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A BLUE RIDGE MEMOIR

EDWARD C. LUKENS
LIEUT. 320TH INFANTRY

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GERMAN H. H. EMORY,
Major, 320th Infantry.
Killed in Action, November 1st, 1918.

A BLUE RIDGE MEMOIR

By

EDWARD C. LUKENS,

Lieutenant 320th Infantry, 80th Division,

and

THE LAST DRIVE

and

DEATH OF MAJOR G. H. H. EMORY

By

E. McCLURE ROUZER,

Lieutenant 320th Infantry,

Adjutant, 3rd Battalion.

SUN PRINT, BALTIMORE

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FEB -8 '23

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DEDICATION

To the inspiring memory of that fearless soldier and splendid man, who fell leading his battalion against the enemy at St. Juvin, France, on November first, nineteen hundred and eighteen, German Horton Hunt Emory, Major, Three Hundred and Twentieth Infantry, this book is affectionately dedicated.

EDWARD C. LUKENS.

"A BLUE RIDGE MEMOIR"

INTRODUCTION

The following narrative does not purport to be in any sense a battalion, company, or even a platoon history. It was written at odd times during the February and March following the Armistice, with the double purpose of killing some of the time that hung heavy on our hands during that dull period of waiting, and of preserving for personal and family records the writer's war experiences. It omits many of the most noteworthy things done by men of "I" Company and by other units simply because it is an eye-witness narrative—a mere expanded diary—and the writer did not happen to witness them. Its only excuse for publication is the fact that it does bring in partial accounts of some of the greatest events in which the 320th Infantry took part, and glimpses of the lives and deaths of some of our comrades whose lives and deaths are worthy of record.

EDWARD C. LUKENS.

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A BLUE RIDGE MEMOIR

CHAPTER I

We Meet Our Allies

THE long months of monotonous drilling drew slowly to a close, rumors grew more persistent until they culminated in orders, and a rainy night in May found our regiment actually on the march to our "point of embarkation." Passing the busy powder mills of Hopewell in the early dawn, we were rapidly loaded on to river boats at the historic landing of City Point, for a preliminary voyage to "an Atlantic port," as the censors have it, or more specifically, Newport News.

We remained in dock a full two days after embarking, during which time no one was allowed to leave the ship or to mention his location in a letter. On a fine Sunday afternoon we started off, almost without warning, and in spite of our impatience at the delay, it gave us quite a shock, a mixture of a thrill of excitement and a sinking sensation, to see America getting away from us. The sights of the harbor, a change indeed from the deadly barracks and sand of the past eight months, kept our thoughts busy, but there was not a man who did not look at that receding land at least once and wonder if he would see it again.

Our life on the converted German liner was on the whole pleasant, in spite of crowded holds, a few moderately rough days and the possibility of submarines. We read, pretended to study military manuals, talked, smoked and rehearsed our respective duties in case of a submarine attack. The first drill resulted in great confusion, shouting of conflicting orders, and not a little levity, but a severe "lecture" by the ship's commander resulted in a more serious attitude toward the submarines thereafter.

When we had cleared the Capes and were therefore open to the possibility of submarine trouble, for the entire ocean was practically the "danger zone" at that time, a "watch" of soldiers was organized to supplement the navy watch. It fell to my lot to have charge of one of the four watches, and it was my duty to inspect about fifteen guards, posted in different places about the ship, looking constantly out over the water. On the occasion of my first climb to the foretop, I made a mental note that the Navy did not have such an easy time as we had assumed. The deck looked small and far away, and this was only the lower foretop, not the real "crow's nest," which was manned by sailors.

The view from the foretop well repaid the climb. The entire convoy of about a dozen transports, their hulls camouflaged with a kind of cubist painting that seemed to me to make them especially prominent, and on the fringes of the group several diminutive but speedy destroyers which were our body-guards.

No submarines were ever sighted, but as the watchers were required to report every object seen, no matter how innocuous, their monotony was broken by occasional ships, refuse from the ships ahead of us, and by whales and porpoises. One man would have reported a "sub," had he not been too excited to do so, when a whale popped up suddenly about one hundred yards from him. "My Gawd," he exclaimed afterwards, "I never seen such a big fish!" As he had never seen the ocean before, his statement was doubtless true.

No one seemed to worry much about submarines. This was not due to pure coolness, but rather to lack of imagination. So long as none appeared, it was hard to imagine a sudden change in the situation, and after the first day or two we practically took it for granted that fortune would favor us, though we never relaxed our vigilance.

One fine afternoon we sighted the lighthouse at Royan, at the mouth of the Gironde River. Our convoy of destroyers had already been increased, and now it was supplemented by a perfect mob of small harbor patrol craft, even converted launches, which tooted their shrill whistles in welcome.

Overhead a French dirigible and several planes sailed around, looking down into the water for possible "subs."

We anchored inside the nets, and knew the submarine peril was at an end. We had to await the turn of the tide before going on up the river, which we did the next morning. I shall never forget that first glimpse of France. The country was green and pretty, and the people along the banks waved their hands and cheered as we steamed slowly past.

About twilight we reached the dock, at the new American port a few miles below Bordeaux, a piece of America itself planted in France. There were big Baldwin locomotives, American flags flying, American soldiers, white and black, and civilian employees, mountains of supplies, and work moving busily on all sides. Mingled in the scene were French soldiers, French civilians, and a swarm of nondescript orientals known as "Annamites."

We debarked on Sunday evening, June 9th, and marched five miles to Camp Genicart, one of the receiving camps of the port. This was our first march on French soil, and our first glimpse of French people. Many of the boys had spent an hour or two over a dictionary while on the boat, and now was their chance to try out their newly-acquired knowledge. The result must have proved our insanity to the natives, for there was a chorus of "Oui, Oui's" wherever we passed a group of people, with hardly another French word distinguishable.

We also sang, and it seemed strange indeed to be marching along a road in France to the tune of "Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here," although that well known ballad has been heard in hundreds of French hamlets by this time. It is even reported that in one village the people thought it was our national hymn and respectfully took off their hats while the troops passed, while a detachment of French soldiers stood at "present arms."

Our duties during our brief stay at Camp Genicart were not severe, and the officers and "non-coms" were allowed to go into Bordeaux with considerable freedom. From the village of Lormont, a little trolley car runs to the city, manned by two half grown boys. We did not have a sou

of French money, but soon found that the people had no objection to American money provided they were allowed about fifty percent extra on the rate of exchange. The car stopped at the end of the magnificent bridge across the Gironde, and there we got a good view of the city with its cathedral spire and the shipping of all the allied nations anchored in the river. American M.P.'s directed traffic across the bridge.

The city was gay and the streets crowded in spite of the war. In the course of a few blocks one would see more different kinds of uniforms, more decorations and medals and more peculiar-looking people than would be imagined to exist. The cafes with their chairs and tables on the sidewalks were a great novelty to us, as that custom prevails in America only in the case of small town cigar stores. The public square was filled with rows upon rows of enormous wine barrels, leaving scarcely room to walk through between them. Bordeaux was far removed from the zone of air danger, and the streets were brilliantly lighted. An especially bright corner attracted us into a theatre, where we found to our surprise that a medley of grand opera scenes was being played. Between acts the lights went on, and several distinguished looking Frenchmen in much-decorated uniforms and enormous whiskers got up, pulled out large field glasses, and calmly surveyed the audience. Their frankness was admirable. Never again, we decided, would we consider it necessary to glance furtively around us when we wanted to see someone in the audience. There was also in Bordeaux that evening another play, the title of which was "Oh, La, La," and this exclamation thenceforth was added to our vocabulary.

It was in Bordeaux that we made our first attempts at talking French. Few indeed were very successful at first, although we soon learned enough of the common words to get along in the stores and restaurants. Those who remembered a smattering of it from school courses had a little start, but the others quickly caught up and began speaking for themselves. It was a favorite amusement at first to engage a native in a conversation, and it gave one a great

feeling of superiority to be able to make him understand a few words if someone else could not. These early dialogues were not highly intellectual. They ran something like this:

American: "Bon jour, monsieur,"

Frenchman: "Bon jour, monsieur."

American: "Beaucoup soldats ici."

Frenchman: "Oui, Oui," followed by several paragraphs in which the word "Boche" is distinguishable.

American: "Oui, Oui, Boche pas bon."

Frenchman: "Oui, Oui, Oui," followed by several more paragraphs at an accelerated rate, in which nothing is distinguishable.

American: "Oui, Oui; bon soir, monsieur. Say aren't we getting away with it fine?"

Gradually there has grown up a sort of "army French" that a great many of the men use with fair success. It consists of a fair sprinkling of common words and expressions, mixed with a few English words the French have picked up, used with no attempt at gender or tense changes, and supplemented by reversion to Indian sign language. For instance, in a store: Soldier: "Any tabac?" Native: "Pas tabac; fini yesterday." Soldier: "Chocolat?" Native: "Chocolat fini." Soldier: "Well then, beaucoup comme ca," pointing at a box of crackers, "Combien?" Native, handing them out: "Deux francs." Like "check" in a chess game, either party is privileged at any time to say, "No compree," which, being neither English, French nor Italian, is understood by all three races to mean that the preceding remark has not gotten across.

Some French words have taken firm root as American slang, and will doubtless be heard at home for years to come, "Fini" for anything that is worn out, used up, or discarded is now "good American." "Bon" and "pas bon" are as common, and one often hears a soldier say that the weather or the food is "no damn bon." "Allez" with the French means not merely "go" but also "get up," and you can see a Yank mule skinner as well as a French artillery driver crack his whip and "Allez" his team. "Beaucoup," "tout suite," "tres bien" and "parti" are equally common.

Of the French soldiers, we saw little. Even after we had been in the line, and had seen hundreds of them, we never really became acquainted with them. The language barrier is a great one when it comes to real acquaintance, and we seldom met a Frenchman who could speak any English. Our men at first looked on them more or less as curiosities—part of the foreign scenery. As the novelty wore off, it changed to an attitude of more or less tolerant amusement. We never actually fought side by side with them, although we would occasionally see their artillery in action, and our admiration for them was founded more on what we knew they had done than on what we saw in them, while those of our men who did not know what they had done, did not admire them at all. In our everyday life of passing them on the roads and in the villages, we admired their whiskers, laughed at their strange costumes, perhaps exchanged a limited greeting, or gave them a few cigarettes, and that was about all. We did not pretend to understand them and they were hardly a factor in our lives. It might have been different if we had been able to know a few of them by individual name and reputation. A Frenchman would point to a scar and say, "Blessè; Verdun;" we would be interested in about the same way as though he had shown us a shell casing from Verdun. If we had been able to hear the whole story of his experiences there when he got wounded, it would have been a different matter.

After a week's stay at Camp Genicart, we entrained for Calais, where we were fitted out with British equipment in preparation for our period of training with them. A journey on a French troop train is a fearful and wonderful thing. The men are usually loaded into box cars with straw on the floors, "40 Hommes, 8 Chevaux," being the alternative capacity. Most of our men were more fortunate on this first trip and got third-class compartments, which at best were crowded, hard and very cold at night. The officers had first or second-class compartments, and were fairly comfortable. We would stop at frequent intervals, for no apparent reason, and excited railroad officials would run up and down the train shouting and arguing.

The country through which we traveled was green and beautiful in early June, and in spite of discomforts the trip was an interesting one to men who were in a foreign land for the first time.

The French Red Cross supplied hot coffee, of course without sugar, at occasional stops. Except for this, the rations consisted mostly of "canned Willie" and hardtack. The people who lived near the railroad must have known of our crackers from previous troop trains, for in almost every town that we passed through there would be lines of children along the railroad bank, crying out "Biscwee," biscwee," as plaintively as young robins squawking for worms. The men would throw them out of the windows and the children would pounce on them and eat them as though they had been the finest of candy. It gave us more of an appreciation of the shortage of food in the country than all the statistics we ever read.

It was in Calais that we made our first acquaintance with the British soldier and the process of becoming really acquainted was far more complex than the ordinary war correspondents allowed the public to believe. With them it is a mere "Howdy, Tommy," "Howdy, Yank," performance, and the job is done. Now in real life, friendships between men of different characteristics are not so easily completed. There was not a little misunderstanding, there was some amusement, doubtless on both sides of the fence, and there was a gradual and slow education of our men to an appreciation of what the British had been through, and of the British to a realization of what the Americans had in them, before the American and the British soldier could form a real friendship. At the time we were in the British sector, the Americans had yet to fight the battle of Chateau Thierry, let alone the final Meuse-Argonne drive. The British had been impatient and worried by what had seemed to them an undue period of waiting for our help; when we did come, we were worst in some points such as march discipline and military courtesy, in which they were best.

On the other hand, we did not know what it was to have endured four years of war without seeing daylight ahead, in

other words, did not know what it was to be "fed up," and it seemed to us at first as if the British were unduly inclined to "let the Germans alone if they let us alone," and accept trench life as a normal type of existence without a thought of ever ending the war. They thought we lacked discipline; we thought they lacked "pep." Doubtless in part both were true, but in neither case was the fault as fatal or as inexcusable as it seemed to the opposite temperament. Our faults of discipline were more due to unformed habits and informality than to any real failure of respect or obedience; and their apparent lack of "pep" was amply explained by their severe jolt of the previous spring, and amply atoned for by their renewed exhibition of driving power the following fall. The British army's past was unknown to many of our men, who therefore did not appreciate that we never even saw the best of it, which was destroyed before we got there; the American army's future was as yet unrevealed, and not even guessed at by the British. They had fought so long they could hardly imagine the end of the war; we didn't yet know what fighting was, and couldn't imagine it lasting so very long. I told an English lieutenant in July that I expected the war to be over by Christmas; he politely informed me that I would get over that after I had been disappointed one or two Christmases like he had. In short, we thought they were the worst pessimists we had ever seen, and, no doubt, they thought we were just too green to understand the Huns' strength, which in a way may have been true, without being any disadvantage.

Then, too, in more trivial matters of speech, dress, and social customs, they were just enough different from us to cause friction, while the much greater things in which we were alike were taken for granted and passed by unnoticed. Our men realized that the French soldiers would talk French, but could not see why an Englishman, unless he intended to be affected, should talk English instead of "American." People in America who affect an English accent are generally fools, because any affectation is foolish; therefore it took a little time before our men could see that an Englishman's accent was not a discredit to his character.

Similarly, their daily "tea" was at first put down as a mark of effeminacy, simply because "afternoon tea" at home suggests a rather insipid kind of a "party" in which the fair sex predominates. When, however, we found that "tea" included something to eat, a smoke, and not infrequently more "Scotch" than tea, it was generally agreed that "four meals a day" was a great idea, and they were forgiven.

When a British officer in those days asked me how our men like the Tommies, I could hardly answer truthfully without disappointing him, nor do I think that many of them fully understood the reasons for the difficulty. Now, after we have known them for several months, been in the trenches with them and learned from our own experience what it must have been to have fought over four years, I can truly say that our men have learned to give them their just praise, and have largely forgotten their former prejudices, but we did not fall into each others' arms at first sight.

Our relations with the English officers afforded us much amusement, though the contact was personal and individual enough to enable us to like some and dislike others without blaming the few less agreeable ones on the race. I think some of them were rather shocked by our lack of dignity at the mess, and especially by our familiarity with the private who waited on the table. He was an obliging fellow and a good cook, so we tolerated his peculiarities while the British officers who ate with us doubtless thought we encouraged them. When any of the officers cracked a joke, there would be a loud guffaw from the waiter and an argument would not be complete until he had added his opinion to the rest. In contrast to the demeanor of the British "officers' servants" —they could never understand why we didn't use the word —it must have been startling. I have had many a laugh since then at one of my encounters with an English officer, who, I believe now, had not the slightest intention of being rude. I met him in a support trench on the occasion of my first visit to the front with a group of non-coms, and, thinking of the possible convenience of knowing his name, I

started to introduce myself in the ordinary American way. "My name's Lukens," I began. "Indeed!"

I didn't have the remotest idea what to say next; I was never more flabbergasted in my life. I suppose in England they don't introduce themselves just that way, and he didn't know why I should suddenly announce my name. At any rate, I never got particularly well acquainted with this officer, nor did he and I constitute a howling success in the "alliance between the two great English speaking races" line.

I cite these little instances just to show the real situation at that time, as a contrast to the ordinary oratory on the subject, and to show how badly we needed to get better acquainted, and what ridiculously small differences had been keeping us apart, in spite of our similarity in a thousand more important ways. After we had been in France for six months, and some of us got to London on a week's leave, we realized how nearly like home it seemed, and how unlike home France had been, and the simple pleasure of seeing people on the street who didn't look or talk foreign wiped out all petty prejudices that still remained. American friendship for France is idealistic and national; for England it is commonplace and personal, and no more poetic than the friendship between Pennsylvanians and Californians might be.

The latter is the more difficult kind to effect, but to me, at least, it means a great deal more. The French are so different that we hardly know whether they have individual peculiarities or not, so we judge them by Joan of Arc, Lafayette and the defense of Verdun. The British are so nearly like us that we take it for granted, and think they should be exactly like us, and judge them as we judge the family next door, or as a Princetonian judges a Harvard man.

While at the Calais camp, we got our gas masks, traded in our American Eddystone rifles for the British short Enfield, and were instructed in the mechanism of the latter by some British sergeants. I recall one of them who made a significant as well as an amusing remark. He warned us about the cost to the Australians and Canadians, of their early

lax discipline, evidently fearing that we would suffer from the same trait, but added that the English had learned some things from the "Colonials." He said, "You know we used to pray "God bless the squire and all his relations," Now we say, "The Squire! Huh! 'oo the 'ell's 'e?" So it looks as though after the war "the Squire," like everybody else, would be judged by what he did in the war, and not by what his ancestors did, and the Sergeant gave the "Colonials" the credit for the Englishman's change of attitude.

It was at Calais that part of our regiment experienced their first air raid. They were of frequent occurrence there, and seldom caused any casualties. Nevertheless, the Tommies stationed there had a wholesome respect for them, which our men had not yet learned, and they were an astonished bunch when they heard the Yanks call out "Mark five," "Remark seven," "Bull on number three," as though on a rifle range, when the "eggs" went off. However, when one finally landed a little closer than the rest, they proved that it was due to ignorance rather than excessive bravery by all falling over backwards in a heap.

Air raids were frequent during our stay in the "back areas," but were not as bad as often described. At least, this was true in our case; other outfits whose luck was different might estimate them differently. While we were at Hesdin L'Abbe, a little village near Boulogne, they came over several times. It is a weird experience at first to hear the motors whirring overhead and try to figure which sounds are "Jerry" and which are British; then to near the low boom of the "Antis" and the rattle of machine guns, punctuated by the heavy boom of the "eggs" themselves. A person is a little nervous, wondering how close they are going to drop, but the space we occupied was such a small proportion of the space available that we could hardly imagine our luck being bad enough to get them. After the first two or three fairly distant raids, most of the men would merely wake up, curse a little, and go back to sleep. Some of the statements written in home magazines about air raids have been worse than exaggerations—they have been lies. I read once that the Huns had made the nights so hideous that a soldier

feels safer in the front line trenches than in a village within fifty miles of the line. The writer should have visited the front line some time, and seen whether he felt safer there than in the rest areas. I do not recall any case of an air bomb casualty in our battalion.

There was just one time when our company was thrown into a state of excitement by an airplane; and this incident will live forever in our annals as a joke on the entire outfit. We were lined up for retreat in an orchard during the early days of the summer, when several planes flew directly over us. They turned out to be British, but it is never easy to be certain at first glance. Suddenly one of them put off some kind of a smoke signal, the effect of which was a trailing ball of smoke falling directly on the company. Someone looked up and let out a yell, and the entire company cleared the orchard in two jumps. One little Italian got on his gas mask and tin hat and reached the fence as soon as the rest. He said he was taking no chances. The anti-climax of the tragedy, there being no explosion, started recriminations as to who had begun the scare. One officer was accused of giving the command: "I Company, let's go!" and for weeks afterward the men of the other companies would yell that at us as we passed. Be it said in conclusion, however, that this motto which started as a jeer, became our battle cry, and many a time later, when to "go" meant to go forward in the face of enemy fire, I have heard the men sing out "I Company, let's go" as we started onward.

