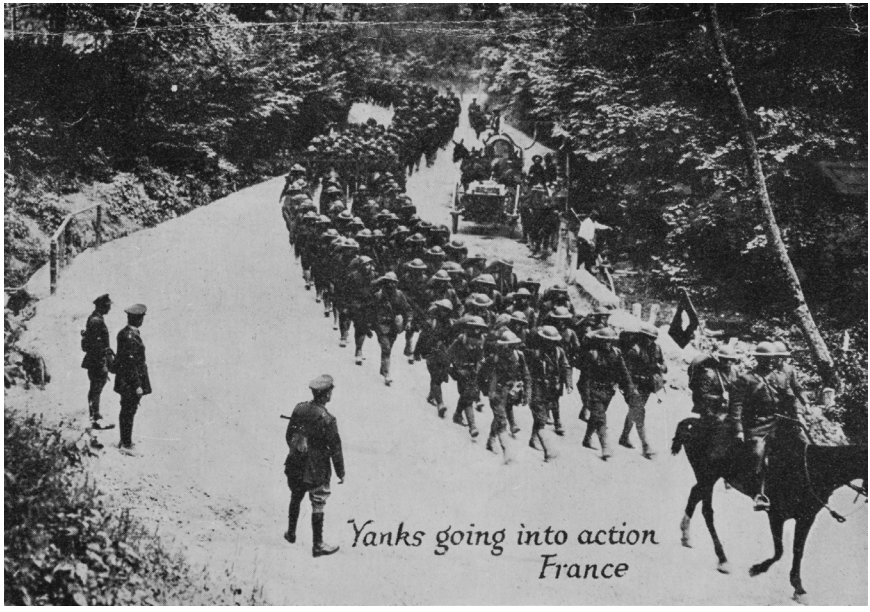
We underwent a systematic course of training under the French, and learned their methods of attacking: how best to use their automatic rifles and machine guns; how to pass through barrages with a minimum of loss, as well as all the latest wrinkles in digging trenches and stringing barbed wire. To advance in combat order was also part of each day's work.

The following extract of a letter written by a doughboy gives an idea of how the whole matter hit us:

> Dear Joe...
>
> Well, Joe, we have just come in and knocked off for the day after about ten hour's manual labor at learning the National game of Europe, the same being "Sock the Kaiser." No doubt you're itching to know just how we go about it, so if the censor will give me a chance, I'll tell you.
>
> The first thing every morning over here is getting out of bed. This happens practically in the middle of the night, 5:15 a.m. to be exact, and, believe me, Joe, that's a terrible time for Big Ben to go off! But like everything else, you get used to it, and half an hour after that, we open up the hatchways and take in breakfast. That being off our minds, we do a bit of chambermaid work around our billet, and then we are all set for the first lesson.
>
> We march away from the village just as if we were going into the real thing, and all the kids, girls, and old men stand along the road cheering us off. Well we go along singing to beat the band. Every company has its own favorite song, and when we all get going together it sounds like the Opera Co. gone crazy. But singing is great stuff for keeping up the doughboys pep, Joe. The French are strong on singing too, only they got a lot of songs which the battle field is the only place they can sing them without police interference! Don't mean they are all like that, Joe, they got some that are real class, and you don't sing them, you weep them out loud.
>
> Well, Joe, we hoof it along the roads singing, and after a while we get to "Kill'em College" and then school is open for the day. Our teacher is both French and English, and there is a sprinkling of birds that can speak both languages with either hand, so's that everything won't get all bawled

up. Joe, our officers had to study lessons and mind the teacher, the same as us doughboys do.

The first thing they put us at was digging trenches, and in about an hour, Joe, everything was all tore up till it looked like Broadway and made me home sick. […] Well, we kept swinging those picks and shovels until many of us got the idea we were going to dig our way to Berlin, and finally somebody took pity on us and called it off.



Yanks Going into Action in France

We hardly got done laughing with joy at our first job when a couple of these French soldiers who know more about war than the guy that invented it took us in charge, and we were introduced into the mysteries of making barbed wire fronts for our future homes. Joe, this here is some stunt! There are only two things on earth can go thru one of these entanglements, and they are a six-inch shell and Houdini. I'll bet he couldn't do it with no handcuffs on neither, Joe. That's one that would beat him! The idea of these things is to make the guy who is rushing your

trench sick and tired of life in the army, and meanwhile you come out and keep his mind off the races etc., with your bayonet.

Well, the next thing on the menu is throwing grenades. Joe, when I come back I ought to be a cinch for a job with some anarchists, because I take my hat off to no man when it comes to heaving a bomb! I have got plenty of speed and control, Joe, and I can burn these things over faster and farther than any man in my squad. The little French guy who is teaching us pats me on the back yesterday, shows me every tooth in his head, and remarks, "But Monseer is the bomb throwaire of the most excellent, *voilà*!"

[…] I must tell you what them grenades are. They look something like a dill pickle, and the main idea of them is to bean Germans with. But at that Joe, you don't have to hit anybody with them; all you got to do is to make them land in the same state with a guy you don't like, and right away the population is reduced by at least one. You creep over to the German trenches with a handful of these and hollers, "Is they anybody home? The Germans say "Yes," and then you throw your bomb and make a liar out of them!

At first, I had quite a time throwing these things, although they ought to have been my meat, seeing what a baseball player I was. But they balled me all up, Joe, because a guy can't take no wind up before throwing them. Just before you let them go you have started the motor going, and you've got about five seconds leeway before they go off. Joe, they don't wanna be any glue on your hands either, because if you hold them too long there aint no doctor living can do you a bit of good.

And if you throw then too quick there's a chance that the Germans will run in from center field, and take then on the fly, and heave them back at you before them bombs has exploded.

[…]

And now, Joe, comes the horrible part. I was forced to assassinate about a dozen of them Germans, including the Kaiser, the Crown Prince, and this here Hindenburg guy.

They won't say I'm laying down on the job after that, eh, Joe? No doubt you may get the idea I'm trying to kid you about this wholesale manslaughter, or have become an opium fiend, but far be it from such. I killed all of them guys, Joe, with nothing but a bayonet, and about a hundred other guys killed them, and if they aint dead its nobody's fault but their own, Joe.

The only thing is, Joe, these guys we cleaned up was nothing but dummies painted to look like the real thing. We'd went at 'em for about an hour with the instructors egging us on, and it was the same as a sure enough battle only there was more noise. You know there is more to using a bayonet, Joe, than merely stabbing a guy. There must be all of a million ways of fighting with it, and the guy who's in charge of us hasn't forgot none of them either. Also, there are special places you have got to pick out to carve on the other guy so that when you get him you get him good, and you gotta know how to stab so's you won't leave the bayonet sticking in him. If you did that, Joe, he could run away with it and leave Germans you flat, and I'll bet them Germans has captured many a bayonet that way, eh, Joe? Them birds would steal anything!

Well, by the time this instructor laid off of us, I knowed more about bayonet fighting than he did. I must of, because he says he didn't think he'd ever be able to teach me anything.

Joe, when you come over here which you probably will pretty soon, don't make the mistake that a lot of us guys made when we first come over. Don't go around bragging and blowing to these French and English guys what a wonderful place America is alongside of their country and how we're gonna finish a job that was too tough for them to handle. That stuff don't go, Joe, and its all wrong. We're all gonna finish them Germans together and the Allies aint looking for the US to step in and knock the Kaiser cold with one wallop. If we simply hold our end up, there won't be no kick coming from anybody, except maybe Germany.

The reason I tip you off about this, Joe, is so's you won't get in wrong like some of the guys did that came over first. Imagine doughboys, which the toughest fight they ever had was getting up early in the morning, mixing around with French and English guys who have had four years of bombs, bullets, bayonets, gas, mud, and a worse hell than any minister ever told about, and them fatheads would pull something like this, "Well, you guys couldn't handle the thing, so we come over to save the game for you in the ninth."

Joe, them English birds would just give 'em the North Pole stare, and the French guys would look more hurt, but they were too polite to say anything. Now that stuff is raw, and you know it, and besides it's liable to make them guys think we are all four flushers. Our officers soon put the locks on that kind of talk, and we're all mixing over her now like ham and eggs. When we seen them guys fresh from the trenches going thru their stunts and showing us what to do, we realized pretty quick that they were the boss scrappers of the world, and we felt like a lot of boobs for thinking we was the only meat in the stew.

We got right down to business and put everything we had into putting the game up, and we made good so quick that we are solid over here for life. So don't you guys queer it when you come over.

Well speaking of bayonets, Joe, you ought to have seen this here practice! It was a riot, believe me! All of these dummies are lined up and we come out of a trench on the run and shove our bayonets into them. There is something comical about a bunch of adults rushing at them painted things and trying to ruin them as if they were real. On the level, it was more like having a laughing jag on than anything else. One guy leaps on top of his dummy, and the two of them roll over on the ground and down into a trench. The gang is in hysterics and, Joe, we are all clowning this thing and having fun galore. Outside of the dummies there's only one guy that aint laughing, and that's this here French sergeant. He looks at us as if he were satisfied

that we had all gone nutty and then he calls us to attention in a voice that would have scared a lion to death!

"*Nom de Dieu!*" he says. "Are we a circus here? You men are not supposed to entertain the Huns, you're supposed to kill them!"

Joe, that sergeant just went nutty, and for five minutes we got an awful bawling out.

And, Joe, the sergeant even went and got a couple of our officers, and they told us the glad tidings that on account of us having such a wonderful sense of humor we would all be fined two weeks' pay and see if we could get a laugh out of that!

Well Joe, the French sergeant takes us back into the trench again, a different set of guys than we were before.

They aint no kidding among those present this time, Joe, and it's all we can do to wait till we get the command. I sneaked a look around, and every one of us looks like he was going after a guy that had insulted his girl or put sawdust in his tobacco. We're a pretty tough looking gang.

"Advance…go!" barks the Sergeant.

Oh, doctor!

Joe, I'm telling you there never was no bayonet charge seen before like the one we pulled off right then and there! In no time, we have gone thru three lines of dummies, howling, cussing like wild animals and tearing up the earth like six-inch shells. We didn't leave no dummies or anything else standing, and if this sergeant and a lot of other officers hadn't run after us, bellering for us to halt, we would have gone right on to Berlin and points west with no stops. There wasn't nobody that wasn't bruised or scratched up a bit, and most of us had to be pulled off them dummies by hand. […] That there charge of ours put new life in the whole outfit, and the little French sergeant comes puffing up, grinning from ear to ear.

"*Mon Dieu*," he pants. "That's the way to fight, my lads, you murdering Yanks!"

That's us, Joe!

Yours truly,

Ed. (A bloomin', murderin' Yank.) (Witwer 101-121)

On June 16, the French Army Commander called upon the Americans to construct an important second line of defense running from a point near Crouttes, on the Marne River, northwest to Crouy-sur-Ourcq.

On the next day, our Engineers moved up from La Ferté to Crouttes, which was only six miles from the lines.

Here with the assistance of battalions of Infantry, they spent several days in laying out a system of trenches, and constructed wire entanglements and located machine gun emplacements. We were preparing for the next German drive.

The continual expectation of another drive spurred us on in our training and preparation. June 20, the whole 7th Brigade spent the forenoon in field maneuvers simulating open warfare. Much attention was paid to liaison, which involves communication between the various units of an organization, between the organization and their brigade headquarters and between the headquarters of the brigade and the division, also between troops on the ground and observers in the air who give information to the infantry.

We spent the Fourth of July watching baseball games and boxing bouts. Picked battalions from the division were more fortunate however, as they paraded in Paris. In the evening, the French soldiers entertained many of our men with a banquet.

Hospital Trip: Meaux, Paris, Bordeaux

I WAS TAKEN very sick during the night and the night of July 5, I was so seriously ill that I was placed aboard a passing ambulance and taken to a French hospital in Meaux. I had been on sick report two days; each time I had visited those pill rollers they would give me CC pills. I was cramped up and had severe pains but the pill rollers didn't care and any amount of pleading was in vain. I'd go back to my bed of wheat and lay down, the members of my billet seeing how sick I was had thrown their blankets over me as they said I was shivering. I don't remember much of what took place during the day, but I do remember hearing "Call to Arms" blow about nine o'clock, the night of July 5. Hearing this, I attempted to respond but found it torture to stand. With the help of others, I managed to get my equipment together and staggered outside. My platoon had formed in its usual place and it was only through having acquired the habit that I was able to

find them in the darkness. I remember of calling for a "Report," and then everything went black. The next thing I knew I was in that French hospital.

When I awoke in that French hospital it must have been early morning, it was pitch dark and for a moment I couldn't imagine where I was. The only thing I was sure of was that I was in bed, clothes and all. My hobnail shoes had been removed, though. I couldn't hear a sound.

I tried and tried to recall what had happened. Slowly, it dawned on me that I must be in a hospital as I remembered being sick, but where am I, and where is the rest of gang? I tried to get out of bed but hadn't any more than got my head off the pillow, when a voice said, "*Non, non, Américain, couché!*"

"But where am I?" I inquired.

A candle was being lit and by the light I saw a French soldier.

After trying to make him understand my Canadian French, and having succeeded in making him talk slower, I finally got the story.

He told me that I had been taken here in a French ambulance along with wounded soldiers, and that I was in Meaux. He asked me how I felt and what ailed me. After telling him he said I must have had an attack of appendicitis. He gave me a cigarette and after smoking it he advised me to go back to sleep, which I did.

Sensing that someone was near me, I awoke later to find a French nurse standing beside my bed.

"*Bonjour, Madame*," I said in my politest French.

"*Bonjour, Américain, vous êtes blessé?*" she inquired.

I told her I wasn't wounded but was sick, whereat the doctor appeared.

After giving me the once over he advised me that an operation was necessary "but if zee sergeant feel able," it would be better to go to Paris, as any moment now, wounded would be flowing in here so fast that I would not get as good care here.

That's OK with me Doc, Paris! Oh, boy! I aint sick no more! Climbing up on the front seat of an Ambulance the next morning I was on my way to Paris!

The driver of that ambulance was to my surprise a fellow I knew. His name is Lafortune, and his home is in Fitchburg.

Outside of pain in my abdomen, I felt fairly good and the thought of seeing Paree made me forget I was sick. Our journey was interrupted by a

stop at Juilly where I was reexamined by an American doc and then I was sent to Paris.

At Paris, I was taken to the American Red Cross hospital, which was a tented affair, they having pitched their tents on the Longchamp Race Course.

Arriving here, they put me to bed, and kept me under observation for a day. All the while I pleaded with the doc to give me a chance to visit the big town before they operated. He finally consented and after promising to behave myself I headed toward town, thirty francs in my pocket and plenty of curiosity. In fact, I felt like the doctor had just told me I had three minutes to live, and that only if I cut out the fast living. I had decided to hoof it in when I ran into another Yank headed the same way as I. It was a lucky meeting for me as this bird knew the town and what's more he knew the ropes.

Hailing a passing taxi, we informed the chauffeur that we wanted to go to the Café de la Paix.

> Dear Joe...
>
> We found out that these chauffeurs were bum guessers. They haven't even got the least idea of where we told him to go, and they take us somewhere else at the rate of one hundred miles an hour, swearing something terrible every time they miss running over somebody. This guy must have taken us by the way of Russia, as we saw the whole of Paris before we reached our destination. We finally made him stop and he acted sore because we had cut the voyage so short, and I made the mistake of asking him what we owed.
>
> "*Vingt-quatre francs!*" he sneers.
>
> This was past me! I thought I knew all about counting in French, but this was new stuff. I found out later that the French have a way of counting all of their own. Instead for instance, of saying "eight-four," they say "four, then twenty and four."
>
> We got out of the cab and started giving this bird an argument, and it begins to rain. We get back in cab to continue the debate without getting wet, and this French Jesse James shoves the clock on again and keeps right on coming hack at us while the meter keeps registering! Here he is

probably calling us pigs and the like, and at the same time getting paid for it! Every time we agreed on the original charge, the clock would show something different, and we would start arguing all over again. This might have gone on for the duration of war if a waiter from the Café hadn't come to the rescue. He sized the thing up in a second and figured we should leave some of our francs at his place.

"Pay but fifteen francs, Monsieur!" he says. We paid him and beat it.

The last I heard him and the chauffeur was running down each other's grandfathers, uncles, parents, friends, and brothers, and there was quite a crowd enjoying it.

We found a table on the sidewalk and motioned to a waiter.

"What would Monsieur desire?" asks the waiter.

"How's the champagne running today?" I ask.

"Nothing doing," my pal says. "You're an American doughboy, and you're supposed to be on the water wagon. Didn't you tell me the doc let you out on the condition that you'd behave?"

"Oh, yeah!" I replied. "All right, bring some seltzer lemonades."

"That I do not the understand," said the waiter. "What is she that seltzer lemonade?"

"Well," I told my pall, "Done what I could. I asked for it, and if they aint got it, can I help it?" I turn to the waiter, "You claim you speak English? All right, bring us two champagnes. *Parlez-vous*?" (Witwer 230-234)

And he did, and after that some more!

After this, we were raring to go. We walked down through all the main boulevards, stopping here and there to kid along the pretty girls.

There certainly is lots of them in Paris, and good looking. They walk along, laughing and smiling, and there isn't any of them deliberately unfriendly! We kept stretching our neck around as if it were on ball bearings all during our walk, and all I'd keep saying was, "Some Burg."

Well, to make a long story short, we picked up all told during the day four girls apiece. We went to the movies, we wined and dined, and when it came time for me to report back to the hospital, I was happy but broke.

I had had my fling and now I faced a disagreeable operation. Some of my impressions of the big town were:

> Dear Joe...
>
> The people there are so struck on their home town that they don't even go indoors to eat, but sit right out on the sidewalks at little tables for all their meals, so that they can keep right on looking at that dear Paris all the time, not to say the girls which parade up and down.
>
> The girls are all knockouts, and none of them are too stuck up to give a guy a pleasant smile and pass the time of day. Anyone who gets lonesome in this burg has only himself to blame. […]
>
> On the streets are officers and enlisted men in the uniforms of every army in the world, excepting our enemies, the Boches. Our Yanks seem to be mixing with the French better than anybody else. In fact, the French go out of their way to make things nice for us, and they don't laugh when we try to speak French and call eggs "woofs" instead of whatever it is. In fact, the French are very polite.
>
> Food seems to be fairly plentiful and the people are not as down-hearted as one would expect.
>
> They are a game nation. Five years of war has given them plenty of hardships, and they know they've been to war all right, but that don't gloom them a bit. They're as full of pep as a steam drill. (Witwer 226-229)

The next morning, I awoke with a big head, and I let the nurse in on my secret. She laughed and gave me two brown pills, which soon gave me something else to think about.

The day after, I was taken for a ride. Not the kind so popular with the gangsters, but one that gave me almost the same effects for a few hours. This ride was to the operating room via ward "B".

I can still remember that nurse and doc while they were giving me ether. It seemed ages since they first put the ether mask on my face, and yet I could hear them talking. The doc, seeing I was quiet, must have thought I was asleep and I heard him tell the nurse, "Well let's get this job over with." I didn't want them to go to it as long as I could hear them speak, so I started sputtering and shaking my head, at which the doc and nurse started to

laugh and more ether was poured on my mask, then I seemed to be walking through the air.

A few hours later, I felt a hand on my forehead and I awoke to find my nurse standing by.

"Well, how do you feel, Daris?" she inquired.

"Oh gee, I'm sick," is all I could say.

Attempting to raise my legs so that I could sit up in bed, I struck the nurse, who was trying to prevent me from doing such a thing and of all the crying spells I've ever heard off, I think the one I had right there with the goods!

I passed a fairly comfortable day, and in the afternoon got a thrill that will always stay with me.

Big Bertha decided to give Paris some more thrills, I had heard that those Jerries had a gun that could shoot seventy-five miles, and now I was to have the experience of hearing the shells as they landed.

Things were quiet in the ward when the first explosion came. Then a lot of whistles begin to blow. The nurses tell us that it is the Germans shelling Paris. Another shell comes screeching through the air and then a louder explosion. From the sound, it seems that they are getting nearer our hospital. About every fifteen minutes, one of those babies burst, in and around Paris.

A wounded Buddy next to me says, "The yellow stiffs, killing women and children again! They aint scaring nobody in Paris. And anyone can see the Kaiser never expects to reach Paris with an army, or he wouldn't have rigged up a gun that could throw a shell as far as that. Them guys better rig up a gun that will shoot a million miles, because when we get through with then they'll be that far away from France!"

Guns from the front boomed all day and night and could be clearly heard here in Paris. That our American troops were in the thick of it could plainly be seen by the number of wounded that flowed into our hospitals. I would scan each cot as the stretcher bearers brought them in expecting at any moment to see one of our So. Ashburnham boys, or someone from my outfit.

The day after my operation, the operating room was the scene of much activity. Soldier after soldier would pass in and out on the carriages. There was someone coming out of ether all the time. Talk about your laughs, here's where you get them.

Two young guys were coming out of ether, one of them had just regained his senses but was very sick, the other wasn't quite normal as yet, and he was moaning, "Oh, oh, Mabel, you wouldn't go back on me," at which the other guy would cry, "Throw a hobnail at him!"

Then he would start to rave about the Germans, "They're coming! There coming!" The other one would reply, "Give him a rifle, he wants to go over the top!"

All those in the ward would laugh until it hurt. Imagine me with a belly full of stitches trying to laugh! I had to bury my head in my pillow, so that I couldn't hear them.

The only time a private in this man's army feels that he's worth something, is when he's in a hospital and the doctors go their daily rounds.

As one buck put it, "Well I know now what it feels like to sit in a reviewing stand. This morning I reviewed four Lieutenants, two Captains, a Major, and a Colonel. Pretty fair, I call it!

Another humorous incident I recall is when the pretty nurses are taking pulses and temperatures. (The patient usually suffers a relapse during this operation.)

Nurse: "My, what a terrible pulse, you must have heart trouble!"

The poor boob can't say a word. She put a safety silencer in his face and told him it was to take his temperature, which will be about 200.

Yank: "Shoot, kid. One look in your orbs is all the gas I need!"

Nurse: "This won't hurt you very much," (She's got the hypo needle).

The Allied drive on the Château-Thierry front was now in full swing. My Regiment has gone into action for the first time, and me on the sidelines. Thinking far into the night, I could hardly sleep. The guns would roar and I could picture brother Ted, Rab, Boisse, and all the gang. How were they faring? Were they still among the living? These thoughts were almost unbearable and I'd keep wishing I was with them. The fact that I was to be laid up for some time also worried me, as I felt that the fighting would be over before I could get well again.

After a three day stay in this hospital, the nurse told me that I was to be sent to Bordeaux to recuperate. It was necessary to evacuate all patients as fast as possible to make room for the ever-increasing flow of wounded. The operating room resembled a butcher shop. Night and day those doctors and nurses labored.

Aboard a stretcher, I was placed in an ambulance with many others and taken to the railroad yards where we were placed aboard a Red Cross hospital train. Welfare workers looked after our comfort until the train was ready to depart. In swinging hammocks, that were three tier high, on either side of the car, we rode in comfort. Arriving in Bordeaux after two days ride on the train, I was taken to Base Hospital #6.

Far away from the front, in the southern part of France. Hundreds of soldiers were already here and I lost no time in making inquiries as to what outfits each man belonged to. After having made about a dozen inquiries, I met a guy that was from the 9th. Infantry.

"What company, soldier?"

"Co. H," he replied.

"Co. H, then you must know a fellow named Boisse?"

"I say I do. He's right here in this hospital!"

"Well for God's sake, you go and tell him that one of his buddies from his home town is right here, will you?"

