"OVER THE TOP"

BY

AN AMERICAN SOLDIER WHO WENT

ARTHUR GUY EMPEY

MACHINE GUNNER, SERVING IN FRANCE

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EMPEY LEARNS, AS COMRADE FALLS, THAT DEATH LURKS ALWAYS IN THE TRENCHES

Synopsis.—Fired by the sinking of the Lusitania, with the loss of American lives, Arthur Guy Empey, an American living in Jersey City, goes to England and enlists as a private in the British army. After a short experience as a recruiting officer in London, he is sent to training quarters in France, where he first hears the sound of big guns and makes the acquaintance of "cooties." After a brief period of training Empey's company is sent into the front-line trenches, where he takes his first turn on the fire step while the bullets whiz overhead. Empey learns, as comrade falls, that death lurks always in the trenches.

CHAPTER VIII.

—6—

The Little Wooden Cross.

After remaining in rest billets for eight days, we received the unwelcome tidings that the next morning we would "go in" to "take over." At six in the morning our march started and, after a long march down the dusty road, we again arrived at reserve billets.

I was No. 1 in the leading set of fours. The man on my left was named "Pete Walling," a cheery sort of fellow. He laughed and joked all the way on the march, buoying up my drooping spirits. I could not figure out anything attractive in again occupying the front line, but Pete did not seem to mind, said it was all in a lifetime. My left heel was blistered from the rubbing of my heavy marching boot. Pete noticed that I was limping and offered to carry my rifle, but by this time I had learned the ethics of the march in the British army and courteously refused his offer.

We had gotten half-way through the communication trench, Pete in my immediate rear. He had his hand on my shoulder, as men in a communication trench have to do to keep in touch with each other. We had just climbed over a bashed-in part of the trench when in our rear a man tripped over a loose signal wire, and let out an oath. As usual, Pete rushed to his help. To reach the fallen man he had to cross this bashed-in part. A bullet cracked in the air and I ducked. Then a moan from the rear. My heart stood still. I went back and Pete was lying on the ground. By the aid of my flashlight I saw that he had his hand pressed to his right breast. The fingers were covered with blood. I flashed the light on his face and in its glow a grayish-blue color was stealing over his countenance. Pete looked up at me and said: "Well, Yank, they've done me in. I can feel myself going West." His voice was getting fainter and I had to kneel down to get his words. Then he gave me a message to write home to his mother and his sweetheart, and I, like a great big boob, cried like a baby. I was losing my first friend of the trenches.

Word was passed to the rear for a stretcher. He died before it arrived. Two of us put the body on the stretcher and carried it to the nearest first-aid post, where the doctor took an official record of Pete's name, number, rank and regiment from his identity disk, this to be used in the casualty lists and notification to his family.

We left Pete there, but it broke our hearts to do so. The doctor informed us that we could bury him the next morning. That afternoon five of the boys of our section, myself included, went to the little ruined village in the rear and from the deserted gardens of the French chateaux gathered grass and flowers. From these we made a wreath.

While the boys were making this wreath, I sat under a shot-scarred apple tree and carved out the following verses on a little wooden shield which we nailed on Pete's cross.

True to his God; true to Britain,
Doing his duty to the last,
Just one more name to be written
On the Roll of Honor of heroes passed—

Passed to their God, enshrined in glory,
Entering life of eternal rest,
One more chapter in England's story
Of her sons doing their best.

Rest, you soldier, mate so true,
Never forgotten by us below;
Know that we are thinking of you,
Ere to our rest we are bidden to go.

Next morning the whole section went over to say good-by to Pete, and laid him away to rest.

After each one had a look at the face of the dead, a corporal of the R. A. M. C. sewed up the remains in a blanket. Then placing two heavy ropes across the stretcher (to be used in lowering the body into the grave), we lifted Pete onto the stretcher, and reverently covered him with a large union jack, the flag he had died for.