Hesdin L'Abbe was the first of the many little villages in which we stayed for a short time. We never stayed long in any one place, and long ago lost count of the number of moves. We pitched our shelter tents in different orchards, so they would be less liable to possible daylight air raiders than if in an open field. The officers' mess was established in a little estaminet, where our own cook prepared the army rations on the French lady's stove, and supplemented them by what he could buy from her garden. The one large building of the town was an old chateau—no French town is complete without one—and in this some of the officers got rooms, while the rest of us slept in tents in the backyard.

Altogether it was an ideal rural existence, and we were rather sorry when the order came to leave.

We advanced toward the front in several stages, or as one of the men put it, "each place was a little worse than the last." The moving itself was no small part of our burden, for it almost invariably involved some early rising and some night hiking. On this particular move, we got up at some unearthly hour, started before daylight and marched seven kilometers to the railroad station, only to wait there until the middle of the afternoon before the train was ready.

We had been given an exaggerated idea of the promptness with which we would be put into the line, and everyone thought when we left Hesdin L'Abbe that we were headed straight for the front. So, although we were actually dumped out a good twenty-five miles behind the line, we had all the mental experiences attendant upon going up to the line, and these were practically repeated at every move we made, both prior to our trench experiences and prior to our later "big drive." So, although each move got us nearer the reality, the "sensations" each time were less novel, and it was that gradual process of becoming accustomed to the idea that prevented us from being more nervous when the time came. As someone said a few days before our first attack, we had been "Just Before the Battle Mother" for so long that he couldn't stay excited to save his life.

The evening that we arrived at Ivergny was the first time that we could see the flashes of the guns at the front, and could hear their rumble with any distinctness, and it brought the reality closer to our minds than many months of training. We thought we were nearer than we really were, until we saw the maps, for the flashes can be seen at a great distance on clear, dark nights. Our march was not a long one, but the way was confusing, we did not know what we were getting into, and we all had a sneaking suspicion that we were "for it" at once, so all in all it was a tiring march. The British "billet warden" met us at the village about midnight, the companies were hastily divided up into groups and assigned to different barns, the officers hunted around for their rooms,

and we turned in, hardly caring what happened in the future, so long as got to sleep at last for that night.

We stayed at Ivergny for two weeks and got some solid training during that period. Never had "drill" had such a meaning, for every man knew we were to begin the real business soon, and all branches of training were energetically pushed. I have often wondered since how much of it was wasted, and whether any of that waste was preventable. The British taught us that the bayonet was our greatest weapon, and it was to bayonet training that we devoted our greatest efforts; and so far as I know, hardly a man in the regiment has had a chance to use it. No one could tell at that time that in our final fighting we would seldom come into such close contact, and that our main obstacles would be shelling and machine gun fire. We did not know whether we would fight in trenches or in the open, in attack or in defense. At least, the bayonet work was splendid exercise and mentally awakening.

The gas training is another thing that we laugh at as we look back to it. The main trouble was that it was overdone; we were taught to be afraid to death of it, and we were all made more nervous than was necessary. Gas as used in 1915 before gas masks were carried must have been a fiendish horror; even in our times it caused many casualties by putting men out of action for a few days or weeks, but with us, at least, it was not the horror that it was advertised to be. I don't know of a single death from gas in our battalion, though I know of some rather nasty lung and eye troubles left in its wake, and I know of very few instances where a few seconds slowness in adjusting the mask made any difference. The trouble would be that the smell would be slight, the man's mind would be on something more urgent, and he would not use his mask at all. In our training we were taught that six seconds was the time limit, and one whiff would "knock you cold." We were also taught that we might have to work or fight for hours on end in gas masks, whereas, in fact, we seldom had to keep them on for more than a few minutes. During the period of training at Ivergny, we were required to keep our masks on for stated

periods, starting at a half hour and increasing to an hour and a half. I know of no worse bore in my whole life than this wearing of a gas mask for a long time with no gas present, and I used to laugh to think of the spectacle we made to the French civilians as we marched, rested, talked, or even slept in gas masks just because it was between 10.30 and 12 on a drill morning.

Another branch of training was vitally necessary to know, but almost unnecessary to teach, because under actual conditions we found it was almost instinctive; this was technically described as "Use of Cover" and consisted of dropping quickly, crawling so as not to be seen, and making the best possible use of the least irregularity in the ground that would stop a bullet or shell fragment, or keep an enemy from seeing you. Time after time we shouted ourselves hoarse to make the men get flat when we were practising, and the first time the machine gun bullets were actually humming over us, I don't believe the fattest man was over six inches high. Many a man in training was so clumsy that in dropping down he had to get his knees on the ground first, like a cow, before he could lie down, but when the first shell came, he "hit the dirt" like Ty Cobb. There is nothing like a touch of the "real stuff" to teach tricks that bear directly on one's chances of coming home!

From Ivergny we marched to the town of Saulty, another step nearer the front, and this time we were at the "jumping off place" for our first real adventures. Saulty was a good sized village, almost entirely dominated by the British, for many of the inhabitants had moved out on account of the air raids, though some remained to make money by trade with the soldiers, as the Americans were especially easy to sell things to at stiff prices. As the men used to say: "The French own the country: the British run it: and the Americans pay for it."

Air raids were so frequent at Saulty that we were required to build parapets around all the barracks, which were roofed with corrugated iron, but fortunately the most severe raid occurred when we were up in the line, which showed that there are compensations in everything.

We had been at Saulty but a few days when the order came out to send the officers and non-coms up to the sector of the line held by the famous Guards Division of the British, for observation and instruction, and this being our first experience, we were eager to go. We grew less eager with each succeeding trip, though no less determined as a matter of grim duty, but the first chance to see the real thing, after such a surfeit of rehearsing, was honestly welcomed. It was also a remarkably fortunate thing to be able to get over the first strangeness and inexperience without having the responsibility of commanding men at the same time.

CHAPTER II

Trench Life

OUR experiences on this first trip to the trenches had in them nothing unusual; but they were new to us, and their impressions were deep and lasting. We were carried in "motor lorries," as the British call their trucks, to Blairville, a much battered village which marked the approximate edge of the shelled zone. The enormous British naval guns barked all around the town, and as even friendly explosions were new to us, they made us jump considerably. We had a joke on some of the party who thought they were exploding shells, but we all soon learned to tell the difference.

It was while waiting over a few hours at Blairville, that we first saw enemy shrapnel exploding; in fact, it was the first hostile fire except air bombing that we had ever seen; and, although it was fairly distant and utterly ineffective, it gave us the realization that we were now "in the game" and from now on a target for everything they had to offer. It is quite a spectacle, though not nearly as dangerous as the high explosive. The Germans for some reason burst their shrapnel at an enormous height, so that it rains down over a large area, but leaves plenty of places untouched. It also gives ample time to jump for cover after the burst is seen in the air, before the shower reaches earth. Why they so seldom burst it low, I don't know, but I am glad they did not. In fact, not counting the common use of the word to mean shell fragments, shrapnel proper was rather rare in our experience; and I estimate that we saw perhaps 200 H. E. shells burst on impact to one shrapnel shell "bursting in air."

Some officers of the Royal Engineers entertained us in a luxurious dugout while we were waiting for darkness, and for the guides to lead us up to the infantry positions, for in the stationary trench life in vogue at that time, there were strict rules against appearing within range of enemy observation during daylight hours.

As our little party started out in single file over the shell-pocked field behind the lines, in darkness and almost in silence, it reminded me more of a fraternity initiation than anything else I had ever seen. The sense of something unknown ahead, combined with our utter dependence on a strange guide, were enough to make the resemblance seem real. Frequent Very lights in the distance showed us the front position, and showed us also that we were in a salient, for these signals were seen on our flanks as well as straight to the front. Our own shells went leisurely over our heads in large numbers, with an occasional "incoming" shell going a safe distance back of us by way of variation. The friendly ones were in the great majority, but enough of them were "agin us" to give us some valuable practice in learning to differentiate between the sounds. The difference is almost impossible to describe in words, but is easy to learn. A shell travelling through the air is often compared to an express train in its sound. Now our own shells, since we heard them early in their flight and high above our heads, would give out a sort of rhythmatic roar, decreasing in volume; while incoming shells would increase in sound, and sound as if the express train were rapidly gaining in speed. The apparent speed of the express train, which is the best sound analogy, shows how close you are to where the shell is going to land. When you hear a roar that would be ten times too fast for any train in the world—then drop quick! What I can't fully explain is why the shells that land nearest are often not heard coming until too late to duck at all. I suppose it is because the sound travels more slowly than the shell, which has perhaps landed while you are hearing it in mid-flight. At any rate, there is that much truth in the old saying that "you never hear the one that gets you."

Our guide brought us to a railroad bank and from an excavation therein there emerged a stout Briton who greeted us as though we had been calling at his regular house. The non-coms were taken in hand by the Scots' Guards N.C.O.'s, our company commander was given a bunk by the Captain, and a sergeant showed the other lieutenant and myself to a little extra dugout where we could sleep. On the way to it,

I amused the sergeant and startled my companion by suddenly reaching for my gas mask when we passed three dead mules in the darkness; the smell was certainly similar to what we had been taught to recognize as phosgene. The sergeant said the mules had been there so long that the spot was universally known as "Dead Mule Corner" and I could readily believe it. He also said that they hardly ever had any gas, and were not likely to get any, which we soon learned was not to be believed.

We were awakened early in the morning by the clatter of Klaxon horns and watchman's rattles and by the voice of the Guards sergeant, who was decent enough to stick his head in our hole and yell at us before making for his own. We frantically adjusted our masks, listening to the dull fizzy detonations which we knew by previous description meant gas. We had a gas-proof blanket over the entrance, and I had closed this on general principles before we went to sleep, but we were taking no chances. Lieutenant Titus and I have had many a laugh at ourselves since, but at that time we still believed that one whiff might be fatal, and we had no proof that the curtain was actually air-tight.

We sat for perhaps half an hour in a gasless dugout with our masks on before we decided to risk the fatal one whiff. Finally we got restless. "Aren't we fools," said I, "to be sitting here in our masks if that curtain is gas-proof." "Yes," he mumbled back, "but wouldn't we be worse fools if we took them off and found it wasn't airtight?"

That seemed pretty good logic, so we waited awhile longer, but my mask was a little tight and I got impatient again. So I sniffed suspiciously, took it off, smelled around the edge of the blanket and decided all was well. Then I couldn't persuade Titus to take his off even then, and the sight of him sitting there with his still on finally made me lose faith and put mine on again, while he delicately added to my nervousness by reminding me that gas sometimes showed no effect on a man for several hours. Next, he got tired of waiting, took his mask off, and began persuading me to remove mine again, which this time, I was reluctant to do. Finally we both got them off, and, after another

period of watchful waiting, decided to venture outside and see whether the atmosphere was yet clear. It was getting light now and we saw someone without a mask, so decided it must be all right; but on taking them off again we found the mustard smell so strong that we started once more to debate about it, and on they went for the final time when a new figure appeared upon the scene with his still on. By this time we had become so disgusted with our own indecision and had begun to laugh at ourselves so much, that we soon put them away and ended the farce for good.

Since then we have learned by experience how strong the lingering smell can be without being dangerous and have often taken chances in spite of the smell to avoid the inconvenience, and so have laughed at our original "gas" experience, but we were faithfully following out our instructions, and have sworn vengeance on the author of the "one whiff" theory if we ever catch him. Later in the morning we found that several of our non-coms had been badly gassed, a shell having landed right in the mouth of their "bivvy" while they were still asleep; and it was no joke in their case, nor is any case of real "gassing" a joke. They were in a Base Hospital for many weeks before their eyes and lungs fully recovered.

This was in the support line, where, we found, there was little to do and little excitement. The only danger was from shells, and very few were killed by them back here, for the railroad bank afforded good protection, and the men stuck to it as much as they could. As one of the British officers then said: "War consists of long periods of intense boredom punctuated by short periods of intense fear." That was what surprised us then—that the British seemed to be utterly bored by the war. It was an anti-climax to all we had ever read and anticipated,—we expected that going to the front would mean plunging into a seething cauldron of turmoil and death. Instead we found a lot of bored Englishmen living in a railroad bank like hoboes, annoyed rather than affected by the casual shelling. The greatest surprise of anything was the fact that with so many shells exploding, so few people ever got hurt. Listening to

the distant rumbling of the guns and shells from back at Saulty, I had pictured wholesale death being dealt by every explosion, and on this first day behind the railroad bank we saw dozens of bursts and no one ever hit. We were taught to drop flat if a shell came close and so have a good chance of being safe from anything but a direct hit. We had occasion to try it several times; it seemed to work all right, and apparently all a man need do was to drop flat, and cease to worry about shelling. We had yet to see some direct hits. When we had been through a little concentrated shell fire, out on an open field or even in a trench, and had learned to know what it could do, we lost our early ignorant recklessness. In other words, we were so relieved that "the front" was not as bad as advertised that we did not give it credit for being as bad as it was. We had always assumed that an experienced man would be cooler under fire than a green man, and this is true on the surface, for a man's determination and will power may grow; but as far as real inward feelings are concerned, I believe that the longer a man is in the game the more nervous he becomes. The accumulated strain of oft-repeated shellings wears on his nervous system, even while his external demeanor is getting more calm by force of habit.

In the evening we set out for the front line, crossing the railroad, and continuing forward along a rough path between shell holes for a short distance; then dropping into a communication trench knee deep in water, crossing a branch railroad track in a cut—which we did in a hurry, on advice that it was a favorable place for a chance spurt of machine gun fire—and finally came to the trenches themselves. Our inspection of the company sector during the next day, added to our impression that the war was not "living up to the bill-boards." Nothing whatever was happening, and it was really impossible to realize that these commonplace trenches were different from the familiar training imitations. "No Man's Land" contained no feature of especial interest, so far as could be seen. It was a flat, grass-covered plain, sloping down to a little hollow where there were some ruined buildings, and sloping up again to the enemy po-

sitions. The opposing trenches were much farther apart than I had expected, in fact, they were more so than usual, because neither party wanted the hollow, with the enemy looking down on them from the hill.

We had always thought that if a man stuck the top of his head a few inches above the parapet it would almost certainly be shot off. Finding that our English friend's head was not blown off, we soon began to look out across the parapet ourselves, and since there happened to be no snipers busy that particular afternoon, we soon completely discounted the sniping stories we had heard, and found ourselves leaning head and shoulders over the parapet, smoking our pipes as if we had owned the place. Well, we had "beginners' luck," but I have thought since that if I had been killed then I would have died more a fool than a hero. After a little more experience, and after hearing a bullet "zing" into the parados near us a few times, we learned that neither extreme is the truth; that a man can perhaps "get away with it" nine times out of ten, but that doesn't make the tenth time a myth, and that a man does neither himself nor his country any good by taking fool chances when nothing is to be gained. I have had to do much more dangerous things many times since then; but I would not now take that risk uselessly for a thousand dollars.

Going in and coming out were the most nerve-trying parts of trench life, excluding special "shows," of which more later. All movement had to be carried on at night; no lights or smoking were allowed, the group had to be strung out a little so as not to offer too concentrated a target for a chance shell, and it required considerable care and ingenuity to avoid getting lost. The area between the front line and the rearmost heavy guns was shelled regularly every night, with especial attention to cross-roads. It was never severe enough to prevent traffic, but always severe enough to make a man rightly feel that he might get hit at any minute. We always hurried past crossroads, and for the rest of it one place was as good as another. It was pure luck. The constant surprise was that luck was so generally good. The front trenches were disturbed very little at

night on the whole, and it was a positive relief to get there and drop down behind the parapet after two hours on top of the ground exposed to shells.

We had no sooner reached our billets after our observation trip than we were ordered back up with the entire battalion, which was split up among the various adjoining battalions of the Guards. One American platoon was joined to each British Company so that a company was with a battalion, and the battalion was spread over an entire brigade. It was an ideal arrangement by which we could get the experience of doing the job instead of merely observing it, while at the same time avoiding as yet the independent responsibility for the defense of the sector. Each platoon spent part of its tour in the reserve or support and part in the front line. Lieutenant Titus' platoon and mine went to the reserve, where dugouts and "bivvies" built into the bank of a "sunken road" composed the position, supplemented by a trench system which could be instantly reached if an attack threatened. We joined the Coldstream Guards lieutenant who was attached to us as adviser in an old Hun dugout, which was indeed worthy of admiration both for its safety and comfort. Of course, it was on the wrong side of the road for our use—a dugout's origin can always be determined by noticing toward which direction it opens—but it was so deep that a direct hit would hardly jar the ground. The Boche was certainly a prize dugout builder. It was a manifestation of his thoroughness and willingness to take infinite pains to promote safety. The Americans have suffered from their failure to expend enough labor on protection. Perhaps it was to our advantage that we never got the dugout habit, or we might not have been so successful in the later open warfare, but there were times when we might well have done more. All the decent dugouts I was ever in were originally British, French or Boche. We never stayed long enough in one place nor had patience enough to build them.

An attack—"going over the top"—inspires war correspondents, authors and poets to shed over it a glamour of romance, and generally to attribute a great deal more enthusi-

asm to the participants than they really have. A stubborn defense, outpost duty, raiding, patrolling—any of these incidents call forth literary efforts, in which the soldiers, no matter how much they may hate the job, always appear in print as craving for more. But I have yet to meet the man who dares to claim that any soldier ever enjoyed "night fatigues" in the front areas. I have yet to meet either a poet or a liar who could rise high enough in his respective profession to make readers thrill with the thought of them or to say that a soldier ever liked them. All soldiers think of such "parties" profanely. I found this out on the first night after we reached the sunken road, when we were ordered to carry rations up to the front line platoons.

Each man slung over his shoulders a pair of sandbags filled with the food, carried his arms and ammunition as well, and then for a long haul through the mud and darkness to the front line, with the potential shelling always a mental factor even when they were not actually dropping near us. Then long stretches of trench, with the bulky bags bumping on the curves, before we reached the right platoon; then back again to the sunken road, wondering several times if we were on the right track. No casualties, not terribly dangerous, but exhausting, nerve-wearing, generally mean. The fights we were in we will talk about for the rest of our lives, but the thought of some of our night working parties arouses all that is ugliest in our dispositions. And yet without these jobs the exciting spicy events could never have won the war, and they deserve a place in the record of our events.

The next night found us in the front line, having relieved two platoons of L Co. with little trouble. At last our own "outfit" was holding its own little section of the long ditch we had heard so much about, and there was not a man who did not feel proud to be there, and feel that he had now reached the point when his life was worth while. The men were in the game now, and were willing to play it hard, and every man was determined to show the veteran Tommies that we were just as good if not better. Nevertheless, it was their first night at the very front, and many of them

were nervous, peering out across "No Man's Land" in readiness for advancing Boche. It was then that, in common with the rest of the officers and non-coms, I learned a psychological fact that has helped me over many a bad place —that the best cure for nervousness is the necessity of combatting nervousness in others. It was absolutely necessary that we should appear calm, not merely for our reputations, but in order to keep down the men's nerves. And how we did have to camouflage! Sergeant Bolton and I went along from post to post, stopping at each one long enough to "kid them along" a little as well as to inspect the practical end of things. I acquired an artificially nonchalant drawl in order to conceal the tenseness that my natural voice might have betrayed, and we forced ourselves to hum a tune or tell each other jokes when we were in the men's hearing. The result was that before we realized it, we had really lost our nervousness; had, in effect, bluffed ourselves by bluffing the men; and I have never forgotten that lesson. I believe almost every officer except the rare few who never were nervous, has had about the same experience.

Trench life is not without humor, as Capt. Bairnsfather has amply demonstrated, and it is fully appreciated when it does break out. The Guards used to have a new password every night, often the name of some British notable, or some English town. One night we were with them they politely made "Washington" the password, not merely as a courtesy but so our men could better remember it than a strange name. A determined young Italian in our outfit challenged one of the Guard Officers as he was making his rounds, "Washington," he replied and started to advance. "Halt!" shouted the Italian again. "You no say 'Georga Wash,' dama you no pass." Failure to prove knowledge of the first name evidently seemed a suspicious circumstance.

It was not only the Italians who furnished the amusement, however. One native American backwoodsman was standing on the fire-step, and was hit square in the chest by a Very light, which was so nearly burnt out that it did not even burn him, but it certainly did startle him. He fell back into the trench, shouting that he was "gassed"—why

he chose that theory rather than "shot" heaven knows—and had to be picked up bodily and set on his feet. He was asked why he didn't dodge when he saw it coming at him. "Well, suh," he explained, "you see it so't o' cha'med me."