It didn't take the soldier long to deliver my message, and in a few minutes, I see none other than Boisse on a wheel chair, hurrying around the corner, with an anxious look on his face and tears running down his cheek.

Both of us were overcome with joy at having been united again after ten months.

His eyes were searching every corner of that ward, and I, unable to rise was waving my hand and at the same time calling, "Here I am, Eddie!"

Ed was badly wounded by shrapnel, early in July at Vaux. A piece tore the back of his neck which left a hole big enough to put a finger in, another piece struck him in the ankle and broke the bones. For three weeks, he and I managed to stick together, although in different wards. After my stitches had been removed, I was soon allowed to leave bed and with Ed as a companion we passed the time away in great shape.

The last part of July the hospital train brought in Corporal McCall, from my company. Wasn't I glad to see him! He told me that Ted was OK when he left, and for an hour, I kept him busy answering questions about our company. Who had been wounded, who had been killed, all about the battle of Sergy, and best of all he told me of what had taken place the night I took sick.

It seems that the doc looked me over while I laid on the ground, and said, "This is a hell of a time to take sick!"

The Corporal even said that the doc gave me a kick and commanded me to rise. This brought a protest from my officers, and a couple of the boys picked me up and waited beside the road until an ambulance came along.

Boy, wasn't I mad at that doc when I heard of this! I couldn't get back to my outfit any too soon. I'll tell that guy something!

Chinese soldiers who were doing manual labor in France had a camp next to our hospital and I spent many an hour watching them at their work on the railroads. They had picked up quite a few words of the French language and it was real funny to hear them speak.

About the first of August the doc gave me a final exam and told me I was to be sent to a casual camp, and from there would be assigned to six months light duty behind the lines. This brought a loud protest from me. I hadn't seen any fighting as yet and that was what I came over here for. Boisse would tell me, "You damn fool! You ought to consider yourself lucky to get a chance to keep away from the lines. Take it from me, I know."

"I guess from the looks of you Eddie, you do know. I am not finding fault with our advice, and after seeing the hundreds of wounded in the hospitals, I haven't got the idea that what they got could have been avoided, but the fact is I want to fight, and what's more, if the doc here don't send me back to my outfit, I'll go back myself!"

Boisse, in tears would keep saying, "You damn fool!"

The doc, seeing I was in earnest, dismissed the subject as follows:

"Well, I'm going to mark you "duty," with a memo attached to your record. When you get to the replacement camp and should you change your mind, tell the doc there, and they'll fix you up."

The next morning trucks were on hand to take the discharged patients to the RTO.[20]

Boisse crying and hanging onto me tried to make me change my mind, and it was with much effort that I was able to get away from him.

Subsequent events made me wonder if I wouldn't have been better off had I taken his advice.

20. Railroad Transportation Officer.

Travel Orders

Saint-Aignan. The Rest Camp.

A wide treeless plain. The plain was crisscrossed with railroad tracks, on the far side were numbers of long wooden sheds, painted red, and in the center, a huge enclosure of barbed wire. On the far side of the barbed wire enclosure was a line of black, weather-beaten huts, their doors sagging, and the cheese cloth that served as glass in their windows was torn and ragged. Toward these huts a half dozen of the fifty of us that had entrained at Bordeaux dragged our weary feet.

For once it wasn't raining. Instead, for a change, every tiling shimmered in the heat, the heat waves rising from the ground as if from a griddle.

The red sheds were the storehouses of a depot of the AEF, the barbed wire fence was a stockade for the retention of prisoners of war.

The six of us, defenders of democracy, played out from the long ride, were eager to get settled long enough to get some sleep.

We carried no baggage, only a tiny linen bag that held a toothbrush and razor. Blankets, slicker or overcoat, we had not. We slept in our clothes. Our uniforms were those articles of clothing that were issued in hospitals to men going to the replacement, or casual camp, second hand breeches, blouse and cap, bleached an unhealthy green by sterilization, and wrinkled into a thousand folds by the same process. We had to be careful of these clothes. The seat, knees and elbows would fade away before a stern look, and a man falling to the ground might easily rise and leave his uniform on the earth, so rotten were the seams. The sad-looking outfit finally arrived at the line of huts.

"Is this here the rest camp?" I asked of some men who were propped up against the wall of the first barrack.

"That's what they call it," was the reply.

"Have you eaten yet?" asked one of six.

"Yeh, a half hour ago."

"Just our luck," we sobbed together. We all spoke at once and from the heart. Then followed some bitter cursing, through set teeth. The entire AEF from Pershing down to the MPs were cracked over in language that fairly sizzled.

"What's the matter now?" asked a Sergeant who appeared around the comer of a barrack. The six of us tried to explain at once.

"Don't get worried," said the Sergeant pleasantly. "We always have a lot of hungry birds coming in at all hours. The cooks look out for that. Right beyond the last hut is the cook shack. Go right down and eat all you want to."

The atmosphere immediately cleared, we were smiling once again as we trooped toward the cook shack. However, two of the party lagged a little behind, one because he was a little tired, and the other to comfort or assist the tired one. I was the tired one, all in but the buttons. The other was an old-timer who had taken a liking to me.

"Come on, Sergeant," the old-timer said, "didn't you hear the sergeant say we were going to eat? Haven't you got any appetite? Come on, maybe they'll put out steak."

I was so doggone near all in that all I gave the old-timer for a reply was a laugh.

With lagging step, we arrived at the last shack, and could see beyond another hut, before which cans of water boiled over a fire built in a pit. Before the hut sat a man in his undershirt, smoking a cigarette. By the many streaks of grease upon the shirt, by the ancient apron rolled tightly around the waist, and by the high white cap, one could tell that here was the cook.

Our group came to a halt, and the old-timer stepped up and spoke.

"Well, cook," said he, "how's chances on a little handout?"

"Ask the mess sergeant," he replied, as he regarded the end of his cigarette.

One or two of our men swore, then I spoke up.

"We've just seen him, and he sent us down." It was true we had seen a sergeant and he night just as well he the mess sergeant as anyone else.

"Lessee your travel orders," said the cook. Before I could produce them, or say a word, the old-timer, pushing himself to the front said:

"We don't have to show no travel orders to no cook. We turned then in when we got off the train. Go on in and rustle us some chow. We aint set our teeth in anything since we got a meal of canned 'termatters' at four a.m. this morning."

The cook again inhaled cigarette smoke. He made several rings and watched then fade away. "I got orders," said he finally, "to issue out no chow to no one except they shows their travel orders."

"Listen," I spoke up, the old-timer meanwhile giving me a wink, which I interpreted that no travel orders were to be shown, "we turned in our

travel orders to the office before we came here. Here are six men just out of the hospital, all been wounded, and going back to the front again. We haven't had anything to eat in ten hours and we've been on a Frog train since daylight. We want something to eat. Now for God's sake show a little interest!"

The cook in the last mouthful of smoke, inspected the butt, snapped it away, and got yawning to his feet. "Well, I'll see what I can do," said he, "but it's against orders to feed guys that aint got orders with them. They should have give you a slip at the office." He turned and went into the cook shack.

"Well we got some action at last," I said. "You can't blame those cooks. They've got their orders. And after cooking up a dinner for a couple hundred guys on a hot day like this, he don't relish the idea of six more guys blowing in."

"He'd move quicker and most likely would give us a better dinner if you'd explained to him how a good poke in the jaw feels," said the old-timer.

"You tell 'em, old-timer," said the gang. We waited and sniffed expectantly. From within the cook shack came no pleasant smell of frying meat, no sizzling of potatoes, nothing but silence, and a smell suggestive of cold dishwater that had known the dirty mess kits of several hundred men. There was a sudden sound, and we stiffened. Thump, thump, thump, thump. Again, thump, thump, thump.

"The son… He's opening cans!"

The cook was indeed opening cans, and the thumping sound was his cleaver making triangular cuts in the lids, a method quicker and easier than the can opener. The cook appeared in the door with a half-dozen cans in his arm.

"Here you are," he said. He handed each man a can, wiped his hands and sat down again by the door. We looked at our cans. There were red labels and the picture of a fish on each.

"Is this all?" we asked.

"That's all," said the cook.

"No bread?"

"We aint got none. We put it all out at dinner time."

The old-timer pushed his way through the group about the cook.

"Now look here," said he, "we been on the train all day and we're all tired out and everything and you got the crust to give us a can of gold fish

for dinner. Goldfish all bones and skin! And us fighting men off the lines! Why even the YMCA would give a guy a bowl of chocolate! Yuh see this can? Well, watch what I do with it." He hurled the can to earth with all his might and then leaping in the air stamped on it. "There," he panted, "that's what I do with goldfish!"

"Suit yourself," said the cook. He lighted a cigarette, unmoved. One of the KPs, however got up from the pan he was scrubbing.

"Yuh wanta look out, guy. You'll get yourself put in the can dirtying up the camp. There's a "barrel to throw stuff in if you don't want to eat it."

To this the old-timer made a bitter and fitting reply and then went away madder than a hornet.

"He's a nice-guy, aint he?" remarked the cook. "What snake house did he break loose from?"

"Aw, he aint so bad. He's better than a damn cook anyway!" I shot at him as I hastened to rejoin the old-timer who had ducked into one of the barracks. On my way, I passed a garbage can into which I hurled my can of goldfish with an especially loud clank.

In the hut was a double deck of bunks, and I lay down on the dirty bed sack stuffed with straw that served as a mattress. I soon fell asleep.

Late in the afternoon, a great amount of whistling and the sound of running feet mingled with the clatter of mess kits announced that supper was being served. I didn't go. I had no appetite. Moreover, I had a spitting headache, and the little tingling chills that spoke of fever were running up and down my spine.

"Aint yuh eating anything?" asked a voice. I looked up, and though the barracks were already quite dark I could tell by the appearance of the figure that it was the old-timer.

"No, I don't feel very well. Man, but this heat is getting me! A spell in the hospital sure takes it out of a guy. I haven't got any appetite, and I don't want to be taken sick in this hole, so I'm not going to eat."

"That's right," said the old-timer, "don't you get sick. You're in charge of this gang and if you get sick, where are we?"

"I guess you can look out for yourself, alright," I replied.

"Huh, if I don't, no one else will, that's a bet. Everyone in this AEF is thinking about no one but himself and I'm doing it just as strong as anyone. Let the welfare guys look after them as can't look after themselves."

"Where's the Sergeant that came in this noon from Bordeaux?" called a voice from outside. "Where's the Sergeant that came in with them five fellows?"

"Here," I cried.

"Well, here's your orders for transportation and everything. I told you the train went at eight o'clock, didn't I? Well, don't lose it. You better start rounding up your gang now. It's after six and two hours aint none too much to get 'em together in. He handed me the sheet of paper and went away.

"Did you see any of the gang outside?" I asked.

"No, I didn't see a one," said the old-timer. "I aint offering no advice without being asked, but I'm telling yuh they all went over the hill. You won't see a damn one of them again."

"Naw," I laughed, "they'll all be around for chow. They haven't had any hot food all day and they wouldn't beat it without a good meal. How could they get money? They're all just out of hospital and broke."

"Ah, they'd take off their underwear and sell it to some Algerian and get enough francs to buy an omelet and a drink and then away on the first freight they seen."

"Come on, we'll go round them up," I said. I got up, my head reeling a little, we went to the mess shack, looking them all over carefully.

I couldn't recognize any.

"I wouldn't spend no time hunting 'em," said the old-timer. "The hell with 'em. After they've been in a stockade a month or two they'll know enough to stick around camp when they're liable to move."

"What would they go absent for?" I asked. "They wouldn't get anything by beating it except getting themselves tried."

"What would they go absent for?" the old-timer laughed. A harsh laugh. "Why they got sick of being run up and down France in them ratty trains and getting thrown into a hole like this with nothing to eat but rotten goldfish! They gone off to get themselves a shot of likker." I couldn't dope it out. I was still new at this game.

"I ask yuh," went on the old-timer, "what the hell is it to us anyway this here war?"

"We've got to keep those Jerries from winning. They want to clean out France," I replied.

"Yuh aint blaming the Jerries for that, are yuh? Next to the Mexican there aint no one needs policing up like them Frogs. I aint hankering to

risk the only life I got protecting 'em. To hell with 'em. Good riddance," say I.

"What a man! My captain once said, 'Give me a man that will swear all night, and drill like hell all day. That's a good soldier.'"

This old-timer is that type. Always bellyaching, but he's there in the pinch!

"I'm going to be sick," I remarked, "and the sooner I get out of this oven, the better!"

"Good!" said the old-timer. "Cone on, let's go!"

The railroad station was about a mile from the camp. It was dark when we reached it and a few electric lights shone feebly along the platform. A number of soldiers sat about on the benches, while others paced up and down restlessly, like caged animals, Along the edge of the platform, and about and within the station was a great number of Military Police.

I didn't see any of our gang, and to tell the truth, I didn't feel like looking for any. I'm what you might call all in. "I suppose I ought to try and round them up," I told the old-timer, "It's a dirty trick to leave a man in this dump."

"Don't kid yourself," sneered the old-timer, "when I go over the hill, I'll pick a better place than this."

We sat down on the platform. It was cool there and it seemed to relieve my fever somewhat. More soldiers arrived and we could hear them wrangling with the MP at the door. Suddenly there came the distant shrieking of a locomotive whistle, the glare of a headlight, and a train rattled into the station.

"All aboard!" called an MP, "American special for Tours and all stations on the Washout Division! Dining car forward. Open up the doors now!"

We got to our feet and went over to the train. The cars were the usual third-class type, with a door that opened into each compartment. These compartments were dimly lit by gas and it could be seen that they were crowded with men. The doors of the compartments remained shut.

"Come on, open up dem doors!" called the MPs running alongside the train. We would-be passengers climbed on the running board and tried to enter the compartments. Hell turned loose! Shouts, the sound of blows, of tearing cloth, breaking glass, rending wood!

"Now just where the hell do yuh think yer going?"

"Who wants to know?"

"You aint coming into this compartment!"

"You aint man enough to keep ne out!"

Some of the doors were opened, but entrance was blocked by the men already in the compartment.

"Lotta seats back in the next car," said these, "Aint no room in this one . . . gwan back a ways."

We men on the platform ran helplessly up and down looking for a foothold, and it became more and more manifest that there was no getting on that train without a fight.

The MPs were helpless. Yet they were doing their best. "Come on, shove back in there! There's lots of room in there!"

"Cone on in and see!" cried the occupants of the car. They stretched out their hands welcoming the MPs. "Come on in, MP!" they said. But those MPs were wise. Any one of then that got into one of those compartments knew he'd come out again bruised in body and mind and deprived of most of his clothing.

"Well, I don't see none of our men," remarked the old-timer, "and I'm going to get on this train!"

He turned toward the nearest door, one that was still closed. From the window of which a soldier looked out, an interested spectator of the lively scene on the platform, where the MPs were beginning to use their clubs.

"Well Buddy," said the old-timer, "how's chances of opening up that door? The train aint going to stay here all night."

"Aint no room in here," replied the soldier.

With a quick jump the old-timer leaped up on the running board, his arm shot out, grabbing the other's wrist, there was a howl, a grunt from the old-timer, and the other soldier, torn bodily from the compartment, sprawled on the platform.

"There's one less," said the old-timer. He opened the door and climbed into the car. "Huh," said he, looking around, "seven men. With me that's eight. Guess we can make room for my sergeant here, being as he's got the travel orders. Come on up, Sergeant. Nine men aint too many."

I climbed in and behind me clamored the man that the old-timer had pulled from the window. "What did you say?" snarled the old-timer. "You was asked to give way and asked decent, and you wouldn't give way and so you can go plump to hell! What's that? You got a pack in here? Well it'll be safe unless we want to make some more room. You'd better rustle up a

place in some other car. Anyone in here got any objections? He looked at all the men in the compartment, but no one showed any interest in their late companion's fate. "Get the hell away from that door!" said the old-timer. He kicked at the other man with his hobnailed shoe and then slammed the door. Down the platform came loud howls and sounds of conflict as the MPs shoved men into the compartments.

From the other side of the compartment wall came the angry grunting and cursing of several men. The occupants of that compartment were resisting invaders inch by inch. A whistle shrieked, doors slammed, and the train began to move, men still clinging to the running boards.

The old-timer looked at the men on the seats. There were four men on one, and three on the seat opposite, where the man had sat that had been ejected.

"You can give way there," said the old-timer to the three, "and let this here sergeant sit by the window. He aint well and may want to heave. You on the other seat give way so's I can be near him to look after him."

"There aint no room here," protested the four. "Eight men is all a compartment holds. "

"Gonna move, or we gonna have an argument?" asked the old-timer.

The argument started immediately, three of the four rushing the old-timer. All fell. The compartment was small and there were too many men trying to get at one, so that the scrap was short. I kicked one in the ribs, the baggage rack was torn down, one man lost his hat, and another finally retired to sit on his barrack bag and nurse a bleeding nose.

The train now was moving quite rapidly and the lurching of the car made combat impossible. The men prowled, they swayed sideways with the movements of the train, but two seats seemed to materialize out of thin air.

"Make yourself at home, Sergeant," said the old-timer. "We got to put in a night here and maybe a day afterward, so we might as well be comfortable."

I sat down by the window and the other men gradually settled themselves, four on one side, and the man on the barrack bag against the far door, and three on the opposite seat. The old-timer didn't sit down, but remained leaning out of the window in the door. The train was now at full speed, that is, twenty miles an hour, but lurching and swaying as if it was

going three times as fast. The men in the compartment became silent, and each seemed to retire into himself.

These men were all casuals, men going about France in small groups or alone, going to and from bayonet and gas schools, going to camps from hospitals. They were all indescribably weary, they lay back against the hard wall, they rested their heads on their hands and tried to sleep, but the swaying of the train rolled them against each other and kept them awake. Smoke and dirt came through the broken windows and made us cough, and the pale gas light in the roof of the compartment flickered. Our legs were horribly uncomfortable, for the floor was crowded with the men's packs, overcoats, slickers and rifles.

The draft from the window chilled me to the bone at one minute, and the next, the heat of the compartment was like an oven. I tried to find some position that would let me recline a little, but with nine men in a compartment, sitting knee to knee, there is no room for reclining. The opposite seat was still vacant, for the old-timer still leaned out of the window, what interested him out there I couldn't dope out. He must have been all in. He had been on the road since we left Bordeaux and had had no food nor sleep. And the strongest man just out of a hospital will feel the effects of an operation and weeks in bed.

The train slackened speed, and came to a grinding stop. The distant murmur of many voices, and pounding upon the door of the next car announced the arrival of the train at a station, and the desire of more passengers to board. The station was on the opposite side this time, on the side of the corridor that connected the compartments. This corridor had a number of doors in it likewise, and these doors were opened from the outside and the new passengers were in the corridor before the men on the train could get out if their compartments to prevent them. The men in the corridor roamed up and down it, trying to get into a compartment.

"Hey," they said, "how's chances of moving in a ways?"

"Haw, there's too many in here now. What the hell do you think we are, sardines?"

"Get away from that door or I'll give you a rap on the nose!"

"Who, me? Man, you make a pass at me and I'll turn your neck around so's you can spit down your back!"

A sudden scuffle, dull thuds, and the inevitable crash of breaking wood showed that the two were making good their threats.

"We can't have no more in here," remarked the old-timer, "and if this is a sample of what it's going to be all night, we'll have 'em in here ten deep by morning. Hand me that there bayonet a minute." He took the bayonet that one of the men had handed to him and turned to the door. There were two handles there, one a little below the other, to prevent the door being opened accidently, since both had to be turned simultaneously. Between these the old-timer wedged the bayonet, so that neither could be turned from the outside. Then, working his way across the compartment, he took a rifle and fixed it against the sliding door that went into the corridor, between the handle and the jamb so that it could not he opened. He then returned to his old place and leaned out of the window.

I watched the proceedings listlessly. I was beginning to feel that another night on the train would kill me. I almost wished it would. There was a tearing pain in my abdomen and my chills were getting worse.

I remembered the old-timer looking down at me with every appearance of disgust.

The train rattled on. I really began to think I was dying, for I felt more comfortable. My legs ceased to ache and itch, and I was surprised to find I would awaken at the sound of a loud argument in the corridor and find that I had been asleep. I dozed off again and only half awakened at the next station, where the sounds of a small sized riot disturbed me. At each station, the problem of getting men on the train became more difficult. The corridor now was jammed with soldiers, who had piled their packs against the doors in the form of barricades. Some of these men were dragged from the train by the police in order to make room for the new passengers at the station, only to find when the new passengers were aboard that there was no room for the old. In nearly all the compartments there were ten and twelve men, and it was humanly impossible to get any more in. There were fights between stations now, many of them, for a man would stand up to stretch his limbs and find his seat gone when he wanted to sit down. A battle would start at once. Only in our compartment was there peace. The original nine were still there, and though the handle had been torn from the door in efforts to wrench it open, the rifle still held it firmly closed. I could hear the men in the corridor cursing and the sounds of raging and yelling at the stations, as men hear sounds in their dreams, faintly. I went in and out of unconsciousness. With all, I was fairly comfortable. I decided that I must be numb from my hips down.

I could see the old-timer was still on his feet. He was swaying back and forth with the motion of the car. After a while, I discovered that my feet were on the opposite seat, in the space that the old-timer was supposed to occupy, and since the old-timer had made no comment, I left them there. I could sleep more comfortably in that position, and really felt good.

"Here, what's this?" said a rough, cold voice. "Take that bayonet away from that door. No wonder we can't get men on this train if this is a sample. Nine men in here!"

I woke up at the sound of that voice. It was broad daylight, the train was at a standstill, and I must have slept all night. I looked out of the door. There was an officer there, one of those men that looked like retired pugilists that were always selected to command units of the Military Police. With the officer were five MPs, all big rough men, with the flaps of their holsters tied back, and the butts of their automatics ready to hand.

The old-timer, his face contorted in a snarl, removed the bayonet. The officer shoved open the door and looked in. "I'd like a dollar for every guard house you've been in," he shot at the old-timer. His eyes roamed about the compartment. "Well, what the hell is this?" he shouted. "You!" He waved his finger under my nose. "Do you think you're on a Pullman? In all my service! Stretched out like a Brigadier General, feet up on the seat and everything. D'yuh know there's a war on, do yuh?"

I sat up, fully awake, and looked at my own legs. Sure enough, six or seven packs had been piled under my knees, and my feet were on the seat opposite. That was the old-timer's seat, but the old-timer was standing by the door, glaring at the MPs and I couldn't catch his eye. The man who had sat on his pack against the door had moved to the other end of the compartment. "So, that's why I've been so comfortable all night. No wonder! Why it's almost as good as a bed!"

"Put down your feet," barked the officer. "The gravy trains off the track. You'll put four more men in this compartment. Send them in, sergeant! What do you mean by putting your feet up on a seat?"

"I'm sick, sir," I replied, "I've been sick ever since I left the hospital."

The officer looked at me in earnest. "Awright," he said. "Take him off and send in two more men. Hospital for that bird."

"Hey, just a minute!" protested the old-timer. "He's got my travel order with him. Give us my orders, sergeant, "The old-timer started to climb from the train, but he was shoved bodily back again.

"Wait till we get this bird off," protested the MPs. "There aint no fire! Give us a little way, will yuh?"

The old-timer stepped aside and they carried me out. Again, he started for the door, but this time, a solid plug of humanity prevented him. The MPs were inserting men in the compartments in much the same manner as hay is forced into a bailer. Exit was impossible. Reaching the edge of the mob of milling soldiers, they set me down. I could hear the old-timer above all the others.

"My orders!" he yelled. "That sergeant's got my orders! I've been nursing him half way across France so I wouldn't get slapped in the mill for being AWOL! My orders, hammerheads, aint yuh got no ears?"

