

A Newly Discov

front of us were to follow Driscoll and turned my bunch of us over to Sgt. Flannery. The light is going out. The Lord be with us all. Amen.

Charles Driscoll. Waiting around till 1:00 pm we reported to Sgt. Baldwin, Monson, Flannery, Fernes and Archibald and myself sitting around my candle looking it over, considering our chances hoping for the best and agreeing quite that we are come what may. Fellow do not hesitate to express their religious feelings in such times. Waiting to go over the top with the best of luck for fathers, mothers and other near and dear ones. Please God, I come through as well as for my own. I have made my peace with God, hold no grudge, hereby putting them all aside if I had any and offer up whatever happens in sacrifice and reparation for my past offenses. The light is going out. The Lord be with us all. Amen.

Later. Thurs. Sept 26 - 2 pm. Am sitting in trench between Corps. Index and Baldwin. We are some miles back of our position. The German lines when it was the top at 10 o'clock this morning. We were at 10 o'clock. We walked 5 or 6 kilometers more.



"Went over the top at 2 PM today," wrote Private Larney in his diary, "and we are pushing on while Jerry resists."

By Thomas M. Johnson

SLOWLY but surely the Argonne mists clear, and new light is shed upon the Lost Battalion. Here is truth, hitherto unpublished, about the most celebrated single battlefield episode of the American part in the World War! Unexpected thrills, surprising revelations, at the 19th anniversary of the historic dates when a handful of gallant Americans, surrounded in the forest, fought off encircling Germans for five undaunted days and nights—Oct. 2-7, 1918.

Today no monument marks the woodland scene, but a new memorial has just come to light in the poignant words that one of the survivors wrote in a diary he kept through all those hideous yet splendid days and nights, setting down faithfully what he felt and smelled and saw there among the gruesome funkholes in the forest.

At any moment a bullet might have put a period on the last page of the black book about six inches long and four wide to which he confided the concentrated emotions of that frightful ordeal.

Yet, grimly, this slim, determined-looking young American stuck to his self-imposed task; and determinedly to this day he has clung to the result—the only existing diary, he believes, of a Lost Battalion survivor.

When he wrote that diary, Jim Larney, a Rochester, N. Y., boy, was signalman for Maj. Charles W. Whittlesey, the tall, calm New England lawyer who commanded the troops that newspapers christened "The Lost Battalion," although they were not lost, but surrounded and beleaguered in the forest. Today Private Larney is an engineer in Watertown, N. Y. He finally consented to publication of his diary just as he was getting ready to head for the American Legion convention in New York, Sept. 20-23, from which 10,000 veterans were to sail overseas to revisit French battlefields.

A page from Larney's diary, with a doughboy's prayer on the eve of battle. "Please God, I come through . . . The light is going out. The Lord be with us all.—Amen."

AT last he has consented to let the public see the treasured diary that he alone of the nearly 600 who entered "the pocket" carried buttoned tight beneath his olive-drab blouse, close to his pounding heart, as he scrambled through the underbrush and over fallen logs on his belly, so as not to give German snipers a mark, and then helped lug after him the coop of carrier pigeons that later were his comrades' hope of salvation.

"I was a walking arsenal," Larney chuckles now. "Besides helping with the pigeons, I carried in a case the four white cloth panels, each about six feet long, with which we were to signal airplanes—or try to; also a can of butter, two cartons of cigarets, and—a copy of an adventure magazine!"

The most thrilling adventure of Larney's lifetime lay before him. Far more gripping than fiction was the true story he was to write in that black-bound diary to which he has clung since as, excepting his family, his greatest treasure.

Crouching low to escape more wounds, huddled in his funkhole, he kept the diary. As signalman he had pencils and fountain pens; but the writing tottered painfully as did the writer when finally blessed relief came. Only 194 of the 600 who had gone in walked out of "the pocket." Of the 252 living, 58 had to be carried.

Here is the diary as Private Jim Larney wrote it, beginning Sept. 25, 1918. That was the night before the opening of the greatest battle in American history, the Meuse-Argonne, which eventually involved two million men—more than half of them Americans. Through that morning's mist and the smoke of a thunderous barrage, those

men advanced northward on the whole 25-mile front which stretched from the Meuse River at historic Verdun to the dark Argonne Forest, most sinister natural fortress on the western front.

The attack in the forest was made by soldiers of the metropolitan 77th Division, drafted from the sidewalks of New York, and reinforced by recruits from west and midwest; especially California, Colorado, Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico.

I HAVE heard recently from Lost Battalion survivors in those states, in Minnesota, in Ohio, in Illinois, in Florida. Indeed, they are everywhere. This story of their heroism and of their humanity is not cheaply dramatized for the "popular" taste. It is a real man's story of real men in that supreme experience. Here is what Larney wrote on the eve of the ordeal by fire:

"Wed., Sept. 25—Fair. Cool. Went to mass and communion at 7 a. m. Reading and writing letters this a. m. Made up battle packs this afternoon for attack tonight or in a. m. Iron rations, toilet articles, and battalion panels. Evans delivered a new panel code to me today. He says we are to make a 30-mile drive. This drive to end the war. *Beaucoup* (many) guns in forest here. Thirteen 6-inch howitzers in line. Lt. Whiting (A Company) in lecture says we will pull off the biggest drive in history against the Germans in front of us. Wrote to Farlow, Driscoll and turned my bunch of out-going mail over to Sergeant Flannery. . . .

"Baldwin (Sergt. Maj. Walter Baldwin, now of 1859 Victor street, Bronx, New York City), Monson (Jack Monson, received D. S. C., now dead), Flannery, Fernes, and Herschowitz (Jack Herschowitz later got D. S. C., 234 Broome street, New York City) and myself sitting around my candle talking it over, considering our chances, hoping for the best and all agreeing quite frankly that we

are in the hands of God, wherever we are, come what may. Fellow do not hesitate to express their religious feelings in such times. Waiting to go over the top 'with the best of luck' for fathers, mothers, and other near and dear ones' sake. Please God I come through as well as for my own. I have made my peace with God, hold no grudge, hereby putting them all aside if I had any and offer up whatever happens in sacrifice and reparation for my past offenses. The light is going out! The Lord be with us all. Amen!"

Not exactly the "wine, women, song" wherewith some books, plays, and movies represent American doughboys habitu-