

FROM THE TRENCHES.

Following we give another letter from one of our boys "over there," Mr. M. F. Sawyer, 119th Infantry, American Expeditionary Forces:

FRANCE, Sept. 10 1918.
ED. ROANOKE BEACON,
Plymouth, N. C.

MY DEAR SIR:

Greetings from the front line trenches! How much you have read from the papers of this war, yet you will no doubt be glad to hear something of it from one of your boys. I want you to know some of my experiences. Naturally much that I could tell you would not be permitted by the censor.

This is my second trip to the front line; the first was for instruction purposes. Our battalion relieved one of the others in our regiment not long ago. How well I remember the night we marched from the reserve line where we had been camping to take the front line positions. It was very dark. As we drew closer the front line we could see the very lights from both sides rise in the air and hang suspended, and then die down. These terrors to ridding parties reminded me of the large arc-lights used in street corners at home. The constant detonations of bursting shells filled me with alarm until I grew accustomed to them and made up my mind that they weren't meant for me. I was hot and sweaty long before we were told to halt, but on and on we marched, tramping along the hard macadam road. Of a sudden the front ranks slowed up and I said to myself, "At last we are here." No, such was not the case. We simply met our guide from the relieved battalion; he was to take us to our positions.

Soon we left the road and followed a rough, narrow path. The night was black. I had no idea where we were going. I could but faintly make out delapidated old huts, torn trees and shell holes. Finally our guides left this seemingly aimless path and entered a communicating trench. This trench was but a ditch such as you might see any day in the country where ditching is being done; a trench of, say four feet deep with the earth thrown up on either side. The sides of the trench were lined with metal laths and supported by A beams. The bottom of the trench is paved with duck boards. It seemed miles that we followed this zig-zag trench. We walked along crouching down, fancying we were thus escaping the shells that rushed incessantly overhead. It did, however, save us from the machine gun fire. At last we reached the very front line; No Man's Land was just over that parapet. I could not resist peering over and try to penetrate the blackness. A thrill passed thru me; I at last know what this modern war is. Oh, I know we were at war when we were back in Camp Sevier; when on the transport, and when we were in that little French village doing our practical training. But I did not FEEL that we, Americans—myself and the playmates of our little town, were actually in a life and death grapple with a cunning and furious foe until that moment. The horror of war cast a shroud about me. As we thumped along the duck-boards I met sentries stationed on the standing-step, silent and alone, searching the inky blackness with their eyes. As our party diminished, a section being assigned to every "bay," conversation was held in whispers. I could come up another bay and all the area near by was lit with a lurid light, the rat-a-tat

we rest. Cooties are body lice which everybody soon get when they enter the trenches.

The soldier at all times takes a lively interest in his rations. Toward noon we roused up, got some water from a shell hole near by, kindled a fire and made some coffee. The aroma of steaming coffee and frizzling bacon and sound of crackling fire experiences most stimulating to a fellow after a night of it. After breakfast I went to my bunk again, for I took the Scotchman's advice: Sleep all you can at the front, for there is no telling when you will be called on for a long period of tough hiking and detail. And I found I could sleep better by day than by night for I was blanketed by the warm air of day and soothed by the silence of guns.

Toward supper I got up again and busied myself assisting with supper; supper of coffee again and bully beef and more bread.

"Hello!" cried one of the men, "look at the plane; I count fifty-three of them."

Fifty-three Allied planes in the sky together! Those modern birds rose, dipped, circled in the air like swallows. Oh, it was a great sight! Jerry wasted a prodigious amount of shrapnell in trying to down them, but to no avail. His shells would burst far below them; these we could see for they were marked by neat puffs of black smoke that soon dissipated. The sun was fast falling; its shafts of light were penetrating the clouds which hung high in the western heavens, producing an effect of gorgeous mother-of-pearl. As twilight struck the glossy wings of the planes, silver stars were shot back to us.

I cannot help but think that our air craft is superior to the Boche; I get the impression that we just about smother them.

We have not been without our casualties, but I am thankful to know that all who have fallen hid their duty until the end and I believe all the rest of them do the same. You can imagine as I have experienced the hell of this war; the deafening burst of shells that shake you from head to foot; that constant strain of a possible gas attack and the fatigue and long vigils. But we Sammies are careful thru it all; to be sure we have feelings of horror pass over us when our comrades fall; we wince when we see them suffer pain. But we are sustained by a great spirit of freedom, and for that freedom we will fight until the last of us are gone if need be.