The chaplain led the way, then came the officers of the section, followed by [illegible] of the men carrying a wreath. Im[illegible]tely after came poor Pete on the [illegible]aped stretcher, carried by four [illegible] I was one of the four. Be[illegible] stretcher, in column of fours, [illegible] mainder of the section.

To get to the cemetery, we had to pass through the little shell-destroyed village, where troops were hurrying to and fro.

As the funeral procession passed these troops came to the "attention" and smartly saluted the dead.

Poor Pete was receiving the only salute a private is entitled to "somewhere in France."

Now and again a shell from the German lines would go whistling over the village to burst in our artillery lines in the rear.

When we reached the cemetery we halted in front of an open grave, and laid the stretcher beside it. Forming a hollow square around the opening of the grave, the chaplain read the burial service.

German machine-gun bullets were "cracking" in the air above us, but Pete didn't mind, and neither did we.

When the body was lowered into the grave the flag having been removed, we clicked our heels together and came to the salute.

I left before the grave was filled in. I could not bear to see the dirt thrown on the blanket-covered face of my comrade. On the western front there are no coffins, and you are lucky to get a blanket to protect you from the wet and the worms. Several of the section stayed and decorated the grave with white stones.

That night, in the light of a lonely candle in the machine gunner's dugout of the front-line trench I wrote two letters. One to Pete's mother, the other to his sweetheart. While doing this I cursed the Prussian war god with all my heart, and I think that St. Peter noted same.

The machine gunners in the dugout were laughing and joking. To them Pete was unknown. Pretty soon, in the warmth of their merriment, my blues disappeared. One soon forgets on the western front.

CHAPTER IX.

Suicide Annex.

I was in my first dugout and looked around curiously. Over the door of same was a little sign reading "Suicide Annex." One of the boys told me that this particular front trench was called "Suicide Ditch." Later on I learned that machine gunners and bombers are known as the "Suicide Club."

That dugout was muddy. The men slept in mud, washed in mud, ate mud, and dreamed mud. I had never before realized that so much discomfort and misery could be contained in those three little letters, M U D. The floor of the dugout was an inch deep in water. Outside it was raining cats and dogs, and thin rivulets were trickling down the steps. From the air shaft immediately above me came a drip, drip, drip. Suicide Annex was a hole eight feet wide, ten feet long and six feet high. It was about twenty feet below the fire trench; at least there were twenty steps leading down to it. These steps were cut into the earth, but at that time were muddy and slippery. A man had to be very careful or else he would "shoot the chutes." The air was foul, and you could cut the smoke from Tommy's fags with a knife. It was cold. The walls and roof were supported with heavy square-cut timbers, while the entrance was strengthened with sandbags. Nails had been driven into these timbers. On each nail hung a miscellaneous assortment of equipment. The lighting arrangements were superb—one candle in a reflector made from an ammunition tin. My teeth were chattering from the cold, and the drip from the airshaft did not help matters much. While I was sitting bemoaning my fate and wishing for the fireside at home, the fellow next to me, who was writing a letter, looked up and innocently asked, "Say, Yank, how do you spell 'conflagration'?"

I looked at him in contempt and answered that I did not know.

From the darkness in one of the corners came a thin, piping voice singing one of the popular trench ditties entitled:

"Pack up your Troubles in your Old Kit Bag, and Smile, Smile, Smile."

Every now and then the singer would stop to cough, cough, cough, but it was a good illustration of Tommy's cheerfulness under such conditions.

A machine-gun officer entered the dugout and gave me a hard look. I sneaked past him, sliding and slipping, and reached my section of the front-line trench, where I was greeted by the sergeant, who asked me, "Where in —— 'ave you been?"

I made no answer, but sat on the muddy fire step, shivering with the cold and with the rain beating in my face. About half an hour later I teamed up with another fellow and went on guard with my head sticking over the top. At ten o'clock I was relieved and resumed my sitting position on the fire step. The rain suddenly stopped and we all breathed a sigh of relief. We prayed for the morning and the rum issue.