I could see him, desperately trying to fight his way out, but it was useless. The short toot of the station master's horn, followed by the engine's answering shriek, seemed to mock him. French station masters start trains from their stations that way, blowing upon a cow's horn, to which the engineer replies and after a good deal of flag waving, the train moves slowly on its way. The last toot had sounded and the *chef de gare* had rolled up his flag and put it away long before the old-timer had given up his useless struggle.

What a man! I'd give anything to meet that bird now.

Spending two days in the hospital, where I had ample sleep and rest, I was able to resume my journey.

After a five hours train ride, I arrived in Tours and spent most of my time scanning faces trying to find the old-timer, but no luck.

Back With The Regiment

Entraining once more on the final lap of my return, I was to experience about the same dose of hardships as just described, except perhaps, I was to enjoy it this time, or at least some parts.

The coach in which I finally found myself in after the battle, was occupied by French soldiers, who were returning from their homes after being on leave. It didn't take long to strike up an acquaintance, and with the assistance of their cognac and good fellowship, a good time was had by all.

Similar happenings as described in the preceding chapter were among the features of this journey, adding to this the fact that I was wearing the blue uniform of France, and the French had each a part of my uniform,

We stopped in a fair-sized town and were told we should have an hour's wait. At the end of that time, I returned to our car with a whole round cheese, and a smile that wouldn't come off, I'd like to have taken a snap shot of the way I looked. As I was back inside of the hour limit, I went out again, and later came back with the "*Sortie*" sign of the *gare*, or, in US language, the exit sign of the depot.

It was quite a contrast the way I was now feeling, after being sick most of the way from Bordeaux. As we used to often say, "I'm a wild, wild flower growing wilder every hour!"

I had plenty of time to get over my wild streak before reaching Bar-le-Duc, where I detrained. The French soldiers had long ago left and the only excitement I could find the last few hours was in my quest for water. Every time the train would stop I'd make a hurried trip into the *gare* to quench my thirst. Lucky we were now in an area that was not infested with traveling soldiers. I could now leave my seat without fear of losing it.

Bar-Le-Duc! The town every doughboy knows. "Nuf ced!"[21]

Here with several other 47th Infantry men, we boarded trucks and riding for several hours, we reached our destination, Condé-en-Barrois.

Reporting at regimental headquarters, I am reassigned to my Company and I start on the run for the section of the town where my company is billeted.

There is a quiet and serious look in the eyes of the men I meet, and the haggard features tell the story of what they have been through.

Reaching Company A's orderly room, I find the noncoms of the company all together. Ted, Gillespie, Bern, Wendell, Cutshall, Baggs and Cude.

All were silent, as if they were in serious thought. Some change from the happy, carefree bunch I had left last July. Boy, it did seem good to be back once more! I didn't lose any time in asking for a story of what had happened since I left. And what a story they told! My platoon commander, Lieutenant Lewis, Sergeant Dluzak and many others had made the su-

21. As the author is from the greater Boston area, this could be a reference to Michael T. "Nuf Ced" McGreevy (1865–1943), the leader of the most vocal fans of the Boston Americans (now the Boston Red Sox). McGreevy owned the Third Base Saloon, which got its name because, like third base, it was the last stop before home. His nickname "Nuf Ced" was given to him because that was what he usually shouted to end barroom disputes. (Wikipedia)

preme sacrifice, and a score of others were among the wounded. Replacements had arrived, and they told me I was just in time for the next big show, which they said they have been rehearsing for. Gee, at last I was to get my chance. Somehow, I just didn't feel equal to those men, even though they had not made any attempt to kid me along. The fact that they had gone through Hell on earth and I had not was the cause of this feeling.

I hadn't been in camp two hours when the call to arms was sounded.

Hastily we assembled our equipment, and under cover of darkness we boarded trucks and rode all night. Somebody said we rode fifty kilometers; maybe we did, but we were a long time getting to Houdainville where just before daybreak we left our trucks.

Houdainville, a small village southeast of Verdun, was one of the many towns that had forts, which were a part of the chain of Verdun forts. Here we spent the day concealed in the woods.

That night, my company was detached from the regiment and we hiked under cover of darkness to Génicourt.

I'll never forget that hike!

The hospital experience had left me in a soft and weakened condition and had it not been for brother Ted, I'd never would have made it. I was on the verge of collapse at one time and he carried my rifle and extra ammunition for me.

We had hiked and hiked and hiked. In the rain, of course. It rained every time we hiked. It's amazing how heavy a pack can get after being soaked in the rain for two hours. And the roads were choked with troop wagon trains, guns and what not. It was dodge here, run there, as our line would be broken at every crossroad to let side traffic through, and trusting to luck that those ahead of us had continued straight ahead, we'd hurry to catch up. After thinking the march would never end, we suddenly turned off the road and took a cross-country route for some woods, where we fell in our tracks and stayed there, too dog tired to even care where we were.

All this took place on September 11. And it was also this day that we were told that we'd see no actual fighting in this, the St. Mihiel drive, but would act as prisoner escort. Disappointed again, I had felt almost certain that I would at last see action, but it was not yet to be.

St Mihiel

> The reduction of the St Mihiel salient will go down in military history as a well-conceived, carefully planned, and efficiently executed operation. It opened a new chapter in the history of the American Amy in France. […]
>
> This was to be the first independent operation ever carried out by the AEF and, at the same time, it was the first occasion in history that large bodies of troops belonging to a foreign nation, in this instance French, were to fight under a purely American command. Every preparation was made for the attack. The artillery was massed in the greatest possible strength, the aero planes were gathered together in flocks, French, American, and British, and the infantry was concentrated for a swift, sure blow. […]
>
> Troops of the 4th Division had already relieved the French troops who were occupying the sector, which was known as the Toulon sector, southeast of Verdun. This sector, very quiet at the time, formed the extreme northwestern edge of the salient. It had been held continuously since 1914. Both the opposing lines were heavily entrenched with the utmost thoroughness. Nothing was lacking. Every new device, every new trick of trench warfare had been introduced in the sector which the 59th Inf. took over when it relieved its French comrades. […]
>
> The terrain in No Man's Land bore all the scars of former suffering. Shell holes were so thick that it seemed as if a shell had fallen every ten feet. The roads in many places had completely disappeared. Hills devoid of every form of vegetation; roots that knew only the hanging, blackened branches of what had once been trees; all the surrounding country white with the overturning of the chalk subsoil; this was the scene of devastation that greeted the eyes of our men as they looked from their commanding position over the flat plain of the Woevre. (B&H 140-143)

The 59th occupied about nine kilometers of the front. The remainder of their brigade was in support, while our brigade, the 7th, was in reserve, less our company, which, as stated before, was assigned to prisoner escort.

The 4th division was directed not to attack without express orders from the 5th Army Corps. At the extreme edges of the St Mihiel salient however, there were to be raids and a general harassing of the enemy. […]

The night was very quiet, nervously, expectantly quiet. At exactly one o'clock on the morning of Sept 12th, the greatest artillery concentration ever brought together on the Western Front roared forth in unison. The drive was on. In a few seconds after the first discharge, ton after ton

St. Mihiel (1)

of explosive was being hurled into the front lines of the enemy and the immediate rear. Long-range naval guns merged their heavy discharges with the sharp reports of the "75's" as they sought out objectives many miles behind the German lines. The whole sky, reflecting the flashes of the thousands of guns, looked, as one doughboy said, "like a great white way." It stretched along the entire front as if miles of munitions factories, placed side by side, had been fired simultaneously. As the day dawned, the barrage became more and more intense and at 7:30 a.m., it seemed as if the artillery men themselves were frantically trying

to out-speed the other in getting the greatest number of shells into the German lines in the shortest possible time. That morning bombardment fired away over ten million dollars' worth of shells, but the result was well worth it. […]

Advancing behind their barrages, our men reached their objectives in short order, the Germans fleeing ahead of them. In their haste to escape, the Germans had left their kitchens, on which the noon meal was being prepared. Good hot roast beef, fried potatoes, sauerkraut. […]

Coffee, loaf sugar, bread and beer were the delicacies that our men had arrayed for themselves. […]

The following summary of the operations is taken from the report of General Pershing.

At dawn on Sept. 12th, after four hours of violent artillery fire of preparation and accompanied by small tanks, the infantry of the First and Fourth corps advanced. The infantry of the Fifth corps commenced its advance at 5 a.m. The operation was carried out with entire precision. Just after daylight on Sept. 13th, elements of the 1st and 26th Divisions made a junction near Hattonchatel and Vigneulles, 18 kilos northeast of St Mihiel. The rapidity with which our divisions advanced overwhelmed the enemy and all objectives were reached by the afternoon of Sept. 13th. The enemy had apparently started to withdraw some of his troops from the tip of the salient on the eve of our attack, but had been unable to carry it thru. We captured nearly 16,000 prisoners, 443 guns and large stores of material and supplies. The energy and swiftness with which the operation was carried out enabled us to smother opposition to such an extent that we suffered less than 7,000 causalities during the actual period of advance. (B&H 148, quoting Pershing)

The American offensive had proved a remarkable success. The St Mihiel salient was closed. The line when finally established was about five kilos in advance of that designated in the original plan. (B&H 146-148)

The thousands of prisoners that we escorted to the ready stockades was the hardest work we were called on to do during our brief stay here.

Our work completed, we hiked to rejoin our regiment which had moved to Les Tremblais. This hike was made in a night that was pitch black, with rain falling in torrents, and the only road that could be used blocked with guns and transportation belonging to units of the French Artillery who had taken part in the drive and were moving to another sector.

For the next few days, we resumed our training routine, special attention being paid to liaison preparatory to the next big drive, the Meuse-Argonne. On the Vesle, the division had suffered many gas causalities, and for this reason gas masks were required to be worn two hours daily. Our training continued until September 19, and on this night a fifteen-kilometer hike brought us to the woods northwest of Senoncourt. Three days of hard training followed and at 8:30 on the night of September 22, we hiked to the Bois de Sivry, about seven kilometers distant. The two succeeding days were spent in training, and on the night of September 24, we moved into the woods south of Bethelainville. Roads in every direction were choked with guns, trucks carrying ammunition, and supply vehicles of all kinds; and every available strip of woods were filled with hiding troops.

To this day, I carry with me the thought of those nights spent in ditches at the side of the road while on those hikes, with somebody's feet sprawled across my middle and my own feet in someone else's ear, the velvet black French sky above studded with its multitude of shining stars.

This night of nights, because it didn't rain, as we started our move up to the lines, those stars looked down on us. Finally, Number Two in the rear rank, a college graduate who wore spectacles and was under suspicion of poetry, remarked something about the deep vault of heaven during a ten-minute halt when he could have been better occupied speaking of officers and first sergeants who didn't care how fast they hiked tile troops.

"Those stars," he said. "I wonder if they're sending some kind of message down to us."

"Sure, they are," I grunted. "They're saying, 'you're a hell of a ways from home, soldier.' "

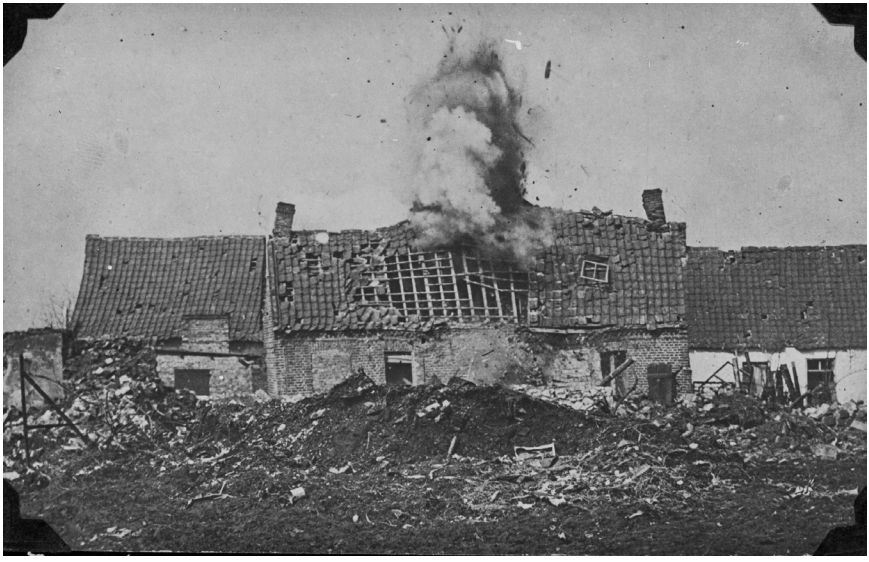
Bivouacking in sodden woods, plodding at night along muddy, crowded roads in utter darkness with clothing soaked and no prospect of dry blankets or a cheering fire, such was the preparation for the greatest of all offensives during the war, that of the Meuse-Argonne, which, before it was

completed, extended Allied activities from the North Sea to the Swiss border, and which before its end, was to see the whole German Army broken and in full retreat.

We kept under cover and rested all day September 24 and that night we moved into the trenches northeast of Esnes, the entire area about the front lines was a wriggling, seething, and like a mass of men, animals, wagons and trucks. They covered every road, trail and footpath, all this in utter darkness; not a light was shown; and rain, rain, rain and mud, mud, mud.

"Look," said a doughboy, "just feast your eyes on that wonderful sight. Mud, mud, mud, more mud and more mud everywhere."

"Get a row boat, soldier," whispered someone.



St. Mihiel (2)

"Aw go drown yourself," cried another.

"Aint this fun," bellowed an old-timer.

"Aw will yer shut up!" demanded his buddy, as he wiped the mud from his eyes.

Somewhere down the line a voice could be heard above the rest:

"It lies on yer blankets and over yer bed,
There's mud in the cover that covers yer head,
There's mud in the coffee, the slum and the broad. . .

Sunny France!"

There was an immediate response from the hundreds of Yanks:

"Oh, the there's mud in yer eyebrows, there's mud in yer nose,
And there's mud in yer leggings to add to yer woes,
The mud in yer boots finds its place twixt yer toes.
Sunny France!"

Officers looked at each other, but no attempt was made to stem the outburst. And on it rolled.

"Oh, the grimy mud, the slimy mud, the mud that makes yer swear,
The cheesy mud the greasy mud, that filters thru yer hair.
Sunny France!

"You sleep in the mud, and drink it that's true;
There's mud in the bacon. the rice and the stew;
Then you open an egg, you'll find mud in it, too…
Sunny France!

"There's mud in the water, there's mud in the tea,
There's mud in yer mess skit as thick as can be.
It sticks to yer fingers like leaves to a tree. . .
Sunny France!

"Oh, the ruddy mud, the muddy mud, the mud that gets yer goat.
The sliding mud, the gliding mud, that sprays yer pants and coat.
Sunny France!

"It cakes in yer mouth till yer feel like an ox,
It slips down yer back and it rests in yer socks,
You think that you're walking on out glass and rocks. . .
Sunny France!

"Ther's mud in yer gas mask, there's mud in yer hat,
There's mud in yer helmet, there's mud on yer gat.
Yet though mud's all around us we're happy at that.
Sunny France!

"Oh, the dank, dank, mud, the rank, rank mud. There's just one guy to blame,

We'll wish him well, we will like hell, and Kaiser Bill's his name!"

That's the way the gang felt, ready to do or die! The battle cry from now on is: Heaven, Hell or Hoboken by Christmas!

Meuse-Argonne

Now snap into it, big boy, your Big Moment has arrived. Got your steel kelley[22] sloped toward your left ear, your gas mask on the left and some tough eggs in your grenade sack. Fix bayonets! Cut out your talking! Now over the top and follow me!

For months, I snorted for action, and now I was to get it, and then some! Before this glory junket took place, it had been carefully rehearsed. Coming from the St. Mihiel sector where we had seen little action, we hiked fifteen kilometers to the woods northwest of Senoncourt. Three days we rehearsed our parts, and at eight-thirty on the night of September 22, the regiment less the second battalion, marched to the Bois de Sivry, about seven miles distant. Two more days' rehearsal, and then on the night of September 24, we hiked to the woods south of Bethelainville. Here we kept under cover during the next day, and that night we hiked into the trenches northeast of Esnes.

We had been cordially invited to take the leading part in a little "Sunrise Party," in which calling cards were to be dropped by the field artillery, machine guns, trench mortars and one pound wonders.

That night, we slept outside of the trenches. The Artillery was lined up hub-to-hub, and just a little to the rear of where we slept.

> Before going into details of this action, an idea of the objects sought would aid in understanding the part we had to play. On the right American front extended to the Meuse River, on the other side of which French Divisions were operating.
>
> On the left the American front extended to a point south of Grandpre, a front of about twenty miles. The German positions to be taken were of great natural strength which had been improved until the enemy deemed them

22. American nickname for the M1917 steel helmet issued to AEF troops.

impregnable. On the right bank of the river the heights of the Meuse rose well above the level of the country on the other side of the stream. Naturally strong points, such as the heights of Montfaucon had been utilized by the Germans to good effect. The Argonne itself with its deep, wooded ravines, and in places almost impregnable undergrowth, made the task confronting us most difficult. (Pollard 59)

The American order of battle as given for this drive, from right to left: the Third corps, from the Meuse to Malancourt, the 4th, 80th, and 33rd, in line and the third Division as Corps reserve; the Fifth Corps, from Malancourt to Vauquois, with the 79th, 37th, and 91st divisions in line, and the 32nd Division in Corps reserve; from Vauquois le Château, the First Corps, with the 35th, 38th, and 77th Divisions in line and the 92nd, as Corps reserve. The Army reserve consisted of the 1st, 29th, and 82nd Divisions. (Pollard 62, citing Pershing)

It has been said that the original plan called for turning movements by all Divisions with the right division as the pivot, in other words, to literally push the enemy across the river, the French meanwhile pushing up on the right bank. In its execution, the plan was not worked out in all its details.

General Order #54, 4th Div., of Sept. 24th, providing for the disposition of the Division in the attack, read in part as follows: "This Division will attack the hostile positions between the Rau des Forces and the Bois de Forêt, exploit its successes by advancing northward from the Bois de Forêt and organize for defense that portion of the west bank of the Meuse from Brieulles-sur-Meuse (inclusive) to Sassey-sur-Meuse (exclusive). Push the attack vigorously regardless of the advance of divisions on its right and left to the Corps objective, where it will halt and await (if necessary) the arrival, at the corps objective of either the right or center division of the Fifth Corps. Thereafter the advance will be pushed independently of other divisions to the American Army objective. Upon arrival at this line it will promptly be organized for defense

by construction of entrenchments grouped into strong points and echeloned in depth. Lines of observation and resistance will he provided. The left flank will receive special attention.

The division will assist (if necessary) the division on its left by turning Montfaucon; not by an advance into the area of the division on its left, but by steady progression to the front and energetic action by the left combat group of liaison or by reserves, against detachments on the left flank.

The Meuse-Argonne—"Time's up, over you go!"

The order further provided for the 7th Brigade (which was us) to constitute the attacking element, with the 8th Brigade in support. Both attacking infantry regiments, the 47th and 39th, were to be echeloned in depth, one battalion in assault, one in support, and the third in reserve. Upon arrival at the Corps objective, the 47th was ordered to place two battalions in the front line, the other battalion previously assigned as reserve to constitute the new regimental support and to revert to the command of the regimental commander.

> The rate of advance was to be one hundred meters in four minutes to the hostile intermediate position, following the capture of which there was to be a halt for thirty minutes. From that time on until the other objective was reached the rate of advance was to be one hundred meters in three minutes. At the hostile intermediate position, the assaulting battalions were to be relieved by the support battalions which were to pass thru to the front. A machine gun company, a battery of "75's" and the regimental one pounder and Stokes Mortar platoons were placed at the disposal of the commander of the assaulting battalions. The men carried two days rations and no packs, two canteens of water, two bandoliers of ammunition, and an incendiary grenade in addition to the ordinary offensive grenade. Meanwhile, all officers of the regiment had been allotted definite tasks by the regimental commander at an officers meeting.
>
> With thousands of guns of all calibers in action, the "Million Dollar Barrage," which was considered to be the most terrific barrage of the war, began at two o'clock on the morning of Sept. 26th. (Pollard 62-63)

For three hours, the incessant din continued and at five o'clock there we stood in the cold, gray and grizzly trenches, first wave, second wave, moppers up, scouts, runners, automatic riflemen and ammunition luggers, all piled up in the jump off trenches, raring to go.

The Lieutenant, our platoon commander was "camouflaged" as an enlisted man that morning. He had left behind his Sammy belt, his collar ornaments and his high polished putts and manners. So keen was he to be overlooked by the German sharpshooters that he had even borrowed the dirtiest rifle in the Company.

Kosmolski and Parchornovitch[23] was assigned to the front wave of shock troops. The very look of them was a shocker. They and their bayonets had been the terror of the Boches on the Château-Thierry drive.

Whiz! Blam! A racket went up, and the temperature of my legs went below zero. Then the rolling barrage! But I went over, close behind the first wave. A helluva hour to launch an offensive. I hadn't slept a wink all night.

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23. Unknown names.

We could hardly see a thing in front as we slipped back and forth in the mud trying to pull ourselves and each other out of the so-called jump-off trenches. Then we had to hop a hellish half mile of barbed wire, where I drew first blood. I'd had no training in hurdling barbed wire, but I soon caught on as my pants gave utterances to a sickening rip.

Soon we were crossing "Suicide Swamp," the jinx of the French for four years. Our first wave was to march sixty paces behind the rolling barrage. We hadn't been told which artillery outfit was to bungle the barrage that morning. All we hoped was that they'd roll the Jerries for everything down to their dog tags and Iron Crosses.

Jerry was now expecting us, and said it with showers of lead. Also scrap iron, radio accessories, hardware novelties, elephant collar buttons, etc. Ash cans in flocks began migrating hither and thither. Steel-nosed wasps whined their troubles in my ears, not that I was interested. Big flakes of high explosive pattered and tore the earth to jelly. Every few seconds, a blinding flash would remind me that the war wasn't all beers and skittles. Overhead a Boche plane was spraying machine gun bullets on us.

The noise and confusion and awful smells increased with every step, and each step grew more difficult, for the ground was laid out like the devil's golf course. But I kept plugging on and kept saying to myself, "They can't get you, they can't get you, only the good get bumped off early."

For kilometer after kilometer we advanced. At nine thirty a.m., we halted for half an hour near Cuisy. To the right and left as far as the eye could see the open country was dotted with our doughboys, all in combat groups. To our rear, wave after wave of doughboys in support. What a picture! Artillery was crossing "Suicide Swamp," the first time in four years, something the French had tried to do many times at the sacrifice of thousands of lives, only to fail. Our support troops carried in addition to their fighting equipment planks which they laid down on the swampy ground forming a road of planks which made it easy to get our guns across. Ahead, German field guns hastily abandoned we later captured and turning them around gave them a dose of their own shells. Taking up the advance once more, we fought our way, night finding us in possession of the Bois de Septsarges, where we again were forced to hold up as the outfit on our left had met with severe resistance. We remained in this position all night.

Just before dark, one of our planes appeared, flying low. Along our position, he signaled us, asking where our lines were. Each squad was

equipped with a large white cloth about the size of a bath towel. When we got the planes signal each man that held one of these panels would spread the same flat on the ground. The plane would fly the length of the line and his observer would note on his map each place he saw a panel. The plane would then fly back to our artillery position and drop the metal tube which contained the map giving our exact position. Shortly after giving the plane our line, orders wore given to advance. Lieutenant Farnum, my brother Ted's platoon commander brought the order to my platoon. I told the Lieutenant that something was wrong and I had a hunch that the morning we would see our own guns baptizing us. He told me to forget it. I couldn't.