The evening after the relief had taken place, a patrol to inspect our wire entanglements was decided upon. The necessity was not very great, but we decided it would be well to get used to patrolling before a necessity arose for some more difficult patrol, and the wire was about the nearest objective available. There was a vast difference in one's state of mind about being in the front trench, and being in "No Man's Land." There had been a sort of hoodoo thrown about the latter that it was well to get rid of at once, for in reality it was often safer to be out in front than in some places far behind. Later, in the autumn drives, the hoodoo disappeared, because half the time you didn't know what was "No Man's Land" and what was within your front positions, but in the trench warfare, it seemed to have an especial "spookiness" about it.

We notified the platoons on our flanks, so that they would not fire if they saw us, and crawled out over the parapet, being careful not to show our forms above the general line of the dirt. There were five of us altogether; four Yanks and a sergeant of the Irish Guards; three had rifles with fixed bayonets, and two had revolvers, while each man carried a bomb in his pocket. We traveled on our bellies, wriggling along like snakes, so that no one could have seen us until we were almost upon them, and stopped every few yards to look and listen. That was the approved method for short distance work, as the Boche generally went pretty low, and he who is closest to the ground sees first. We wormed our way out to the wire, found it in fair condition and left three men there, while two of us crawled through the wire to look on a little farther. We thought we heard something going on down in the valley, but could not make certain. We crawled up a little farther, strained our ears trying to catch any slight sound that might mean an enemy patrol, and finally decided it must have been imagination. We rejoined the men at the wire, and waited there in case

a party should come out to cut the wire, but after stiffening ourselves for another half hour on the damp ground, we decided to return. Nothing whatever had occurred and we had spent over an hour in covering two or three hundred yards, so our venture was neither wildly exciting nor remarkably successful, but was perhaps more typical than most accounts of patrolling, for it was more of a coincidence than a commonplace when two opposing patrols met.

We had, at least, accomplished our purpose of taking the novelty off of crawling around "out in front" and I could not say that any of us were especially anxious to strike trouble on our first experiment. Moreover, the Irishman, who was a veteran at the game, seemed as little anxious to do so as any of us, which we can the better understand now that we also know what it is to be "fed up."

That was the first and last time I ever patrolled flat on the ground, for in our later attacks the distances were too great, the time too great a factor, and the respective positions of ourselves and the Boche too vaguely known to allow any such elaborate precautions. We just had to go where we had to and take a chance, only dropping and crawling when we actually saw something or were fired upon. I have often thought that if I had that first patrol to do over again, I would rather risk walking right out to the wire and coming back, for the compensating advantage of getting rid of the job so much the sooner. Advocates of extreme precautions fail to figure the time element; that if a place is dangerous, it is a good thing to do your business quickly and get back to safety.

So drifted on our life with the British—not over strenuous, but exceedingly watchful and careful while in the trenches; full of the most strenuous training while back in billets. We had conquered our early nervousness, and already trench life was commonplace. It was on our next tour at the front that we learned how suddenly the commonplace could change to the intense and terrible.

We started up from Saulty one hot Sunday afternoon, with the regimental band playing, a movie machine grinding as we swung along past the chateau that was Regimental

H. Q. and we entrained on the little narrow gauge as if going to a picnic. The relief was accomplished with little trouble; the next day was quiet and eventless. The men basked in the sun in their firebays, only the sentries on the alert, the rest sleeping, eating crackers, smoking and sighing with boredom. Only one sentry per post was required in the day; at night there were two sentries looking over the parapet, and an additional guard at each end of the bay to prevent a stealthy raid along the trench from the vacant stretches. The men stayed constantly in their bays, awake at night and sleeping by turns by day. Company headquarters was in the "local support," a short section of trench a few hundred yards back a communication trench from the front line. One or two platoons were generally kept back in this local support and the remaining two or three put in the front. The officers ate and slept, when opportunity offered, at the Company Headquarters, and took turns in the front trench, two being up there during the night and one during the day. At morning and evening "stand to," and when an attack threatened, all the officers were, of course, in the firebays.

In the pre-dawn hours of the morning of the 13th, Lt. Parkins and myself happened to be on duty, and were walking slowly up and down the trench, inspecting the positions and the alertness of the sentries. The British batteries behind us put over a short bombardment, and no sooner had it ceased than the Boche opened up on us with H. E.'s and minnewerfers. We had experienced plenty of casual shelling before this, but this was our first barrage and it was ranged almost to perfection. The "Minnie" is a terrible thing. Falling slowly from a high range, it can drop into a trench more easily than the ordinary shell, and in the daytime can actually be seen falling drunkenly through the air. The concussion alone is terrific, not to mention the scatter of the fragments. They dropped into one bay after another with amazing rapidity; the air and the very ground shook under them, so that men would be knocked down and shaken in every fibre even when they were not hit. Lt. Parkins and I had met in the middle of our sector when the

barrage started, and each started along the trench in opposite directions to pass the order to "stand to" and see that all men were prepared for the attack that might follow. I ran along the duck-boards, followed by my "runner," stopping but an instant at each post to see that the corporal had his men in hand and properly placed. My anxiety was needless; every man of the platoon was right in his place on the fire-step, crouched down behind the parapet, his rifle or Lewis gun ready to fire. Those knocked down, if not severely wounded, were on their feet again and on the job in an instant. A man with a wound in the leg came frantically down the trench, limping as he ran, trying to find some kind of shelter, and almost ran into me. I tried to open a first-aid packet with more haste than skill and managed to slice up my hand so badly with the jagged tin that I got the bandage bloodied up before I could get it on him. A shell had landed right in his bay; why the whole squad was not wiped out is a miracle; they were all knocked down and this man and three others wounded. Corporal Mannerberg, who commanded the post, reorganized his men instantly, and I did not know until the affair was all over that he was wounded in the wrist.

The barrage lifted after fifteen minutes that seemed like hours, and played on the communicating and support trenches in order to prevent help from reaching the front. A wild dash from company headquarters had brought the other officers up to us and all was ready to give the Boche a good reception if he "came over." He did not come over on us and it was not until afterward that we learned that L Co. on our left had received and repulsed a severe raid.

Isolating a particular post, from which the barrage was lifted while it continued to batter the rest of the sector, they rushed it with bombs and bayonets. Corporal Johnston had his leg shattered by a bomb, but continued to fire his rifle and encourage his men; heavy fire was poured into the raiding party by the posts on the flanks in spite of the falling shells, and the Boche withdrew, leaving behind the body of their officer and a wounded private and dragging several other casualties with them. The corporal lost his leg but

was awarded the D. C. M. by the British commander; Pvt. Collier, who was with him and carried him back, got the Military Medal, and the integrity of the line which we had borrowed from the British was preserved.

I Company had suffered from the barrage, though we did not catch the raid. My platoon had only wounds, no deaths, but the platoon on our left, adjoining L Company, had four men killed. Corporal Truxal had died as he had lived—doing his duty and caring for his men. He had started to move his squad into the next bay where less shells were hitting, and, remaining in the more dangerous position until last, had been killed with the sentry just as the other six men had gotten around the curve ahead of them.

Previous to this morning, we had lost only one man, hit by a chance shell. Now the Boche and ourselves had really met and drawn each other's blood, and we felt that we had met our first real test, and had not been found wanting.

It was then for the first time that the British officers and men confessed to us how doubtful they had been as to how our green troops would perform under fire, and at the same time told us how delighted they had been with the coolness and steadiness that our men showed. That little affair that the Boche attempted to put across that morning did more to wipe out the friction between the English and the Americans than a month of conventions and speechmakings could have done. While the barrage was going on, a Sergeant from the "Tommies" on our right, who saw we were catching it and wondered if we held, ran down to my flank post to see if we were breaking and needed support. The answer given him by Corporal Puzo, as good an "American" as ever bore an Italian name, ranks in my mind with any of the "famous sayings of American Commanders" that fill our history books; "You don't need to worry any place us Yanks is at," and the veteran went back to his platoon satisfied, for the claim had been not only spoken, but proved. Every man had "stood to" according to the "trench orders" of the Guards Division, in spite of the temptation offered by the "bivvies" in the wall of the trench.

We have often debated since then whether the policy of standing ready to fire during a bombardment was necessary. Casualties from shell fire might have been saved by making use of all possible cover, as was, of course, done in all positions except the very front line. The British, however, were unwilling to risk a raid reaching the trench when the men were not ready to shoot, and having the men trapped in dugouts and bombed or bayoneted without a chance to fight, which might result in the loss of the trench as well as in casualties. The Boche held to the "deep dugout" policy and doubtless suffered less from shelling, but were often caught by British raids at the instant the barrage lifted, before they could pour out of their dugouts. The Americans while with the British necessarily obeyed British standing orders; in the autumn drive the question did not arise. We took the best cover we could and we moved so much that the best was never deep enough to spoil our watchfulness. The system that some of our outfits adopted during the trench warfare was good, but risky, namely to advance from the trench and lie down just inside the wire, allowing the barrage to fall in an empty trench, while the men are in a ready position and avoid the shelling also. But this requires a very accurate barrage, or too many shells will be falling near the wire, and also involves an initial jump over the protecting parapet in which some would be hit, and greater exposure in case rifle fire from the Boche trenches followed the bombardment. I have never seen it done, but believe that if trench warfare had continued it would have become the American method. It is perhaps characteristic of the Tommy to hold on to his regular post regardless of what comes, of the Boche to stay protected at the risk of worse danger, more remote, and of the Yank to dodge the bombardment by advancing into the open. The British were skeptical of the advantage of leaving the partial protection of the trench for the hope of being out of range, and they had plenty of experience to quote in an argument.

This is a somewhat technical digression from the narrative, but may serve to show the difficulties of deciding how to handle a situation in which some casualties are almost in-

evitable, and to show the folly of crying "useless casualties" without a full study of the situation.

Be that as it may, our men had come through their first real test with a full measure of credit; had gained the admiration of the Tommies and greater confidence in themselves, and were now hardened for the far greater tests that were to come when America "took the bit in her teeth" and started over the wooded hills to victory.

Our Company was relieved by K Company the night after the attack, and took up the more secure life of the support, in one of the deep "sunken roads" which are so characteristic of that part of France, and were so useful to the troops of both sides.

But support life, while less intense, was no "rest camp," for it is the support battalion that supplies the working parties for the much-hated night fatigues. This time the job was to move a large pile of gas projector tubes from the place where they were last fired to the location of the next shoot. The "doughboys," as always, did the heavy work, and the Royal Engineers had to bury and camouflage the tubes before daylight. The tubes were all that two men could lift, the night was dark and the ground irregular, and as we were only two or three hundred yards behind the front line, the danger of detection and shelling was very real. The job took nearly four hours and the men were utterly exhausted by the time it was finished. Now and then a Very light would go up, or a tube would be dropped on another with a clang of metal that would awaken the echoes and then we would wait a minute in expectation of an answering shell, and breathe a sigh of relief when none came.

We had seen a small gas shoot put over by the British a few days before, and it was indeed a terrific thing. The projector combines the cloud idea and the gas shell idea. It is an enormous cylinder, which shoots a short distance at a very high angle, and bursts with terrific force, releasing a small cloud of gas which drifts on with the wind. If "Jerry" detects such an attack being prepared all hell is let loose on the place, hence the importance of camouflaging, and hence

also an awful joke—caught in time to prevent it being serious—on one of the K Company lieutenants.

This lieutenant was in charge of the section of support trench, on the lee-side of a bank, where we had so laboriously placed the projectors the night before and, having brought with him from billets the habit of "policing up" on all occasions, cast his eye over the ground in search of the unsanitary and the unsightly. Now "camouflage," be it understood, does not generally consist of artistic and ingenious tricks such as are shown in war pictures, but of rolls of chicken wire draped with brown or green burlap, very ragged and frowsy. "Police up that rubbish," the officer commanded, and if he had not been politely but firmly restrained by the British N.C.O., the deadly projectors would have been exposed to the first Boche plane that came over.

After two days in the support, we were relieved altogether, and a long night hike brought us to the narrow gauge, where the platoons, drifting in separately from their various positions, reformed into their companies. The slow, puffing little train took us back to Saulty in the chill of the early dawn. The men, packed like sardines in the tiny cars, slept or smoked, their heads on the next man's stomach. We dragged ourselves into our billets, weary, dirty and unshaven, but happy in the hope of a few days' real rest.

We fell asleep, few even stopping to undress, and woke up in time for dinner to meet one of the worst discouragements that a soldier has to face. The order had come out for the Third Battalion to go in again that night, and our brief rest was turned again into a hurried preparation. As events turned out, it amounted to little; we only went to the reserve position near Ransart, several miles from the line, and had a fairly restful time, but it took every ounce of reserve force a man had in him to start back in again and give up the expected rest without complaining. Then, as unexpectedly as we had gone in, we went out again.

CHAPTER III

Life in the Bois

WE had arrived in France at a time when allied fortunes were in a critical position; the British had barely recovered from the terrific March offensive, and were necessarily more interested in avoiding casualties than in harassing the Boche. Their artillery and aviation maintained their usual supremacy, but the Infantry, who had borne the brunt of the great Hun drive, played it watchfully and doggedly, but very safe, and allowed "Jerry" to rule over No Man's Land rather than waste men in fruitless small encounters. Apparently it was a contest of patience and might last forever. The British might defeat the Boche in such a contest, but the Americans' best genius was for action.

Then in July came the news from Chateau Thierry and big headlines every day thereafter until the whole Marne salient was flattened out. How it did cheer us up, and how we did like to hear our allies praise the Americans! And by August there was a new feeling in the air, a new offensive spirit and a desire to end the war quickly, and rumors began to fly. The entire line was going to get out of the trenches and start forward on September 15th and keep going regardless of cost until the end was accomplished—this was about the favorite one at that time. And then the plans of an attack right in our own sector began to be talked of, and at first we were going to be in it. Then at the last minute we were pulled out and started southeast to join the rest of the American army. We left the reserve trenches at Ransart on a sudden order, and the next day the Guards went forward without us, for our time had not yet come, and we were needed to help form the First Army, which was already being collected and prepared for the greater drive which was to turn a "quiet sector" into the terrific final battle ground.

We marched hurriedly that night, for we had several miles to go before we were altogether out of shell range, and the moon was so bright that a column on a white road made too

good a target for Boche bombers. Several times the rumble of motors would be heard overhead, and in an instant the whole battalion would be off the road, and lying still on the darker background of the bank until the plane had passed on out of hearing. About two hours after midnight we reached a small dirty village where we slept the rest of the night on barn floors, then on again the next day until we reached the valley of the Canche River, where we pitched tents in a cow pasture. It was a long, mean hike, but how good the green meadows and pastures looked after the desolation of the shell-holes and trenches! Then we reached the little city of Frevent, where we rested two nights, the whole battalion billeted in a large brewery, and had baths, some real meals and a chance to see an excellent show by a British army troupe.

These shows formed a prominent part of British "back area" life; the players had all served in the trenches and were for the most part actors by profession, and their value in making the rest periods really enjoyable and relaxing was inestimable. This particular show included a ridiculous jingly little song that ended up "Everybody happy in the old French trench," and this optimistic little sentiment became quite a byword in Company I, being often quoted later on, even when everybody had a hard time trying to stay happy.

The regiment entrained, and the "British sector" became a memory. We passed Amiens, where the road had just been reopened, through Paris at night, and found ourselves heading toward Dijon the next morning. The Italians were jubilant with a false hope; we were aimed toward Italy, and they thought we were being sent to the Italian front. To their disappointment we landed near Chatillon-sur-Seine, and after enduring a severe thunderstorm, camped in a field next to a group of wooden barracks occupied by some Signal Corps troops. Then for the first time we saw a real, full-sized American Y. M. C. A. hut, and the officers slept on the stage at night. It cheered us up, for we thought that now that we were in the "American Sector," we would see something of the Y. M. C. A. besides the magazine advertisements, and

would no longer wish in vain for cigarettes, hot chocolate, and the homelike influence we had read so much about. Not until later did we learn that the Y. M. C. A. was mainly for the S. O. S., and that the nearer we got to the line, and the more we needed the "Y" the less we would see of it. That night we felt deeply grateful to the "Y" and our inclination was all in its favor, but thereafter it was a great and deepening disappointment to find that we only ran into it on such rare occasions as this, when we were temporarily near a big town, and to realize that the "Y" considered the needs of the fighting men less important than those of the non-combatants.

A day's march up the valley of the Seine followed, the road winding along between the steep banks sprinkled with chateaux that reminded one of the castles of fairy tales and through little villages that seemed more like parts of Switzerland than like the low-lying Northern France. The Seine at this point is a mere brook, and as we stopped for dinner in a meadow through which it lazily curved, most of the men refreshed themselves by a swim, splashing about and diving from the banks, as boyishly as only the American soldier can act.

At dusk we arrived at the tiny village of Bellenod, a little cluster of houses on a rocky hillside that recalled the familiar "hill pastures" of New England. Only our company was in the village, the battalion being split up among the neighboring communities, in order that camping space should not be overcrowded. After our turn in the trenches and our succession of long hikes, it seemed to us as though, in this far-off corner of the world, we had come upon a true rustic paradise. We were only the second American troops that had been in the region, and there was a spirit of cordiality and obligingness among the villagers that was entirely lacking in the people of Pas de Calais who had been overrun with soldiers for four years. Here the men rested, drilled, and relaxed their souls in the evening by sitting in front of the small estaminet, drinking "vin rouge" and trying to talk to the natives. The Italians seemed to be even more at home than the others, for it was a part of

France in which there was apparently some admixture of Italian blood and language and the Bellenod evenings resounded with Italian opera and ballads from the front of the inn.

By virtue of an extremely slight knowledge of French, I drew the job of "Acting Town Major," which meant in plain English, the duty of negotiating with the local Mayor for the use and rental of such fields and billets as the troops required. In a town of considerable size, this duty generally falls upon a Major—hence the title—but Bellenod was a second lieutenant-size town. I sought out "le Maire" by way of making an official call. His Honor was very obliging and loquacious, had a large dirty white mustache, and a large gold collar button where his collar should have been, and altogether reminded me so much of the traditional "constabule" of rural America that I had difficulty in preserving the dignity that the occasion demanded. By way of diplomatic introduction, I offered a Cinco cigar, but, unlike his American counterpart, he shook his head and replied, "Fume pas," to which his wife added, "Il n'a fauts pas." I suspected that the lady's presence might have had something to do with his statement that he didn't smoke, so tried him again when we were alone, but his repeated refusal convinced me that his wife spoke truly, and here, indeed, must be the perfect husband!

Our dreams of a long rest in the delightful Bellenod were interrupted by an order to prepare for prolonged field maneuvers. On the face of it, this looked as if we were merely going into another phase of our training for the rumored coming offensive, but it did not take us long to guess that this was a piece of camouflage, and that the prolonged maneuvers were to be against an enemy that was far from imaginary. So we left Bellenod forever, and marched down the valley again. A pleasant Sunday morning found the regiment resting in a meadow near Chatillon. The band played "Onward Christian Soldiers," and in a corner of the field the Catholics gathered for Mass, while on the other side of the camp the Protestant Chaplain held his services. It was one of those extra-peaceful occasions which live in a man's

memory the more because of their contrast with the noise and bustle of our ordinary days. A chilly night intervened before we entrained and hugh fires were lit, the men clustering about them, sleeping, smoking or talking, like the old "bivouacs" of Civil War stories, before the introduction of aircraft deprived the soldier of even this simple luxury. This was the last time we had uncovered fires after nightfall until the memorable evening of November 11th, for our next train ride brought us close enough to the front to make it unsafe.

The next night inaugurated a period of secret movements, hiding in woods by day, and marching only at night. It was the old "Indian stuff," on a gigantic scale, for division upon division was being stealthily worked up nearer to the front, and with never a wagon or a soldier more than usual on the roads by day, or a light by night. The enemy may have learned a part of what was going on by spies, but I do not believe that their aviators reported a single thing out of the ordinary.

This phase of our history is dramatic in retrospect, but was both monotonous and difficult in the doing. Idleness and uncertainty in the daytime, never knowing whether we would move the next day or not, and then the terrific hike through mud and rain almost all night to a new woods where our small attempts at comfort and shelter had to be begun anew, marked this period.

