



OVER THE TOP

AN AMERICAN SOLDIER WHO WENT

ARTHUR GUY EMPEY

MACHINE GUNNER, SERVING IN FRANCE

WRITTEN BY ARTHUR GUY EMPEY

CHAPTER XX.

"Chats With Fritz."

We were swimming in money, from the receipts of our theatrical venture, and had forgotten all about the war, when an order came through that our brigade would again take over their sector of the line.

The day that these orders were issued, our captain assembled the company and asked for volunteers to go to the Machine Gun school at St. Omar. I volunteered and was accepted.

Sixteen men from our brigade left for the course in machine gunnery. This course lasted two weeks and we rejoined our unit and were assigned to the brigade machine gun company. It almost broke my heart to leave my company mates.

The gun we used was the Vickers, Light 303, water cooled.

I was still a member of the Suleide club, having jumped from the frying pan into the fire. I was assigned to section 1, gun No. 2, and the first time "in" took position in the front-line trench.

During the day our gun would be dismantled on the fire step ready for instant use. We shared a dugout with the Lewis gunners. At "stand to" we would mount our gun on the parapet and go on watch beside it until "stand down" in the morning. Then the gun would be dismantled and again placed in readiness on the fire step.

We did eight days in the front-line trench without anything unusual happening outside of the ordinary trench routine. On the night that we were to "carry out," a bombing raid against the German lines was pulled off. This raiding party consisted of sixty company men, sixteen bombers, and four Lewis machine guns with their crews.

The raid took the Boches by surprise and was a complete success, the party bringing back twenty-one prisoners.

The Germans must have been awfully sore, because they turned loose a barrage of shrapnel, with a few "Minnies" and "whizz bangs" intermixed. The shells were dropping into our front line like hailstones.

To get even, we could have left the prisoners in the fire trench, in charge of the men on guard and let them click Fritz's strafing but Tommy does not treat prisoners that way.

Five of them were brought into my dugout and turned over to me so that they would be safe from the German fire.

In the candlelight, they looked very much shaken, nerves gone and chalky faces, with the exception of one, a great big fellow. He looked very much at ease. I liked him from the start.

I got out the rum jar and gave each a nip and passed around some fags, the old reliable Woodbines. The other prisoners looked their gratitude, but the big fellow said in English, "Thank you, sir, the rum is excellent and I appreciate it, also your kindness."

He told me his name was Carl Schmidt, of the Sixty-sixth Bavarian Light Infantry; that he had lived six years in New York (knew the city better than I did), had been to Coney Island and many of our ball games. He was a regular fan. I couldn't make him believe that Hans Wagner wasn't the best ball player in the world.

From New York he had gone to London, where he worked as a waiter in the Hotel Russell. Just before the war he went home to Germany to see his parents, the war came and he was conscripted.

He told me he was very sorry to hear that London was in ruins from the Zeppelin raids. I could not convince him otherwise, for hadn't he seen moving pictures in one of the German cities of St. Paul's cathedral in ruins.

I changed the subject because he was so stubborn in his belief. It was my intention to try and pump him for information as to the methods of the German snipers, who had been causing us trouble in the last few days.

I broached the subject and he shut up like a clam. After a few minutes he very innocently said:

"German snipers get paid rewards for killing the English."

I eagerly asked, "What are they?"

He answered:

"For killing or wounding an English private, the sniper gets one mark. For killing or wounding an English officer he gets five marks, but if he kills a Red Cross or English general, the sniper gets twenty-one days' furlough as a reward for his carelessness."

Then he paused, waiting for me to ask him to stop.

I hit him right and asked him why the sniper was punished for killing an English general. With a smile he replied:

"Well, you see, if all the English generals were killed, there would be no more war, would there?"

CHAPTER XXI.

About Turn.

The next evening we were relieved by the 4th brigade, and once again returned to rest billets. Upon arriving at these billets we were given twenty-four hours in which to clean up. I had just finished getting the mud from my uniform when the orderly sergeant informed me that my name was in orders to leave, and that I was to report to the orderly room in the morning for orders, transportation and rations.

I nearly had a fit, hustled about packing up, filling my pack with souvenirs such as shell heads, dud bombs, nose caps, shrapnel balls, and a Prussian guardsman's helmet. In fact, before I turned in that night, I had everything ready to report at the orderly room at nine the next morning.

I was the envy of the whole section, swanking around, telling of the good time I was going to have, the places I would visit, and the real old English beer I intended to guzzle. Sort of rubbed it into them, because they all do it, and now that it was my turn, I took pains to get my own back.

At nine I reported to the captain, receiving my travel order and pass. He asked me how much money I wanted to draw. I glibly answered, "Three hundred francs, sir;" he just as glibly handed me one hundred.