Machine gun nests constituted our big problem of enemy resistance up to this point. During the day, the weather was excellent although visibility was poor on account of the smoke from the intense barrage. Germans who were captured during the early part of the day seemed dazed and apparently did not know in which direction they were going or what they were doing.

From Nantillois and Montfaucon on the left, we suffered somewhat from enfilading fire due to our being further in advance. The Germans were said to have had two divisions of machine gunners in the vicinity of Montfaucon.

We had advanced about a kilometer farther on our final move for the day where we dug in for the night in order to get some protection from the heavy shelling. We were now on the edge of the Bois de Brieulles. At nine o'clock on the following morning, the third battalion on our left, we went over again and we were greeted with machine guns. We had been expecting a barrage from our own guns, but I guess the signals must have got mixed. As we advanced, we could hear heavy shelling to our rear. At first, we thought it was the Jerries shelling our support. The woods were so thick and trees so tall that it killed the sound. What we really were hearing was our own guns, our expected barrage. When we realized this, we made several attempts to signal the artillery that they were firing on us. It seemed the more we signaled the faster the shells came.

We found out later that owing to the height of the trees, the artillery men would not see our signals which were rockets.

There was only one thing we could do and that was pray. I grabbed a stump and hung on for dear life. I have said before that the Jerries had greeted us with scrap iron etc., well our artillery men certainly had a nice

assortment of greetings mixed up this time. First comes high explosive, then gas, and then some! Whiz Blam! Screams of mortally wounded men. Your own buddies. By your own guns! I'm bouncing up and down from the concussion of the shells, hanging on, expecting every second it would be my turn. I am choked. I can't catch my breath. Gas. I release my hold on the stump, I'm fighting for air. I'm not alone, there's Sergeant Winnie rolling on the ground beside me. The barrage passes on. All around me, the mangled bodies of my pals. I finally get my breath and with a prayer of thanksgiving to God, I start bandaging Gregory. Part of my elbow had been torn off. In the meantime, I had learned that Ted had come through safely. Colonel Middleton, tears in his eyes, makes the rounds. The wounded are picked up, sent to the rear. The companies are reformed, the attack must go on! The Devil's Golf course watered with the blood of our own, oh well, it's a part of the game. If our guns had unknowingly shot us to pieces, they sure were thorough with those machine gunners that had greeted us when we came over. Our advance underway once more we don't more than get started when Jerry start returning the compliment with another shower of scrap, iron, etc.

We were forced to stop until the shelling ceased. We soon found the reason for this shelling. Jerry had buried his machine guns forward, to catch us as we climbed over the banks of a narrow-gauge railroad track. This wise move however only served to delay us momentarily. Attempting a further advance, we soon discovered their nest, and after a half-hour of attack from the flanks, we managed to silence them. The attacking squad soon returned, their prisoners in front of them. Reaching our line, we got busy with their wounds. Some of them had up to eight bullet holes, all bleeding freely. Each one was cleanly shaven and their appearance was very neat. They were fresh troops, hastily summoned from their leave.

I can picture them now. We were on the tracks, our prisoners seated in a row. I was bandaging one who kept asking me if I was "English." I answered "No," but he'd keep saying "English." I managed after much effort to convince him that we were really Americans. I learned afterward from a prisoner who could speak our language that the German soldiers believed even up to this time that only a handful of Americans had arrived in France. Busily engaged with dressing their wounds, I hardly noticed Sergeant Winnie, who was in the war for "souvenirs." He was searching each prisoner, pocketing whatever he found that appealed to him. Reaching the

prisoner I was engaged with, he started his search, finding a handsome watch which the Jerry didn't want to part with. I tried to talk Winnie in giving back the watch, but he wouldn't. Taking the watch, I opened up the case in the back and found a snapshot of the Jerry, his wife and young boy. The German held his hand out for the picture and I gave it to him. He thanked me in German. Out of his pack I took a sewing kit. I still have the scissors. From him and other prisoners, I took shoulder straps which had the number of their regiments. These were covered with mud. I still have these.

"Pete" Caouette of Co. D got shot through the wrist a few moments before the above occurrence and was on his way to the dressing station. He passed through our line and I sure was surprised to meet him. "To Hell with you guys, I'm going back to the white sheets," was his greeting. Blackberries were in abundance where we were at this meeting and I jokingly told Pete that he was shot while picking blackberries.

We eventually came within sight of the Bois de Faye objective, only to be stopped again by intense machine gun fire. We finally located the nest and Captain Dudley, who had recently swapped his 45 Colt for a German officer's Luger, said "Follow me." Thinking we were on the left flank of the nest, we advanced following a path in the woods that led to an open field. We hadn't gone more than a hundred yards down this path when we came face to face with a Big Jerry who was attempting to get his machine gun in action. Captain Dudley pulled up short and with his Luger tried a shot but the gun failed him. I took a kneeling position and emptied my Springfield. Meanwhile the Jerries got their gun agoing, about the same time as our automatic rifle squad in charge of Corporal Harrell with Private 1st Class Mendon as his leader, got into action. Captain Dudley had withdrawn telling us to fall back also. I had thrown myself flat to the ground, and was reloading my rifle when I felt a burning sensation on my left side. My rain coat was up bulging just enough to be in the way of those bullets! I had got nipped in the left site when I had raised a trifle in loading. We were so close to that gun that they couldn't lower the muzzle enough to get us. With sweeping motion, they sprayed the earth all around us and the minute the firing stopped, I reached for a grenade that I had in my pocket, thanking God they hadn't hit that and I threw a perfect strike right into their nest. I then withdrew to the shelter of a stump about fifty feet to the rear. It was lucky for me that I did as I had no more than reached the stump when Jerry threw over a potato masher killing Corporal Harrell and Mendon.

In the meantime, Captain Dudley had detailed a squad on the flank of the nest to catch them from the side by surprise. They continued their firing in my direction and were taken by surprise when the squad surrounded the nest according to Ignorant Drill Regulation. They tickled the flanks with rifle grenades and Chauchats, the "bucking kind," that took cowboys to ride. Good luck was rooting from the bleachers and the squad cleaned them up. We got sixteen prisoners out of the nest, including the officer in charge.

During this mix-up, we discovered we were gradually going too far to the left, and were already a little in advance of the third battalion. We then shifted further over to the right, running into Ted's platoon. They also were bearing left and had to swing further right. We finally got our line straightened out and had resumed our advance which brought us to the end of the Bois de Fays. Here the Jerries had the swellest looking dugouts I had yet seen.

For four years the Jerries had occupied this sector and for two years they lived the life of Reilly here. In fact, they had a kind of a gentleman's agreement with the French to not do any fighting in this sector. Both the French and Germans had used this sector as a rest area for their troops. Under these conditions, it was possible to have the comforts of home and Jerry sure did make it comfortable. All through the weeds we had seen electric light wires in abundance, running water through pipelines. There was also a theatre, bath house and officers' quarters. But best of all was the discovery of the Recreation building fully equipped with a bar, and REAL BEER! How the boys did appreciate this prize! As to these dugouts, they had electric lights, tables, bunks, wooden stairs and running water! In my mention of running water, I must say that it wouldn't run for us as in the retreat of the Jerries they put the line out of commission and had poisoned the water in the springs. Throwing grenades down the entrances of those dugouts, we waited a few seconds and not seeing any Jerries coming up for air, we explored them. We found the dugouts empty with evidence that someone had left in a hurry.

The Bois de Fays was heavily defended by machine guns and it was only through the hardest and bitterest kind of fighting that we were able to take and hold the woods. We successfully beat off repeated counter attacks and by six o'clock that night, we had convinced the Jerries that we were there to stay. We had gained five kilometers for our day's work. About four

o'clock my platoon attacked the Bois de Forêt. We succeeded in crossing the open field that separates the two woods. This was done by filtration. Taking shelter on the edge of the wood and waiting until the whole platoon had crossed, the Jerries suddenly cut loose with terrific shelling of the woods. They had observed our crossing.

I ought to name this day "Shell Day." This morning, it was our own guns as our opening number and now for the finale, we will hear from Jerry. There was a shanty with a tin roof nearby and I made for that. Laying aside of the building hoping they wouldn't score a bullseye, I waited. Several of the boys had run back across that open space to the dugouts I mentioned in the woods. I heard someone coming through the bushes; thinking it was a Jerry, I sighted my rifle in that direction. It's a good thing I didn't let drive because instead of Jerry, it was Lieutenant McClellan and he was right out straight making for my shanty. He was scared stiff. So was I. He threw himself on the ground beside me and asked me why I didn't fall back with the rest of the men. I told him that perhaps I thought it was safer from the shelling where I was. He agreed but wanted my hole of refuge. He even threatened me with his forty-five, but that's all the good it did. After raking the woods for about fifteen minutes, they shifted their aim to the dugouts. I was glad I had stayed where I was. The big guns ceased and when they did the Lieutenant and I had a race across that open space. Hey, talk about going! We flew! One pounders were sailing through the air. Bullets whining. I could feel the wind of those shells. Talk about your fancy dives, the Lieutenant and I both dove head first into a dugout! There was already a full house in that dugout and when the Lieutenant and I came crashing in, there was a clatter of steel and a lot of cussing. They made room for one more and the Lieutenant looked up his post of command. Where he had been the last few hours no one knew. He was supposed to have been in charge of my platoon but he had a habit of straying away that I couldn't understand.

We stayed in that dugout until the shelling stopped. Orders were then given to dig in for the night. We dug foxholes a little in the rear of the dugouts and at four in the morning the 50th Infantry relieved us.

Rain had fallen all day. We were wet, tired, hungry and had been through the hardest day of the whole fight. Our canteens had been emptied of water the first day, our rations gone. We had entered the second day of the advance without having these replaced. Our lips and throats were

parched and we risked poisoning by drinking water that had accumulated in shell holes or a footprint in the mud. My side ached a little where I had got nipped and although I wasn't badly hurt I felt that it would be better to have a dressing put on it and a shot of that anti-tetanus serum as a preventive for lock jaw.

After being relieved, we drew back to the Bois de Septsarges, where we were placed in reserve. Although we were constantly under shell fire there, we were a bit better off as our cooks had the kitchen going and we got hot meals. We also had the chance to look around a bit in the woods as in this position we were not under observation. We had captured these woods late yesterday and we now had an opportunity to scout around. The theatre I spoke of and Recreation building, we found were a part of the training camp that the Jerries had here. In the theatre, we found eight machine guns that they had used against us yesterday, every high tree had platforms constructed in the "Y" of the tree. Here the Jerries would station a machine-gun. He had excellent vision the height of the trees being used to advantage. In the underbrush which in places was so thick you couldn't see ten feet ahead, they had cunningly concealed wires, which were ankle high. These wires would have a wire or rope leading to their gun. When we'd trip against this wire, the gunner would know from his concealed position that we were within range. With sweeping notions of his gun, he would spray the bullets. Here we had an unseen enemy to conquer. The road that runs through these woods was a mess. Abandoned guns and dead horses, filled the road. A nearby tree had a horse blown up there by one of our shells. Another tree had a dead Jerry who had been chained to his machine-gun, hung suspended by his chain. (These men left behind chained to their guns were sacrifice men, used to cover up the retreat.) Our own dead, German dead, a terrible sight!

Next morning, getting permission from the Captain, I took about ten canteens and started for the Field Hospital, which was about a kilometer to our rear. Here I got my shot of serum, and joined the line of thirsty men, who were lined up awaiting their turn to fill up the empty canteens. The Medics had tested the water from this well and had OK'd it. It was the only water around. I eagerly awaited my turn as I hadn't had a decent drink in two days. All around the vicinity were wounded on cots awaiting the ambulances. Suddenly a German plane, flying low appeared. He had sighted our line of thirsty men and swooping down with his machine gun going

full blast he soon scattered that waiting line. Many were hit. But there were some who couldn't scatter, those poor wounded on the cots. Many of them received additional wounds, some fatal. To this day I feel as though I were the cause of their additional suffering. Returning, the skunk of an aviator, still flying low, seemed to be laughing when he passed over. I'd given anything if I could have brought him down. We decided that it would be wiser for only one or two at a time would go to the pump, the rest remaining under cover. I must have waited three hours for my turn. After getting my water, I started to return to the company when a German shell came over and scored a direct hit on a supply wagon that was coming up to the hospital with supplies. The smoke of the shell hadn't any more than lifted when there was a mad scramble in salvaging. I got a cartoon of Lucky Strikes and some Bull Durham for smokes, a can of tomatoes and a roll of hard tack for eats.

I started back once more, stopping on the way to chat with some French Heavy Artillery men who were stationed in the same woods as we. They passed around the *vin rouge* when I asked them for water. I had plenty of water and knew they never drank any. This bunch were shelling the Jerry strong points across the Meuse. After a few minutes' stay, I resumed my way toward our position.

The Jerries were continuously throwing over shells as if they were searching out our hiding places. This naturally made the return trip slow as when I'd hear one of those ashcans screeching its way I'd duck into a shell hole. Eventually I arrived back to our position. What a scramble those guys made when I showed my salvage! I passed the smokes around to my platoon and when the smell of smokes got into the air, most of the company had visited my foxhole.

The shot of serum I got at the field hospital had left me in a feverish condition and the following morning I was one sick boy. I couldn't even crawl out of my hole. I had no desire for food, not even broth that Cook McDonald had offered me. I managed to stick it out all day. I had placed a raincoat over my hole and rolled myself in a blanket. Rain was falling continuously and I was chilled to the bone. Ted, who was acting 1st Sergeant, came over to see me and suggested that I'd go back to the kitchen until I felt better. Our kitchen was about a half mile to the rear and I thought that I could at least get a little heat there, so I went. On my way back, I ran into Jasper Thompson who was in charge of our water cart. Poor Jasper was

having an awful time. Two of his carts, both loaded with water, had been blown up and he was on the way with the third and that had a shrapnel hole in it. Staying at the kitchen was a lot more comfortable but I kept getting worse, so I decided the hospital was the place for me. I was sent to a field hospital near Cuisy where the docs put me to bed and in two days I was able to get out again and report back for duty.

Passing a supply dump, I stopped and had a chat with the Regimental Supply Sergeant. Here I learned that overcoats had arrived for issue to the regiment. I picked mine out right then and there.

Leaving feeling pretty lucky I had got a coat ahead of the rest, I was suddenly thrown to the ground by a terrible explosion. This came so unexpectedly, I was stunned. I lay on the ground feeling my body over to see if I was all whole. Then I heard voices. They were laughing. Looking around a bit I discovered I had almost stepped onto a big naval gun, and which was the cause of the explosion.

This gun was camouflaged and concealed so cleverly that I was about to pass it when they let her go, without me even seeing it. These guns are placed into a hole dug especially, the hole being large enough to make a nice cellar for a big building. For a roof, cross sections of logs supported branches of trees, an imitation grass on which sod was placed. The muzzle of the gun would stick out when they wanted to fire. After firing, the muzzle would he lowered and it would disappear, a special mat cowering the muzzle would raise and lower with the motion of the gun. Enemy planes, even though flying low, would be unable to find then.

The concussion from these guns is so great that the men manning them were compelled to keep cotton pads between their teeth.

There I was on the ground and those birds laughing at me. I felt cheap. I picked myself up and went over to the gun. "What's the matter, soldier?"

I replied that I thought I had been hit.

They told me I wasn't the only one that got fooled that way. They seemed to get a great kick out of it.

These men are all sailors from our battleships and their work here was to bombard railroads and other enemy strong points. At this particular time, they were shelling the railroad station and freight yards at Sedan.

They asked what outfit I was from and after telling them, the loaders cried out as they put the shell in, "With the compliments of the 47th." I watched with interest as the big gun functioned, and when the shell was

speeding toward Sedan, I could picture the destruction "the compliments of the 47th" had wrought.

Resuming my journey back to the outfit, chewing on some hardtack, I came to the Montfaucon-Gercourt road that we had passed over the first day of our advance. Long-range German guns were shelling the road intermittently. Traffic was unusually heavy in spite of the shelling. An MP directing traffic hailed me as I was passing.

"Where in hell to you think you're going?"

I told him I was returning from the hospital and was on my way to rejoin my outfit.

"Well for C…st sake where in hell is your gas mask? You can't go up there without one."

"I'll get one before I get to the lines," I told him.

"Like hell you will, you'll get one now or you don't go any further." I looked around and saw a pile of equipment that someone had picked up and placed beside the road. Finding a gas mask, I once more was on my way. The remainder of the trip was uneventful excepting dodging a few shells. I got back to the company about supper time. They were still occupying the same position as when I left.

The next day, October 2, was spent in checking up on our missing buddies and reorganizing our platoons.

Several of our boys were unaccounted for and it was the custom after every engagement to make inquiries from members of their platoons. In the excitement of battle, it is usually every man for himself when it became too hot. Many would fall wounded, and many killed and almost always someone saw them.

The next day, October 3, word got around that we were going back into the front lines again. This rumor was correct and that night after dark we relieved the 59th Infantry, the same bunch that had relieved us on September 28. These fellows had advanced the line about one hundred yards since we left and had cleaned up the surrounding woods of snipers and machine-gun nests.

The position we were assigned this time was further to the left of where we had been before.

> From Brieulles to the Bois de Fays, there were shallow enemy trenches protected by a very thick belt of wire. The German units identified in front of us were the 236th Divi-

> sion, the Fifth Pioneer Storm Battalion, the Bavarian Reserve Division, together with a sprinkling of other units. In his desperation, the enemy took fragmentary units out of his lines elsewhere and threw them apparently at random into the Argonne fighting in an effort to stop the American advance, the danger from which he well sensed. (Pollard 65-66)

Montfaucon had proved to be a tough nut for the 79th to crack and it was only after part of our division, the 39th Infantry, had been sent to their assistance that they were able to take the town. October 3, the day we relieved the 59th, the 80th Division relieved the 79th, [and] had captured Nantillois and Bois de Beuge. Our line being a lot farther in advance, our flanks were exposed and we were subject to fire from three sides.

Taking our positions that night in a strange place was a tough situation. The 59th boys being anxious for relief gave us only a faint idea of our position. We couldn't speak above a whisper being so close to the Jerry front line. It was very quiet at the time of this relief. Only occasional blasts from a machine gun, evidently some nervous gunner. Star shells illuminated the sky at intervals, forcing us to hug mother earth. We had been assigned to the first line which was in an open field at the foot of a hill that led to our rear. My platoon under command of Lieutenant McClellan took over the foxholes dug by the 59th boys. The rest of the company was about two thousand yards to our rear acting as support.

The Sergeant that I relieved neglected to tell me who was on my right or how the line ran. When the Lieutenant came around on his inspection tour, he asked me to check up on this matter.

It was a ticklish situation but for our safety it was necessary. I started out to the right, crawling on my hands and knees. I'd crawl a few feet and would listen. Rockets from a trench about 150 yards in front of me would go zooming up. When the sky was lit up, I would look ahead. All the while, I was coming nearer the Jerry trench and so far, I hadn't run into any of our men. It occurred to me that perhaps we were an outpost. I had now gone a good thousand yards away from our position and I decided to go straight to the rear from where I was. There was a sloping hill to the right rear and where I was at this time I noticed a kind of valley. I decided to follow this and hadn't gone very far when I heard voices. I was a bit nervous thinking they night be Jerries. I listened for several minutes and I soon made out

they were Americans. The thought then occurred to me that if I took then by surprise they might open fire on me. Crawling a little closer, then another star shell went up. When the light had died down I whistled and called to them. Someone I could hear was asking what was that? Another star shell. This time I could make out the faces of several. I hailed them again and crawled into their hole. Here I found Corporal Joslyn with his squad. He had been given the proper instructions from the squad he relieved and from him I got a better idea of how our position set. His squad was placed in this valley to prevent the Jerries from sending patrols through there. His position as well as ours was an outpost. The nearest support he had was from the 11th MG squad who had positions on the hill overlooking the open territory. I visited their position and reported our position to them. From this point, I could see my own position and I had no difficulty in getting back.

Getting back, I reported to the Lieutenant and crawled back into my foxhole. The might passed quietly, only occasional sputters from the Jerry machine-guns could be heard. We arranged the defense of our position by putting our automatic rifles on the flanks. At night those on guard would crawl into a specially arranged pit with automatics, which were a little in advance of our holes.

Morning came at last and I was eager to get a look at the layout.

The Jerries were entrenched strongly on the heights of the Meuse and they had a strong defensive position in the Trench de Teton which was directly in front of us and about 150 yards away. The town of Brieulles lay the other side of the trench. Our position was out in the open. Those in our supports could look down on us from their holes. Directly in back were the Bois de la Côte Lemont, to our left the Bois de Fays, to the left front the Bois de Forêt. On our right was open country, hilly but with no woods on this side of the river. The heights of the Meuse lay there and boy, how they would pepper us at times. In the distance to the front we could see Dun-sur-Meuse.

At the break of dawn (we had received orders to hold our position at all cost), the First American Army moved forward again. Bitter fighting to our right and left all during the day netted our troops very little gain. The line was shaped like a pocket and we were holding the advanced point. We had little to do other than hold what we had. Our position was such that we could watch everything that took place for several miles. A sort of reserve

seat. Directly in front from across the river, Jerry was sure sending over lead to both our right and left, mixing this with artillery, one-pounders, Stokes Mortars and even liquid fire.

For two days, the battle on our flanks raged. We were thankful that Jerry had enough on his hands as our position was unusually quiet.

Our food and water were all gone and our position in the open made it difficult to get any to us.

On October 6, the third day of our holding and waiting game, attempts were made to get us food. From our foxholes, we were first attracted to the rear when Jerry gunners had seen two of our men in their attempt to drag a burlap bag across the open. Those boys would run a few feet and hit the dirt, while those Jerries would spray the ground with shots. One-pounders even took a hand. Even laying on the ground, their bodies were exposed. Brave boys them, with guts. But it just couldn't be done. The odds were too great. They got about half-way to our lines when one of them got hit. The other lad apparently wounded kept crawling dragging the bag along with him.

He didn't get far when they got him. Under cover of darkness we crawled to the spot and even though under heavy machine-gun fire, we managed to get the bag of grub to our line. The Lieutenant divided the food and crawling from hole to hole with a helper, I gave the food out. For every two men, we had a can of bully beef and a package of hardtack. Nothing to drink. We were so thirsty that from holes we had dug outside to catch rainwater we would crawl out after dark and drink that.

Go out into a field, take a small shovel similar to those old-fashioned shovels we used to put coal in the parlor furnace with and start digging. Imagine there is a hail of bullets over your head. Pick out a rainy day as this war wasn't fought when the sun was shining, even though it was in sunny France. Dig, if you strike a rock, start in another place. Throw your dirt in front and around the side of the hole. When you get down deep enough so that from a kneeling position you can look through an opening that you make from your pile of dirt in front, just dig enough for your rifle to stick through, and enough to get a good vision ahead, you now have what we call a "foxhole."

October weather in France, when this happened was like October weather here. Cold rains, cold nights. Heavy shelling, we have been told always brings rain. Well here I am in my foxhole, with my bully beef and

hardtack. My raincoat is overhead to stop the rain from coming directly on me, and also to keep out the cold air. I never thought the body could generate so much heat. Once the mud I am sitting in is warmed up and the cold air shut out, my hole is fairly comfortable. Water runs down the sides but I shouldn't worry. I have dug ditches along three sides and in front I have a well. My ditches drain whatever water I may be forcing out of the mud that I am sitting in. When my well gets full I take my cup and bail it out. Having eaten and made a final round of my guard, I crawl back and fall asleep. I don't any more than get to sleep when I hear footsteps. It's funny how one can be asleep and still hear things. I find that it is one of our patrols on its way to Brieulles. I wish them luck and go back to sleep.