We piled out of the train near Bar-le-Duc after dark, the night after we left Chatillon, and the first of this series of marches began. No one ever knew, on these marches, how long it would be, nor where we were going, which made them the more discouraging. On and on we marched in the dark, through deep woods, up hills and down again. Every hour we halted and fell out for ten minutes' rest, the men falling asleep on the wet ground, waking up shivering at the call to "get in shape" and throwing off the chill by the exertion of the next hour's marching. Finally we came to the "Bois" or patch of woodland, that was to be our stopping place. Only a narrow path entered the woods from the road, and the entire regiment had to enter it in single file, each

man hanging on the coat-tails of the man ahead of him to keep from getting lost. Loud and hilarious yelling accompanied this process—for noise, unlike light, was permissible—and the whole scene reminded one more of an entrance into some mysterious cavern than into an ordinary patch of forest. The path was cut a little wider for the Transport and by daybreak not a man, animal or vehicle showed outside the edge of the woods.

For five days we camped here, clearing out enough of the underbrush to make level places for the shelter tents. It reminded us of old vacation days in the Maine woods, and the I Company officers built a fine lean-to of boughs and shelter halves on the old camping-trip plan, with a bed of ferns. As we lay there smoking in the evenings it was difficult indeed to realize that we were not on a mere ordinary camping trip, but in the daytime preparations for the battle went on in spite of our restricted conditions and the rattle of the automatic rifles and the bursting of hand grenades made the woods resound.

As usual, we made our move in the night and in the rain, and received our orders at the last minute. We rolled packs, assembled on the road after dark, and then had one of those long, chilly, apparently needless waits before the command came to fall in and start on the march. Three French privates reported to our battalion as instructors in the use of the Chauchat automatic rifle, and apparently the outfit they belonged to had followed the same short-sighted policy that American companies generally use in cases of "detached service," for the three specimens that they sent us were the worst-looking soldiers of any nationality that I have ever seen. Anyone who regarded them as typical must have had a low regard for the French army, for these fellows were undersized, dirty, unshaven and apparently half-witted. After their first sample of an American hike they left us as mysteriously as they had come, and whether they deserted, or reported back that our instruction was completed, we never knew nor cared.

That hike was enough to discourage anyone, especially if he thought we did it every night. We had gone but a

short distance, and were off the main road, on a steep and rough back lane, when a terrific thunderstorm struck us. The rain came down on us in sheets, the ground was so sloppy that even our hob-nails could not save us from much slipping and falling, and it was so dark that only the flashes of lightning told you whether you were in the column or off on a tangent by yourself. Several men sprained their ankles so badly that they never got back to the line again. No one knew the way except the officers at the head of the column, and it sometimes seemed doubtful if they did, so whenever any platoon got a little behind it would have to run to avoid leaving a gap and losing all those behind it. At last we came out again on the main road; the rain had slackened, and we repaired our straggling formations, and marched into the village of Nancois-le-Petit, where, after another short delay, we got the regiment distributed among the various barns and haylofts that the town afforded, and got to sleep just before dawn. The Transport had had as rough a trip on the hilly roads as we had had on our would-be short-cut, and arrived even later, but we slept late, and had a larged combined breakfast and dinner, at about eleven o'clock.

It was such nights as this that made men damn the Infantry then, and that make men proud to have been in the Infantry now, as much as the days and nights of the drive itself. These are not the experiences that get into the newspapers, but they are hardly less exhausting than the ones that do. Reading an account of an attack, one would think our troubles started with the advance from the front line. It is to the greater glory of the Infantry to know what long miles and sleepless nights had been endured before it even got to the point where its work began to show.

Four days we remained at Nancois-le-Petit, where we had a chance to go through some tactical problems that were of more benefit than usual by reason of the similarity between the terrain there and the ground over which we actually fought. Most of our training in attack had been on too limited and cramped a scale, but here we had a whole wooded hillside, and could get more of a picture of the real thing than we had gotten on a mere drill field. True, we had seen

real action with the British, but that was stationary trench warfare and was quite different from the kind we were now about to take part in.

On the evening of September 12th, we formed for another move, understanding that we were going up to the line, though where, or with what object, we did not know. We were met just outside the town by a train of French motor trucks that were to take us up, and started to load the men into them. They squeezed and packed as tight as they could, but at best nearly a quarter of our battalion was left behind and had to follow the next morning. By some error an insufficient number of trucks had been arranged for. Add to this the fact that we arrived at our destination several hours late and the appropriateness of the famous line "What though the soldier knew someone had blundered" is seen. As was generally the case when something went wrong, it was someone high up who did the blundering, and the privates and line officers who had to hike twice as hard to make up for it.

Such was our entry into the St. Mihiel drive, in which we had no fighting, but two days of terrible marching. Our part in it was in a sense a farce, but the distance and speed that we had to travel was no joke, and if the attacking divisions had not done their work so quickly, we might have had plenty to do. Our division was in the reserve, and our regiment had the special mission of striking in at the side of the salient and cutting off the retreat of the enemy who were driven back in the main attack at the point. The speed of the attack, combined with the delay of our truck train, brought us there too late to catch them, but not too late for a hot pursuit.

We piled out of our truck in the morning near Woimby, on the bank of the Meuse, and after a hasty breakfast of cold "canned Willie" and crackers, started into what had been German territory twenty-four hours before. We had not the slightest idea whether we were one mile or twenty behind the front line, but not a sound of battle was heard. We saw Austrian prisoners coming back in droves escorted by French; and some French artillery shared the roads with

us. All along the way we passed signboards printed in German; Boche equipment of all kinds, and in the little villages and hurriedly abandoned camps, their fires were still burning. Some of the boys even had the good fortune to find beer in the dugouts. At one point we passed a solid belt of barbed wire entanglements at least sixty yards wide, in front of trenches, and I believe this was the Hindenburg Line, which, before the drive, was a reserve position a few miles in rear of the front trenches.

We made a halt later in the afternoon in a little valley and cooked some more of our emergency rations before darkness should preclude fires. Then "Officers' Call" sounded on the bugle, and we assembled at a road corner for orders for the night. A French lieutenant dashed up on a white horse, saluted and started in: "Monsieur le Colonel," which was all that any of us understood until it was translated, but it lent a touch of the dramatic to the scene.

Our battalion was to advance over the hill in front of us and take up a position with outposts for the night, after which we would receive further orders for the next day. It was pitch dark, and no one knew anything about the lay of the land or the distance or position of the enemy. In a general movement on the main front, the direction of the enemy was, as a rule, obvious, but as our mission was to get in behind a retreating detachment of Boche, in the salient, the directions were almost reversed. As this had not been clearly explained to us, it was no wonder that the idea wasn't correctly carried out, but it was lucky that the Boche were well on the run and did not counter-attack that night. L and M Companies were in the front of our battalion, and established outposts on the wrong side, the rest of the men sleeping peacefully with their backs toward the enemy. I and K Companies thought they were behind them but were actually alongside and contented themselves with a few gas sentries facing the allied lines!

The commanders of I and K Companies went to find Battalion Headquarters; they couldn't find it nor could they find their own companies when they tried to come back to them, so they slept by themselves in the middle of the field

several hundred yards nearer the enemy than the whole rest of the regiment. Luckily the Boche were by this time far enough away so that no harm was done, but it gave us a shock when we found out the situation, and many a laugh afterwards.

Early in the morning we started back, through Lavigneville, and La Croix sur Meuse, and back to our starting place, the hike back being nearly as hard as the hike forward. Such was our small share in the wiping out of the St. Mihiel salient; if the Boche had put up the resistance that was expected, our part might have been greater.

We went back in trucks and camped in an orchard near Chaumont-sur-Aire, a village on the main road from Bar-le-Duc to Verdun, but the next day it was a case of "move again." We marched a short distance to the main road, and were loaded once more into the small French trucks—this time with great despatch and efficiency. It was a bright starlit night, and the road showed up clear and white ahead of the camions. I did not then know where we were going, nor where the road led. In the truck ahead of me the men were singing the old song, now so literally true, "We don't know where we're going, but we're on our way." I was sitting on the front seat with the driver—a typical bewhiskered "Frog" with his head hunched down into the collar of his faded blue coat. I asked him where we were going. "Verdun," was the reply.

As the camion sped along, all the tragedy and the glory of Verdun came to my mind. This was the highway from the rest of France to the beleaguered fortress at the point of the salient. It was up this very road that the continual trains of ammunition and rations, and the ambulances, had passed, when the battle was at its worst, and the railroads had been cut off, and it was along here that thousands of the best of France's soldiers had marched to take their turn in the most critical part of France's struggle. The crisis had passed, but, while defeat had been staved off, victory had not yet been gained, and now it was our turn to travel up the same road in the same cause.

We did not actually go in until ten days later, and then it

was at several miles distance from Verdun itself, but that night I thought we were going straight up to the town itself, and it was a great surprise to me when the train stopped near Souilly, and we once more took up our life in the woods. We knew at least by that time that some great movement was closely impending, and expected it even sooner than it actually came. We passed so many nights under the impression that we were just on the edge of a battle, that the feeling almost got stale in our minds, and when it became a reality the edge of the excitement was already worn off; and, as usual in human affairs, the reality was less exciting than the apprehension.

We were well accustomed to woods camping by this time, and made ourselves reasonably comfortable in short order. Being now nearer to the front, the secrecy was the more strict, and not a man left the woods during daylight. Sentries at the ends of all paths enforced the order.

Our life in the woods was monotonous on the whole, but fairly restful as long as we stayed in one place. While at Souilly we went through some combat maneuvers that were fairly true to the reality that followed, since so much of our fighting was in the woods, but it was too cramped up, and on too small a scale. No one had a very definite and accurate picture of what the real thing would be, in spite of many lectures and explanations by officers who had been in the summer attacks, and our maneuvers before the fight at best compare very unfavorably with those engaged in after the armistice, when they were not nearly so important. We knew that we were on the verge of a big drive, and had frequent conferences, at which, thanks to the wisdom of the Major, the sergeants who commanded the platoons, as well as the officers, were present. The stay at Souilly is chiefly remembered by the men for one evening when the whole regiment was led on a sort of "follow the leader" stunt through the woods. The object was to see if we could "keep closed up" and avoid splitting up and losing part of the outfit, and it was a thorough enough test, for we had double-timed through the woods, jumped logs, and turned sharp corners aplenty before we finally regained the main road and reorganized the column.

In a few days, as usual, we had another night move, this time an all-night affair. The distance to our destination was not so great, but because of the heavy traffic on the Verdun highway we were ordered to go by a circuitous back road—one of the many instances where the Infantry got the rough end of the deal.

Frequent delays and unexplainable halts retarded our progress. It became very cold, and the ground was wet, but as the night wore on and the men grew more tired, it got so that they would drop down and fall sound asleep the minute we fell out, and have to be roughly awakened when the signal came to fall in again. We thought that we were going directly into the line, and that we might "go over" without even stopping to rest from this hike, but everyone was so weary that he cared little whether we did or not at the time. At one time we went on the main road for a mile or two, not far from Verdun itself, and heard the Allied guns steadily pounding away.

"That's Jerry getting his 'iron rations,' " remarked one of the men. "Iron ration" was the term used for "emergency ration" when we were in the British sector. Thank Heaven for the humorist that almost every platoon includes. That fellow kept the whole crowd laughing for an hour with puns and sarcastic comments on things in general, when it was a choice between laughing and cursing. What he said about the army and his "superior officers," from G. H. Q. down to the right guide, would have been enough to hang him if set down in cold print, but it made everybody feel better, and I would not have stopped him for the world.

We left the road as dawn was breaking, cut across a field, through a marsh and up a steep hill into another woods. We found we were not quite in the right place, but we had already been on our feet so long that it was decided to "flop" right there and locate our correct station later. It was broad daylight when we at last unrolled packs for a few hours' sleep; getting up again at noon to march another mile or so around the edge of the "Bois" to our assigned place, where we could meet our rolling kitchens and enjoy a hot meal.

We were now in the "Lampire Woods," where the French maintained a permanent camping place for outfits just going into, or coming out from, the Verdun lines. The small growth was cleared away, the large trees being left to provide sufficient concealment from airplanes, so that the place resembled a park or picnic grounds. We put our "pup-tents" in the best covered parts of the grounds, and prepared to make the most of the days of rest that we knew would be very few.

Most of the men wrote home every day during that short period, since each day might be our last chance to write until after the drive, which meant that it might be the last chance in this life. Some letters were also written to be mailed only in case the writer was killed, but I don't think that as many did that as might be expected. Combined with the necessity for unusual care and strictness in censoring, this outburst of mail kept the officers busy.

The time for training in any large way was now past, but there was much to be done in the way of preparation for our particular mission. Equipment of all kinds was given a last inspection, gas masks were thoroughly gone over, and a lot of grenades of various types issued and tried out. Pyrotechnics were distributed to the company and platoon commanders, a code given us for their use, and a demonstration arranged by a French lieutenant. This was one matter in which we had received little instruction, but would have succeeded well enough nevertheless if the code had been simpler and the rockets and flares less varied. But we were compelled to carry types of rockets that were not even included in the code, or that only the higher commanders would be likely to use, with the result that it was generally hard to find the few useful ones when needed.

Maps were issued to all the officers, with the Boche positions and the barrage lines marked on them and the whole plan, with the maps, carefully gone over with the non-coms, and to some extent with the privates as well; all that was still unknown was the day and hour.

On the evening of the 23rd we prepared to move, and had already fallen in and joined the other battalions when we

were halted, and after a wait of nearly two hours, were told to return to our camping place. What change of plan was made, we never knew, but it was only a matter of one day, for the next evening we did move.

A lady who was in the entertainment work of the Y. M. C. A. gave some sort of a recital in a natural woods theatre that afternoon, and I think the entire regiment attended. I have only the haziest recollection of what she said or did, but whatever it was, it well served the purpose of taking our minds off the coming drive for a few minutes of relaxation. The show was no sooner over than Major Emory and the company commanders received a hasty order, and left by automobile to reconnoitre the front and get familiar with the lay of the land at our "jumping off" place, the troops to follow later in the evening. This left me temporarily in command of Company I, as two officers who were senior to me were away at school, and it was a great relief when Lieutenant France joined us again the next day after a dangerous and tiring night, for I had no great desire to command more than a platoon unless I had to.

We left the Lampire woods late in the evening of the 24th, expecting a comparatively short journey, but when we got up to the main road we found it so clogged up, with a continuous stream of field artillery going forward, and an intermittent stream of trucks and ambulances going to the rear, that it was almost impossible for Infantry to get through. We struggled along, in and out among the caissons, often getting clear over into the mud, and several times stopping altogether until the jam was a little bit cleared, and we scarcely averaged two kilometers an hour. The last village we went through was a battered ruin called "Germainville," and we entered the Bois Bourrus, an old French strong point of the early Verdun days, where we unrolled our packs under the open sky and snatched a few hours sleep—our last sleep before we "went over." It was as peaceful as any of the woods we had slept in during the past month, but the Bois Bourrus was soon to become a place to be remembered, as long as 320th men shall live, as a place of death and horror.

CHAPTER IV

The Big Drive.

EARLY in the afternoon of the 25th, Major Emory held a meeting of officers and non-coms, and told us that "D Day" might be the morrow and might be the day after.

A few hours later word came that we would leave the woods late that night, and "go over" in the morning. The Second Battalion was to form the assaulting waves, our battalion the support, and the First the reserve. Lt. Titus and I were ordered to take fifty men from I Company and form a "mopping-up" wave, to follow just behind the Second Battalion. It was an eleventh hour order, but we hurriedly picked our men, had them turn over their automatic rifles to the rest of the company, and take an extra quantity of bombs in exchange, and divided them into two sections, so that we could each run a small unit instead of combining on a larger one. As we stuffed our pockets with bombs, and explained our mission to the men, we reminded ourselves of some mob of anarchists or blackhanders. The men saw the humor of the situation and were keen for the excitement, acting like a lot of boys on a "pirates" game. Our job was to bomb dugouts, search out snipers who had hidden while the first wave passed over, and in general to kill or capture any small remnants of opposition that the assaulting waves did not stop for.

We had eaten an early supper, and an additional round of hot coffee and bacon was ordered for 10 o'clock, as it was our last chance for a hot "chow." The kitchens did their best to keep their fires low, and avoid sparks, but they showed some light, and whether this caused the trouble, or whether the Boche simply knew that this woods was a likely place to catch troops in, we never knew. The men were drinking their coffee, lying on the ground in little groups near their stacked arms, and trying to get an hour's rest before we started off. Without an instant's warning, Hell cut loose! C-r-r-ash! A big H.E. came tearing through the trees, and landed within a few yards of battalion head-

quarters. Another followed in about thirty seconds; it landed square in the midst of a meeting of L Company non-coms, and killed or wounded every corporal and sergeant in one of its platoons. More followed, striking in different places all over that corner of the woods, until it was a perfect pitch-dark maelstrom of flying shell fragments and pieces of trees, with men running about frantically trying to get out of the way, and wounded men groaning and crying for help on all sides.

There was an elaborate system of enormous French dug-outs in the side of the hill a few yards away, and the men made for the entrances, some by platoons, and many individually. Our battalion still had a little time before it had to move out, and by that time the shelling might stop. The Second Battalion, which had to get started right away, was in a less battered part of the woods, and moved down to the road at once, getting away with far less casualties than we had, although not without some confusion. If our problem had been merely to minimize the casualties and keep the organization together in what shelter we could find, it would have been fairly simple, but here we were still five kilometers from the jumping-off place, and a whole regiment to organize for an attack at dawn. We had no time to think of anything but getting each unit to its appointed place in time to go over when "H hour" arrived. The bombardment could not have come at a more perfect psychological moment for the Boche, and to my mind the fact that the 320th Infantry made their attack at all, was even more of a feat than anything that we did after the drive actually started. It was only the frantic and herculean labors of the officers and non-coms in getting the different units together in the darkness and under the heavy shelling, and the devotion to duty of the vast majority of the men in coming out of the dugouts when ordered, that saved the regiment from being beaten before the battle began. I had gone over to the Second Battalion to find out just how I was to join on to their rear on the road, and was on my way back to the "moppers-up" when the shelling began. I ran toward the place I had left them, dropping flat whenever a shell came

near me, and jumping up again as soon as it had burst. Once I got on the wrong path, and had to stop and look at my compass, and then turn back to the last fork. I passed the place where the first ones had hit, and will never forget the cry: "O God, help me!" that came from under the bushes. But I couldn't stop; that was the medical men's job and mine was to get fifty men collected out of different dugouts and out of the woods in time to go to the jumping-off place behind the Second Battalion. We could not wait until our battalion started, for we were practically lent to the assault battalion, and might miss our function altogether if we once lost them. There was a fortunate lull in the shelling, and by dint of frantic searchings, shouts, exhortations and some threats, Lieutenant Titus and Sergeant Barnhart and I finally got about forty-five of our original fifty men together and led them to the road, where we were lucky enough to find the approximate end of the battalion.

Then they began shelling the road—not as heavy stuff as in the first bombardment, but bad enough. It is easy enough to say to "take open formations under shell fire," but what if there is only one road out, and everybody has to use it at once? The men were in solid column of squads, in places even two columns abreast, and often not even moving on account of some jam up ahead. Whenever one would come over, twenty or thirty men nearest it would dive for the ditches, and get right into their places again after it had landed. Sometimes one would land right in the road and not get a man. This was a trick we had learned pretty well in the British sector, and every man developed his skill still further that night. Finally the road cleared, and we moved out of the woods, and on up the road between Dead Man's Hill and Hill 304 without further trouble. It was still over an hour's hike that we had to go, and although we now carried only light packs—nothing but slicker and two days' rations—we were pretty well loaded down with bombs, and were already fairly tired when we got there.

We were spared the sight of the Bois Bourrus the next morning. The shelling had continued intermittently all night. The Transport men and cooks, who were not to come

forward until the next night, organized rescue parties and searched the woods through the night, bringing the wounded into the dugouts, where Capt. Sweeney and the other medical men bandaged them up. There were, I believe, seventeen killed and over fifty wounded in all, most of them from our battalion. When a final search was made by daylight, heads and limbs and torsos were seen scattered all over the ground where L Company had been, one fellow's body being smeared on a kitchen wheel as if the spokes had been a part of his own skeleton.

It was like waking from a nightmare to get out of that place, and the last hour before we advanced, which otherwise might have been a trying time, was such a relief from what was past that it was robbed of any thoughts of what was to come.