CHAPTER X.

"The Day's Work."

I was fast learning that there is a regular routine about the work of the trenches, although it is badly upset at times by the Germans.

The real work in the fire trench commences at sundown. Tommy is like a burglar, he works at night.

Just as it begins to get dark the word "stand to" is passed from traverse to traverse, and the men get busy. The first relief, consisting of two men to a traverse, mount the fire step, one man looking over the top, while the other sits at his feet, ready to carry messages or to inform the platoon officer of any report made by the sentry as to his observations in No Man's Land. The sentry is not allowed to relax his watch for a second. If he is questioned from the trench or asked his orders, he replies without turning around or taking his eyes from the expanse of dirt in front of him. The remainder of the occupants of his traverse either sit on the fire step, with bayonets fixed, ready for any emergency, or if lucky, and a dugout happens to be in the near vicinity of the traverse, and if the night is quiet, they are permitted to go to same and try and snatch a few winks of sleep. Little sleeping is done; generally the men sit around, smoking fags and seeing who can tell the biggest lie. Some of them, perhaps with their feet in water, would write home sympathizing with the

[illegible]'s Gun in Action.

"governor" because he was laid up with a cold, contracted by getting his feet wet on his way to work in Woolwich arsenal. If a man should manage to doze off, likely as not he would wake with a start as the clammy, cold feet of a rat passed over his face, or the next relief stepped on his stomach while stumbling on their way to relieve the sentries in the trench.

Just try to sleep with a belt full of ammunition around you, your rifle bolt biting into your ribs, intrenching tool handle sticking into the small of your back, with a tin hat for a pillow and feeling very damp and cold, with "cooties" boring for oil in your armpits, the air foul from the stench of grimy human bodies and smoke from a juicy pipe being whiffed into your nostrils, then you will not wonder why Tommy occasionally takes a turn in the trench for a rest.

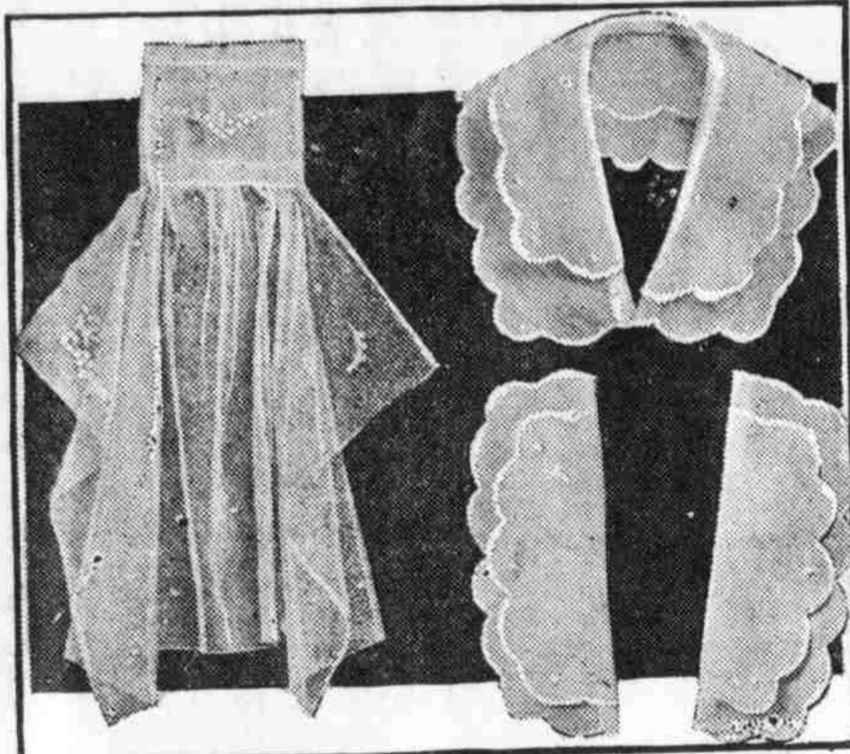
While in a front-line trench orders forbid Tommy from removing his boots, puttees, clothing or equipment. The "cooties" take advantage of this order and mobilize their forces, and Tommy swears vengeance on them and mutters to himself, "Just wait until I hit rest billets and am able to get my own back."