About three o'clock in the afternoon of this same day, one of our planes appearing suddenly from the Bois de Brieulles flew the whole length of our line and released a shower of paper. For several days, there had been rumors that Germany wanted an armistice. Could these papers be the big news? Or was it news that we were to be relieved? We've been in action now ten days and were beginning to feel we were getting a raw deal. What did those officers care they had bomb proof dugouts? Our boys cheered themselves hoarse, waving their hands at the aviator. Jerry blazed away at the plane and we forgetting ourselves for the moment scrambled out of our holes for the big news. I got three of those pieces of paper, and made for my hole.

Here's what it said:

> Headquarters 3rd Army Corps.
> American E. F. France.
> General Orders, No. 29 October 5, 1918.
> The Corps Commander, in General Orders, cites the gallant conduct of the Fourth Division, especially the 7th and 8th Infantry Brigades in the seizure against great difficulties, of the Bois de Fays and the holding of it against repeated and determined counterattacks between Sept. 26th and Oct. 5th.
> You are there. Stay there!
> By Command of Major Gen. Bullard.

Talk about a disappointed bunch, it was us. For a long time, our greeting to one another, even after we were stationed in Germany was, "You are there, stay there."

The next morning, October 7, just after day break and without any artillery preparation, a patrol from Co. B passed through our lines.

The Trench de Teton was strongly fortified, how, we were unable to discover. We knew machine-guns were plenty, but as to the number of men, and we knew nothing of the placement of their guns. To determine this information, Co. B. was chosen to furnish the men to attack.

Talk about your "suicide patrols," here was one. Twenty-two men in charge of a Lieutenant. Some of the men had only returned to the company from the hospitals, they having been wounded on other fronts.

The Jerries let them come until they had passed our line, and then the slaughter! I never learned whether the higher ups had got their information or not. It did seem to me to have been an unnecessary sacrifice of men.

The sight before my eyes I will never forget. Every man in that platoon knew when he went through our line that he wouldn't come back. Four of them, we managed after an hour's work to drag them to our line. They were so badly shot up though that they died before they could receive the services of a doctor.

No other attempt was made on our sector to advance, and as we had done the past few days, we continued to hold and wait. During the day, I would enjoy myself, and make Jerry waste his ammunition by sticking my steel helmet which I had placed on my bayonet, appear slowly in the air. Snipers would occasionally hit the helmet. While I was doing this, our snipers who had silencers on their rifles would hunt out the German snipers who were shooting at my helmet.

Late in the afternoon, artillery raked our support and reserve positions. Evidently, the Jerries having seen our attempt to feel them out with the platoon in the morning were thinking we were massing in the rear for an advance. Ted's position and its vicinity was given a thorough dose. It was estimated by our officers that over a thousand shells were sent over during the day. Luckily, our boys were dug in pretty deep and that the ground was sandy. The casualties were light, but a buddy very dear to both Ted and me was among the victims. Leon Jacquenet, a French kid from Louisiana, who was our company runner and interpreter in French, was blown out of his hole, his remains blown up into a tree. I learned of this during a visit to Ted's position that same night.

Our artillery countered with a barrage and before dark had silenced them.

One of our boys recovered a circular dropped from a Boche plane today. I guess Jerry intends to change his tactics a bit, judging the tone of the circular. Here's what it said:

> How To Stop The War.
>
> October 10, 1918.
>
> Do your part to put an end to the war.
>
> Put an end to your part of it. Stop fighting. That's the simplest way. You can do it, you soldiers, just stop fighting and the war will end of its own accord.
>
> You are not fighting for anything anyway. What does it matter to you who owns Metz or Strasburg? You never saw these towns, nor know the people in them, so what do you care about them?
>
> But there is a little town back in the United States you would like to see and if you keep on fighting here in a hope of getting a look at those old German Fortresses you may never see them again.
>
> The only way to stop the war is to stop fighting. That's easy. Just quit and slip across No Man's Land and join the bunch that's taking it easy there waiting to be exchanged and sent home. There's no disgrace to that. That bunch of American prisoners will be welcomed just as warmly as you who stick it out in those infernal trenches.
>
> Get wise and get over the top. All the fine words about glory are tommy rot. You haven't got any business fighting in France. You would better be fighting the money trusts at home instead of fighting jour fellow soldiers in gray over where it doesn't natter two sticks to you how the war goes.
>
> There is nothing in the glory of keeping up the war. But think of the increasing taxes you will have to pay the longer the war lasts, the larger those taxes at home will be. Get wise and get over. Your country needs you. Your family needs you. You need your life for something better than being gassed, shot at, deafened by cannon shots and rendered physically unfit by the miserable life you must have lived here.
>
> The tales they tell you of German prison camps are fairy tales. Of course, you may not like to be a prisoner of war but anything is better than this infernal place with no

> hopes of escaping except being wounded, after which you will only be sent hack for another hole in your body.
>
> Wake up and stop. You can if you want to. Your government does not mean to stop the war for years to come and those years are going to be long and dreary. You had better come over while the going is good.

That night the Jerries withdrew from the Trench de Teton, falling back to the Martinvaux trenches, leaving the impression that a further withdrawal was imminent. This proved to be unfounded however. Their artillery began to be active once more. Meanwhile, on our left while we still held our position, which was gradually becoming a pivot, other troops of our division were forming a turning movement toward the Bois de Forêt.

> On October 11th, they succeeded in taking the woods. They spent the following day in consolidating their positions. The Jerries tried and tried to dislodge them, hut without success.
>
> The superiority of the American Artillery over the enemy became more and more manifest, effective counter battery work being done. The Jerries back areas were effectively searched out. (Pollard 66)

During the day, our position was again treated to heavy shelling.

Just before noon, American artillery played heavily on the Bois de Forêt. The Americans had retired to a position about in the center of the woods. The position unoccupied was literally drenched with shells. It had once been my good fortune to witness one of our batteries in action. From my position as I have said before I could see all that took place. I could, picture those artillery men, clothing stripped from their backs, sweating as they fed their guns. Previous to sending over a barrage, they pile the shells they are to use near each gun. These shells are passed to the loaders just as fast as they can pick them up. The guns (French 75s) are sometimes loaded on the recoil. Jerries that have been through one of our barrages and later taken prisoners have asked to see the "Four-inch machine-guns." Fireworks displays that I often see these days always remind me of this scene I am seeing. Smoke belches from the woods. The noise is deafening. Flash after flash as the shells explode can be seen through the smoke. Parts of trees fly up in the air. It doesn't seem possible that a human being could live through that. Yet many times I have been fortunate enough to

do so. Toward the middle of the afternoon Jerry directed a barrage on these same woods, and followed it by machine-gun activity between four and five o'clock.

That night, a patrol from Co. I went within fifty yards of Brieulles, but could see nothing in the town except a few small fires burning, A patrol from Co. K. made a similar report. Intermittent artillery activity occurred during the night.

About twice as many enemy shells came over during the succeeding twenty-four hours and the Jerries were more active.

> Brieulles was entered on the following night by another Co. I patrol and was again found to be deserted. On the way back, they saw an enemy patrol making its way back to Brieulles. Jerry snipers were active during the day. The Jerry artillery threw over barrages lasting from twenty minutes to an hour and a half during the afternoon. They also showed increased aerial activity. (Pollard 68)

Staring me in the face all day long were the bodies of those poor B Co. men who had been shot down the morning of the seventh.

Those bodies had been out there now for five days and it hadn't but just occurred to me that they might have food in their packs. I resolved that I'd find out that night. At dark, I crawled out to our outpost and told him [*sic*] of my intention. It took me a good half hour to get to the nearest body and back. I was lucky to find a can beef and some tack, the famous "Iron Rations." Dividing with the two fellows in the outpost I crawled back to my hole and took a feed.

The next day the fourteenth, was quiet, possibly due to the bad weather. In the afternoon, I was just thinking it was about time for some excitement when a Jerry bombing plane appeared overhead, flying low, I could see the pilot and the assistant peering down at us. I reached for my rifle. They were apparently an easy target. Aiming at the pilot, I let go two shots. Then releasing one of the many bombs the plane carried underneath I remember seeing it coming down through the air and about fifty yards to my right. I came to and found I was in a dressing station just back of our lines in the woods. I had been knocked completely out, but wasn't hurt. Lieutenant McClellan happened to be outside of his hole at this particular time and he received an ugly hip wound. I had lain in my hole until dark when they found me and failing to revive me, they took me to the dressing station.

The Lieutenant laying on his stretcher gave me an awful bawling out for taking those shots. Stopping on my way back to my line again I dropped in on Ted. He nailed me for patrol duty that night. Not being myself after my experience of the afternoon, I was excused until tomorrow. I went back to my hole in spite of occasional shelling. Looking around for my rifle, I was surprised to find it all blown to pieces, I picked up part of the metal, a piece of the chamber, and I still have it as a souvenir. No one had an extra rifle, I had to rely on my Colt 45.

The sector was unusually quiet again the next day, the fifteenth, only toward night the Jerry machine gunners got a little active.

That night I reported to the Battalion Commander for instruction as I was to lead a patrol into Brieulles.

He wanted me to go, unobserved, into the town or outskirts, whichever way I could secure the information without being seen, and ascertain if possible how many Jerries occupied the town. "Remember," he said, "You are a visiting patrol, and not a combat patrol. You are to see and not be seen." Picking out my men, I started. Crossing the Jerries' line through a place cut in the wire, we made our way quietly toward the town. We could hear the Jerries talking when we crossed their trenches, but we were not discovered. We were armed with trench knives which we carried in our hands, and our Colts. We carried no pack and no ammunition belt. The trip over was uneventful. Reaching the outskirts of the town we could hear sentries pacing up and down the street. We saw a field kitchen and a water cart near a house. To enter the town proper would be too dangerous so we decided to skirt the town. We could see ahead on the outskirts what appeared to be machine-gun emplacements. Skirting the western edges of the town, we saw more emplacements. Returning, we hadn't gone far when we heard a Jerry's low voice. Laying prone on the ground, we waited. Several Jerries were in the group and they passed within ten feet of where we lay. Waiting, to make sure they hadn't seen us, we resumed our way back. Arriving back to our lines, I discovered we were one man short. What happened to him I never learned. Whether he deserted while we were in enemy territory or was hurt and later captured I don't know to this day.[24]

24. In his photo albums, Daris writes: "Picking my nine men I started out to the prearranged position where I was to cross the German line inside Trench de Teton. Bailey, one of the men halted us after a few minutes with a plea that he be dis-

On these patrols, not a word is spoken after we leave our lines. It is up to each one to be on the alert and take care of himself. Each man knows what the mission is and it is their duty to follow behind the patrol leader without commands.

The patrol duty complete, we made our report to the Battalion Commander and crawled in for some sleep. We had been over three hours on this assignment, having covered about three kilometers on our trip.

On the next day, the fifteenth, and our twelfth day of holding this position, we had very little to do, except worry about our long-awaited relief. I felt terrible, and was about all in. The cold rain continued and dysentery was weakening me. I hadn't had any hot food for twelve days and had gone several days without food of any kind. After dark, I crawled back with much effort and went to see the doc at the dressing station. I had a little fever and outside of a couple of pills and words of sympathy he did very little good. The whole outfit was in terrible shape. The doc said if we didn't get relieved before long, we wouldn't need it. I agreed with him. I went back once more to my hole. Every move was torture.

I'd pass blood and had no strength. Oh well, we won't be here forever and anyway the Jerries are ready to quit.

The seventeenth, harassing enemy fire occurred at different times during the day. The Jerries were wise to our patrols now. Tonight, their machine gunners shot up a patrol. When will we get out of here? I was getting weaker all the time.

October 18, not much doing today either. Our artillery located several Jerry ammunition dumps and blew them up today. The enemy did not show himself to any great extent all the time our holding game continued.

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missed from the patrol. I asked him his reasons and he replied that he had a hunch that something was going to happen to him. It was too late to turn back and get another man, so I compelled him to come along. […] I noted [the group] was one man short, but didn't dare risk the chance of questioning the other men then, so I waited until we were safely back in our own lines. Here I found the missing man was Bailey [(arrow points to him)]. Nobody knows what became of him. As far as we knew no combat had taken place. It was some weeks later while in Germany [that] I received the photo [shown on the other page], which was sent by Bailey. He stated he had been wounded and had been taken prisoner. How, when, or where, he did not state, so even today I don't know what happened to him. The photo was sent from a prison camp with no address.

Occasionally individual Jerries would be seen, but as a rule they kept their movements well screened.

October 19, our fifteenth day of holding and our twenty-sixth day in action on this front.

Relief at last! At five a.m. this morning the 30th Infantry, having formed in waves under cover of the woods in our rear, come advancing to resume the attack. They pass through our lines and continue.

The attack is taken up by fresh troops. All along the line the American Army, in the second phase of the drive, sweeps everything before them.

Leaving our foxholes which had been our home for fifteen days, we staggered to our feet and found we had almost lost the use of our legs. We were so weak that it was impossible to march in any formation, so word was passed along that we were to assemble in the Bois de Septsarges. For an hour, stragglers trooped with difficulty toward our assembly point. Here the regiment was reformed. But best of all, the hot food that we hadn't seen since our holding game had started! How good it tasted! After eating, the regiment started to hike for the Bois de Hesse, arriving there about two o'clock in the afternoon of the same day. Weary and sick. Sixteen kilometers covered.

Ted was among the noncoms picked to go to the officers' training school and he had left us at the lines October 18. On our way through Cuisy, I saw him waiting for his truck.

Staying in the Bois de Hesse overnight, we rested and cleaned up during the next day. Our clothing which hadn't been changed since September 26, was taken off and burned. Each man took a bath and was given new clothing. Talk about your crummy feelings, you don't know until you go through it.

This crummy feeling can best be explained by using the contents of a letter a soldier sent home, who like myself had qualified as an authority through actual contact. His explanation was as follows:

> Cootie(sing.) bug. Cooties (Plu.) bugs. A blight infesting underwear of soldiers not used to soap and water. Size varies from that of a molecule to that of a mud turtle.
>
> This animal is an insect of many legs, each of which the Shapiro Quadruple Ball Bearing Movement and a set of tickers which makes contact with the victim's body while the beast is in motion. At the former extremity can

be found by microscopic investigation wicked-looking arrangement not unlike a well drill. This attachment provides the means by which this beast is classified a parasite.

Symptoms of cooties are about like this sad case. This young doughboy, a graduate of four trade schools, and one kindergarten was taken lousy with cooties about Oct 3rd and he had scratched himself to death by Oct. 13th.

Cure… soap and water. . . finger nail barrage or new clothes.

In this particular case, a good bath and change of clothing relieved me of mine.

A sad happening occurred last night that many of us can't forget. Arriving at our destination and lined up in company front awaiting dismissal, we were startled to hear the report of a rifle. One of our men whose name I can't recall had accidently discharged his rifle which he had neglected to unload leaving the lines. The bullet blew part of his jaw away and he died soon after. This fellow had. been through the thick of the fight and came out unharmed. Such is fate.

October 20, still in the Bois de Hesse. Cleaning up and getting some needed rest.

October 21, Bois de Hesse. Taking it easy today. Break camp after dark, marched to the Bois de Sivry under cover of darkness. Another sixteen kilometers. We spent the remainder of the night here and also the following day. We are hiding up by day and moving by night.

Our strength is gradually coming back. Hiking is just the thing we need. Major Woods commanding our battalion. A hard boiled but good soldier.

October 22, Ippicourt, we hiked to this place last night. Fifteen kilometers. Still hiding up and taking things easy.

October 23, Benoît Vaux, fifteen kilometers,

October 24, Villote, about fifteen more kilometers.

October 24, Bois de Vadonville, twenty kilometers this time.

October 25, Aulnois. At last we have reached our destination. This area has been assigned us as our resting and training area for our next "show." Rehearsals will now he in order.

From the twenty-fifth to the twenty-ninth, we busied ourselves in cleaning up our equipment. The morning of the twenty-ninth, we once

more started doing squads east and west and I was a pretty sick boy. I hadn't recovered from my spell in the Argonne and on the morning of October 29, I reported for sick call. The doc said I had a case of the flu. Boarding an ambulance, I was taken to a Base Hospital in Toul.

Upon arriving, a "pill roller" (medical orderly) told me to strip. He handed me a bathrobe and walked me across to another building where I had to take a cold shower bath. My temperature was over a hundred. Boy I was glad when I struck those white sheets.

In twenty-six days in the front lines the 47th had again done more than its share in the stern fighting in the Argonne. True enough, the advances were made almost entirely in the first two days of the general engagement, but with our division (the 4th), reaching the Army objective first, we were exposed to flanking fire on either side while we were engaged in beating down enemy opposition so that other units could advance more easily. Once we arrived at the Army objective, there was nothing to do but to hold grimly on to positions attained. Once more, it developed into a holding action for us. We were retained in the front line during the first two phases of the action and finally gave away to a fresh division to recuperate and to receive replacements.

The regiment suffered severely in this engagement. Entering the lines, we had about 3,000 men. When we were relieved our total strength was less than 1,800 men. Casualties in this drive were as follows:[25]

	Killed	Wounded	Gassed	Missing	Total
Officers	6	27	17	0	48
Men	139	775	271	19	1204

The following is taken from General Pershing's Report to the Secretary of war, Nov. 20, 1918.

> In all, forty enemy divisions had been used against us in the Meuse Argonne battle. Between Sept. 21st and Nov. 6th, we took 26,059 prisoners and 468 guns on this front. Our divisions engaged were the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 25th, 28th, 29th, 32nd, 33rd, 35th, 37th, 42nd, 77th, 78th, 79th, 80th, 32nd, 89th, 90th, and 91st. Many of our divisions remained in line for a length of time that required nerves of

25. Numbers from Pollard 125

steel, while others were sent in again after only a few days' rest.

There are in Europe altogether, including a regiment and some sanitary units with the Italian Amy and the organizations at Murmansk (Russia), also including those en route from the States, approximately 2,953,347 men, less our losses. Of this total, there are in France 1,338,169 combatant troops. Forty divisions have arrived, of which the Infantry personnel of ten have been used as replacements, leaving thirty divisions now in France, organized into three armies of three corps each.

The losses of the Americans up to Nov. 13th, are: Killed, 36,145; wounded, 179,625; died of disease, 14,811; deaths unclassified, 2,204; Prisoners, 2,163; missing, 1,160.

In all our engagements, we have captured about 44,000 prisoners and 1,400 guns, howitzers and trench mortars.

Finally, I pay the supreme tribute to our officers and soldiers of the line. When I think of their heroism, their patience under hardships, their unflinching spirit of offensive action, I am filled with emotion which I am unable to express. Their deeds are immortal, and they have earned the eternal gratitude of our country. (Pershing's Story, 31-36)

Toul Hospital

Several days among the white sheets in the AEF Hospital in Toul soon relieved my feverish condition. I had a slight attack of the flu, so the docs said. Having been out of bed but a few days, my stomach went out of order and reporting my trouble to the nurse, she had one of the docs look me over. Laying me flat on a table, without bothering to ask me to remove my clothing, the doc proceeded to probe my tummy. After a few minutes of feeling around he turned to the nurse and said, "Acute appendicitis."

"What!" I cried. "Are you positive? Why, I've only recently been operated on for chronic appendicitis." I continued, "How many appendices does a guy have?"

"You say you've been operated on for this?" asked the doc.

"I most certainly have, and if you think you're going to knife me again for that trouble, you've got another thing coming!" I shot back at him and bolted for the door.

The doc hollered at me but I paid no attention to him,

An orderly caught me by the arm and told me to wait. The nurse came hurrying with something in a glass which she told me to take, at the same time telling me that the doc had decided I was suffering with an acute indigestion.

We birds sure had to take a mean dose from some of those pill rollers. They had the knack of diagnosing an ailment without even asking a question. "Hit or miss," was their motto.

For excitement here, outside of watching daily air battles overhead, things were tame. One day however, we got quite a thrill when the French anti-aircraft batteries brought down a Boche plane which landed in the hospital yard after taking part of the building with it. The aviator was a young German who, when his plane had been disabled had come down in a parachute. The French soldiers, knives drawn, would have cut that Boche all to pieces had it not been for a few of us American soldiers, who had reached the spot before the French.

Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, I was still confined to this hospital, and it was here also that I got news of the signing. For many days, the rumor that the Jerries wanted to quit had been our favorite topic of discussion. Even during the time we were in the Argonne, we had heard and dismissed the possibilities of such.

To the sound of shrieking whistles and ringing bells we were acquainted with the good news, and sick men suddenly were well again as they left their hospital cots, running up and down the wards, crying "*La guerre, finie!*" "Partee America!" Downtown, the streets were filled with a throng of happy people. Soldiers of America and France, arm in arm, shouting and singing. The civilian people, tears streaming down their cheeks, joining in the celebration.

I as well as the majority of inmates of the hospital hurried downtown to take part in the fun. Some of the patients had left sickbeds and try as they would, they didn't have the strength to stay up, it was necessary to carry many back to the wards. The celebrating lasted well into the night, and I was among the tired and weary who hit the hay after midnight.

Hostilities had ceased, Germany, in accepting the terms of the Armistice, had virtually surrendered unconditionally to the victorious Allied armies. The terns of the Armistice were drastic and not only broke German's military powers, but placed the Allies in a position from which they could, with ease, penetrate into Germany and if necessary, occupy the whole country.

Briefly the terns of the Armistice provided for:

Immediate cessation of operations on land and sea.

Immediate evacuation of invaded countries and withdrawal of the German Army to the right bank of the Rhine.

Repatriation of all inhabitants of occupied countries and of prisoners of war, without reciprocity. No destruction of property or taking of prisoners upon evacuation.

Surrender of large quantities of equipment and war material of all kinds.

Maintenance personnel of all public utilities to remain at work.

Germany to reveal location of all mimes, fuse traps, etc.

Right of requisition reserved to Allied troops. Requisitions by Germany to cease at once.

Evacuation of Russian territory and abandonment of treaties of Bucharest and Brest Litovsk. Allies to have free access to evacuated territories by way of Danzig and the Vistula.

Restoration of property, money indemnity to be paid by Germany.

Surrender of certain German ships of war. Allies to sweep up mine fields and have free access to the Baltic.

Blockade against Germany to remain in effect.

All German naval aircraft to be immobilized at once.

Captured and interned merchant vessels to be returned by Germany without destruction of material and without reciprocity.

No German shipping to be transferred to neutrals.

Armistice to be in effect 30 days with option of extension. Termination by notification within 48 hours by either side permissible in the event of failure of the other to

> comply with the above terms, hostilities to commence 72 hours thereafter.
>
> Under the terms of President Wilson's final reply to the German demand for a suspension of hostilities, all details were left to Marshal Foch who continued to be in supreme command of the Military forces of the Allied and associated Governments. Marshal Foch allotted the Aix-la-Chapelle sector to the Belgians, the Cologne sector to the British, the Coblenz sector to the Americans and the Mainz sector to the French. (B&H 214- 215)

General Pershing created the Third American Army to occupy the sector and this army was composed of the following divisions. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 32nd, 42nd, 89th and 90th, Divisions. This Army was placed under the command of General Joseph Dickman.

I was soon well enough to leave the hospital and was sent to a replacement camp in Toul, where I was surprised to meet "Pete" Caouette. Several days stay here, our busiest time being to keep the camp officers from sending us to the MPs. Both of us wanted to rejoin our own regiment, and several times our names had been placed on the list of men to be sent to the military police. We would be absent each time our name was called. We finally wound up our stay here by joining a group of 4th Division men that were loading in trucks.