We deployed in an open field in front of Dead Man's Hill, guiding the moppers-up on the support companies of the battalion ahead. We had about six squads, which we placed at intervals with the corporal in charge of each one, while Lieutenant Titus and I each took the command of three squads. Less than an hour remained after we had completed our dispositions until the advance should begin. Titus and I sat down together for a few minutes and shared a jelly sandwich that I had carried with me for the last two days and shook hands to our mutual luck; then we went to our own sections, and I attached myself to the middle squad of the three, as it was too dark to hope to see them all. Meanwhile our barrage had been going on in great intensity, lighting up the sky in back of us and creating a tremendous racket as it burst only a few hundred yards in front. Combined with the smoke which the artillery put down in addition to their H.E.'s was a considerable natural fog, and a few minutes before "H Hour" it became so thick that one could hardly see five yards ahead of him. We looked at our watches frequently and awaited 5.30.

"Going over the top" is an expression that has lasted from the trench days when the British troops climbed out of the trenches by ladders on the appointed minute, and there was a sharp and sudden break from the security of the trench to

the exposure on top of the parapet. With us it was a misnomer. There was no "top" to go over. We were already deployed in an open field with only a few scattered shell holes in it. The outposts had been withdrawn to avoid our own barrage; the boundaries of "No Man's Land" were not clearly defined. In fact, in one sense we really deployed in No Man's Land, under the protection of our artillery. "H Hour" was chiefly remarkable for its failure to be dramatic or intense.

Five-thirty came. I could see just eight men and could not tell whether the rest of the outfit was starting or not. We started forward as a "combat group" (single file) depending on my compass, for we were as much cut off from the others as if we had been alone at sea. We kept walking forward at a moderate pace, constantly wondering whether the other groups were going faster or slower. Soon some of our shells began to hit too close in front of us, and we slowed down a little. We did not know whether they were exceptionally short, or on the normal barrage line, for the air was too thick to see where the rest were bursting. The first living thing that I saw was a rabbit, coming through the smoke from the Boche lines like greased lightning. All kinds of game birds were also started, and flew about bewildered. Then we saw a Boche coming toward us with his hands high in air and the most terrified look in his face that I have ever seen in mortal man, running almost as fast as the rabbit. We let him go on by, laughing at him as we passed, and we knew that the companies up ahead had begun to do business.

We came to a gully about ankle deep in water, and crossed it at a leap. We didn't know that this was Forges Brook, which we had been told was deep enough to require bridges, and kept on wondering when we would come to it. Some of the Engineers made the same mistake, for we had gone several hundred yards beyond it when there loomed up out of the fog, going diagonally, a crowd of about twenty men carrying a bulky wooden structure which they told us was a bridge for Forges Brook. Soon we began to meet parts of other outfits, generally striking on slightly different angles

from our own, for very slight compass errors make a big difference when a little distance has passed. It became apparent that the different companies had already become pretty badly intermixed, and as for the moppers-up, I didn't have the slightest idea where any of my other squads were. The smoke and fog were fatal to any hope of keeping organizations in their proper place and formation, but in spite of that it was a tremendous life-saver, for the front waves had gone over and flanked the first row of machine gun nests before the Boche gunners had hardly a chance to fire a shot, and our casualties were almost nothing as long as we were hidden. I began to run into other officers that I knew, and we exchanged "good mornings" and cigarettes as though we were meeting on a city street. I could not make head nor tail of where I was with reference to the companies, for I kept getting mixed up with the Second Battalion, whom I was supposed to follow, and then whenever we would be delayed a little we would find ourselves crowded on by L Company whom we were supposed to keep ahead of.

Meanwhile there was the "mopping-up" to do, although the assault companies had pretty well finished the job themselves. We were supposed to work from left to right on our sector, but this beautiful theory didn't work in practice, for the rest of the detachment was now entirely out of my control, and I had to trust to them to take care of the ground in front of them while my squad confined themselves to what was in our sight. To have attempted to go much to the flank with such a small group would have left us hopelessly behind, and spoiled any chance of our making the way clear for our battalion. So we ran along the top of the trenches, heaving bombs into all dugouts that might contain hidden gunners or snipers, looking at scattered wounded Germans to assure ourselves that they were safely out of action, ready to kill them if they should show any signs of treachery, and making the prisoners who were not badly hurt run faster to the rear. The old-fashioned way of "mopping-up" was to kill everything, and there is no possible doubt but that it was necessary in the days of closer personal combat and greater danger of treachery, but in the new open style of fighting,

and with the Boche's general willingness to get safely to the rear as fast as he could, it was unnecessary and almost impracticable. Furthermore, we had been ordered to take prisoners whenever possible, because the Boche will stop shooting sooner to go to the rear than when he knows he is in for sure death. One of our companies that morning had the experience of opening fire on a group of Boche coming forward to surrender, and having them return to their guns and hit several of our men before they were again subdued. But it was often hard to tell just when a Boche was safely out of action and we heard later of a case in our sector where one had slipped back to a buzzer station after being wounded, to be found and killed a few minutes later, so it is probable that if anything, we should have been even rougher than we were.

The first dead Yank I saw was lying directly in front of a machine gun in a shallow trench, not more than two yards in front of the muzzle, and the Boche behind the gun was also dead. They must have got each other at almost the same instant. We lost comparatively few men in this first stage of the drive, and had hardly any shelling at first because the sharpness of the attack kept the Boche busy moving his guns back. Company H almost ran into a gun as it was being moved, and shot the horses and drivers before they could escape.

One of our men's faults was their curiosity and their craze for souvenirs. I came upon a whole group of them gathered around a few prisoners, accepting presents of iron crosses and buttons which the frightened Boche offered doubtless as bribes for their lives, our men apparently forgetting that there were more enemies close at hand. By this time I had lost all my original men, as they would be delayed at some little job and be absorbed into the companies in rear, so I broke up the souvenir party and thereby recruited a dozen or so new moppers-up. I saw a lone American lying on the ground shooting his Chauchat, so ran over to see what the fuss was, and had no sooner dropped down beside him than he curled up with a bullet in the stomach. I took his gun while another fellow picked up a few maga-

zines. The wounded boy did not seem to be suffering, but talked in the voice of a sleepy child protesting against my taking his gun away, and I had to humor him as you would a child, and tell him I would give it back in a minute, in order to get it out of his grasp. We crawled rapidly around the flank of the hostile nest, but by the time we got to it someone had already crippled the single Hun with a shot from the other flank. By this time we were too far onward for me to leave my job and go back to the wounded man and I don't know whether he lived or not, but I believe he soon went painlessly to sleep still murmuring about the loss of his beloved gun.

Our soldiers in this drive walked ahead for the most part as nonchalantly as though they were on a route march. Only when something was actually encountered was the atmosphere in the least intense. In fact sometimes they were too easy-going, apparently too innocent to realize what sudden crises might arise. They were all hungry by this time, and out came the bread and hardtack, though we did not stop. I think this attitude "got the German's goat" even more than intense ferocity, which they better understood. One Boche officer who was captured said he had seen many kinds of soldiers in many kinds of fighting, but he had never before seen soldiers advancing against the enemy with their rifles slung over their shoulders and bread and jam in their hands. I have been asked whether it was true that the Yanks went forward shouting "Lusitania!" They did not, in our outfit. They went forward eating, smoking cigarettes, chewing tobacco, and when they did holler at the Boche it was invariably a less romantic and more vulgar word that they yelled.

By about eleven o'clock we had reached our preliminary objective, where we were to reform our lines and wait thirty-five minutes while the barrage was again laid down ahead of us. Our artillery this time was weaker and less accurate, either because of the more extreme range or because some of it was moving up, and we also got a little desultory shelling from "Jerry." My own company came up, and I found most of my detachment had already re-

joined them, so as the mopping-up job was about over, I decided to go back to I Company and try to get my own platoon into shape.

A large group of prisoners came over the hill on our left, and as we didn't see any guards with them, some officers thought it was a counter-attack coming, so I Company started over to meet them, and narrowly averted shooting them up by suddenly seeing some Americans with them. This move had put us too far over to the left, and when we started forward again, I and K Companies were separated from the rest of the regiment. However, as there had been a gap between us and the 4th Division, it probably was just as well in the end.

We advanced by ourselves in a double skirmish line over the next hill, with apparently no sign of trouble, and the right flank of the company was approaching a small patch of woods, when a burst of machine gun fire suddenly splattered the ground about our feet, slightly wounding one man in the leg. We dropped instantly, and hugged the ground close until some men from the other end of the company, who were not in direct range, had time to work into the woods from the flank, for it is an inevitable cause of needless casualties to advance frontally on a machine gun nest if it can possibly be flanked. Then we crawled around until we could also get into the woods, and a regular man-hunt developed. The woods was grown thick with laurel, penetrated by many intersecting paths, and two or three men would sneak up each fork to hunt out the prey. About eight of us, keeping on the main path, came to a small clearing which contained two small wooden shanties. We approached cautiously, watching the trees for snipers, and glancing sharply around on all sides. We found the buildings deserted, and then saw near one of them the entrance of a dugout. I peered down, and saw something moving down in the darkness, so I pulled a bomb out of my pocket and struck the cap against my tin hat. At the sound of the hissing fuse, there came from the dugout the most unholy conglomeration of yells that I ever heard from human throats—screams of terror and abject pleading. But six seconds is too short a

time to negotiate a surrender; they had kept hidden too long and could not possibly claim to be regarded as prisoners. The fuse was already going and down the hole went the bomb. I jumped back from the mouth and in an instant there was a terrific explosion and a cloud of dust and smoke came up. Why it didn't kill them all, we couldn't imagine, but no sooner had the smoke cleared than the cries started again, and we could distinguish the words "No more" in English. This time we waited with our guns ready, and out piled eight Boche, apparently without a scratch, but as scared as men could well be. There was something ludicrous and at the same time contemptible in the way they screamed for mercy. A short five minutes ago, they had almost killed us, and now they were yelping "Kamerad," and giving us their pistols and even offering their personal belongings with the attitude of whipped curs. We didn't kill them, but we didn't want any of their "Kamerad" stuff either, and we scarcely knew how to express our disgust at their offer to shake hands with us for sparing their lives. It was this same feeling of loathing that kept me from wanting anything they had as souvenirs, though two of the men got beautiful Luger revolvers and various other articles. Most of the men were souvenir-crazy, but in fairness it must be remembered that whatever they took was purely as souvenirs, and I don't believe any of the prisoners' stuff was ever taken for its money value. I contented myself with a small wooden sign on the shanty, which proved that we had captured a battalion headquarters, and I lost that soon afterwards. We also found a whole bag full of maps and documents, which we sent back to the Intelligence Officer, though I never heard whether they proved of any value. The eight prisoners were started back over the hill and sent running to the rear with an "Allez!" and perhaps a kick, and after searching the woods a few minutes more, we rejoined the company.

We were now on the edge of a large woods, and called a halt until we could re-establish liaison with the rest of the regiment, and the runners were kept busy hunting in vain for the Major and the other companies, while Lieutenant

France went over to get what information he could from a 4th Division Battalion with whom we were in contact. About this time a flock of five or six "Jerry" planes came over, flying low and cavorting around as if they owned the whole sky, shooting machine guns at any troops they could find. As usual, not an American plane was in sight. There never were any when Jerry was around, though one would generally come over after the enemy had left, like an innocent-looking policeman appearing after the conclusion of a street fight. We all got into the woods and laid low as soon as we distinguished the black crosses on the plane, but were afraid they might have seen us, in which case the shells would be due to arrive in about five minutes, so we scattered about in the various small "bivvies" and shelters of the old Hun camp. To our surprise, only a handful of shells came, and as things quieted down, and evening approached, the men began to move from holes in the ground to the more comfortable shanties. The fact that these places had been evacuated by the Boche before we arrived led us to believe that some of our troops had already cleared the woods ahead of us, when our feeling of security was abruptly shattered by the instant death of a K Company man from a sniper's bullet. It was then growing dark, and we failed to locate the sniper, but we hastily assembled the men from their insecure positions, went back to the open field, and formed a ring of automatic rifle posts about the two companies to repel any attack during the night, while the rest of the men dug little holes in the ground to gain a slight measure of both protection and warmth, and went to sleep. It was miserable sleeping indeed. The ground was damp, a chilly night had followed a day of profuse sweating and we had not carried our blankets, as a man cannot fight with a heavy pack. Lieutenant France and I had been lucky enough to find a "Jerry" blanket in one of the shanties, and a few of the others did the same, but even with them our teeth chattered all night, and it must have been a good deal worse for those who were less lucky.

In the cold dawn of a rainy morning, we had, as some of our persistent humorists remarked, "bullets instead of bu-

gles for reveille." We were awakened by the sound of machine guns and the buzz of the bullets overhead, coming from the flanks, evidently indirect fire from a long distance. We kept low and made for the woods, which we reached without casualties. We had lingered long enough and determined to push on, bearing to the right, and either locate our own regiment or fight the rest of the drive alone. A trail led out in the right direction, and the brush was too heavy for rapid traveling off the trails, so putting out a "point" in front, we set out. Several times we heard the ominous "rat-tat-tat" of guns, and thought we were striking opposition, but as no bullets came our way, we concluded the sound came from a distance and the fire was not directed at us. After thus advancing about a kilometer, the road came out into a large open field. Suspecting that this clearing was under observation from the wooded hill beyond, we kept the men concealed in the woods until the next step should be decided upon. It was well that we did so, for it was not long before shells started going over our heads and the empty woods several hundred yards behind us was given a severe bombardment. We were evidently farther front than the Boche figured, and if he had seen us, we would have caught it hard without a doubt. As a drive progresses, it becomes increasingly harder for our artillery to support us, and proportionately easier for the Boche to shell us, and we were now at the point where the original impetus of the attack had played out. From now on the Infantry, unaided, had to run up against the combination of everything the Boche had, in positions of his preparation and choosing, and we gained less per day in this phase than we had gained per hour on the initial morning.

We met some of the C Company officers in a wooden shanty, and learned from them that we were again in contact, though no longer in our original support position, the line having widened out and the companies having shrunk so that most of the regiment was in the front line. A continuation of the general advance was not planned until afternoon, when we hoped we would have some artillery help, and in the meantime the men ate a little and rested. Almost all

were out of water, and some of us refilled our canteens from the drippings of the rain from the shanty roof. The water was dirty and tasted of tar, but it was a precious discovery. We also filled our pockets with some little nuts, of which a large quantity had been left in the shanty.

The artillery help did not arrive, but the order to advance did, and we formed on the little road and started through the woods. The denseness of the underbrush soon broke up any semblance of formation, and it became, as it were, a hand to hand struggle with nature to advance at all. The large trees were scarce, but the fallen trunks and the tangled small growth formed an almost impenetrable jungle through which a man had to struggle like a football player bucking a line. Only a few of the nearest men could be seen at a time, and we were as much dependent on the compass as we had been in the fog and smoke of the previous day. Our leggins were torn in shreds and hands and faces scratched in the scramble, so that the woods made us look more like wrecks than the fighting itself. For an hour or more we went on, working to keep the company from complete scattering and not hearing a sign of war on either side. Ripe blackberries grew in our path in untouched profusion, and they were a windfall to the hungry and thirsty men, who grabbed handfuls without stopping. We approached a sharp ridge, and in the valley beyond was the Meuse River. Several paths led up the hillside, and the men, almost exhausted from their push through the brush, inevitably took to the paths and were going faster than had been possible before when the familiar "rat-tat-tat-tat" was heard, and one of the scouts came running back to tell us that machine gun fire had been opened from the ridge. He hardly needed to tell us, for the bullets began to sing over our heads as we hurried up to the support of the men in advance. The platoons were badly intermixed, and some men had gotten a good deal ahead and others a good deal behind. Those who came first pushed up the path and spread out on the side of it under cover of the slope, while the men who had been a little behind were deployed along a transverse path to the left and crawled up through the thicket to the edge of the clearing,

where we could fire from cover into the open. A swale in the ground made it hard to get a good target, but we would now and then see a Boche head and fire. Private Hood, a Kentucky mountaineer, who now hated the Boche as personally as he had hated the officers a year before, got up a tree where he could see over the swale and hit four of them. No one else would ever have thought of that method.

Meanwhile attempts were being made to blow out the nest at the head of the path with rifle grenades. The platoon along the trail was lying flat, a heavy stream of bullets cutting the twigs just above them, though an advance of a few more yards would have brought them over a little cleft in the slope where the bullets were just skimming the ground. Lieutenant Schultz of K Company came up the path as coolly as though it had been a village street, and learned that several rifle grenades had missed their aim, so taking a rifle from one of the men he advanced up the path with Sergeant Barnhart, to try another shot. A burst from the machine guns was heard, and an instant later we saw the Sergeant running down the path, carrying the Lieutenant limp in his arms, a perfect hail of bullets playing about them. How he got down to the safety of the swale, running at full height, seemed a miracle. He could have crawled down, dragging the wounded officer with him, in comparative safety, but his one idea was to get him to a place where his wound could be instantly attended to. The lieutenant was already beyond medical help, with a clean hole through the abdomen, against which the utmost promptness and skill would have been useless, and there in the woods he died, too stunned to suffer, in less than five minutes. He was the first officer of our battalion to die, and a braver one had never lived among us. Sergeant Barnhart was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his gallant effort to save him.

It had by this time become apparent that instead of a single "nest" a whole system of strong defensive positions occupied the ridge. We had by this time killed and captured several Boche, had lost Lieutenant Schultz and one man mortally wounded in return, and had done no more than harass them. Parts of C, I and K Companies were

there, totalling perhaps three hundred and fifty men; we were off our sector, to the left and front of our regiment and completely cut off from communication with our battalion commander, and with nothing to prevent the Boche from cutting off our rear. To have cleared the ridge at all costs would have undoubtedly caused the almost entire loss of the detachment, while with artillery support and proper liaison, it might be easy. I was glad that the decision did not fall upon me. The Captain of "C" Company decided to establish a defensive position for the night, get in touch with the other units, and not force the issue while the odds were still against us. Accordingly we drew back down the hill in the growing darkness, going deep enough into the woods so that Boche shells during the night could find us only by chance, and established a ring of automatic rifle posts. The sound of firing showed us that we were surrounded on three sides. In front, to the right, and in rear, we heard the familiar rattle during the evening. Only toward the east, the direction in which the other companies were supposed to be, were the woods silent, and we hoped, free of the enemy. We were indeed in a ticklish position, and might easily have been completely surrounded and shot up if the Boche had been more aggressive. Our sentinels established, we lay down to try and get a few hours' sleep, while the company commanders talked over the situation in low tones.

It was shortly after one o'clock that I woke up, stiff and shivering, to find Captain Miller talking to me. He wanted me to patrol through the woods to the east, and get in contact with the other companies, or that failing, at least to see if there were any Boche in that direction and pick a better defensive position to which the men could be moved before dawn. The men were sleeping all around in the dark, and it took some time to find the right men to come with me. I had to go along the line, waking men at random, and letting them go back to sleep if they did not happen to be men whom I knew and trusted. I finally came across Sgt. Gontz and two privates with whom I was satisfied, and we set out. I will never forget that expedition; it was not particularly dangerous, for we were a small enough group to keep out of

trouble, and our mission did not require fighting unless cornered; but the loneliness of it and the fear of getting lost in the woods gave us a sort of "spooky" feeling that it was hard to shake off. Striking a grassy vista that formed a kind of natural trail, we made our way quietly. A new moon was up and we guided on it, as a check on our compass work, for it happened to be straight in our direction. The men had their rifles and bayonets ready, while I held my compass in my left hand and my revolver in my right. Once we came to a tumble-down cabin that looked suspicious, and we sneaked up to the door and satisfied ourselves that it was empty before passing it. Then we struck a real woods road leading back to where we knew the regiment must be, and followed it a short distance until we came to a bushy hilltop which afforded concealment and at the same time allowed a good field of fire into the valley in front. Time was moving on rapidly, and the men had to be moved before dawn, so we left off our search for the other troops and went back to guide the detachment to this new position.

The three companies were silently awakened at about 3.30 and led to the position, where they settled down in hiding, lest aeroplanes should spot us and shelling commence. We had thus extricated ourselves from a situation that might easily have proved a trap and we breathed a sigh of relief when runners from the Major appeared and said we were now just in front of Battalion Headquarters. We had hit our direction and distance on our night patrol more accurately than I had dared hope. We were out of trouble, but a deep stretch of woods yet remained between us and the Meuse River, which was our objective.