Reporting at brigade headquarters, with my pack weighing a ton, I waited, with forty others, for the adjutant to inspect us. After an hour's wait, he came out; must have been sore because he wasn't going with us.

The quartermaster sergeant issued us two days' rations, in a little white canvas ration bag, which we tied to our belts.

Then two motor lorries came along and we piled in, laughing, joking, and in the best of spirits. We even loved the Germans, we were feeling so happy. Our journey to seven days' bliss in Blighty had commenced.

The ride in the lorry lasted about two hours; by this time we were covered with fine, white dust from the road, but didn't mind, even if we were nearly choking.

At the railroad station at F—we reported to an officer, who had a white band around his arm, which read "R. T. O." (Royal Transportation Officer). To us this officer was Santa Claus.

The sergeant in charge showed him our orders; he glanced through them and said: "Make yourselves comfortable on the platform and don't leave; the train is liable to be along in five minutes—or five hours."

It came in five hours, a string of eleven match boxes on big, high wheels, drawn by a dinky little engine with the "con." These match boxes were cattle cars, on the sides of which was painted the old familiar sign, "Hommes 40, Chevaux 8."

The R. T. O. stuck us all into one car. We didn't care; it was as good as a Pullman to us.

Two days we spent on that train, bumping, stopping, jerking ahead, and sometimes sliding back. At three stations we stopped long enough to make some tea, but were unable to wash, so when we arrived at B—, where we were to embark for Blighty, we were as black as Turcos and, with our unshaven faces, we looked like a lot of tramps. Though tired out, we were happy.

We had packed up, preparatory to detaining, when a R. T. O. held up his hand for us to stop where we were and came over. This is what he said:



Dead Bodies Everywhere.

"Boys, I'm sorry, but orders have just been received cancelling all leave. If you had been three hours earlier you would have gotten away. Just stay in that train, as it is going back. Rations will be issued to you for your return journey to your respective stations. Beasty rotten, I know." Then he left.

A dead silence resulted. Then men started to curse, threw their rifles on the floor of the car; others said nothing, seemed to be stupefied, while some had the tears running down their cheeks. It was a bitter disappointment to all.

How we blundered at the engineer of that train; it was all his fault (so we reasoned); why hadn't he speeded up a little or been on time, then we would have gotten off before the order arrived? Now it was no Blighty for us.

That return journey was misery to us; I just can't describe it.

When we got back to rest billets, we found that our brigade was in the trenches (another agreeable surprise) and that an attack was contemplated.

Repetition of the forty-one will never get another chance to go on leave; they were killed by the attack. Just

think if that train had been on time, those seventeen would still be alive. I hate to tell you how I was kidded by the boys when I got back, but it was good and plenty.

Our machine gun company took over their part of the line at seven o'clock, the night after I returned from my near leave.

At 3:30 the following morning three waves went over and captured the first and second German trenches. The machine gunners went over with the fourth wave to consolidate the captured line or "dig in," as Tommy calls it.

Crossing No Man's Land without eliciting any casualties, we came to the German trench and mounted our guns on the parapets of same.

I never saw such a mess in my life—bunches of twisted barbed wire lying about, shell holes everywhere, trench all washed in, parapets gone, and dead bodies, why, that ditch was full of them, theirs and ours. It was a regular morgue. Some were mangled horribly from our shell fire, while others were wholly or partly buried in the mud, the result of shell explosions caving in the walls of the trench. One dead German was lying on his back, with a rifle sticking straight up in the air, the bayonet of which was buried to the hilt in his chest. Across his feet lay a dead English soldier with a bullet hole in his forehead. This Tommy must have been killed just as he ran his bayonet through the German.

Rifles and equipment were scattered about, and occasionally a steel helmet could be seen sticking out of the mud.

At one point, just in the entrance to a communication trench, was a stretcher. On this stretcher a German was lying with a white bandage around his knee, near to him lay one of the stretcher-bearers, the red cross on his arm covered with mud and his helmet filled with blood and brains. Close by, sitting up against the wall of the trench, with head resting on his chest, was the other stretcher-bearer. He seemed to be alive, the posture was so natural and easy; but when I got closer I could see a large, jagged hole in his temple. The three must have been killed by the same shell-burst.

The dugouts were all smashed in and knocked about, big square-cut timbers splintered into bits, walls caved in and entrances choked.

Tommy, after taking a trench, learns to his sorrow that the hardest part of the work is to hold it.

In our case this proved to be so. The German artillery and machine guns had us taped (ranged) for fair; it was worth your life to expose yourself an instant.

Don't think for a minute that the Germans were the only sufferers; we were clicking casualties so fast that you needed an adding machine to keep track of them.