Lucey

After a few hours' ride we arrived in Lucey where we were assigned to the 85th Division and we wondered if we were to stay with this outfit. Some ventured the opinion that we would he sent hone earlier if we stayed with this outfit. We soon found out that we were sent here for a purpose, as shortly after our arrival we were grouped into squads, some of which had all noncommissioned officers, and then every morning would find us on the drill field. We needed the exercise, but we got it by bawling up the drill every day. Somehow every one of us had forgotten how to do squads east and west, and the Corporal that was vainly trying to put us through the drill gave up in disgust. The Captain was wise however and soon found that too many Sergeants in a squad was not according to the IDR. He solved, that is partly, the problem of drilling men out of hospitals by making each

of us take turns in commanding. In a manner that was not at all military we'd bluff the drill through and then there'd be one grand rush for the billets.

There were so many noncoms among us that it was necessary for us to take turns at KP. This we did with willingness as it gave us an opportunity to get better eats and besides it exempted us from drilling. At meal time the occupants of my billet would give the prearranged password to the server and we'd all profit with an extra portion of food. This worked all right for a few days until the mess sergeant got wise. In fact, it worked so well for us that by the time the tail end of the line reached the servers the grub was all gone.

On rainy days, of which there were many, we'd utilize our time in swapping stories and, tiring of this we thought up a scheme to get rid of some of our equipment. Our billet as well as every billet had in addition to cooties plenty of flies. December weather forced them to seek the shelter of our home and there were hundreds of them on the ceiling. Taking the steel jacket out of the cartridge we'd stuff the shell with paper and loading our rifles we'd proceed to shoot the flies. What's more this was a success. We did not kill a fly with every shot, but with each shot it was one less cartridge we would have to carry. Occasionally, somebody would throw a whole clip in the stove, and then we'd get a kick out watching the stove dance around. Two bandoliers of ammunition beside what we had in our belts had been issued to each of us and before we left the place, no one had need for an extra bandolier.

In two weeks' time, we had burned up so much firewood that we stole from the French vineyards that we were ordered to cease the practice, under pains of paying for that wood, which the captain said amounted to 20,000 francs, we had already burned. Guards were posted in the various vineyards and for a time we had to sleep in a cold billet. On a tour of inspection to various billets, we discovered that somehow, they kept warm. The answer to how they managed was that one of their men was a member of the guard. After learning this we saw to it that a member of our billet was on guard every day. We had no trouble in keeping warm once we used this system.

On December 23, we said goodbye to Lucey and with all our equipment, we started hiking for Toul.

There were about 500 of us and were all headed to rejoin our regiments which had already made the march into Germany as part of the Army of Occupation.

To Toul Replacement Camp

Leaving Lucey, our route took us to Fort Bruley, which was about five kilometers away. There is a long winding hill that leads to the Fort and about half-way up, we decided to unload. The result was a highway that resembled one that a retreating army had just passed over. Rifles, extra ammunition and full packs, littered the side of the road every inch of the way up that hill. I had only discarded my rifle and thrown away clips of ammunition from my bolt when an officer riding in the sidecar of a motorcycle sped by. As he passed me headed for the head of the column, I noticed there were several rifles in the sidecar. He had seen all that stuff by the road side and was hastening to inform our commander. The column was halted and a check was attempted. But no one seemed to know how come all that stuff was on the side of the road. When the Captain asked me what had become of my rifle, I lied telling him I never had been issued one, and besides, a platoon sergeant always carries a revolver, which luckily I had retained. I got away with it but most of the others had to go back and pick up all of that stuff.

At noon, we had reached the Fort and it began to rain. All that delay caused by throwing away that equipment made us late in arriving at our destination, and as the result we went without dinner. We reached the Toul Replacement Camp about four p.m. soaked to the skin. We were told not to leave camp, as early in the morning we were to start our move to Germany and once more would we be with our outfits. We were anxious to get back and I for one went to bed early in order that I'd have a good rest before starting the long ride into the land of the sauerkraut.

The Author's "Soldat de Verdun" Certificate

To the High Command – To the Officers – To the Soldiers – To All

Heroes known and anonymous, living and dead,
who triumphed over the avalanche of the barbarians
and immortalized its name
throughout the world and for future centuries,
The City of Verdun, inviolate and standing on its ruins,
dedicates this medal in witness of its gratitude:

The name of Mr. LOUIS Z. DARIS,
Sergeant, Company A, 47th Infantry,
U.S. Army
is inscribed in the Golden Book of "the Soldiers of Verdun"
St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne 1918

The President of the Veterans of Verdun "They Shall Not Pass"	The President of the "Golden Book"	The Mayor of Verdun Deputy of the Meuse
(signature)	(signature and seal)	(signature and seal)

From the Daris archives

5. Germany

On to Germany!

December 24, the day before Christmas, Germany bound!

Forty-five men in a box car that was labeled, "forty men." We waved a fond farewell to Toul as our train left the town behind. Each man had been issued rations, which we termed "iron rations." These consisted of bully beef, hardtack, jam, tomatoes and tobacco. Our train pulled out just at noon with the first stop at Nancy. We passed the line held at the time the Armistice was signed about three miles beyond Pont-à-Mousson. The scars of war surely were evident here. Factories and buildings leveled. Nothing but ruins everywhere. The bridge across the Moselle river had been blown up by the retreating Germans and it was necessary to detour our train. At 9:30 p.m., we arrived in Metz. Here our train spent the night in the yards and at 5:30 a.m. the following morning, the train pulled into the train shed. Two hours' wait during which time we detrained and walked the platform for exercise. Many of the boys strayed away and when the train pulled out, my car was minus four. This didn't make me mad because I hadn't slept all night on account of lack of space.

The next morning, Christmas. Pretty tired and half frozen, we were still aboard our cars. Our train was following the Moselle river and high hills rose on both sides. During the night, our train had passed through Lorraine and had skirted the border of Luxembourg and early morning found us entering the Rhineland. Glancing at my watch, I noted that it was 3:30

a.m. Our train was at a standstill and most of us were awake. Peering out of the car door, we discovered our train was once more on a sidetrack and in a freight yard. Nearby, we counted seventy-five German locomotives. Brass fittings so common on all European locomotives had been removed from all of these locomotives. We later learned that these locomotives were turned over to the Allies according to the terms of the Armistice.

Discovering that we were at last in Germany, the gang went wild. Shouts, a mad scramble to get out of the car and set foot on German soil awakened the inhabitants of the small village. Lights appeared in many houses and shortly after to our surprise, small and somewhat scared boys came to our train with pitchers of hot coffee. We hadn't expected such a reception from an enemy country. As daybreak dawned, the adult population in a curious but friendly manner congregated about the freight yards. Somehow, we had made a hit with them. They were ready to run any errand or render any service we desired.

In looking over the locomotives on the siding, I discovered that one was all steamed up and ready to go. Returning to my car, I dug my toilet kit out of my pack and returned to the locomotive. Before the rest of the gang got wind of what I was doing I had time to draw some good hot water from the locomotive pipes and had a much-needed wash and shave. This was a signal for everyone to do likewise.

We didn't get moving again until eleven o'clock. With both doors wide open, we viewed the scenery. No wonder the Germans didn't want to fight any longer. This country is surely pretty! I couldn't help but think of war torn France with hardly a tree left and every inch of ground gouged, from constant shelling.

At 2:10 p.m., we reached the small town of Bullay where we detrained. We hiked about eight kilometers across the river in the direction of Bad Bertrich only to be halted and turned back to Alf, which we had passed through. Here we were treated to another reception by the villagers. They swarmed around us and each of us found a place in their homes overnight. The villagers wishing to show their friendly spirit and at the same time help to celebrate Christmas had received the permission of our officers. Supper was hastily provided. In fact, we had hardly time to wash up before our host called us. Fried spuds, bread, butter, jam, coffee, but no meat, was the menu. Finishing supper, we were ushered into the parlor. A Christmas tree gaily decorated set in the corner of the room. A music box provided music.

The host treated us with sweets and provided German tobacco. In fact, everything possible was done to make us comfortable. This woman had lost a son, possibly one of us had killed him. She showed no sign of bitterness.

In peace time her home had sheltered many tourists, as well as most of the places in the village. Having been shown to our rooms, we lost no time in getting to bed. Sleep came rather hard for some hours however as we couldn't get out of our minds the fact that an enemy would treat us so good. One of the boys even thought that while we were asleep someone would cut our throats. But this fellow soon was to learn as we all did that the German people as a whole were more than good to us.

The following morning, our host had breakfast waiting for us. Our own food had been used up and no arrangement had been made by our officers to feed us. It was more than good of these people to feed us as they did. Thanking our host with all our hearts, we fell in and marched out of town. Reaching the outskirts, we fell out to the side of the road and were told we are to wait for trucks that are to take us to our outfits. Rain was falling, and there was about two inches of snow on the ground. We waited without dinner until four o'clock in the afternoon for trucks that didn't come, marching back to the village again to wait about an hour in the streets. An officer finally told us to fall in and marched us to a building that was once used as a cabaret. We were told that we were to spend the night here. Late that night, our trucks arrived bringing food with them, and cooks. They cooked us some Army slum and we stopped our grumbling.

Men from the different regiments were grouped accordingly, and after a warm breakfast we piled into the trucks. And after a day's ride over the hills we arrived at our regimental headquarters in Adenau.

We were pretty weary after that trip. On several occasions, we were ordered to unload and push the truck over the hills. The trucks were unable to climb due to the slippery condition of the roads. Clay that was slippery as grease when wet covered every road.

After spending the night sleeping on the floors of the YMCA recreation hut, we reported to headquarters.

The first battalion men were placed under my charge. The Red Cross put over a "barrage" of chocolate and cigarettes and as we pounded our way over the road to Leimbach, we munched chocolate and smoked. My company was also located in this town and bidding Pete goodbye, I was

once more back to duty. The following morning my company moved to Insul. Here we were to take up once more our training and duties of guard.

Insul

The Kreis Adenau, in other words, the county of Adenau, of which Insul is part, is in what is known as the Eifel, a mountainous region associated in German folklore with dwarfs and gnomes, that fabled race of diminutive beings, the guardians of mines, quarries, etc.

A few days elapsed before we became thoroughly settled in the area. Army orders had been issued explaining that we would find ourselves among an enemy people and that our conduct must not tarnish the luster of arms so bravely and victoriously borne on the field of battle. There was to be no "fraternizing." The German, whether an indulgent and kind-hearted man or coquettish and receptive woman, was to be left severely alone. Germany was still an enemy and no confidence was placed in the Government or the people. Prudence demanded that discipline and vigilance should not be relaxed.

The German people in the village viewed us in admiration. Our field kitchens with their abundant food supplies attracted the most attention. The German children lost no time in making friends with us. Neither orders nor threats of punishment could keep our soldiers from playing with the children. The kids all asked for chocolate, of which they hadn't seen any for three years. Walking down the street, a soldier would suddenly find a soft little hand pushed into his own and, looking down, would find a pair of pleading eyes set in a pale, anemic face, gazing into his. Then, "*Haben Sie Chocolade?*" came in a piping voice. They'd get it.

Guarding of a railroad tunnel, drills to keep the boys in trim and also to properly train the many new men who had come to us as replacements, schools and sports, was the usual routine during our stay here.

Occasional trips to Coblenz, rides down the Rhine, and an occasional show in our mess hall relieved the monotony

After the New Year, in addition to our drills, extensive maneuvers were engaged in, real ammunition being used, while artillery worked in conjunction with the infantry. Casualties occurred when shells fell short. The boys, especially those that had been through the hell in France were pretty

peeved over this uncalled-for risk. Three men and one German civilian were killed during these maneuvers.

In March, the big event was the Division review before General Pershing. This took place at Büchel after a snow storm. We hiked two days in the snow storm to reach the grounds, and arriving there we had to sleep in our pup tents. Those we'd pitch after scraping the foot of snow that covered the ground to one side.

Doughboy, the weekly publication of the 7th Infantry Brigade in the issue of March 22, 1919, had the following comment that tells the story of the review:

Insul

E. F. Commander in Chief inspects Ivy Units and awards decorations to men.

In a little hollow surrounded on all sides by over towering hills. Gen. J. J. Pershing, Commander in Chief of the A. E. F., reviewed the "Fighting Fourth" Division Tuesday afternoon. The site was just North of Büchel in the Southern part of the Division's occupied area.

In spite of the inclement weather the review from every standpoint was a decided success. Despite the warm weather of the past week, snow began falling early Monday morning and it grew considerably colder.

All morning Tuesday the skies were overcast but just about time for the review, the sun appeared through the clouds for the first time.

The sight of thousands of khaki-clad soldiers, their glistening bayonets, the prancing horses and lumbering wagons of the animal transport, all shining and indicating efforts of those in charge, all contributed to making this review one that will never be forgotten by those who witnessed or participated in it.

The hills covered with snow as a background, and the blending of the uniforms of the soldiers made a very picturesque sight.

Gen. Pershing complimented Gen. Mark L. Hersey, Commanding the Division, after the review, on the smart appearance of the unit and many times during the inspection he commented favorably on various features, including the well-kept wagons and equipment.

In order to get to Büchel, the site of the review it was necessary to move the 7th Brigade troops (which was us), early and the first troops departed early Sunday morning. Only enough men necessary for guard duty, etc., were left behind.

The 47th Infantry moved via Adenau, Welcherath, Retterath, Laubach road and billeted the night of March 16th in the Lierstall, Welcherath area and the following night near the scene of the review.

The rolling kitchens moved with the columns and the men slept at night in their "pups" for the first time in many weeks. It was pretty hilly to sleep outdoors for the doughboys after being in billets so long, and many fires were seen around the various camps. And many comments were heard that the blazes would not be bringing down a barrage from the Jerries either this time.

For the review, all men wore the service uniforms with helmets. On account of the cold weather, overcoats were worn.

Gold chevrons, wound and service stripes were much in evidence and indicated the large number of veterans in the "Fighting Fourth."

> With neatly cleaned and pressed uniforms and equipment spic and span, the men put up a neat appearance.
>
> And say, when they stepped out to pass the reviewing stand, keeping with the band, it was easy to see they were veterans. Some of the lines were almost perfect and brought forth praise from the Commander in Chief and members of his staff.
>
> The band consisted of 180 pieces, made up from picked musicians from all the Division organizations. And say, it was SOME BAND.

The Old Boy got quite a kick out of his inspection, and before it was all over we were grouped around the reviewing stand listening to his words of praise. He mentioned our work on the various battle fronts and surprised us by telling us we were second to none in the AEF. Later came praise from the Commander of the 3rd Army, General Dickman, who one time at Camp Greene, had called us "The Hiking Militia."

It was all different now; in his words of praise, he said, "Your appearance was a source of great pleasure to me. I think your Division is beyond the reach of competition."

My diary, under the date of March 16 to 20 reads as follows:

Sun. Mar. 16, Reveille, 6:30, hurried breakfast, fall in at 8:45. Our combat packs, our blankets have been sent ahead on trucks. Only thirty men remain behind in each company. Route of march, Nieder Adenau, Leimbach, Breidscheid, Meuspath, Welcherath to Mannebach. Distance 26 kilos (about twenty-one miles). We put into billets for the night after meeting Lieutenant Otto on the outskirts of the town, He had gone ahead of the troops to arrange for our billets. At the sight of the Lieutenant, we gave a hearty cheer, as we knew the end of the march was at hand. The cooks put on an extra feed for supper. Boiled eggs, spuds and sauerkraut, as much as we could eat. It didn't take much teasing to get us to bed. Everybody is all in,

Mon. Mar. 17, Reveille. 4:45. Oh, how we hated to get up this morning. Stiff as a board. We have been living too soft a life the past few months and these hikes sure get us when we're not in shape. An early start as we have 34 kilos to make today. Our route today was to Retterath, Lierstall, Laubach to Kaisersesch. Instead of entering Kaisersesch we turned left and climbed a hill that was as steep as a house roof. The hill was two-kilos long, What

a march! Reaching the top of the hill, we went into "bivouac." For the first time since we left the States, our regiment was once more all together. As we pitched our pup tents, we saw it was necessary to clear a place under the snow, so that we could lie on the ground. To make matters worse, orders were issued that each man should shave and clean his equipment, shine his shoes and brush his clothing before retiring! What an assignment under the conditions! There was plenty of grumbling but every man carried out his orders. After building huge bonfires from wood we got in the nearby woods, we ate supper and melted snow in our coffee cups, warming up the water in order to shave.

All of this in order to please our Commander in Chief! As I went to the task of cleaning up I thought of the words good old "Tal" Fraser, our Top Kick back in our training days, had once said to me: "Daris, you can swear at me all night, and if you drill like hell the next day, I know you're a good soldier."

The YMCA had a stock of candy and smokes blowed [*sic*] in on us after supper and those among us that had the price visited their store.

The snow storm which started last night was still in progress and it looked bad for tomorrow. In the cold outdoors, we slept.

Tues. Mar. 18, Reveille 6:30, This is the day. There are just eight inches of snow on the ground and it's still snowing. A cold wash and a hot breakfast then a final check up on the looks of my equipment and I was ready to pass in review.

At nine o'clock we are formed and hike for the grounds. "Slush, slush," the sounds of thousands of feet plodding through the snow. The leading company, which happens to be us, plowing the road.

The rest of the morning is spent in placing the different battalions. A moving picture camera grinds away as we are in ranks. In columns of platoon our regiment is directly in front of the reviewing stand. At noon, all outfits are in place. After a long and tedious wait, we are startled by a blast from the buglers, which announces the approach of our Division Commander and staf; they ride onto the grounds, and pass up and down the ranks. General Hersey, Division commander, and Brigadier General Poore, in command of the 7th Brigade seemed well pleased with our appearance. This inspection took some time as do all Division inspections. The Division front covered a length of five kilometers and was half of a kilometer deep. The bands of the Division supplied 180 musicians, who were espe-

cially trained for this event. They were grouped to the right of the reviewing stand.

They helped to relieve the monotony by furnishing music.

At two o'clock, the Bugles again sounded. This time it was for Pershing himself. Boy it was a treat to see him mounted and the officers as well as our own, dashing across the field. The old boy was way ahead in the lead as he rode to inspect our combat trains. Next was my regiment. Our platoon had opened ranks, the front rank facing the rear rank. As his party arrived Captain Halligan in charge of my company at the time, met them and Pershing exclaimed, "My, what a fine bunch of soldiers. Is this your company, Captain? They're the neatest and most soldierly appearing company I have had the honor to inspect. Not a fault, excellent in every way!" After he had passed through and was out of hearing, one of our hard-boiled guys cried, "All together hoys, Some S…t."

After a long wait, still in ranks, a scene I'll never forget took place in the form of massing all the colors of the Division. This was the first and only time in the history of our Division that such an event took place.

Then it was pass in review. The whole division on the move at once. At the finish, we were recalled and in a solid mass, regardless of formation we grouped around the stand and listened to words of praise from our commander in chief. A half hour in which he elaborated our part in the BIG SHOW, and the whole bunch of us broke into a mighty cheer. Our Division commander sprung to his feet and cried, "Boys, God gave us this man to lead us to victory! Take off your war hats and let's give him a tiger and three cheers." What an outburst resulted!

At the conclusion of the General's talk, we were marched off the grounds and on leaving were met by the YMCA who handed us a roll of cookies. We reached our camp, cold, tired, and aching from the long stand, which was actually eight hours. Reaching camp, a warm supper with hot chocolate instead of coffee was served to us. After spending an hour beside the bonfire, I crawled into my "dog house" all in.

Wed. Mar. 19. Broke camp at 7:15 and hiked 24 kilos over slippery roads that were icy. Stayed overnight in Mannebach. More comfortable sleeping quarters for us tonight.

Thurs. Mar. 20. The last leg of our journey. Leave 7:30 over icy roads and downhill. We got back to Insul 11:45 a.m. glad that it was all over. Our cooks and kitchens didn't get in until two o'clock so we had a late dinner.

The "landlady" however insisted on feeding me so I wasn't so bad off. Mail had accumulated and the rest of the day, I read letters from home.

The next few weeks we were inactive other than guard duty. The weather was terrible. Snow, cold rains that made you shiver, and roads that were almost impassable made it impossible to do any drilling.

Talk of going home was becoming the favorite topic of the day. In fact, discipline was pretty well shot. Most of our boys were either drafted or enlisted for the duration of war. They now began to feel that their job was over and the sooner they got home, the better. One night, as I was on a tour of inspection of the tunnel guard I found every sentry and the Corporal in charge sound asleep. Imagine it, in enemy territory, and asleep on duty.

This tunnel was part of the railroad system known as the Luxembourg Rhine division, and was naturally very important. Our men didn't seem to realize the importance, and after waking and scolding them, all I could get for an excuse from them as to why they slept on the job was, "Those Jerries own this tunnel, don't they! The war's over aint it?"

Being a good guy, I didn't turn them in, instead I told the corporal in charge that he must make the rounds every half hour for the rest of the night. He didn't like this very much but when I told him to choose between that and being turned in, he decided the half hour was the best.

Danger lurked, not only the fact that the Germans could blow up the tunnel and cut off a source of supply to our Army on the Rhine, but the male, especially the returned soldier, disliked the idea of American troops in his country, and in numerous occasions some of our sentries were found killed in ambush. In the face of this danger, those fellows weren't interested. On this occasion I have just mentioned, the sentries, eight all told, unbuckled their belts and threw them and their rifles in the ditch, and sprawled along the gutters at both ends of the tunnel, they slept. Trains roaring through didn't disturb their slumber either. I've heard it said that a man can get used to anything and from my past experiences I guess the saying is right.

Rifle range work supplanted our drill periods in April. I drew an assignment as Instructor and for several weeks was quite busy.

I received word that brother Ted had reached the States, and was discharged from the army. For once, I had a longing to be home also. Included in my mail of that date was a news clipping stating that the US were shipping food to feed the starving Germans.

The Germans are begging the Allies for assistance and at this time, it is almost a whine. Of course, they play up to us Yanks, as they are smart enough to know that we alone are able to feed them. On two different occasions, I visited several of the larger cities in this section and my observations were that in comparison with France and Belgium, the Germans as a whole were better off. Now that they have started to whine, it brings to mind an old saying, "Remember the leopard does not change his spots."

To those who come direct from Paris to Coblenz, Cologne and Mainz, which are the chief cities in occupied territory, the most striking fact is the cheapness of food in the German restaurants. After Paris, life in occupied Germany is cheap. Of course, it must he remembered that restaurants can obtain food with greater facility than private houses. The shops in Cologne and Coblenz are handsome and well equipped with stock. Purses, handbags, and many kinds of fancy articles abound and are cheap. Other articles are dear; stockings for instance, cost 13 to 40 marks a pair (cotton), and socks are from ten to twenty marks for a very poor grade.

The most extraordinary neckties are sold in Cologne, amazing in color and design. Hats of the Civil War are labelled "latest style." There is a general air of prosperity. There is no evidence of starvation, no paper clothes as so often reported in the newspapers are seen, and no wooden shoes are worn. The houses are well kept, clean and all roofs are in place. The Allied soldiers all sleep in beds. Comparisons are often made, quite thoughtlessly, by our men, regarding the different quarters, and the general subservient attitude of the Germans. These would-be critics are forgetting that over eight hundred square miles of French territory has been invaded, bombarded, fired and utterly ruined. They forget that hundreds of villages, happy, laughing villages filled with a peaceful, contented community has been razed from the earth, their men killed, their women raped, the children starved; that every bit of machinery was stolen from the industrial districts, and that which could not be carried away was destroyed beyond repair.