Now about myself. I am a company runner and attached to Headquarters platoon of my organization. I carry messages from my company headquarters to the Battalion Headquarters and to platoon commanders. I suppose it is as hazardous as any position but I am glad to do it for I have the nerves and physique to stand it. I am happy to say I have come so far without a scratch, and fully expect to come home to you all. I have not heard but what the other boys from my county are all safe too.

What has impressed we boys so much is the spirit of our own folks back home. Their readiness to sacrifice of their pleasure, their money, and their food that this war might be brought to a victorious close helps us immensely. We say, "If the folks back home feel that way about it, it is up to us to give of our best."

Respectfully yours,
MILES F. SAWYER.

[The censor adds the following postscript: "Sawyer is a fine chap and is doing splendid work."—Ed.]

ZEB VANOE NORMAN

SMALL, McLEAN, BRAGAW & RODMAN
Attorneys & Counsellors at Law
PLYMOUTH, N. C.

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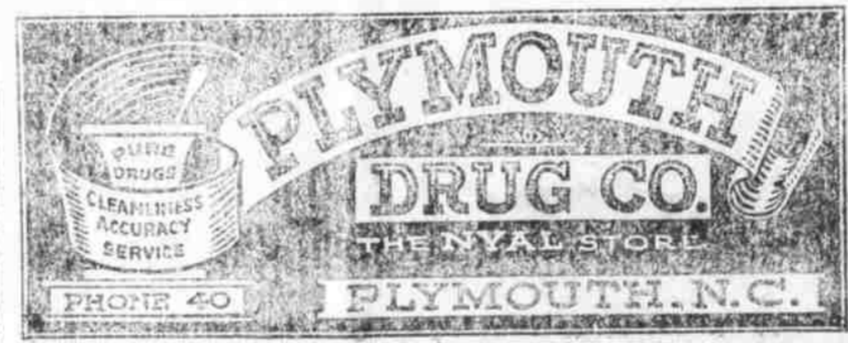
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ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE: Government Sends An Urgent Call

Having qualified as administrator of the estate of Conway Newman, deceased, late of Washington County, N. C., this is to notify all persons holding claims against said estate to present them to the undersigned on or before the 18th day of Sept., 1918, or this notice will be placed in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate settlement.

This Sept., 18th, 1918.
D. O. BRINKLEY,
Administrator.

NOTICE

North Carolina, Washington County—In the Superior Court
Pearl Franklin
vs
Elbert Franklin

The defendant above named will take notice that an action entitled as above has been commenced in the Superior Court of Washington County by Pearl Franklin for the purpose of obtaining an absolute divorce; and the said defendant will further take notice that he is required to appear at the next term of the Superior Court of said county on the 18th day of January, 1919, at the court house in Plymouth, and answer or demur to the complaint in said action or the plaintiff will ask for the relief demanded in said complaint.

This September 11th, 1918.
p. C. V. W. AUSBON, C. S. C.

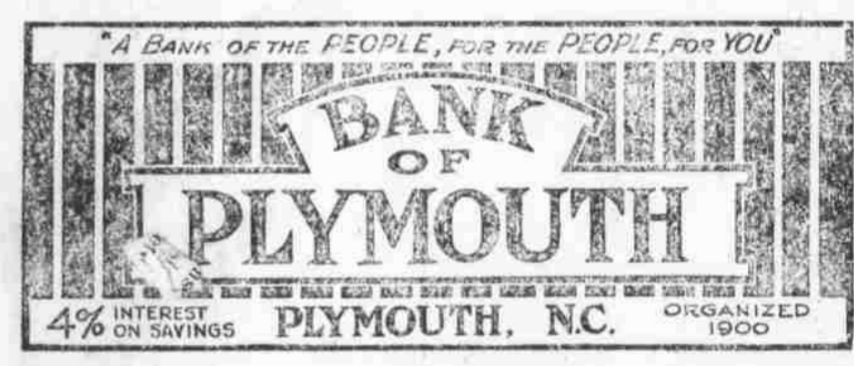
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FOR YOUR INTEREST.

Remember the condition of last season, horses and mules couldn't be bought at any price when they were wanted by the farmers, so if you have to buy or exchange do so early for your own interest.

I am leaving on Oct. 12th, to purchase a car of the very best of horses and mules that can be bought and if there is any special team that you want and need, place your order with me before I leave and I will give it my best attention, with a guarantee of satisfaction with every deal.

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COUPON.
DRAUGHON'S COLLEGE, Nashville, Tenn.: Send FREE book on Home Study and tell me why a Home Study Course, given by your new method, is better than a course at college; also, tell me about the contract that you will give to secure for me a good position. A clipped notice from the ROANOKE BEACON, Plymouth, N. C.

(Name) _____
(Address) _____