Did you ever see one of the steam shovels at work on the Panama canal? Well, it would look like a hen scratching alongside of a Tommy "digging in" while under fire. You couldn't see daylight through the clouds of dirt from his shovel.

After losing three out of six men of our crew we managed to set up our machine gun. One of the legs of the tripod was resting on the chest of a half-buried body. When the gun was firing, it gave the impression that the body was breathing. This was caused by the excessive vibration.

Three or four feet down the trench, about three feet from the ground, a foot was protruding from the earth. We knew it was a German by the black leather boot. One of our crew used that foot to hang extra bandollers of ammunition on. This man always was a handy fellow; made use of little points that the ordinary person would overlook.

The Germans made three counter-attacks, which we repulsed, but not without heavy loss on our side. They also suffered severely from our shell and machine-gun fire. The ground was spotted with their dead and dying.

The next day things were somewhat quieter, but not quiet enough to bury the dead.

We lived, ate and slept in that trench with the unburied dead for six days. It was awful to watch their faces become swollen and discolored. Towards the last the stench was fierce.

What got on my nerves the most was that foot sticking out of the dirt. It seemed to me, at night, in the moonlight, to be trying to twist around. Several times this impression was so strong that I went to it and grasped it in both hands, to see if I could feel a movement.

I told this to the man who had used it for a hatrack just before I lay down for a little nap, as things were quiet, and I needed a rest pretty badly. When I woke up the foot was gone. He had cut it off with our chain saw out of the spare parts' box, and had plastered the stump over with mud.

During the next two or three days, before we were relieved, I missed that foot dreadfully; seemed as if I had suddenly lost a chum.

I think the worst thing of all was to watch the rats, at night, and sometimes in the day, run over and play about among the dead.

Next our gun, right across the parapet, could be seen the body of a German lieutenant, the head and arms of which were hanging into our trench. The man who had cut off the foot used to sit and carry on a one-sided conversation with this officer, used to argue and point out why Germany was in the wrong. During all of this monologue I never heard him say anything out of the way—anything that would have hurt the officer's feelings had he been alive. He was square all right; wouldn't even take advantage of a dead man in an argument.

To civilians this must seem dreadful, but out here one gets so used to

KEPT HER AWAKE

The Terrible Pains in Back and Sides. Cardui Gave Relief.

Marksville, La.—Mrs. Alice Johnson, of this place, writes: "For one year I suffered with an awful misery in my back and sides. My left side was hurting me all the time. The misery was something awful.

I could not do anything, not even sleep at night. It kept me awake most of the night. . . I took different medicines, but nothing did me any good or relieved me. . . I took Cardui. . .

I was not able to do any of my work for one year and I got worse all the time, was confined to my bed off and on. I got so bad with my back that when I stooped down I was not able to straighten up again. . . I decided I would try Cardui. . . By time I had taken the entire bottle I was feeling pretty good and could straighten up and my pains were nearly all gone.

I shall always praise Cardui. I continued taking it until I was strong and well. . . If you suffer from pains due to female complaints, Cardui may be just what you need. Thousands of women who once suffered in this way now praise Cardui for their present good health. Give it a trial. NC-133

FARM DEMONSTRATION

(By D. S. Coltrane, County Agent.)

How to Combat Cutworms in Cornfield

In many sections it is hard to plant corn at a time when the young corn plants are not destroyed by cut worms. Serious injury can be prevented by placing around over the field lumps of poisoned bait, made of mixing about forty pounds of corn meal with a pound of Paris green and enough of the cheapest grade of molasses to make a stiff dough. Put this out immediately after planting, and many of the worms will eat this poisoned bait and die before the corn comes up, but this method has proved quite effective even after the plants are up a good size.

A Few Facts About Soy Beans

The soy bean is a legume and a land improver. It is valuable as a grain crop and makes from 20 to 25 bushels per acre on good land. It is very valuable as a hay crop and makes from 2 to 3 tons per acre of hay that is high in digestible protein. It is a valuable pasture plant, especially for hogs. It is worth two or three times as much as peas for this purpose.

The preparation of the soil for the soy bean is about the same as that for corn. On the poorer lands, from 200 to 300 pounds of acid phosphate should be applied. This should be broadcast or put in the drill, but should not be left in contact with the seed in any considerable quantity, since there is danger of injuring them.

Soy beans can not come through a deep covering and should be planted preferably one inch and not more than one and a half inches deep. It is best to plant in rows 30 to 36 inches apart and aim for the plants to stand 2 or 3 inches in the drill. This method will require about 25 pounds of seed per acre. The planting may be made with a corn planter, or with a grain drill, by covering the feed cups not in use.

The time of planting the Mammoth Yellow Soy Beans is preferably from May 15 to 30. From a hundred and twenty to one hundred and thirty-five days are required for the plants to mature seed, and our average killing frost is on October 25th. It is seen therefore, that planting for seed should not be deferred later than June 5. They may be sown for hay any time during June.