All that morning we lay concealed under the bushes. We were now out of food, except for a few more provident men who had saved a little from the previous day, and out of water, and we wondered when relief or rations would come up. Major Emory came up and told us that our artillery would shell the woods ahead of us before we advanced, and we waited hopefully for a "man's-size" barrage. The river was in plain sight over the next ridge, and with our glasses we could see a train pulling down the valley, getting stores

away before we should reach them, but our guns were too far back for the information to do them any good. Away over on the left we could see several companies of the Fourth Division advancing across a clearing and disappearing again into the woods.

Finally about six of our shells landed at random in the woods, a sorry imitation of a bombardment, and we formed for the advance. Just at this time we were favored with a dose of gas shells, but as it was only "sneeze gas," it didn't do much harm, and we hastened to go forward out of its range.

As on the previous day, we had a hard struggle through the underbrush, but this time the company commanders were determined to keep in touch, even at the expense of less open deployment. For once, we were agreeably surprised. We had expected that the forest would be full of machine guns and snipers, and that we would have a terrific fight on our hands. Once in the morning when a solitary American plane had flown over there it had apparently been fired at from every tree, and the Major told us afterward that when he was forced to send us forward with a farcical barrage he never expected to see us come out alive. But luck was with us for the time at least, and although we had a little shelling, we struck no serious trouble, and at last came to an old ditch on the outer edge of the woods. As before, our organizations had become badly broken up in the thick tangle of forest, and we landed up in that ditch, with men of every company in the regiment hopelessly intermingled. This was considered our objective, for the right of the regiment rested on the river, and as it flowed northeast, diagonally to the direction of our advance, the left had to extend away from it to avoid leaving an enormous gap and to avoid direct observation and exposure from the Boche batteries on the east bank.

Here we prepared to spend the night. It was no favorable position, for we were subject to close range fire from front and flank, while our guns were apparently helplessly in the rear. The ditch, apparently a very old trench, caved in and grown over with bushes, was the only semblance of

cover in the whole forest, and the only place from which Boche infiltration back into the woods could be prevented, and here the whole regiment was strung along. They were so exhausted that it was with difficulty that we got them spread out and evenly distributed, and even then there were far too many men for the front line. Our training had always been to "defend in depth," but the woods were so thick that in this situation the front line alone could take part in the defense, and someone in authority way back in the rear was so afraid of an infantry counter-attack that he forgot to consider that a crowded front line invites heavy casualties from shell fire. I don't pretend to pass judgment on the theoretical wisdom of the Corps Staff, but I do know that we did not get a counter-attack, but did suffer more from shelling than if we had kept to the principle of a thin front line. I knew we were in for it as soon as I saw the jam in that ditch, and was only surprised that it held off until morning.

It was a mean night. No one was allowed to sleep because of the danger of a counter-attack, and there was no place to sleep anyhow, for the bottom and sides of the ditch were three inches in mud. Our muscles and nerves were worn out by the strain of the past three days, and we were still living on the hoarded remnants of our original two days' emergency rations. The cold drizzling rain that added to our discomfort was for once welcome, for we could catch a little water in our mess tins and lick the wet leaves of the bushes to take the worst edge off our thirst. Several times I went to sleep standing up, to be awakened with a start as I lost my sense of equilibrium and found myself falling over. Then I would try to keep awake by catching water and would be rewarded by about a teaspoonful every half hour. Once late in the evening the taut nerves snapped; some men thought they saw the Boche coming, and all along the lines rifles started crackling, the men blazing away in the darkness at nothing, some even throwing hand grenades. The panic was hard to stop, for in the darkness an officer's voice was no louder than any other, and by the time the firing died out our whole position must have been shown up. Our own

artillery contributed to the party by firing behind us at intervals through the night. They did no damage, for the shells were landing at a safe distance in the rear, but they kept our nerves on edge. We had been provided with rockets with which to signal to the artillery in such an event, but by this time so much equipment had been lost, and units so broken up, that it was impossible in the night to find anyone who had the necessary combination of blank cartridges and lights.

As soon as dawn came we managed to find some, and after several unsuccessful attempts with wet lights, finally got off the combination of "green followed by white." The range was increased just enough to put us in a more dangerous place than before, so we hastily repeated the signal, and were rewarded by seeing our shells break on the ridge well in front of us. Whether our rockets, or the firing in the night helped to give the enemy our range, or whether they were just waiting for the dawn, anyhow, I do not know, but we had just begun to congratulate ourselves on being rid of our own shells, when the Boche cut loose.

It is useless to try to describe a barrage. We crouched down in the meagre protection of the ditch and waited, wondering where each one was going to strike, and whether the Boche infantry would come over. It was not heavy stuff, but there was plenty of it, and even three-inch shells can rip things up when they come like machine gun bullets. A runner brought an order to pull back to the next hill, and, although we did not know the reason for it, we lost no time in obeying. Not a man had left the ditch so long as our orders were to stay there, but once we got the order to leave, it was a race to get out of that infernal shelling, and the men streamed back along the paths with no semblance of order. Men were getting killed and wounded on all sides; most of the wounded kept on going, and many who could not walk alone were grabbed and pulled along by well men, without stopping for bandaging.

When we reached the clearing behind the woods we saw some of the 33rd Division going in, and learned that we were being relieved. Since they had only to hold, and not con-

tinue the drive at present, they could occupy the line less densely, and were pushing outposts and patrols up to where we had been without subjecting whole battalions to the shelling. The relief was the cause of our order to vacate the ditch, and in fact we were just about relieved in time, for we had spent our strength to the limit and would have had great difficulty in re-forming again even in rear of the woods. It appeared that they intended relieving us during the previous night but had been unable to locate us in the dark, which resulted in the confusion in the morning. Where the woods are so thick that one can only see a few yards, and runners get lost in broad daylight, things do not work so smoothly as they look on paper.

Our joy at finding we were relieved is beyond description. Correspondents who write "front line stuff" from nice dugouts five or ten miles in the rear, may gush about the men's anxiety to have another crack at the Boche, but let any of them go through a few nights like that one with a barrage at dawn, and see if they are not temporarily more enthusiastic about the chances of getting a good drink of water, a hot meal, and a few hours' sleep in a safe place.

We went on back, knowing that our job was done for the time being, stopping when chance offered to pick up a loaf of bread or a can of tomatoes from a pile of rations, or to fill our stomachs and canteens at a spring, or to "bum" a smoke, and in this way we drifted back until we came to our kitchens, where we found a meal of hot canned beef and coffee waiting, our first real honest meal since four days before. Here the battalion collected, like bees around a hive, the kitchens feeding everyone who came along regardless of what his outfit was. Then we took up our station in a system of old Boche trenches near Cuisy, over which we had passed on the first day of the drive, and found that we now constituted the "reserve brigade."

The comforts of our new position were not extensive, as half of our blankets had been lost, and there was no further weather protection for the men than the "bivvies" they could dig in the side of the trenches. Captain Gilmore of "A"

Company was lucky enough to find a corrugated iron dug-out into which he invited the "I" Company officers as well as his own, so we took up our abode in what had a few days before been some Hun officers' home. We were shelled occasionally, but as we had nothing to do but keep out of their way, and none happened to strike the trenches or our flimsy roof direct, they bothered us very little. It was such safety and comfort in comparison to the period just passed, that we were as carefree and happy as though we were in a Paris hotel, and we slept and ate to our heart's content.

In spite of some things that might have been done better, and some mistakes concerning which "hindsight was easier than foresight" the drive had been a success, our objective had been gained at a reasonable cost, and the regiment was complimented by the Division Commander. We had come through our first real offensive action with credit, and those of us who were left were now intent on getting all the rest and relaxation we could before we should go in again.

CHAPTER V

The Cunel Drive

THE "MEUSE ARGONNE" DRIVE of September 26th to November 11th is now spoken of as though a single battle, but from the shorter perspective of an outfit that was in it, it contained as many different "drives" or "shows" as the outfit happened to make during that period. Some divisions "held" between "drives," some "drove" exclusively and some did some of each. The 80th division never did anything but "drive" and our regiment's share in the whole consisted of three such "drives" each of a few intense days, after each of which we were relieved, at least from the actual front line. To us the three drives were separate and distinct, though from a staff viewpoint they were, of course, all parts of the same engagement. In the army one is little interested with what does not concern him directly, and while we were in the trenches at Cuisy we only knew that the other brigade of our division was "up the line" somewhere, and to this day I am unable to even go outside of my own battalion's experience without depending entirely on hearsay and risking errors. I shall therefore, leave it to those whose jobs kept them in touch with the general news to tell what happened in that region of front during the first week of October, and for that matter, in the second week as well, for even while we were on our "second drive," I was lucky enough if I understood the platoon and company situation, without bothering about questions of divisions and corps.

This much was evident before we left Cuisy—that things were not moving as rapidly up front as they had at the first jump-off. As our own first drive had shown us, the thick woods which checker-board the hills of Cunel, and which had not been fought over since the Huns originally took them, made far more difficult going than the bald, shell-pocked hills around Verdun. The nature of the country lent itself wonderfully to the defensive plans of the Boche; the proportion of forest to clearing was just about enough so

that all the clearings were covered by the field of fire from unseen guns in the woods, while the woods were filled with snipers and accurately ranged for artillery. The job was done by brute force, a division going in on a narrow sector and advancing in spite of everything until its momentum was lost, then another one relieving it and doing the same thing. It was discouraging from a local standpoint, for the end of a particular outfit's "show" would thus generally be less successful than the beginning, but the accumulated result was success, and it was only by having and using plenty of divisions, and changing them soon enough, that the job was done. And there were more divisions used and more companies and battalions used up, in the neighborhood of the little village of Cunel, than at any other place that I know of on the American front, and the 320th Infantry, like many another good outfit, had its turn on these hills, gained a little ground, and went back for replacements.

The fighting around this region was apparently not handled as well from above as was the initial stage of the drive. No such great barrage prepared our way as was laid down on September 26th. Frequent changes of orders and uncertainty as to just what we were supposed to do, incorrect artillery firing, and almost total absence of aviation, were annoying features. Lack of good "Liaison" perhaps largely includes the others. Instead of preparing a co-ordinated attack, as on September 26th, and on November 1st, the staff apparently allowed each outfit to work out its own salvation, depending on the original impetus which had in fact been totally expended long ago. Some mistakes were made by line officers, but the greatest bungles were made higher up. In spite of everything, we gained ground, and in the course of time other divisions carried it on until the Hun's deathgrip was loosened, but we took our turn in Hell to do it. And yet I do not feel overmuch sympathy with the tendency to "muckrake" for needless casualties. There were cases, to be sure, of companies who were caught in too close formations by shelling. There were a few cases where our shells hit our men, and more where they failed to hit the enemy. There were cases where lieutenants failed to put their men in

the best cover, and there were cases where generals failed to secure proper cooperation between adjacent brigades or divisions, and doubtless there were a few cases blameworthy enough to merit investigation as far as individuals are concerned. But let any critic look at the rows of wooded hills of Cunel, see some of the old Boche machine gun and artillery positions, and say how they could have been taken without going through Hell, and then let him look at a map of the old lines and say whether the war could have been won in 1918 if they had not been taken. Our staff officers were inexperienced in that kind of work—one high-ranking officer who was in the line told me the Corps Staff was a bigger obstacle in his way than the Boche—but how in the world could we have had an experienced army without waiting for the next spring and incurring casualties all winter? The "doughboys" of the line do want it understood distinctly that it was not the staff officers who "won the war," but they went through the struggle without whining then, and will not be greatly helped by their friends whining now.

There were six of us, the officers of Companies A and I, who lived in the old Boche dugout for a week which, in spite of physical discomfort, was one of the most boyishly hilarious of our lives. We "roughhoused," wrote letters, sang and read ancient magazines in the evenings, and in the daytime amused ourselves by watching the troubles of our friends, the airmen. The Boche planes flew over us pretty freely, and we never missed a chance to watch the "antis" and machine guns trying to get them. It was a great sight to watch the puffs of smoke appear in the sky around them, and one day they actually brought two of them down. Then there was the balloon, which afforded good melodrama several times a day until the climax came. We did not envy this American balloonist his job, for he had to jump out with his parachute three or four times a day, when a Jerry would get too close. Then when it would be driven off he would haul down the balloon and go up again. Finally they got it. A Boche plane dropped out of a cloud straight for him; we saw him give a wild leap, and an instant later the balloon burst out into a terrific mass of flame, though he landed

safely. We "innocent bystanders" stood around on the hills and gave way to unbecoming mirth; not being the "goats," our sense of humor was doubtless perverted. Of the six of us who bunked together during those days, two were killed the next week, but the knowledge that this was likely to happen did not keep us from getting our fun when we could.

On the evening of October 6th, the First Battalion moved out, leaving the I Company bunch alone in the dugout, and we knew that our turn was soon coming. The next night we got our orders and prepared for a mean all-night job of trench digging. It was pitch-dark and raining hard by the time we started out, and the ground was so slippery that walking was difficult. Our way led us over to the left, and we entered a deep basin between two hills, occupied by a balloon and some heavy guns. Here we piled our packs, and started again for the scene of our labors. The road — it was just south of Montfaucon—was jammed with motor and horse transport of every kind, and we had to narrow down to single file to wind our way among the stalled trucks, and had to look sharp to avoid collision with the moving ones.

Major Emory led the way, for which I admired him, for this was not to be a fight, but only an ordinary digging job that he might easily have delegated to a junior officer had he been less conscientious. After a hard struggle through the mud across an open field, we came to a road near Nantillois, and it was on the brow of the hill in front of the road that the trenches had been taped out by the engineers. For over three hours the men dug, in darkness, rain and constant apprehension of shelling, until in the early morning hours the job was declared done, tools turned in, and we started back to where our packs were piled. No one had been hit by the occasional shells which came over in our general direction, but a more exhausting job could hardly be invented, and when in broad daylight we reached the balloon we were quite close to "all in." The men unrolled their packs on the muddy ground, while the officers had the luck to be invited in to an artillery officer's dugout for a few hours' sleep.

We turned out again early in the afternoon to return to the front. It was cold and rainy, our weariness from the past night had not yet worn off, and it was difficult indeed to feel much optimism at the prospect. Not a man but would have given everything except honor to have stayed just one night more in the comparative security of the heavy artillery. It is not bloodthirstiness that makes men do their duty; it is conscience. Rain, exhaustion and shells can knock the ardor out of the roughest "hard guy" that was ever born, but it is the man with an efficient conscience, be he rough or gentle in disposition, who will stick to his job in spite of everything.

Our way led us up where we had gone the previous night, past the high ruins of Montfaucon and up to the field artillery positions on the hill back of Nantillois. Here we camped for the night in "fox holes" that had already been dug, not yet knowing what our job for the next day would be. By the time we had disposed of our respective platoons in the best available holes we officers found there were none left for ourselves, so Lieutenant France invented one of the most novel and remarkable "homes" that I have ever slept in. He found a large pile of empty "75" shell boxes, and with these we made a floor, and walls to keep out the wind, leaving only the roof uninventable. It was indeed a "Fools Paradise," for instead of being below the ground we were raised up on a platform with only flimsy boards to keep shells out, but there are times when comfort looks better than safety. Our feet were so wet and cold that we finally decided to risk taking our shoes off, and Titus and I have had many a laugh since at the way we kept each other going by taking turns at putting our feet in between the other fellow's shins. Dawn came at last, and we spent the morning still loafing around, shelled a little off and on, and still not knowing what we were going to do. Then at about three o'clock in the afternoon the order came to advance at 3:30, in support of the First Battalion, which was to jump off in front of Nantillois.

The 319th was on our left, and my platoon, with a section of machine gunners, was designated as a "combat liaison

group" to connect with the right of the 319th and take care of any gap that might occur. We advanced in columns of half platoons over the hill by Nantillois, hurriedly shed our packs, and formed into the more open formation of "combat groups" on the hill north of the village, where already some men of the assault battalion, which had gone on beyond, were lying dead. Artillery on both sides was barking furiously, but our shells were scattering all over the woods at random instead of forming a systematic barrage like we had followed in our first drive, while the Boche, who had had four years to study the ground, was placing his shells all too well.

A kilometer of open field lay in front of us, the next ridge being crowned by the Bois des Ogons. We advanced at a steady walk, while the Boche planes circled over our heads, and the shells tore holes in the earth around us. Our advance over this shell-torn field was a witness to the value of our open formation, and to our experience in quick dropping. Time after time a big one would come tearing through the air, a dozen men nearest it would drop, a cloud of earth and smoke would appear and one would wonder whether any of them had escaped. In an instant one would get up, and then another, and often the whole crowd would jump into their places again, but sometimes one or two would lie still, or would rise slowly and start painfully toward the rear.

Had we been in close masses, or had the men failed to drop flat when one landed in a small group, the battalion would have been knocked sky-high. On the edge of the woods we saw a fearful spectacle. Phosphorus shells were breaking in air, throwing down blazing streamers of yellowish gray smoke in fantastic shapes, like weird monsters of death. Fortunately, this show stopped before we were forced to go through it. It is not, in fact, quite as dangerous as it looks, but it forms one of the most frightful spectacles for a man to approach that is known, and is used more as a "goat getter" than as a killer.

We reached the edge of the Bois des Ogons and the battalion took cover in shell holes for a few minutes while the

Boche shelled the woods. The planes had evidently seen us reach the woods and thought we were going through it, for a perfect hail of shells landed among the trees ahead of us. Major Emory fooled them and saved his men by waiting until the worst of it was over before he started, but enough were landing at our edge to cause a few wounds in spite of the cover, and to make it mighty uncomfortable. While this was going on, it was fast growing dark, and we had not yet closed up with the 319th, so our "combat liaison group" had to start on through the woods without waiting any longer with the battalion. We thought they were ahead of us, as well as to the left, and a trail through the woods seemed to lead in the right direction. We jumped up out of our scanty protection and plunged into the forest, with the shells still bursting among the trees, going single file at five pace intervals so that a direct hit on one man might spare the man next to him. It was well that we did so, though with all precautions it was mainly good luck that saved us from losing a single man. We had gone about two hundred yards, and I was leading the way, with my "runner," Private Symington, five paces behind me, while Sergeant Sugden closed the rear, when a shell whistled so suddenly that I didn't even have time to drop, and burst in the soft soil a few feet from the interval between Symington and me. It must have actually gone between us, and only the interval and the softness of the soil, which choked the fragments, saved us. We were showered with mud, and it was ten minutes before my ears stopped ringing.

We came out on a trail running transverse, with open fields on our left, and by this time it was pitch dark. Short and hasty patrols in three directions failed to locate any 319th and while we waited for them in a ditch we began to receive gas shells, so I decided we had better drive ahead and trust to luck that we were not already beyond the front line and going up against the enemy by ourselves.

Machine guns were rattling as we deployed in the open field, for as I could not be sure that any of our comrades were directly ahead of us, I was afraid to continue in column and had organized a skirmish line. The noise seemed to

come from the middle of the field directly ahead of us, though we found later that it was actually farther away. The gas annoyed us slightly, but it was impossible to "carry on" in gas masks without getting hopelessly scattered and lost in the dark, so most of us "took a chance." We had advanced about a hundred yards when we ran into a broad tangled belt of barbed wire, and had to stop and look along it for a gap. We finally located a place where it was cut or torn enough to let us through with some trouble and scratching, but it broke our skirmish line and forced us back into a loose column. Beyond the main wire was a system of trenches, and the whole ground was a mass of tangled wire and muddy holes, through which we struggled in the dark, not knowing whether there were any Boche in the trenches or not. The difficult going resulted in a gap in our column, and Sergeant Sugden with about a dozen men were lost and had to camp for the night in complete isolation until they found our own company again next day. These trenches formed part of the Boche position about the Farm de la Madeleine, which was a few hundred yards to our left, and which had been finally cleared that afternoon, but we didn't know then whether it had yet been cleared.

We came out on a narrow gauge railroad track—part of the Boche ammunition transport system which lined that whole region—and met a runner who said he could guide us to "K" Company of the 319th which was on the hill in front of the track, so we followed him. It was with a great sense of relief that I found myself connected with other troops, and with a captain to report to, for the worst of our little trip had been our isolation and the possibilities of opposition with a unit of only about fifty men.

