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How I Spent Last Christmas In the A. E. F.

"I can't git 'em up, I can't git 'em up,
I can't git 'em up this morning,
etc."

Thus, did the bugler speak to each of us on Christmas morning, one year ago. I could continue the words of this memorable ditty, but "memories that bless and burn," principally burn, force me to refrain. Most of us who passed through the torments of bugler calls accompanied by the commands of the blessed Top Sergeant have long since had a mutual understanding that we would some sweet day "murder the bugler and spend the rest of our lives in bed." However, after we have shuffled off the O. D.'s and tucked the khaki away for future reference in some secluded spot where not even the moths can break through and steal, we have grown passive and now look back upon the lazy bugler as, perhaps, a necessary evil.

Notwithstanding the fact that it was a precious holiday we turned over in our bunks, no doubt, and sought to snatch one more snooze from Mr. Napper. As well as I remember I think I was guilty of that unmilitary indiscretion. It couldn't last long for my fellow bunkies would not tolerate such a thing on the part of one for whom they wished a clear record. In a twinkling I was out and at attention in front of my section ready to call the roll. In another moment the report was given and the battery dismissed.

Did you ever hear a military company call the roll? To describe it adequately would require the assistance of at least seventeen men. Such a number might possibly make sufficient noise to confuse you. In a battery or company more than 200 men answer to their names in almost less time than it takes to tell the incident. As fast as twelve sergeants can salute the Top and say "section so-and-so present or accounted for," the work is over and the men are ready to come to "inspection arms" and "fall out." This



Merry Christmas
And a
Happy New Year

is known as snappy work. It is according to the rule of the army game. If a man fails to show the proper amount of "pep" he is everlastingly bawled out by some one from above, and immediately, perhaps, branded as a "frog" or a "cranny guy". These are epithets we could not indorse with good grace. So, it behooved us to stay on the job and jump into the work.

After reveille, for that is what the first daily formation is called, we split the mud wide open getting back to our bunks to make ready for mess. In case we had a little water in the canteens we "washed" our heads and faces.....perhaps, it would be more truthful to say, we dampened our heads and, maybe, our faces, and then dried them on the community towel. Sure, we were then ready to eat. Our bodily condition was in keeping with mess served us at the mess time. On this particular morning we cared very little about the first meal which was to be served. However to save criticism and avoid rumors about sickness I grabbed my kit and cup and

made for the mess sack. As was their custom the K. P.'s served me coffee, breakfast st ips, molosses, and bakers' bread. That was considered a remarkably good breakfast, yet, somehow or other, I couldn't help but let my mind go shifting back one year to the time when I had the privilege of eating a good warm breakfast cooked by my mother. Such a change in such a short time over such a long distance made this. Khaki clad Tar Heel sit on his bunk end, while he ate, think of the good things friends were having on the other side of the planet. These foolish mental ramblings were frequently engaged in by all of us, especially on occasions like Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc. There are occasions when we all like to be with those we love and cherish.

I am sure Christmas 1918 with me was far from being observed as you observed it. I have no reason to feel proud over what we did, in part, yet, it was, at the time, about the only good thing one could do. You must remember that at that time nearly all the boys in France were extremely homesick. Should I be ashamed to say homesick? Not in the least. To us the U. S. A. was the sweetest spot on earth. A foreign soil gave nothing that could fill up the void caused by separation from all that is dear to life.

Since these things are so it was encumbent on the men in charge to bring about some sort of a change which would breed a more wholesome morale. For weeks since the armistice boys had been spending their idle moments around the stoves of the huts and billets talking about going home rumors, and this, that and the other over on the home shore. Every now and then they would all join in on the refrain, "I want to go home." This practice of fanning the flame of homesickness was getting so far along that the general morale was at a very low ebb. For it to have continued would have meant the utter destruction of bat-