There is a comparison to be made: it is that we are in the show district of Germany; we are in the historic German playground; we are in a Germany which was not invaded, where civilians were neither starved nor robbed nor expatriated by the thousands, by a brutal enemy. Of course, there is a difference in our mode of living, and moreover, the attitude of the German toward our men, their friendliness, their anxiety to make a favorable impression due to the fact that they realize that we Americans

hold the fort; that we, and only we, can feed them, and they are falling over each other in an attempt to convince us that the horrors of Flanders and the Argonne, the crimes of Belgium, are forgotten. They want to avoid paying for their misdeeds and after having killed and destroyed millions of lives directly and indirectly, they are now calling us "*Kamarade.*" They did that on the fighting line, they are doing it now.

It is well for us to remember this. It is justice to recall that civilization will not recover for many years from the destruction caused by these whining "*Gott mit uns*" blasphemers.

Let us remember that Germany was not invaded; that her homes have not been destroyed, nor their women and girls outraged. Let us also keep in mind that we left our homes in order to fight an unspeakably savage beast, who, had he succeeded, would have throttled us as he throttled France and Belgium.

Keep in mind also the scenes we have witnessed with our own eyes, the loss of our comrades, whom we left in mud and filth, and who will never again return to God's Country. And for their memory, our friends, pals and buddies, for those brave boys who died that "democracy may live," those boys who gave their all to destroy the beast that menaced all civilization, let us beware of these sudden protestations of friendship; let us remember that the "leopard does not change his spots;" that the German is at heart a bully; and finally, that he has no real friendship for Americans.

April 3 was a big day for me. I received all the back pay due me, and it was some roll. All told, I drew 217½ francs. The rate of exchange in American money at this time was 5.80 francs to a dollar.

Baseball practice is now being held daily and I am playing on the company team. We managed to trim our battalion teams and expect soon to meet the best in other battalions. Nights we spend in our new mess hall, where we stage boxing and wrestling bouts. Occasional show troupes drop in on us and we enjoy the entertainment.

The dedication of our new mess hall was a gala affair. We bought several kegs of beer and a good time was had by all, no officers allowed.

Rumors that we were to move up to the Rhine River had been flying around for over a week, and on Thursday April lo, we hit the trail of the beautiful Ahr valley headed for our new territory. Three months and twelve days we had spent in the Adenau district.

The first day of our hike brought us to Rech, a distance of twnty-five kilometers arriving here at 12:15 p.m. The route of march followed the course of the Ahr river, and at Altenahr, we marched through a tunnel that goes under a very high hill. From time to time a white cross could be seen on the slopes of these hills marking the grave of an aviator who had crashed. Passing through Ahrweiler which is a very beautiful town, we saw acres upon acres of fruit orchards. The trees were in full bloom and they were a very pretty sight.

Leaving Rech at 7:00, we hiked to Remagen, our destination, which we reached a little after twelve. The distance was twenty-two kilometers. Our band met us on the outskirts of the town, and the sight of the Rhine was a thrill as we marched to our quarters headed by our band. To our astonishment my whole company was quartered in the Hotel Rhein.

Remagen

This seemed too good to be true. A hotel on the riverfront!

But wait, I knew there was a catch somewhere. The 42nd Division had been occupying this section and now that they were sent home we come along and have to clean the hotel up before we can get settled. They left a very untidy mess for us. About an hour's work and my room was OK. I lost no time in seeking out a porch chair and sat on the hotel veranda until dark, watching the boats sail by and feeling that at last my ambition had been realized. "From So. Ashburnham to the Rhine!" That night we stood retreat, the whole battalion on the paved waterfront!

Just before retiring, a *Fraulien* came to the hotel and wanted someone to write a letter to her boyfriend who had gone home with the 42nd Division. After spending an hour trying to find out what she wanted to tell the boyfriend, one of our bright lads suddenly saw that here was a chance to get even with those birds for leaving such dirty quarters for others to clean up. After listening to his plan, we agreed that he should write the letter. Well here's what he wrote,

Remagen, Germany,
Apr. 20, 1919.
Dear Fred.

Say, you birds sure are a swell bunch. Why in blazes didn't you borrow brooms from us if you didn't have any of your own?

I love every pebble in your concrete dome. Besides, I'd rather have a million dollars than belong to the 42nd Division.

Father broke his leg the other night and we had to shoot him.

The rest of the family are well.

I am ever thine,

Kathrina.

Finishing the letter, the writer said, "There, I guess that'll hold that bird awhile."

We were not stationed long enough in Remagen to learn whether Kathrina had received a reply or not. The poor girl couldn't read our language, and although we were roaring with amusement over the thought of the letter's reception when it reached its destination, the girl didn't show any sign of being wise to what we had done. In fact, she seemed assured that we had sent a gentle love letter.

Remagen lies in a picturesque landscape on the banks of the Rhine. This village is situated twenty-four miles above Coblenz and is an excellent starting point for excursions. Remagen was a place of some importance in the middle ages, but declined after the Thirty Years War. It once belonged like Sinzig, to the Duchy of Julieh; in 1624, it came into the possession of Pfalz Neuburg.

At the lower end of the town is the Roman Catholic Church, with Romanesque nave and a Gothic choir, consecrated in 1246. In the interior are a handsome Gothic tabernacle and several sculptures of the 15th century. The Romanesque Portal adjoining the Roman Catholic parsonage, adorned with grotesque sculptures of the 12th century, was also worthy of inspection.

History, that is ancient history, had never appealed. to me, but in some manner the surroundings had fascinated me to quite extent, or was it my curiosity? Whatever spare time I had was spent in exploring and viewing the many attractions that abounded in our district.

Rhine close in right up to the river, retiring again at the latter place, and disappearing altogether beyond Bonn; on the right bank the hills re-

tire opposite Remagen, leaving a narrow plain which is terminated by the beautifully curved lines of the Seven Mountains.

The Seven Mountains, about four miles in length the highest of which is 641 meters, adjoin the Westerwald on the east, while the Drachenfels Mountain on the west extends right up to the river.

Here again one sees the Rhine landscape in all its charm.

The villagers told me that in olden times, the Rhine flowed into a deep mighty lake above the town of Konigswinter. Those who then lived near the Eifel Mountains or on the heights of the Westerwald were in constant fear of the swelling waters which often overflowed, causing great destruction in the country. They began to consider that some great savior was necessary and sent a messenger into the country of the Giants, begging some of them to come down and bore through the mountain, which prevented the waters from flowing onward. They promised valuable presents as a recompense.

So, as the story goes, one day seven Giants appeared in their country bringing enormous spades with them, and with a few good strokes with their tools, they made a gap in the mountain so that in a few days the water washed through the gap which visibly became larger. At last the river streamed through in torrents. The lake gradually dried up and completely disappeared, and the liberated Rhine flowed majestically towards the plain.

The Giants looked at their work with satisfaction. The grateful folks brought them rich treasures, which they had taken out of the mines. Having divided them fraternally, the Giants shouldered their spades and went on their way. These heaps of rocky ground which they had dug out were so great, that ever since they have been called the Seven Mountains, and will remain there until the Giants come again and sweep them away.

Another place of interest in Remagen is the Gothic four-towered Appolinaris Church, which was erected in 1839. This little church occupies the site of an ancient and much-frequented shrine. The villagers tell us the story in this manner. In 1164 Frederick Barbarossa is said to have presented the head of the highly revered St. Appolinaris, Bishop Ravenna, to Archbishop Rainald von Dassel of Cologne, who was in the act of conveying it to Cologne, together with the relics of Magi, when by some miraculous agency the vessel stopped in the middle of the river here, and refused to proceed until the head of the holy man had been safely deposited in a chapel on the Appolinarisberg.

Ruins of Roman days, castles and forts are visible in all directions and the khaki-clad figures of our soldiers can be seen on every fair day as they search and probe into the mysteries of the past. Now and then on sees the crude carving of a soldier's jack knife; it sometimes represents his organization, or a name and date. Also, the carving activities were not confined to timbers and trees, but even in the interior of some castle or famous church the mark can be found.

I remember the famous and huge statue of Kaiser Wilhelm in Coblenz, thousands of doughboys had put their trade marks on the huge stone foundations, and many on the bronze figure of the Kaiser himself.

The people of the Rhineland in addition to their tales of Roman days, can now tell many tales concerning the occupation of those inquisitive Yanks.

My stay in this town was one of pleasant memories and it was with regret that I learned of my assignment as assistant to the Supply Officer, and ordered to report for duty at Bad Neuenahr.

Trucks were provided to transport the detail assigned to our new job, and after riding a couple hours over rough and humpy roads, we reached Neuenahr at 9:30 a.m., April 22.

Bad Neuenahr

Imagine my surprise when I discovered that our new home was the world-famous health resort!

Neuenahr, where warm seltzer water sizzles from the earth, where the tiny Ahr river gurgles noisily toward the Rhine, where kings and millionaires from all parts of the world formerly were soaked, financially as well as aquatically, and to think that I, a humble Sergeant is about to spend weeks in one of the most famous watering places in Europe!

Here, where in prewar days, the mighty enjoyed the luxuries of mineral baths and elegant hotels, the American soldier now rests supremely. My billet is a room in one of the best hotels on the Continent. I eat in a restaurant formerly patronized by John D. Rockefeller, the late Teddy Roosevelt and the late Kaiser Wilhelm. I am amused by the best talent in the Army of occupation. I bathe in a water the name of which is famous in the USA, the Appolinaris Water.

In the words of the inebriated reporter sent to cover the Baltimore fire, the leave center at Neuenahr, "baffles description."

Our troops are indeed fortunate to have this area to enjoy their leaves. To say that this city is the finest leave area in the Army of Occupation would be putting it too mildly. There is no other that compares with it.

My duties here would not be too confining, I learned after reporting to Lieutenant Kimball, the officer in charge. I was assigned a desk in his office at the Casino building where all the recreation activities were carried on. This would enable me to take in all that is going on without neglecting my work. All arriving truckloads of foodstuffs and supplies had to report to me. These came at intervals from one to two hours apart. It was easy to cheek the load and OK the drivers' papers. This took about five minutes and I'd have the rest of hour or two to myself. Talk about the life of Reilly! One guy called it a gold brick job, and I agreed with him.

The rest of my company arrived here unexpectedly tonight. They were picked to furnish guard and various details needed to run the place.

1 am to remain on detached service however, and still occupy my room which is the Hotel Klinger.

The job before us to properly conduct this area is worked out to perfection. I found it of so much interest that I think it worthwhile to devote a little space in these memoirs.

One thousand enlisted men are entertained in elegance every day in this small sized city which is known the world over as the source of Appolinaris water. Under the auspices of the Army and YMCA cooperating, these men are billeted, dined and amused for three days at the end of which time they depart to make room for others.

Neuenahr itself was built primarily for housing the thousands who came yearly to enjoy its mineral baths. It has fifty first class hotels, one boasting 1,100 beds and over 100 bath rooms, numerous restaurants, beautiful parks and a Casino which equals those in the resorts of Southern France. Ideally equipped for a leave center and managed by efficient American men and women, the city now provides for practically everything that a soldier on pass could wish for.

When the enlisted man arrives at Neuenahr, he is welcomed at the depot by a pretty girl in the uniform of the YMCA. He is then assigned to one of the hotels where he has the comforts of a modern home. If his next desire is a mineral bath he is guided to the Kur Hotel. There, he is assigned to

one of the fifty bath rooms where tiled steps lead down to a tiled bath, built below the level of the floor. After a plunge in the mineral water, naturally warm, but heated again in the hotel's monster boiler room, he dries himself with a towel as large as an honest-to-goodness American bed spread.

This completed, the soldier's mind turns to lighter things. He strolls across the street to the Casino, a place of amusement. So numerous are the activities in this one huge building that any sideshow "barker" would need the staying powers of Floyd Gibbons[26] to enumerate them.

Here under the leadership of the leave area secretary and his corps of helpers, the soldier finds amusement in every nook and corner and something to eat at every turn.

To the mind of the average soldier in the Army of Occupation a "Casino" suggest merely a glorified term for "*Wirtschaft*" or beer joint as some call it. This Casino, however, is a long, beautifully constructed building extending along the Ahr river for some 300 feet in length.

In the center, it rises to a height of three stories with many balconies and towers. On either side are wings, one story in height. The West wing has a large veranda which was used as a beer garden, but now serves as a lounging place. The real glory of the building is its interior, finished in marble and gold trimmings with works of art adorning the walls. An extensive system of lights with costly fixtures provides for the evening hours.

In the Casino, one finds the personnel, the largest in any leave center in the Army of Occupation outside of Coblenz. There is someone to look after the soldiers' religion, if he has any. Another is in charge of the restaurant, and there are others who take care of athletics, housing, information and sight-seeing trips, entertainments, games, library, Rhine trips and the general comfort and welfare of the visiting soldier.

From one end of the Casino to the other, there is some form of activity from eight o'clock in the morning to ten o'clock at night. In the luxurious theatre, which seats 1,400, there is a performance every afternoon and evening. The library affords not only books but billiard, ping pong, and croquet to tables as well as other games. There are several writing rooms and lounge rooms. On the second floor is the parlor, dubbed by the boys

26. Floyd Gibbons (1887–1939) was the war correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune* during World War I. One of radio's first news reporters and commentators, he was famous for a fast-talking delivery style. (Wikiipedia)

"The Yellow Astor Room." The room is not decorated in yellow and as far as is known, none of the well-known Astor family had anything to do with the room, and the origin of the title is a mystery but it sticks. In this room, the "Y" girls serve hot chocolate, cookies and candy to those who drop in for a quiet social chat.

The most important part of the establishment however is the dining room, in two sections where three times a day, the soldier eats a meal never hoped for in the days of hiking thirty kilometers on one can of "corn wil-

Bad Neuenahr—The Casino

lie." The meals are the best money can provide, and the French pastries and ice cream sure make a hit! All the cooking is done in the basement where there are several large kitchens and one hundred German girls under the direction of a former ocean liner steward, who cook the food. There are also bakeries, butcher shops and any number of storerooms, packed to the limit, all working fourteen hours a day to supply the demands of the great American appetite.

When the soldier isn't eating, and there are very few hours that he isn't, he may listen to a band in a bandstand close to the veranda, see a show, dance with the "Y" girls, or even have his mending done by a German *Frau* provided for such emergencies. In the afternoon when his spirits need a tonic he may lounge on the veranda and listen to the wails and jerks of an extremely jazzy jazz band.

Or, if he desires outdoor sports, there are tennis and basketball courts, four of the finest outdoor swimming pools in Germany, thoughtfully provided by the *Boches* in case some invading army cares to use then, and three baseball diamonds. On these diamonds three teams composed of soldiers, detailed to the "Y," play exhibition games with visiting teams brought to Neuenahr to furnish real contests.

When sports and entertainment both prove tiresome the pleasure-seeking doughboy has his choice of buying out the sales commissary, open at all hours at the Casino, or drinking Appolinaris water till he feels like a quart of champagne looking for an opening. Or he may stroll through one of the two parks that flank the Casino.

If it is the life of the "city" the soldier wants, he may go to the Flora Hotel where another "Y" restaurant is in operation. Two hundred men can eat here at one sitting while the Casino takes care of from 350 to 500. Sittings continue until the doughboy cries, "Enough!"

To enumerate every feature of this leave center would mean that I would have to remain in Germany longer than the Army of Occupation. Needless to say, my stay here was enjoyed immensely.

The morning of May 17, and out of a clear sky orders were received to prepare to close this leave area, as our regiment was booked to sail Home! Boy, maybe this wasn't cause to celebrate! Several busy days followed during which time we turned in our surplus equipment, and I was relieved from my duties at the Casino. Every day we were on the parade ground for final inspections, and each day for about two weeks, we were told, "Tomorrow, we go home." But that tomorrow stuff got to be old stuff and one night after standing retreat the wildest party took place in that quaint old town, that I have ever seen or ever expect to see again. The boys first of all got "tanked up" and forgot to pay for the wet goods. This caused the owners of the cafes to summon the MPs. The boys were prepared for this turn of events, and in very short time not an MP could he found in town. They took to the woods. The soldiers in groups went unmolested from one end

of the town to the other, singing and raising hell in general and shouting "We wanna go home." Cry baby stuff from men who only a short time ago were willing to lay down their lives. A few of the more reckless ones had brought their rifles and seated on the curb stones they would shoot at the electric light bulbs that were so numerous in the Casino towers. In cafes, the round top tables would, by removing the tops, make cart wheels, and many of these the soldiers rolled down the streets, tiring of this they'd hurl the table top through a plate glass window. The officers, themselves a disappointed bunch had congregated in the town's leading hotel and from all accounts a good time was had by all. Empty bottles were hurled through costly mirrors and at costly pictures, and the place looked as if a GI can had hit it. After about two hours of rioting, an attempt was made by us noncoms to put a stop to the rumpus. Shooting was the only may we could have restored order. The rioting was confined to property damage and no one was hurt. A troop of cavalry from Division headquarters. soon rostered order, and on the following morning, the battalion was separated. A company was sent to Güls where hard labor awaited them.

D Company was sent near the Belgian border where hard labor in the form of blowing up enemy ammunition was to keep them out of mischief.

B and C companies were sent to the Coblenz railhead for labor duty unloading boats and cars. What a mad bunch of soldiers they were! The work we were assigned to had been done by labor battalions, they had been sent home and we must do their work.

Discipline went to the dogs. The men just laughed at a noncoms' order to do a certain thing. Threats of guardhouse had no effect. These men had finished their fighting when the Armistice had been signed and as far as they were concerned, the war was over. Things got so had in the way of discipline that the Colonel was compelled to assemble the battalion and read the articles of war riot act. A lot of good that did, as each time he'd read an Article, a wisecracker would cry out "All together boys, some Sh...t"

For the next six weeks, we were sent to all parts of the area where work could he found. It was labor, labor and more labor. I managed to make the regimental rifle squad and spent two weeks on the range in the Army of Occupation shoot. Returning from this, my company was on duty at the Mulheim ammunition depot where I rejoined them.

Mulheim

Mulheim, where we walked our posts with shoes that had sheep-skin soles. Hobnails wouldn't do; there was too much risk in striking a stone or piece of metal which, if done would cause a spark and "with the tons and tons of ammunition stored here, there would be a grand explosion.

"No smoking, Buddy," would he the stern command of the sentries to all who approached the barbed wire fence that surrounded the place.

Shells, 1ong, slim, fat, round, yellow, blue, pink, brown, long nosed and flat nosed, shells filled with high explosive, and with gas, shells captured from the Russians, from the French, from the English and native German shells, shells for the most part made in America, enough to blow up all Rhineland, and take a big hunk of Prussia along with it.

Nearly five hundred soldiers are on detached service at Mulheim, exploding all of these shells. This ammunition, which is part of that turned over by the Germans to the Army of Occupation according to the terms of the Armistice, composed the largest ammunition dump behind the German lines. It is about midway between Mulheim and Coblenz in a valley surrounded by high hills. Much of the ammunition is stored in underground halls and passageways.

The dump is heavily fortified. It extends for several miles along the railroad, and is protected by a high barbed wire fence and by a large number of concealed anti-aircraft batteries in the surrounding hills.

Exactly eight days of guard duty and we were relieved by Co. G., 5tth Inf., 3rd. Div.

Boarding trucks the morning of June 27, we rejoined our regiment at Vallendar.

June 28, a big day. In the morning, we were inspected by Col. Middleton our regimental commander, and told we were about to leave for home! At 3:12 p.m., news of the signing of the peace with Germany was flashed through the air. Shortly after hearing this, planes showered us with papers, which carried the story of the signing. Guns boomed everywhere, bells ringing, everybody excited and shouting! The German people were joining in the rejoicing, small children running up and down the streets crying "*Fried*," others had copies of our newspaper shouting, "*Der Peace* [?] *screiben, Hoorray!*" That night along the Rhine River water front we stood

retreat amid the booming of guns! PEACE HAD COME AT LAST TO WAR-TORN EUROPE!

Far into the night in all directions could he seen the flares that only a few weeks ago had been used to seek destruction, but were now being used to celebrate the end of destruction.

> Briefly, the Peace terms as presented by the Chairman Clémenceau of the Allied to the German envoys were as follows (the khaki-bound treaty contained 450 pages):
>
> Punishment of the former German Kaiser and others guilty of crimes against humanity.
>
> No fixed amount is set for reparation, but Germany must pay for all damages caused by the war as far as she is financially capable.
>
> Germany must make an immediate payment of a thousand million sterling.
>
> German merchant shipping is to be divided among the Allies proportionately, thus replacing ships lost in her ruthless submarine warfare.
>
> The German Army must be reduced to 100,000 men, conscription abolished, her navy reduced to six battle ships with appropriate cruisers. All dirigibles must be surrendered, and the building of submarines, and naval and military aircraft is prohibited.
>
> Provision is made for the reestablishment of commercial treaties and conventions abrogated by the war. Germany consenting to give the Allies the most favored nation treatment.
>
> The peace treaty is designed to set forth the conditions upon which the Allied and associated powers will make peace with Germany, and to establish those international agreements which the Allies have devised for the prevention of wars in the future. For this latter reason, it concludes the covenant of the League of Nations, and International Labor Conventions. (Note: at this writing, the United States alone among the Allied powers have not accepted the covenant of the League of Nations. President Wilson fought vainly for its adoption. October 1931.)
>
> From coming into force of the treaty, the state of war will terminate. From that moment, subject to the provi-

sions of the treaty official relations with Germany will be resumed by the Allied powers.

The German frontier with Luxemburg and Switzerland is to be that of August 1914. The frontier with France is to be that of July 8, 1870, with reservations regarding the Saar region. Germany's frontier with Austria is to be the same as that of August 3, 1914. The boundary with Denmark, and the portion of the boundary between East Prussia and Poland, will remain to be decided by plebiscite.

Germany is to recognize the full sovereignty of Belgium over the contested territory of Moresnet, and over part of Prussian Moresnet.

Germany renounces her various treaties and conventions with Luxemburg and recognizes that it ceased to be a part of the German Zollverien from January 1.

Germany must not maintain, nor construct, any fortifications less than fifty kilometers to the East of the Rhine. In this area Germany may maintain no armed forces nor hold any maneuvers.

In compensation for the destruction of coal mines in Northern France, and as payment on account of reparation, Germany cedes to France full ownership of the coal mines of the Saar basin. This territory will be governed by a commission appointed by the League of Nations and consisting of five members one whereof is to be an inhabitant of the Saar.

Alsace Lorraine is restored to France.

Germany is to recognize the entire independence of German Austria and the Czecho Slovak state.

Germany cedes to Poland the greater part of upper Silesia, Posen, and Province of West Prussia on left bank of the Vistula.

Northeastern corner of East Prussia about Memel is to be ceded by Germany to Associated Powers; Danzig and district immediately about it to be constituted as the "Free City of Danzig," under the guarantee of the League of Nations.

Frontier between Germany and Denmark is to be fixed in accordance with the wishes of the population of Schleswig.

The fortifications and military establishments of Heligoland are to be destroyed by German labor, at Germany's expense.

Germany renounces in favor of Allied Powers her overseas possessions with all rights and titles therein.

Germany recognizes Great Britain's protectorate over Egypt.

Germany cedes to Japan all rights and privileges, notably as to Kiaw Chau, in China, including railroad and mining rights, and State property, free of charge. (Unknown source)

Peace has been signed and the war is over. Over. . . Forever! It shall never be again, this war they told us was fought to end wars!

The years have rolled by, thirteen of then, as I write these memoirs. Nations are still heavily armed. Wars are still being fought. The world is filled with a spirit of unrest. Will they ever learn?

1 know what war is. If it was Hell in Sherman's time, it is worse than hell now. The man who said that modern warfare is humane has a seared sense of humaneness. The difficulty today is, there are still too many that do not know what war really is. They see the flags and the parades and hear the martial music and the drum corps. But that is not war. You may wave flags over that, but war is nothing to wave flags about. It does not maintain peace. It does not secure security. It begets more wars. It destroys more liberty than it saves.