I found this company about to advance in skirmish line. The situation was mixed up, and no one knew just where any other outfit was. Several companies of the 319th had apparently advanced some distance ahead of us by "sliding through," that is, going past machine gun nests in the dark without cleaning them out. Night advancing is about as rotten for one side as the other. The Boche was always afraid of it, and if it could have been done without units

becoming scattered and lost, and if it were followed by systematic back action to clean up what was left in the rear, it would have produced good results, but when not done to perfection it often resulted in unexpected attacks on the support outfits and a cutting off of the front ones. In the present instance, as we learned later, the companies in advance had done a lot of damage, but had to fight their way back and did not gain the ground permanently.

I formed my men on the right flank of the company, and we had advanced only a few yards with them, when we were met with a burst of fire from the bushes ahead of us. We all dropped flat, and I went up to the center of the company to learn how the Captain intended to flank the nest, and found one of their lieutenants dying with a bullet in the chest, while the Captain had decided to defend his present position for the night, and wait until daylight before resuming the attack. Our machine guns sprayed the bushes while the company took up their position for the night in the ditch of the railway bank. My men occupied fox holes at the right of the company, while the two machine guns were trained down the track across the field to protect the open flank, and thus, barring sentries and patrols, and an occasional awakening when a shell landed near, we slept that night.

The tenth of October was a day full of mixed-up situations, movings back and forth and sideways with little accomplished, and shelling everywhere. Many a time that morning I cursed my job, and wished I was a "buck private" so that I could attach myself to any outfit I happened to meet instead of having to continue wandering around trying to learn the situation and find my own outfit. The company which we had found late at night did not renew their attack in the morning, for they were relieved and ordered back to the support. We had to locate and rejoin our own outfit, became scattered in the woods, and drifted into our own company in small groups. At one time I found myself entirely alone, for in waiting for a group which had got behind, I lost both sides of the gap, and my chagrin and disgust as I went around looking for them, combined

with such fatigue that I felt I could hardly walk another step, made it a more miserable time than the sharpest fighting. At one time I found myself in with the Fourth Division, and thought of going forward with them to fight as a private, but reminded myself that what I could do as a single extra man would not compensate for what might happen if a gap were left between the 319th and 320th, so I kept on combing the northern slope of the Bois des Ogons until I finally ran into our Battalion and found that most of my men had landed there already, though some never did find it and were used during the rest of the drive as stretcher bearers or ammunition carriers by the reserve companies that handled those jobs.

Company I was about to make a new advance when I joined them. As we came out from the shelter of the corner of the woods and deployed on the exposed slope facing the enemy lines we advanced against a storm of shell and machine gun fire. Part of the first battalion was ahead of us, but the Boche positions were within easy range on our left front and had a clear view, so that we might as well have been the front line for all the good our technical designation as "support battalion" did. In front of us a group of buildings—the Ville au Bois farm—was getting a terrible drubbing. "Big stuff" was landing among the stone buildings and frame shanties, and chunks of masonry and planks were jumping around as if a cyclone had struck the place. It would be suicide to go through it, so we circled around it on the open field to the left, and dropped into the shell holes and road ditches in front of the farm, where we were ordered to await developments.

And await developments we did, the most interesting development being where the next shell was going to land. All the rest of that day I Company lay in the road ditch, with L Company in the shell holes in front, while Boche planes circled over us, and Boche shells peppered the whole area in general, but that infernal farm and the road in front of it in particular. It was a trying time for nerves. Every few minutes all day a shell would be heard coming, the men would shrink deeper into the bottom of the ditch,

and hold their breath till it went off. Fortunately they seemed to be intended for the buildings, and we only got the "shorts" and the back-flying fragments. It is a never-ending wonder, to all who have ever been shelled, how many shells can land close and how few men get hit, and an equal wonder that there is such a large measure of protection in a shallow hole or ditch. Shell after shell would land in the road, the fragments go flying over us, and miss everybody. During that day and the following night we had two men killed and about half a dozen wounded, while an observer seeing us approach that ditch across the clearing and weather the bombardment would have thought the whole company was doomed. The men smoked or chewed to occupy their minds and keep their nerves steady, and ate canned beef and crackers at intervals when it was not too hot. I recall several times taking some old letters from home out of my pocket and reading them, but with all these little occupations our minds were mainly concentrated on the destination of the next shell. Meanwhile our artillery furiously shelled some unoccupied ground on our left, harming neither friend nor foe. The 319th was on the left of this bombarded gap, where shells from both sides were landing, and I got a chance to go up occasionally and keep in touch with them during lulls in the shelling, and found them holding, but not advancing, their numbers having been depleted and their organization confused by the night fighting they had just come through. Apparently everything had come to a standstill, and it was our fate to act as passive targets for the Boche artillery, without any chance to get back at them. From time to time orders would come to advance, but would be countermanded before the time came. Artillery would be ordered on a certain place and fail to produce, and when night fell the positions were unchanged.

At last the order came for a fresh advance, and in the morning we formed in the field in front of the farm and started up the hill, but had to wait again for a few minutes in shell holes while our artillery repeated the now-familiar process of shelling the wrong place. This lack of liaison with the artillery was our greatest handicap throughout the

Cunel drive, as the further events of that morning showed. We resumed the advance, and soon came in sight of the church tower of Cunel, only a kilometer or so away, but between it and us were patches of woodland filled with machine guns and field pieces as thick as pumpkins in a corn field. We had crossed over a protecting ridge in the field and were approaching one of these little woods, when the machine guns opened up on us. We dropped flat, and started at once to advance "by rushes," or "filtering," a few men at a time jumping up and running a few yards, then diving behind any slight swale they could find, like a baseball player sliding for a base, and so getting under cover before a gun could be sighted on them. In this way we reached the edge of the woods with a surprising degree of safety, although bullets were plowing up the turf among us. A group of us had reached an abandoned Boche field gun at the forest's edge, and were taking shelter behind its metal "apron," while a few men had even penetrated into the woods as scouts, so that we were in high hopes of flanking and cleaning out the opposition with little trouble, when to my surprise I received an order to withdraw to the ridge back in the field. We did so, but not without suffering more casualties in the withdrawal than we had in the advance. It appeared that the Major had received notice that our guns were about to lay a heavy barrage on that corner of woods, and that our troops must be cleared from it instantly, but the barrage never came, and a successful action on our part was spoiled. Private Hood, our wild-eyed mountaineer, who had fired from a tree during the first drive when the rest of us were hugging the ground, again showed his reckless contempt of danger, but this time he got caught. He came to me with a message from the Company Commander and I sent him back with a reply, telling him to get behind a little rise of ground and keep low. Instead, he ran full tilt in the open, shouting: "The —— ——'s can't get me!" and fell with three bullets through his body. We never thought he would live an hour, and were as surprised as we were delighted when we got a letter from him from a base hospital some weeks later. Private Foy H. Spangler, one of the

stretcher bearers of my platoon, learned that a man had been left wounded as the company withdrew, and fearlessly went out to get him; the guns opened up and he fell dead, while his helper got back with a bullet in his shoulder. He gave his life willingly to help a comrade, and a truer Christian soldier never lived and died than he.

We re-formed and advanced into the Bois de Malaumont, leaving the scene of our interrupted skirmish on our left, for the 319th to tackle after it should be shelled. All that day that nest continued to take its toll of American lives, and it filled us with bitter chagrin to know that it had been almost in our hands and would have been but for a staff blunder.

The Boche positions which we were now running up against formed part of the Kreimhilde Stellung, a complete defensive system running the entire length of the front at some distance to the rear of the even more famous Hindenburg Line. We kept seeing sign boards in German marked "Kreimhilde Stellung" with various other unintelligible letters and figures, although the defensive positions were so continuous that it was impossible to see where one "system" left off and another began.

We emerged from the Bois de Malaumont at the northern edge without difficulty, for the woods had been already cleared except for a few snipers, by the companies on our right, and we dropped into the ditch of the Cunel-Brieulles road which ran transverse in front of the woods. Major Emory came up and sent Lieutenant Dunmire with the First Platoon to reconnoitre a fresh patch of woods on our left front, the result of which was that they very nearly got captured, for the woods and the field beside it were full of Boche, and they had to fight their way back after being almost surrounded. The Company later advanced some distance into the field and lay in shell holes, but by that time the strength had been so depleted by casualties and our left flank so badly exposed that we could not advance further and never did take the next woods. The Division on our right were ahead of us, and Lieutenant Calkins with part of M Company pulled off a pretty piece of work when our right

was held up, by taking his men in a half circle into this Division's sector and coming in behind the nests that had confronted him, killing or capturing every Boche in that whole patch of woods. But we on the left were not so fortunate, as we were already ahead of the 319th, and were being fired on from their sector, while our attempt to help them to advance in the morning had been stopped on account of the supposed barrage plans.

Meanwhile our advance, small though it was, had left open the whole left edge of the Bois de Malaumont, for although we had been in contact with the 319th, there was now a lateral gap between us of just as great a distance as we had advanced ahead of them. This gap was my concern, and the Major sent me back to find out its extent, and to see that no harm resulted from it. A whole platoon could no longer be spared from I Company, so I took with me only a small patrol, consisting of Sergeant Sugden, Corporal Shay, and two or three privates. As we were going back, keeping just inside the cover of the woods, we ran into a streak of the strongest gas we have ever experienced. I do not know yet what kind it was, for it had none of the typical odors, but was rather anaesthetic in its effect, choking you like ether, and if we had not instantly put on our masks we would have been quickly knocked out. Another hundred yards brought us clear of it, and no harm was done. We found the right flank of the 319th where we had left it and luckily picked up several lost I Company men on the way back, so that we now had a fair-sized group, and with this little outfit we took up our station in the northwest corner of the woods, where we could observe, and at least attempt to prevent, any attempt by the Boche to reoccupy the woods.

The afternoon passed with no change in the situation, the Boche shells landing here and there in the woods and field. One of my men, an Italian, had started away from us with a message for Battalion Headquarters. I heard a shell burst some distance away and a minute later he came running up to us: "Lieutena' Luke'," he cried, "fexa me up. Shella bust; dama near kill." We all had to laugh at him in spite of his misfortune, and indeed it was hard for the

rest of us to consider it a misfortune, for as I bandaged a clean little hole in his arm, every man of us was thinking that he would have given a hundred dollars for it at that particular time.

We could see part of K Company on the road at our right, and their luck was not so good as ours. Once while I was looking at them a terrific shell landed in the middle of the road. I ducked behind the bank while several fragments went singing over our heads, and when I looked up again four men were lying still, and another was writhing and groaning with a fractured leg. One of the dead men had been sitting in the ditch facing us, and he had not changed his position nor moved a muscle. Only a hideous snoot-like protrusion where his face had been showed where the flying metal had struck him. The wounded man was carried back on a shelter half, for there were no stretchers left.

Late in the afternoon I began to get anxious for news of the situation and further orders, so as everything was quiet, I left Sergeant Sugden in charge, and started back to Battalion Headquarters at the southern edge of the woods. I found the Major and his staff occuping a group of shallow "bivvies" and met Lieutenant France and Sergeant Barnhart, who had come there for the same purpose. A lieutenant from the Fifth Division, with several "runners" had just arrived to arrange for relieving us that night, and we were mightily thankful, for we all felt that we could hardly "carry on" for another day. One officer of the battalion was already virtually out of action from shellshock, as complete a case of nervous breakdown as you could ever see, and we were all more or less on the verge of it. Lieutenant France and the Fifth Division officer were standing by the side of a shallow hole in which the Major was sitting, talking with him, while the rest of the headquarters men were sitting in the other meagre "bivvies" or lying on the ground when without an instant's warning a tremendous shell landed in our midst. No one heard it coming, and none of us ever felt such a tremendous concussion as that shell caused. For a few seconds I felt dazed. My limbs shook, my ears rang as I felt the clods of dirt land on me and wondered whether

I were wounded. I looked around and saw that the others were in the same condition, and for a minute no one could speak. I was brought to my senses by hearing a man ask in a calm matter-of-fact voice if someone would please put a tourniquet on his leg. There was one of the Fifth Division runners, lying on his back, with two toes blown off his left foot and an ugly hole in his right leg just below the knee, and he was the coolest and least shaken man of the whole crowd. Sergeant Barnhart and I bandaged him up, and saw him started back on a stretcher, and, although I do not know what his name is or anything further about him, I have never ceased to admire him for his calmness. We hardly dared to look around, for we were sure some of our comrades had been killed, and when we had completed our bandaging and looked about us, we saw Lieutenant France lying dead. He was my company commander and my intimate friend, with whom I had been talking but a short moment before, and, in spite of our familiarity with death and sudden shocks, it came as a great blow to realize that he was gone. He was not badly mangled, but the Fifth Division lieutenant and one other man were torn to pieces and the earth was strewn in a wide radius with quivering chunks of human flesh. Fifteen yards or more from the shell hole was a right hand, severed clean at the wrist. I recalled it with a shudder several weeks later when I happened to see an ivory model hand in a shop window in Paris. When I rejoined my men at the northern edge of the woods, I learned that no one had been hurt during my absence, but that a few minutes after I had left a sharp fragment, like a railroad spike, had driven itself deep into the bank just where my chest had been. Call it Luck or call it Providence, it was with me on the Eleventh of October, or I would not be alive today.

As long as daylight had lasted, there was no danger of anything occurring in our gap short of an organized counter-attack, which our small post could at least observe in time to give warning to the flank companies. But with the coming of night, the problem became more ticklish, for now the great danger was that Boche machine gunners and

snipers might "filter" back into the woods singly or by twos and threes, reoccupy the camouflaged positions from which they had been driven, and thus undo by stealth what we had done by struggle and sacrifice, and force us to clean out the woods all over again the next morning. To prevent this in the darkness, the remnant of our original "combat liaison group" was inadequate; it was necessary to occupy the whole edge of the woods. Sergeant Barnhart and I therefore returned once more to Battalion Headquarters as darkness was falling, to hunt for some more men, and found part of K Company, which had been so badly shot up that the scattered remnants had been drawn out of the front line. Finding Lieutenant Earl, who had just joined K Company that day from the Candidates' School, we hastily organized a small platoon—all that we could find who were still in condition to fight—and started again for the woods, taking a circuitous route to avoid a hollow that was full of gas.

Our job now was not only to protect the gap, but at the same time to locate all the nearby companies so that we would be certain just how great the gap was and could judge how best to place our men. The Fifth Division was to relieve us about midnight, so we knew that if we could keep the Boche from filtering back, for five or six hours more, our job would be done and we could shift our burden to the fresh troops with no apologies. We were near to the limit of our physical strength, and what is worse, our nervous strength, and but for this knowledge of the coming relief, we would have felt almost hopeless.

As it was now quite dark, we decided to go around the edge of the woods in the open field; instead of attempting to use the trails through, and as we reached the southwestern corner of the "Bois," near the scene of our morning's skirmish, we could distinguish the figures of men lying in almost every shell hole. I wondered what platoon this could be that, unknown to us, had come to help us fill our gap, and I went up to one group of them and asked in a whisper who they were. None answered, and thinking they might have fallen asleep at their posts, I shook one of them by the shoulder. Only then did I realize that I was speaking to

a dead man, and that every one of those men, who lay in their holes so naturally, facing the enemy as though still intent on defending their ground, had already finished their fight, and had been relieved ahead of us.

We continued under the shadow of the trees until we came to a little vista where a trail led from the field into the woods, and thinking that this was a likely place for the Boche to sneak back into the woods if he attempted it anywhere, I left the men there in charge of Lieutenant Earl, while Sergeant Barnhart and I went on by ourselves to locate I Company and reconnoitre the whole situation. We could not be quite certain that some enemy had not already entered the woods so we posted sentries in rear as well as in front of the group and kept absolute silence.

The Sergeant and I each took a big chew of tobacco to steady our nerves, took our revolvers out of the holsters, and started breaking through the underbrush toward the front of the woods, stopping at intervals to listen for any sound of hidden enemy. We emerged on the Cunel-Brieulles road where we had been in the morning, without seeing a sign of friend or foe, and believing that some of our troops must be somewhere in the field in front of us, we started cautionsly over the shell-pocked ground in the direction of the enemy. We did not know whether, in the exact direction that we chose, we should run into any Americans or whether we had an open path straight into the Boche positions, and it was well that we went carefully, for the latter proved to be the case. We had progressed as much as four hundred yards from the road, and were going up a hill, with the woods, from which the company had been held up in the afternoon, on our left, when we saw several figures in a trench on the crest of the hill a scarce forty yards distant. Their heads and shoulders were dimly silhouetted on the sky-line, but it was so dark that we could not make out whether the helmets were American or Boche. We could not afford to go any closer, but we had to find out; we dropped into a good deep shell hole, tucked our feet well in, and then I yelled out: "Who's that up there on the hill?" and held my breath. The answer was prompt and emphatic. A Very

light went up, and a burst of machine gun bullets spattered the dirt around the edges of our hole. Our curiosity was thoroughly appeased, and the instant the light died out we jumped up and ran down the hill as fast as our legs could carry us. Nothing more happened, and when we reached the road we stopped a minute to get our breath, and have a quiet laugh, for in spite of its closeness it certainly had a ludicrous side.

We were going quietly along the road a minute later when we heard a faint moan from the ditch that made us jump, for we thought all the figures lying still along the roadside were dead. We stopped and found it was one of the K Company men whom I had seen hit that afternoon, and whom I had thought instantly killed. Now after five hours he had partially regained consciousness, but was desperately wounded and we did not believe he could live long. There was little we could do for him, for we had our mission to carry out, and could not spare a man from our detachment nor delay long ourselves. I gave him a stiff dose of morphia, and Barnhart forced a swallow of water down his throat, and we went on, never knowing whether the next morning found him dead or whether the stretcher bearers of the new outfit carried him out alive.

We were returning in the open, in order to see what lay at the projecting northwest corner of the woods, and by good luck met a runner there who was then headed for I Company. Guided by him we again went forward into the field, this time at a slightly different angle than we had tried before, and soon found Lieutenant Dunmire and Lieutenant Titus in a shell hole, with what was left of the company scattered in other holes near them. We bore to them the welcome news that our relief was due in a few hours, and learned from them the exact position of the different companies and the limits of the gap which we were trying to fill. This information showed me that our forces were still inadequate to prevent filtering back if it were seriously attempted, and when we returned to Lieutenant Earl and our small detachment, Sergeant Barnhart went on back toward the 319th to report the situation to whatever higher officer he could

find, and bring back whatever troops he could get hold of. He found Major Holt, of our second battalion, and speedily returned guiding two platoons of the 317th Infantry, which the Major had located and sent up to our assistance. Their officers on learning the situation divided these two platoons into a large number of small posts occuping shell holes just outside the woods, so that at last we had that exposed edge completely guarded by a close line of outposts that could not be easily penetrated. Barnhart and I returned to our original posts and dropped wearily into a "fox-hole" with Lieutenant Earl. A great load was off our minds, for now we had only a normal space to defend instead of six or eight times our capacity. A couple of hours had passed in which the Boche might have re-occupied the Bois de Maloumont if he had only known it, and our little group doubtless owe their lives to the fact that he did not happen to try.

There were still several hours to wait until our relief should come, and we lay still, watching and waiting with what patience we could muster. As our good luck would have it, nothing happened, and neither we nor our two new platoons had anything to do but wait, but this fortunate fact did not make our precautions any the less necessary. Only the Boche artillery was in action, and here again our luck was with us. An "Austrian 88", apparently not more than half a mile away, kept firing pointblank into the woods all night. Enough shells landed in the middle of that woods, at intervals of about two minutes, to have killed every man who lay in the fields north and west of the woods, and not a man was in there to be hit by them. For hours we lay listening to them, and fervently praying that they would go on battering the empty woods and not change range or deflection. Had the Boche once learned the location of our companies, our situation would not have remained so favorable.

At last the relief came. About two o'clock in the morning the companies of the Fifth Division began coming in single file around the corner of the woods, guided by our runners. In silence we got up out of our shell holes and they dropped into them, and we filed out, away from our never-to-be-forgotten "gap" and back toward the Ville-au-Bois farm and

battalion headquarters. We breathed more easily when we got back over the first ridge and out of machine gun fire, for our safety during the relief had depended entirely on darkness and silence, as it was in direct close range of the Boche guns. Arriving at battalion headquarters, which had been moved back to a dugout on the hill back of the farm, I found that all four companies had reached there ahead of me and had started on back, so gathering up a few men of various companies, who had been late finding their way back, we continued on down the road to Nantillois.