Just before daylight the men "turn to" and tumble out of the dugouts, man the fire step until it gets light, or the welcome order "stand down" is given. Sometimes before "stand down" is ordered, the command "five rounds rapid" is passed along the trench. This means that each man must rest his rifle on the top and fire as rapidly as possible five shots aimed toward the German trenches, and then duck (with the emphasis on the "duck"). There is a great rivalry between the opposing forces to get their rapid fire all off first, because the early bird, in this instance, catches the worm—sort of gets the jump on the other fellow, catching him unawares.

Empey goes "over the top" for the first time and has a hand-to-hand fight with a giant Prussian. In the next installment he tells the story of this thrilling charge.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Fads And Fancies Of Fashion



Unobtrusive New Styles in Neckwear

Women are not running after strange gods in neckwear this spring. There are some new departures in the styles but they are unobtrusive and no one kind of neckpiece is dominant, overshadowing others, as the jabot did last spring. Favor is divided among several good styles and much attention given to the development of them to the last degree of daintiness. This spring the guimpe, the vestee with collar attached, the stock collar and tie and the long collar with cuffs to match are receiving the greatest amount of consideration.

In so many of the new spring suits coats are open in the front to the waistline; that a waistcoat or vestee comes in as a matter of course as the most logical of accessories. But one must put up a brave front these days, whether the suit coat allows an expanse of waistcoat to show or not. Therefore, collar and cuff sets have been forged to the front with new vitality. They are of white wash satin, of white organdie or crepe georgette, or of a combination of white and a color. They are simply and daintily finished; little frills, scalloped edges and embroidered dots holding first place in the choice of decorations for them. A set of this kind is shown in the picture, with a jabot and high collar of net in which embroidered dots also serve as a means of adornment. An added daintiness comes of using very sheer swiss-organdie and making the collar and cuffs double as shown in the picture.

Soft white collar fabrics like gaberdine, cross-barred with fine lines in black or blue, are used for high stock collars with four-in-hand ties attached. Vestees with high collars finished with rows of little pearl buttons are made of the same materials. These will all delight the woman who likes trim mannish touches to add to her tailor made suit.

Smart and Quiet Daytime Frocks

Daytime frocks that prove most interesting this season, whether they are made of silk or of wool materials, are those that provide a way of dressing for almost any occasion. Naturally foulard has come back to us, and has forged to the front, in an endless variety of patterns and made up in an endless variety of ways, proving itself a reliable resource in the wardrobe. Women have need of just this kind of frock now that war time makes them wish for a limited supply of dresses. Striped satins, in separate skirts, or combined with georgette crepe or chiffon cloth in frocks, plays the same sort of role as that undertaken by foulard in the apparel of today. It is the new understudy whose performance is proving equally as good as that of the star.

Just one more of those fine combinations of satin and crepe that have been plentiful this spring is pictured here. The tunic and the bolero strengthen its consciousness of being strictly in the mode while fulfilling its many duties. Its wearer will know herself to be smartly and quietly gowned—which knowledge is very comfortable—a consummation to be devoutly wished in daytime frocks.

For once stripes do not run diagonally; in this frock they proceed in matter-of-fact directness about the figure, in a tunic that proves itself an exception to the rule of uneven lengths in tunics. This tunic is finished with a band of crepe whose straightforwardness is emphasized by a row of beads on its edge. There is a short bodice of the striped satin and over it a long-sleeved bolero of the crepe. The sleeves have narrow cuffs of the satin. A narrow shawl collar of the crepe is extended into the ends, which prove the designer has originality and imagination. The edging of small beads that outline the bolero at the arm's eye and at its lower edge finish the tie ends and the cuffs, so that we are in no danger of overworking the clever details of this design. Such gowns as this force home the conviction that materials are less important than the way in which they are put together, in the making of successful clothes.