Everybody knows that war is costly, but when cold figures are published, the fact becomes more apparent. This refers only to money expended and not to the loss of human life and the almost as terrible tragedies of maimed soldiers who are forced to pass the rest if their earthly existence only the shadow of what they once were and night still have been. Figures recently released by the War Finance Corporation state that the cost of the titanic struggle of 1914-1918 was $136,000,000,000, a figure almost beyond comprehension. Approximately one eighth, or $23,000,000,000, was the cost to the United States alone. And we were only a little over a year and a half in the war from the time of the declaration in April 1917 to the Armistice in November 1918.

> Signature of the treaty of peace at the last minute by the Germans gave rise almost at once and anew to the report that the division would be returned to the States before long. Definite orders arrived about the first of July. As usual, postponement occurred several times, final orders calling for the departure of the regiment on July 9th and 10th. (Pollard 87)
>
> Fourth of July was celebrated in thorough fashion in the morning at Vallendar. A circus and midway, all of home talent, featured. In the evening, thousands of signaling rockets were sent shooting over the river as a spectacular finale to the day. (Pollard 90)

The celebration over, we turned our attention once more to our Homeward bound preparations. The trip back home was the favorite talk in the billets, the cafes, the streets and everywhere.

Out of a clear sky came the news that our beloved Colonel Middleton would not return to the States with us. To me it was one big regret, as I had become quite intimate with my regimental commander.

He came to my company in Camp Greene a first Lieutenant. Before we went overseas be was promoted to Captain. Overseas promotions followed in rapid order. Major in charge of the 1st Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel and finally he was promoted to Colonel in charge of my regiment, this last promotion was for gallantry in action.

The old boy sure was a fine Commander and now that the powers that he had had taken him away from us we just couldn't feel enthused ever the newcomer, Lieutenant Colonel Mitchell, who was assigned to take charge.

Not that the new Commander wasn't any good, but somehow having followed Colonel Middleton through this great experience the regiment seemed different without him.

Now that definite arrangements had been made for us to travel by train July 9, for Home, Sweet Home, there was on the eve of our departure many busy soldiers. There was Gretchen and Lizzi to say goodbye to, and what a farewell that was! "Tears of regret are all you left me" would have been an appropriate ballad at the time. With promises of silk stockings, I managed to pacify my "*Frauliens*" and stopping in for last rendezvous, I gulped and swallowed my last German wine and beer.

From every corner of the village could he heard the strains of the very popular song "We're Homeward Bound." ln my billet the hoys that had been in the war for souvenirs were busily packing. And what an assortment! Everything from helmets to postage stamps.

That night after taps had blown, sleep was almost impossible. I could see things just as they were when I answered the call to arms ever two years ago. Dad's face will be a little more wrinkled, perhaps, and there will be more grey hairs on Mother's head. The young kid sisters will he flappers when I get back. And other things must have changed too. The 1917 Fords, purring beauties of our time, will be old and wobbly when I get back, and the kids will call them "cans" and "old buckets" and worship the new models that I have never seen or heard of. There must he changes in the old town too.

In the midst of these thoughts, Sergeant Bern climbs out of bed, reaches in the dark for something and in his bare feet makes his way to my bunk.

"Better enjoy yourself while you can, soldier. Back in the States, they are selling soda water where we used to buy our beers."

"You're right, old stick in the mud, gobble, gobble."

July 9, 1919, AT LAST, at exactly 10:45 a.m. my Battalion, headed by my Company gets the command "Forward, March!"

The civilian population of Vallendar lined both sides of the streets as we marched out. Tears streamed down their cheeks. We had made many friends. Happy? I'll say we were happy!

We had spent eight months in Germany as part of the Army of Occupation. As we crossed the bridge which was a little above the city of Coblenz, and which spanned the Rhine river, now and then we'd turn and glance at the village that had been our home and the scene of many good times.

A half-hour's march and we pass through the streets of Coblenz.

The largest city in the occupied area, where the Army Headquarters are located, and where many a soldier had the time of his life, including yours truly. My memoirs would not be complete without devoting a few paragraphs about this burgh So here goes.

Coblenz is a *Stadt*, or city, in *Deutschland*. It is located at the spot where the Moselle River stops being Moselle and turns into the Rhine. It has a large population of about 10,000 Germans, 25,000 machine gunners and the rest are snipers. In the war, the snipers sniped our men but now all they do is shoot "snipes" (or cigarette butts). The machine gunners have

changed also, they used to raise H… l with their rat.. tat… tat… tat, but now all the machine gunners do is shoot themselves full of bull telling of what they would have done to us if they had had three square meals a day instead of one a week.

Food is very scarce in the city. If it weren't for our canteens, the civilians would starve. Of course, they can't buy stuff at the canteens, that is not allowed and besides it costs money. Theirs is a more simple way. They kid some soldier into buying the stuff for them. And take it from me, these Heinies are some kidders.

There are a great many soldiers in the city. By this I mean those on duty, those on pass, Red Cross workers, Salvation Army, Knights of Columbus, YMCA, and nurses and last but not least are the MPs and the AWOLs, but mostly MPs. In fact, on entering the city, all you see is MPs. If somebody puts you wise to a place where you can buy a drink between hours, and you walk *beaucoup* kilometers to find the joint, there is always an MP standing at the doorway.

And every time a good-looking *Fraulein* slips you a smile, there is always an MP taking in the whole thing. Truly if they would take all the MPs away from Coblenz, a soldier might be able to walk the sidewalk without getting his toes stepped on.

Coblenz is a mecca for AWOLs. Everyone who has not been there wants to go, so there is a stream of AWOLs constantly going in and out. Some of them get away with it AND OTHERS DON'T.

There is a large number of American *Frauliens* in Coblenz and the buck privates find great pleasure watching them promenade, escorted by Shavetails[27] and Majors. Gee, it must be great to be allowed to speak to an American girl outside of the line of duty.

The Rhine flows down toward the sea, scraping Coblenz as it goes. It's a hell of a river and a soldier wonders why in the devil they ever wrote a song about it. The best part of the Rhine is the wine they make out of it and sell to the troopers for twenty marks a bottle. Here is a chance for some wide-awake Yankee promoter.

Old Kaiser Wilhelm has his picture on a statue beside the river.

He is all camouflaged up and looks real noble.

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27. Shavetail: a newly commissioned officer, especially a second lieutenant. (Google Dictionary)

That is about all there is to Coblenz, which is mostly MPs and *Frauliens*. And of course, there is a big battle staged there every night when the American soldiers try to drink all the wine in Germany and the Germans try to serve it faster than they can drink it. The fight gets real exciting at times. But after all, the town is German and therefore Rotten!

Imagine our surprise on reaching the railroad yards to find a train of twenty-four real honest-to-goodness American boxcars! Did me whoop it up at this sight! I'll say we did.

> Each car was large enough to accommodate forty-five men. A kitchen car was placed in the middle of the train. For the officers, a German coach and a steel box car containing wooden bunks was placed ahead of the train. (Pollard 91)

Noncoms were placed in charge of the cars and yours truly was among those elected. For once in this soldier's travels overseas we found comfort. Bed sacks full of straw had been provided for us to sleep on. With a seventy-two-hour ride ahead of us, those beds of straw sure looked good.

We entrained at one. At exactly three twenty, Sauerkraut time, our train shoved off, amid cheers from both the homeward hound soldiers and the German civilians that had flocked to the yards to wish us farewell.

> Our route was North to Cologne, West through Liège, Namur and Mons, Belgian cities rich in the memories of the first and last days of the great war. At Liège, which we reached early the morning of July 10th, we left our cars and ate breakfast in the railroad yards. For the next two days, our journey took us through Flanders and Picardy, with the famous towns of Valenciennes, Douai, Arras, and Amiens, all British strongholds through weary months of trench warfare. (Pollard 91)

Destruction everywhere. Not only were churches, public buildings, and private homes throughout the whole district turned into ruins, but the very ground itself was plowed up into craters and shell holes, and the trees smashed into splinters.

Extra

THE AMAROC NEWS

YOUR NEWSPAPER

Extra

Vol. I. No. 69 — Coblenz, Saturday, June 28, 1919 — Price, 50 Pfennigs

PEACE

TREATY IS SIGNED AT VERSAILLES PLACING ALLIES AND GERMANY AT PEACE AFTER FIVE YEARS OF WAR

Mueller and Bell Sign Documents for Germany as Allied Representatives Watch With Almost Breathless Attention---Ceremonies Simple But Impressive

Paris, June 29---German delegates affixed their signature to the Peace Treaty at 3;12 p m. The ceremony began at 3:00, and ended at 3:50.

Paris, June 29 5 p. m.--Germany has signed. The Allied Powers and Germany are now at pesce, and the culmination of Peace with the other countries allied with Germany in the world war is only a matter of a few days. Herr Hermann Müller, Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Bauer Cabinet, and Dr. Bell, Minister of Railways placed their signature on the Treaty of Peace, the Rhineland Agreement, the Saar Pact, and the Polish Treaty, while the representatives of the Allies looked on with almost breathless attention.

Simplicity marked the entire ceremony, although the outward show was gorgeous. The ostentatie of the German were examined this morning and found correct in every detail.

At 2:45 the French Mission called at the Hotel Reservoirs for the German delegates and took them through the Park, which skirts the Palace, and they entered the Hall of Mirrors through the wooden vestibule which is contiguous to the marble stairway, and they came through the side door from the terrace.

The plenipotentiaries of the Allied and Associated Powers arrived at the Palace by way of the marble court, and ascended the staircase of Honor, and then passed through the Salle de Gardes, and the apartments of the Queen to the Hall of Mirrors. These apartments, which have been closed to the public for several years, present a magnificent aspect. Sumptuous tapestries of Louis 14 epoch, and certain historic pieces of furniture occupied prominent positions, among them the main masterpiece of the time passé ones of Marie Antoinette.

Adding zest to the ceremonies was the fact that in the identical room in which the Germans signed the Treaty today, in 1871, Bismarck declared the foundation and organization of what was intended to be the greatest Empire the world would ever know.

Premier Clemenceau, his voice seemingly trembling with emotion, opened the sitting, after all the delegates and attendants were assembled. Taking his seat, Mr. Mueller, one of the French secretaries, solemnly presented the Peace documents to Clemenceau.

The only Treaty is the largest document of its kind ever prepared. It was seen to be bound in a brown full morocco cover, lined inside with blue silk. The text of the Treaty is printed on white Japan paper. The pages are approximately eight and one-half inches wide and thirteen inches long, and are sewed together with red silk thread. Along the text on each page is a

red line border effecting a wide blank space which added greatly to the impressiveness and appearance of the Treaty which contains about 200 pages, including those of the signatures. It is printed on parallel pages in French and English, the French on the left, the English on the right, both of equal validity and authenticity. Of ex actitudes and more delegates signed the Versailles Treaty than any other document in the world's history.

Remaining seated, Premier Clemenceau affixed his signature and seal, and passed the document to President Wilson, who also remained seated and calmly placed his well known signature on the document followed by Lloyd George, signing for England. The other representatives of the Allied and Associated Powers followed in alphabetical order, walking to the table, and standing while they signed. The two German delegates signed last.

The pen used in signing was made in Alsace-Lorraine, and is of solid gold. It is the hand work of a French polib.

Louis 14th empere, heretofore never used, was laid in the Hall of Mirrors, in the middle of which was placed the plenipotentiary konsolue table. Inside the horseshoe was the smaller table on which the Treaty was signed. The table was of pure style, ornamented in copper, and is a part of the furniture of the Palace. The signatures were placed on the Treaty facing the red wax seal. All delegates and diplomats were dressed in Prince Alberts and silk hats.

Airplanes Carry News of Signing To Every Division

Delivery by airplane is not a new venture in the United States, but this issue of The Amaroc News, the newspaper of the soldiers of the Army of Occupation, is the first ever delivered by airplane in Germany. Immediately following the printing of the paper airplanes left the flying field in Coblenz, carrying bundles of the paper, which are being dropped at Corp Headquarters throughout the entire area.

Planes are flying low over Cobenz dropping papers in principal parts of the city.

Paris Crowds Go Wild With Joy As News Spreads

Greatest Celebration World Has Ever Witnessed Being Staged There

(By Special Correspondent)

Paris, June 28, 4 p. m.—Paris has really gone wild with joy. Such a celebration as now starting as the world has never before witnessed. Military parades that will eclipse anything of the like, are now forming, and tonight all soldiers have been called out, and the streets are crowded very a smiling happy throng. Tears streams from the eyes of many, tears of joy and thanksgiving, while the happy laughter of the younger set mixes and mingles in one grand sprawling mass. Bands are playing everywhere, flags and decorations are waving. All streets are crowded with military parades, composed of every branch of the service. The military display is held in perfect order, but the sidewalks know no rest, countless thousands of people are streaming down town.

All cafes, theatres, and dining rooms are running at top speed and will remain open by special order until one o'clock in the morning.

Huge bonfires, long prepared are burning all over France, even in the most remote sections, and are serving as the signal to all France that the Treaty has been signed, and Peace is at least once more. In the Vosges mountains the fires were started at three o'clock, and will be kept burning during the entire afternoon and night.

In London millions of searchlights will light the sky, and the entire British fleet is to fire a salute of 101 guns at six o'clock, while an extra issue of grog is being given to all.

Bastile Day Will Be Great Victory Fete

(By Special Correspondent.)

Paris, June 27.—July 14th, the French national holiday, Bastile Day, will be celebrated as never before. The French government announces for that day a fete of victory and a combined celebration which will make that Monday the biggest day Paris ever saw.

All France wishes that the Grand Army, all the French forces, and every unit of the Allied forces which is still on European soil, could on that day march through the Arch of Triumph. Chairs were placed around the Arch after its contamination by the passage of the German troops under it in 1871. This year, on July 14th, these chairs will be removed—forever.

It is, of course, impossible for all but a few troops to be in Paris for the holiday. There is still need of garrisons to hold their station on the bridgeheads of the Rhine. So only crack regiments, picked units to show the elite of the army, will be brought in to parade. But Paris is determined to make much of those men, and to shower upon them all the jubilant honors due the forces which won the war and made possible this greatest of all holidays for France.

First Extra Ever Attempted by Yank Paper in Germany

This extra edition of The Amaroc News, the first ever attempted by any American newspaper on German soil, is distributed with the excellent help of the E. of C. Fifty-thousand copies were sold outright to this welfare organization, and they are being distributed throughout the entire Third Army area, as fast as motor transportation over the roads from Coblenz. The farthest outpost is to receive that paper at almost the same moment it is received by readers in Coblenz, due to an efficient circulation system and the work of the E. of C.

President Will Leave For Home Early Tomorrow

Sends Message of Appreciation to French People for Many Kindnesses

(By Special Correspondent)

Paris, June 28, 4 p. m.—President Wilson leaves here tonight at 8 o'clock for Brest, where he will embark for the United States on the George Washington Sunday morning. Before his departure he sent the following message to the people of France:

"As I look back over the eventful months I have spent in France my memory is not that of conferences and hard work alone, but also of the inexpressible acts of generosity and friendship which have made me feel how genuine the sentiments of France are towards the people of America, and how fortunate I have been to be the representative of our people in the midst of a nation which knows how to show its kindnesses with so much charm and such open manifestations of what is in the heart.

"Deeply happy, as I am at the prospects of seeing my own countrymen again, I leave France with genuine regret, deep sympath for her people and belief in her future confirmed. My thought enlarged with the privilege of association with her public men, memories of more than one affectionate friendship formed, and profoundly grateful for unstinted hospitality and for countless kindnesses which have made me feel welcome and at home. I take the liberty of bidding France God's speed, as well as good-bye, and of expressing once more my abiding interests and entire confidence in her future."

Peace (*The Amaroc News*, July 28, 1919)

From the Daris archives

6. Homeward Bound

Homeward Bound

Leaving the war-torn areas, we pass through Rouen on the Seine and finally to Brest our port of embarkation.

With excellent facilities, the American Amy Camp Pontanezen which had been built in 1918 supplied quarters for our men until the necessary details incident to our sailing could be taken care of.

Back in 1918, the camp was a mud hole and duckboards had to be built all over the camp. Now everything was in excellent shape. Good roads had been built and comfortable quarters provided.

While awaiting our transport everybody was given a final delousing and a final medical inspection. We also received fresh underclothing and parts of our uniform that had seen so much wear were exchanged for new.

The afternoon of July 15, we boarded our transport the USS *Mobile* for home at last. The harbor was full of transports. Once aboard we were assigned quarters forward and aft and quite similar to those we had experienced coming over.

> The ship's capacity was taxed for space with some 5100 passengers and a crew of 400 when we got underway in the early evening of July 16th. 138 of our passengers were war brides whom officers and men were taking back to the States. (Pollard 92)

In the coming darkness, we could see the disappearing rocky coast of France and crowded decks of soldiers seeing for the last time the shores of the country that had been the scene of much suffering and hardships.

With anticipation of soon being back in God's Country, we settled down to the endless duties that were necessary.

> The days were uneventful. The old boat proved to be somewhat slow as the noon report of our mileage showed that we had covered only 204 miles, with an average speed of only 14 knots. […]
>
> For amusement and recreation there were desk games and movie shows and boxing, while the band every morning and afternoon entertained. (Pollard 93)

Late in the evening of July 26, the first lights from the Long Island shore were visible. Every point of vantage on the ship was crowded with soldiers glad to see the home shore. Strangely silent, the boys would gaze at the fast appearing shores and for the next three hours our ship slowly moved up the harbor, finally letting go her anchor with the Statue of Liberty in full view.

How many times had we in our many lonesome moods wished for just one more glimpse of Miss Liberty. And now that we were at last looking her in the face, one would expect us to burst into one loud cheer. Instead every eye was fixed on the emblem of freedom, and we stood there in silence just like a bunch of dumbbells. There was more than one lump in the throats of those soldiers. But try as I would, neither I nor anyone else could have cheered if we wanted to.

Late into the night we walked the decks of the ship with thoughts of the morrow. Oh, how we yearned to once more set our feet on good old USA soil!

> Unknown to us, a case of smallpox was discovered among the ship's crew, one of the Filipino attendants in the officers' mess being the victim. Our ship the following morning having been inspected, we got underway flying the yellow flag of quarantine. Our docking was delayed somewhat until the authorities had decided to vaccinate everyone aboard. (Pollard 96)

After docking at the Hamburg American Line docks in Hoboken, NJ, shortly after noon, we left the ship in long lines which led us upstairs over

the dock and to a meal of weenies and sauerkraut, buns, coffee, and brick ice cream. From here we were headed downstairs to another portion of the docks to await railroad ferries which later took us down the river under Brooklyn and many others to the Long Island RR station.

Here we boarded trains for Camp Mills. Before boarding, oranges, cookies and smokes were handed us by welfare workers. Without delay the train speeds us to camp. The sensation of being comfortable on a train once more after months of agony riding on French and German railroads is something I'll never forget.

We arrived in camp about 4:30 Sunday afternoon and were assigned real honest-to-goodness barracks, the sight of which made out eyes pop out of our heads. When we left the States almost two years ago, the camps were all tented affairs. We hardly recognized the place now. After a nice, cool shower, then we put away our first good meal in two years. Hard boiled eggs, which in Europe were as precious as gold were now being fed to the humble enlisted men! It didn't seem possible. And can you imagine the KPs asking as if we wanted seconds! That bird must be cuckoo. Boy did we eat, and how!

With a full tummy, we consented without grumbling to another vaccination before calling it a day. We are forbidden to leave our quarters until the quarantine was lifted, and anxious as we were to go places and do things, we busied ourselves telling the world by writing to everybody that the Fourth Division had returned to the States.

The quarantine lasted four days, during which time we got one more delousing that was to make sure that our old friend Cootie hadn't followed us to the States. July 26 being the anniversary of the Regiment's fight at Sergy, in the Château-Thierry area. we held special ceremonies. The names of our dead were read and the ceremony marked the last formation of the Regiment. Retiring to the recreation hall, we listened to our own heroes, both enlisted men and officers, who gave us talks in our own language, that is the language of a soldier.

Uncle Sam had secured the services of a circus which entertained us up to a late hour.

On Wednesday, July 30, all men to be discharged were split into groups according to the section of the country they lived in. Almost 250 were grouped for Camp Devens, including myself. That day marked my separa-

ion from the best bunch of fellows I have ever met. That night was one of farewells, for one buddy to another.

So Long, Bud

Well, I s'pose the time has come to say "Good bye, Bud."
We're going home, our work is o'er, we've won.
An' 'fore we part, y' see, I'm gonna try, Bud.
To thank you jes' for what you've been and done.
You've watched me when I lay in bed a sick, Bud.
You've slapped me on the back when I was blue.
An' that old slap jus' seemed to do the trick, Bud.
It sheered me jes' cause it was from you.

You've split your coin with me when I was broke, Bud,
An' never asked me where it went. or why.
You've took my surly moods as jes' a joke, Bud.
An' things I've said when sore you let pass by.

You've stood besides me when the shells broke near, Bad.
An' grinned. An' given me courage with that grin.
You've called a steady, cheerin' word, in fear, Bud,
Jes' left me an' drove that bay'net in.

Through all the weary days and nights we spent, Bud,
A'sloshing through the mud an' rain an' sleet,
I knew that each bright word from you was meant, Bud,
To keep me up an' on my staggerin' feet.

Well, now I'm going back… she's waiting, Bud,
God Bless her… gee, I've missed her over there.
So here's so long to you an' don't forget, Bud,
1 owe a debt to you that I can't square.

Boarding trains the next morning we sped to New York City where the final lap of my travels begins. Aboard a special, we ride all afternoon and night headed for the dear old Bay State. The following morning, I awake to find our train at a standstill in the Camp Devens railroad yards.

Boy, here's where I say good bye to Uncle Sam.

Red tape, paid in full, discharge papers, and a hooray, I'm free!

Exactly 3:30 p.m., Friday August 1, 1919, was the time that ended the greatest experience of my life.

“It all happened this way:
Since the entry of the United States in the World War conflict, not a day passed but the subject was freely discussed by us of military age. The time had now arrived for America to put an army in the fight.
While enjoying our noon smoke on Garlick’s store steps, a sudden desire to enlist made its appearance...

Boy, here’s where I say good bye to Uncle Sam.
Red tape, paid in full, discharge papers, and a hooray, I’m free!
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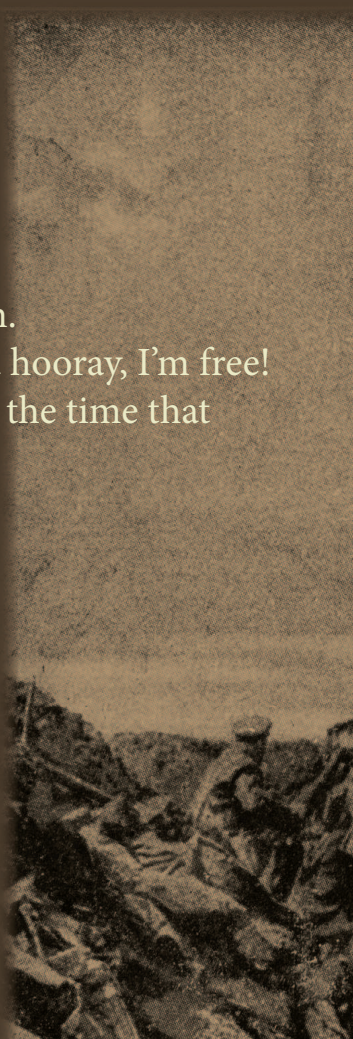

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