USE MORE MILK.

Clear Your Complexion with This Old Reliable Remedy—HANCOCK'S SULPHUR COMPOUND

For pimples, black-heads, freckles, blotches and all skin eruptions, it is the most effective blood purifier known. It cleanses the pores of the skin and removes the cause of the trouble and restores the blood.

Priceless when you are suffering from skin eruptions. It is the most effective blood purifier known. It cleanses the pores of the skin and removes the cause of the trouble and restores the blood.

Be sure to ask for HANCOCK'S SULPHUR COMPOUND. It has been used with satisfactory results for over 25 years.

50c and \$1 the bottle

At your druggist's. If he can't supply you send the name and the price in stamps and we will send you a bottle direct.

HANCOCK'S SULPHUR COMPOUND

MADE IN U.S.A.

Be sure to ask for HANCOCK'S SULPHUR COMPOUND. It has been used with satisfactory results for over 25 years.

SIXTEEN BILLIONS IN WAR INSURANCE IN FORCE NOW

Written for More Than 1,800,000 Soldiers and Sailors Since October

More than \$16,000,000,000 insurance on lives of more than 1,800,000 soldiers and sailors has been written by the Bureau of War Risk Insurance. That is more insurance, all written since the middle of last October, than is today on the books of the twenty largest life insurance companies in the world.

All kinds of problems have been met, according to information furnished to Congress by Thomas B. Love, assistant secretary of the treasury, in charge of the bureau, and other officials.

The war risk law provided for payment of family allowances and allotments and for a compensation insurance applicable to 2,000,000 risks and for writing of this insurance on lives of a possible 2,000,000 soldiers and sailors.

Scattered over World
The applications for allowances and allotments of the soldiers' or sailors' pay had to be obtained from the ends of the earth to which those in war service have been scattered.

From December 20 until the beginning of this month the bureau mailed out 2,000,000 individual checks to families of dependents in the United States, approximately \$60,000,000 has been paid in allowances and allotments, and in addition many thousand claims for compensation have been made, some paid and others disallowed.

More than 95 per cent of the soldiers and sailors listed at the bureau have taken the insurance and applications for it have come in at a daily rate involving from \$50,000,000 to \$100,000,000 of insurance during the last month. A clerical force of about 4,300 is employed by the bureau in the work.

In Favor of Mothers

A bill is now pending in Congress, favorably reported by the House interstate commerce committee, amending the law in a number of details, providing for instance, that automatic insurance shall be payable to the mother, whether dependent or not, and to the father as well, and making other broadening features in the interest of the soldier's nearest of kin.

Bureau records show that there are 1,062,091 application blanks returned on which the man says he has no dependents of any kind. There is a surprisingly large percentage of those men who do have dependents, the first knowledge of whom the bureau learns when such dependents write for information.

Registrants Must Work or Fight

Under a drastic amendment to the selective service regulations, announced last week by Provost Marshal General Crowder, every man of draft age must either work or fight after July 1. Not only idlers but all draft registrants engaged in what are held to be non-useful occupations are to be called before the local boards and given the choice of a new job or the army.

Gamblers, race track and bucket shop attendants and fortune tellers head the list but those who will be reached by the new regulations also include waiters and bartenders, theatre ushers and attendants of clubs, hotels, stores, etc., domestics and clerks in stores.

Deferred classification granted on account of dependents will be disregarded entirely in applying the rule. A man may be at the bottom of Class 1 or even in Class 4 but if he falls within the regulations and refuses to take useful employment he will be given a new number in Class 1 that will send him into the army at once. Local boards are authorized to use discretion only where they find enforced change of employment would result in great hardship upon his dependents.

The Department of Labor of the United States will co-operate to assist in finding work for those who ask it, but will not take the responsibility to guarantee jobs. However, an effort will be made to bring men and jobs together.

Social Work in War Time

The women of America are everywhere asking what they can do to help win the war. Few of them are able to go overseas. There is work to be done at home, however, which will afford many of them an opportunity to do their part. Among the most important of these lines of service open to women of special training is war-time social work. To enable women to qualify themselves in the briefest period of time for this war service at home the Department of Civilian Relief of the Red Cross and the School of Social Work and Public Health in Richmond, Va., have organized a summer course of six weeks in emergency social service which will begin June 24.

SUFFERING FROM COLIC
If you shiver in frosty weather, if you have cold hands and feet, if colds are stubborn and frequent, then your blood may be thin and impoverished.

SCOTT'S EMULSION

has been correcting this condition for nearly fifty years. It possesses rare powers for creating natural body warmth for charging summer blood with winter richness and strengthening both throat and lungs.