Julia Bottomley

Sweater of Satin Ribbon.

The new sweater is made of narrow satin ribbon, instead of worsted. The first one brought to this country from France contained 1,000 yards of baby ribbon, yet the cost was less than the average silk sweater. These sweaters are promoted by the French to conserve wool. The idea is very clever and will undoubtedly appeal to hundreds of women who can do the work at home.

A CROSS, FEVERISH CHILD IS BILIOUS OR CONSTIPATED

LOOK, MOTHER! SEE IF TONGUE IS COATED, BREATH HOT OR STOMACH SOUR.

"CALIFORNIA SYRUP OF FIGS" CAN'T HARM TENDER STOMACH, LIVER, BOWELS.

Every mother realizes, after giving her children "California Syrup of Figs," that this is their ideal laxative, because they love its pleasant taste and it thoroughly cleanses the tender little stomach, liver and bowels without griping.

When cross, irritable, feverish, or breath is bad, stomach sour, look at the tongue, Mother! If coated, give a teaspoonful of this harmless "fruit laxative," and in a few hours all the foul, constipated waste, sour bile and undigested food passes out of the bowels, and you have a well, playful child again. When the little system is full of cold, throat sore, has stomach-ache, diarrhœa, indigestion, colic—remember, a good "inside cleansing" should always be the first treatment given.

Millions of mothers keep "California Syrup of Figs" handy; they know a teaspoonful today saves a sick child to-morrow. Ask your druggist for a bottle of "California Syrup of Figs," which has directions for babies, children of all ages and grown-ups printed on the bottle. Beware of counterfeits sold here, so don't be fooled. Get the genuine, made by "California Fig Syrup Company."—Adv.

MADE IMMORTAL BY GOETHE

Leipzig Tavern in Which Poet Located Scene in "Faust," Was Well-known Gathering Place.

Auerbach's cellar was a tavern at Leipzig which disappeared in 1912. It owed its chief fame to Goethe, who in this place located the scene in "Faust" wherein Mephistopheles, standing upon a wine cask, takes his flight into space with Doctor Faust, to the stupefaction of the guests drinking at the tables. The old building to which the cellar belonged was built by Doctor Stromer d'Auerbach at about 1529, the worthy doctor there storing the wine intended for his own use. Later, as the wine was good, he conceived the idea of selling it. In this way was established the tavern to which his name has been attached ever since. From the earliest years of the seventeenth century legend has placed in this cellar the famous adventure of Faust and Mephistopheles. Goethe, studying at Leipzig university from 1765 to 1768, frequented that cellar almost nightly and there talked with his friends of art, literature and politics, and thus he heard of that legend which he turned to such excellent account, at the same time so very greatly enriching the literature of his country.

Neatly Put.

There had been a long silence in the dim-lit room. The atmosphere was tense.

"Edith," said the young man at last, breaking the silence, "I have a question to ask you—an important one."

"Y-y-yes, Tom?" faltered the young lady.

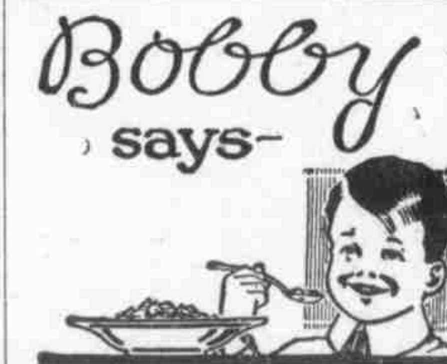
"I—I—I—well, anyhow, my name's going to be printed in the paper soon, and I—I—I wondered whether it would be among the deaths or—or among the marriages, along with yours?"

Not to Be Outdone.

The Lark—I sing above the guns.

The Hen—Well, I cackle over a shell.—New York Sun.

Honest labor is the best remedy for bad luck.



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