We were still well within the range of shelling, and had to be back out of observation before daylight, so in spite of our fatigue we walked at a good pace, our spirits buoyed up by the realization that we were going back to rest and getting farther from danger with every step. Dawn was breaking when we reached the ruined village of Nantillois, from which we had started our attack, and we could see the high tower of Montfaucon in the distance. We hurried through the town, for it was a notorious place for shelling, but stopped a half mile beyond when we came upon a fine spring in the side of an old quarry. Here we had our fill of good water, and filled our canteens before continuing on to the rear. It was now broad daylight and we were fairly well out of trouble, so we suited our pace more to our inclinations and dragged our way slowly, for we were almost at the point of exhaustion and no longer keyed up by the necessities of the situation.

As we neared Montfaucon, I had one of the most welcome surprises of my life. We saw four rolling kitchens busily cooking breakfast, and started toward them to get something to eat, as we were nearly famished, and had not yet seen anything of our own kitchens. The mess sergeant of the nearest one gladly consented to feed our crowd and told us that they belonged to the 317th. A few minutes' search brought me to the kitchen of my brother's company, and a messenger brought him down to the kitchen to meet me. Neither of us had known until then whether the other had gotten out safely or not, and the relief was inexpressible. We sat down on the ground and had breakfast together—

beefsteak and toast and hot coffee—and between the hot food and our good luck in finding each other unhurt, we never have had a more enjoyable meal.

After we had eaten and rested for an hour or so, we continued on, and came upon our own Transport in a patch of woods behind Montfaucon, near some of our heavy gun positions. Although the last of our battalion to leave the front line, we found that we were the first detachment to reach the Transport, as we had struck across fields and saved some distance, while the others took the road. They welcomed us with open arms, and, what was more, provided us with places to sleep, for the Transport men had pitched shelter tents and unrolled their blankets there and had slept there the previous night. Lieutenant Earl and I found a vacant tent, took off our puttees and shoes, and in five minutes were "dead to the world." The "Cunel drive" was over, and the Ville au Bois farm, the Bois de Malaumont and the "gap" were now things of the past, though destined to remain forever in our memory.

CHAPTER VI

Relieved

THE two weeks that followed our relief from the line near Cunel contained no excitement, of which we were very glad, but much of interest and variety, and not a little pleasure. It was a season of recuperation, both for individuals and for organizations and in both respects it was badly needed. The companies had had no replacements as yet, and had gone into the Cunel drive with the gaps caused by the summer's work and the first drive unfilled, and when that was over, there was not one company of the four which could muster over two full platoons. Three officers of our battalion had fallen in this drive, and two company commanders had gone to the hospital. Lieutenant Parkins of my company had been badly gassed and sent to the rear the day our commander was killed.

Individually we were in almost as bad shape as we were by companies. It is a mistake to think that because a man is not wounded he is not affected both physically and mentally by what he has undergone. Fortunately, young men of sound constitutions have wonderful recuperative powers, and in a week's time we were quite, or almost, as good as new, but on the twelfth of October every man of us was at his lowest ebb. Will power had kept us going, and when the strain was relaxed, the reaction came. We came out of the line weary and hollow-eyed; practically every man in the battalion had severe diarrhea; and our nerves were so frazzled that even the sound of guns in the distance would make us jump. In other words, we were "all in."

The Transport men awakened us at noon, for they were getting ready to move farther to the rear and after a hot meal we felt a little better. Added to that we got hold of a plentiful supply of issue tobacco, and although it is by no means my favorite brand in peace times, I will always have a kindly feeling toward old "Bull Durham." Tobacco in civilian life is often regarded as a mild tolerated evil, but at the front it was a positive blessing, and I would not have

taken ten dollars for the five cent sack that the Mess Sergeant handed me then. It was medicine for our worn-out nerves as truly as if it had been given by a doctor's prescription. We learned that the place of assembly for the regiment was in the Foret de Hesse, near Esnes, and that we had been unusually lucky in being the only part of the battalion to meet the Transport before getting back there. We took the road again, glad enough to get still farther back, and walked slowly, stopping for rest almost whenever anybody wanted to, back over the battered hills that bore witness to our first drive and the original Verdun struggles.

The Foret de Hesse was to the rear of the September 26th line, but its numerous ancient dugouts showed that in the old days it had seen a good deal of shelling. It is thick-grown and intersected by several first-class roads, so that it affords convenient space for concealing large bodies of troops from aerial observation. Our whole division reassembled here, coming out of the line by companies or platoons and making their way back as best they could. We found our regimental area late in the afternoon, and proceeded to make ourselves as comfortable as circumstances allowed. Some of the men had recovered their packs from the hill at Nantillois and could set up their tents; many had lost their packs or had been too exhausted to carry them back, and we let these scatter about and hunt for shelters where they could keep warm, knowing that they would not wander far from the kitchen for long at a time.

Two of the I Company boys found a small dugout furnished with chicken wire bunks, into which they were kind enough to invite another lieutenant and myself. Finding there was still a little room left, we passed the tip to three of the non-coms, and there the seven of us slept that night, sharing three blankets and a Boche overcoat which was our combined stock of bedding. It was the first decent night's sleep we had had since leaving Cuisy six days before, and even there we had been awakened almost every night by a false gas alarm or a stray shell, and the privilege of going to sleep with nothing on your mind was beyond words.

It rained that night and the next day, and the forest roads were slippery sheets of mud. It was late in the evening before all the companies got in, and all the next day men came drifting in by twos or threes, for some had gotten lost or had lacked the energy to hike that far, and had found a sleeping place with some other outfit on the way. We washed, shaved, and ate, and began to take the worst edge off our fatigue. Then very early on the following morning we moved, to get another stage farther back toward civilization. As usual, the order came at the last minute, and, as usual also, we had to lose some sleep because of it. We were awakened about midnight by a runner with an order to get up at 2.30, get breakfast and pack up for a move. An awful thought struck my mind as I reluctantly opened my eyes and heard the order. Could it be possible that some emergency had occurred and that we were to be hurried back and thrown into the line again? I almost fainted at the thought, and when the runner assured us that we were going farther back and not farther front we were so relieved that we even forgot to grumble at being aroused out of a sound sleep.

A march of five kilometers brought us clear of the forest and at dawn we reached the village of Parois, where a train of French camions awaited us. How can I describe the intensity of the restfulness and luxury as we slouched down on our seats, relaxed in body and in mind, while every revolution of the wheels carried us farther away from the nightmares of the past three weeks and farther into green fields and unscathed villages? It was a sight for sore eyes to see anything that was normal, and untouched by the devastating hand of war. For all that time we had not seen a civilian, man, woman or child, nor a domestic animal except army horses and mules, nor a house undestroyed, nor an acre of ground not torn up by shell holes and strewn with tangled wire and signs of death. A pasture full of cows seemed like something out of a fairy tale; the unbroken green turf seemed unnatural because there were no shell holes, just as the steadiness of the land seems queer after a long voyage on a rolling ship. The sight of a cat or a dog in a doorway

made me look twice, and I stared at a group of children playing by the roadside as though they were creatures from another world. Once when we passed a couple of American army nurses the whole truck load of men broke out in an open and hearty cheer.

Another march of a few kilometers, after our ride was over, brought us to the town of Passavant, just south of the borders of the Argonne Forest, and here we settled down to rest, clean up and recuperate before again going into the line. There were bunks in the men's billets, tight roofs over their heads, and fire places. Extra blankets and an entire round of fresh clothing were issued, and a shower bathhouse was put in repair and set working. Meals were once more put on a regular basis, and the medical department and nature began to have a fair chance to cure up the colds and diarrhea. Equipment began to be put into shape, and before long we began to look and feel like soldiers again.

The afternoon that we arrived at Passavant was our first chance in a whole month to exercise the pleasant function of spending francs, and we had not been dismissed an hour before the little stores were thronged with soldiers, paying exorbitant prices for every imaginable kind of wares. Pipes, writing paper, cigarette lighters, candles and canned vegetables and preserves were the main articles of trade, and the boys were so anxious to buy things regardless of quality or price that they fell easy prey to the cupidity of the French peasants, who must have doubled or trebled their prices as soon as they saw us coming. Our men cared nothing for price at the time, for a few francs is of little importance between the last battle and the next one, but they remembered these things afterward in forming their opinions of the French people, and the friendly Parisian diplomats would throw up their hands in horror if they learned what inroads this matter of sharp trading has made on inter-allied friendship.

The surviving I Company officers hunted around that evening for a place to get a real home-cooked meal, and we found a grandmotherly old lady who was a real cook and a notable exception to the unfortunate tendency just men-

tioned. It was a grand touch to be able to put your feet under a dining-room table once more, and the steaming soup with which she ushered in the banquet was about the best thing we had ever tasted. The old dame hovered around us like a hen with her chicks, while her small grandson helped her with the dishes and stared at us in respectful curiosity. It was the first home we had seen the inside of for long weeks, and humble and foreign though it was, it did our hearts good.

Billets again, after so many nights in dugouts, in lean-tos in the woods, in shell holes, or not sleeping at all—it hardly seemed possible! And here was a big French feather bed waiting for me to sink into it! But it was several nights before I could sleep without dreaming of shells. As long as we were still sleeping on rough bunks and at odd times, as we had continued doing for a couple of days after leaving the front line, our sleep was the deep sleep of physical exhaustion, but it was when we finally got to comfortable conditions and regular hours, and the physical sleepiness was somewhat appeased, that the depth of the nervous strain showed itself. Many of the others spoke of the same thing; time after time we would awaken with the crash of bursting shells coursing through our brains. It wore off for the most part in a few days, though even now after several months, I occasionally have it recur. It was also several days before we got rid of a chronic tired feeling. Within an hour after breakfast we would feel as though we had done a day's work, and to walk a mile or two was a burden. Naturally, we did not start any very strenuous training right away, but gradually worked into it as our "pep" came back. Replacements began to arrive—men who had never been on the line, but who were fresh and unstrained, and our battalion soon got back to a fighting basis. A few new lieutenants joined us from the school, to take the places of our officer casualties, and they were for the most part men who had had practical experience as non-coms in the summer fighting along the Marne.

For the first time in weeks we were able to get newspapers regularly, and we read daily of the terrific fighting in the

Bois des Rappes, a large woods just north of Cunel and straight in front of the Bois de Malaumont, in our old sector, and we knew somebody else was catching the same kind of hell that we had caught the week before. It surely did not look as though the Huns were weakening in the least, and yet in the same papers we read the first beginning of the armistice news. Each note that President Wilson received or wrote would be studied with an interest that was more than academic, for we began to faintly hope that peace might come before our turn came to go up the line again, and the Major, who was a keen student of affairs, would give his opinion on each and warn us against being too optimistic.

One Sunday while we were at Passavant an order came from Divisional Headquarters that each battalion should hold a memorial service for its dead. Naturally, in most cases these were conducted by the chaplains, but our battalion chaplain was in a Base Hospital with a shell wound received in the Bois des Ogons, while the regimental Chaplain was struggling to stay out of the hospital in the face of a combination of a touch of gas and a touch of influenza. Major Emory conducted the service himself, and the rough wooden shack of the French "Foyer du Soldat" was more crowded than it would have been for any chaplain in the world. Some one else led the singing of a couple of hymns, and the Major arose to speak, simple and dignified, without a trace of sanctimoniousness or of apology. "Killed in Action" was his text and in beautiful and eloquent language he showed us the glory of such an epitaph above all others that man could earn or his friends could write for him. He spoke out clearly and frankly what every man of us held deep but vague in his heart—the eternal things for which we were fighting and living and (some of us) dying—the things that we all knew in our hearts were the real things and his tone was not that of mourning but rather almost of envy of the men whose lives had come to such a glorious climax. Then he read the names of our own battalion's Roll of Honor, about sixty, up to that date, with "First Lieutenant J. W. France" heading the list. We did

not know that in less than two weeks the Major should himself win the great epitaph of which he spoke, and that his own name would head the final list of our honored dead. It was impressive and inspiring when he spoke of it; it was sacred in our memories after he was gone.

Our stay at Passavant saw various changes in our battalion organization, due to casualties among our old officers, and incidentally marked the end of my career as a platoon commander and started me on a new and more complex, if somewhat less dangerous job. Lieutenant Davis, the adjutant, was given command of a company, and was badly wounded shortly thereafter. Lieutenant Rouzer, who had commanded the Transport outfit for the battalion, became adjutant, and I took his place as Transport Officer. It was a surprise to me, especially as I knew very little about horses, and I told the Major that if horsemanship were a requisite, he was picking the wrong man. He replied that this made no difference; all he wanted was to be sure that "the stuff got there." I promised him it would get there, and proceeded to learn what I could in a short time about the problems of horse transportation.

Our Transport system was modeled after that of the British, for we had necessarily adopted their methods while brigaded with them, and had found it so convenient that we had kept it. Instead of depending on the Regimental Supply Company to take care of the entire regiment with a single wagon train, as was the old American army system, each battalion in our division had its own organization of men, horses and vehicles for the hauling of ammunition, rations and other supplies and baggage. Of course, there was much to be carried whenever the battalion changed station, whether near the front or in the back areas, but the supreme function of the Transport was to get ammunition and food up to the troops when they were in the line. The battalion "Transport" was the final link in the chain that reached all the way from the cargo ships through the railroad trains and the motor truck trains to keep the front line supplied, and its job started at the point where motor truck traffic stopped. The quartermaster and ordnance outfits got the supplies

up only as far as the divisional or brigade "dumps," which were on the main roads a safe distance behind the lines, though subjected to occasional long range shelling or air bombing. Beyond the "ammunition dump" and the "ration dump" was the area of the horses and limbers of the infantry battalions, whose work it would be to travel the shell-pounded roads and fields between the "dumps" and the line. Bad roads or no road, mud, congestion of traffic, breakdowns, and shells were the obstacles with which the Transport had to contend, and so long as the stuff was delivered nobody in the line cared what the obstacles were or how the Transport men met them, for they had their own problems which were even more desperate. Hence a "Transport Officer" had a peculiarly independent job, though one requiring resourcefulness and attention to a variety of details. He rarely got any detailed orders or instructions; he judged by common sense what the companies wou'd need, got hold of it somewhere, and figured out the shortest and safest way to get it to them. The enlisted men of the Transport would take their teams through bombarded villages, over fields torn up by shell holes, or any place where horses could walk and wheels could roll, with a skill and an indifference to circumstances that was a marvel. The Transport work was, of course, less dangerous than that of the regular companies while on a "drive," for the limbers were never brought up close enough for direct rifle or machine gun fire, nor did they ever catch a barrage such as is laid down on a trench or an advancing line of troops. Their danger came from the Boche shelling the roads, especially the villages and cross-roads, for a distance of several miles behind the lines, and when shells did land back in those places they were generally big ones. Moreover, although they were subjected to less shelling than the foot troops, they were caught at a greater disadvantage when they were shelled. A platoon can drop into a ditch or a group of shell holes for protection, or it often can detour around a dangerous spot. Even if there are a few casualties it may not interfere greatly with the rest of the outfit carrying out its mission. The Transport, on the other hand, was long and

unwieldy; it could not get off the road, nor even move if traffic were jammed; men and horses were high up instead of flat on the ground when fragments were flying; and a single horse or wagon hit might cause a tie-up in the road that would imperil all the rest. The result was that a few shells, even when no one was hit, could cause as much worry to those in charge of the Transport as a much worse bombardment would cause to a platoon commander.

Our Transport outfit had gone through its roughest times before I came to it. While we were in the line on our first and second drives they had been pushing their way along roads that rivalled Fifth Avenue for density of traffic. One day they had been held up at Chattincourt in a stream of wagons, ambulances and trucks that could not move one way or the other, and while they were held as in a vise, the shells started to land square in the road among them. One man was badly wounded, and several horses crippled so that they had to be shot, and much quick cutting of harness and rehitching of animals had to be done with the steel still flying. Luck had favored our battalion as it was, for several men had been killed in the whole regimental train. When I took over the job, I was plentifully accustomed to shelling, but entirely unaccustomed to handling horses, even under normal conditions, and needless to say I was more than thankful for the good fortune that continued to follow the Third Battalion Transport. The first thing I did, after acquainting myself with the routine and organization of the outfit, was to start to practice riding Queen, the Major's mare, for even on the peaceful roads of Passavant the mere incidental job of handling my own horse was not the least of my troubles at that date.

CHAPTER VII

The Argonne Forest

OUR period of rest was brought to an abrupt close by an order to move, and on the morning of October 22nd, we started up into the Argonne Forest. We had hoped for an even longer vacation, but the eight days we had spent in Passavant had answered their purpose, and we were different men from those that had come back out of the line in the dawn of the twelfth of October. Our orders did not tell us just when or where we would attack again, but anyone could see that our pendulum had swung, and that when we left Passavant we were getting nearer to action instead of coming farther from it. No one was anxious to go in again; there is no novelty after the first time "over the top," and all the old men knew only too well what it meant. We were willing and ready to do it, because it was our job to do, but no one felt any necessity for trying to bluff either his comrades or himself about what he would like to do. We felt fairly confident by this time that this would be the last drive, and that, as the men said, "If you got through this one, you would get home," for the armistice negotiations were progressing.

The companies marched ahead and were loaded into motor trucks when they reached the main road, while we followed with the Transport. It reminded me of a Gypsy caravan when I got it lined up in the main street of the village, ready to start, and rode down alongside the train to see that everything was in shape. There were twenty-one vehicles in all—four rolling kitchens, clumsy-looking things with their blackened chimneys sticking way up, ten limbers, three "G.S. wagons" built like large delivery wagons, two water carts that reminded one of small-town street sprinklers, and the one horse medical and mess carts. All our transport equipment, except a few things that had been replaced, was British, for we had organized the outfit while we were back of Arras, and I was always very thankful that it was, for their vehicles were lighter and more practical for rough

work than the American issue wagons. Several pack mules that the outfit possessed were ridden on the march by the non-coms and various spare men, who helped keep the train together and assisted any driver who had trouble, while the Sergeant and I used the only two riding horses.

It was a beautiful clear fall morning when we left Passavant, with a touch of frost in the air. A couple of miles brought us to the main road that led north into the heart of the forest, and here we waited a little while to get our appointed place in the combined brigade train, which assembled from the side roads, coming from the various towns in which we had been scattered.

The long column entered the woods and wound along the shaded road at a steady walk, and despite the many horrors that the name of the Argonne Forest recalls, our first impression of it was one of wonderful beauty. The leaves had turned to a gorgeous red and gold on the trees, and had formed a carpet for the horses' hoofs, and I could well imagine what a playground it must have been for the motorists of the old pleasure-seeking days. It was hard indeed to realize what a hell the hand of man had made out of such a fairyland, and what sacrifices had been made a few miles ahead of us to cleanse it from the pollution of the foul Boche. We passed through isolated little villages, cut off from the world except for this one thoroughfare, and came out into a stretch of open meadow land just beyond Futeaux, where we stretched our picket lines near the bank of a little stream and made our camp for the night. That evening as we slept under the open sky, for it was a clear starlit night, we heard the hum of Boche planes coming toward us from the north. It was a helpless feeling to be lying there with nothing to prevent the bombs from dropping straight into your face, and wondering where they would happen to land. The sound grew louder, came directly overhead and passed on. A minute later we heard the succession of dull roars as they "pulled up their tail gates" and "dumped their load" somewhere else. Then we breathed easily again, for we knew that they generally dropped their "eggs" all in the same place.

In the morning we hitched in and took the road again, passed through the town of Les Islettes, and soon came to where wire entanglements and shell holes told us that the battle line had been at some time. Sign-boards in Italian showed us who had been in that sector ahead of us. The highway ran between heavily wooded hills on either side, and in these woods the division was encamped. We passed Le Cleon and were approaching the enormous church and monastery at La Chalade, half ruined and now used as Divisional Headquarters, when the column was halted and we were told that our troops were on the hillside on our right. I let the men unhitch and feed their horses while I rode up the hill to get our exact location and pick out the best road for the wagons. The whole regiment was distributed along a woods road, with their pup tents hidden by the trees—a beautiful camping ground—and I located the Third Battalion without difficulty. Then came the job of getting the wagons up the steep muddy hill to meet them. We picked a circuitous route across the field, but there was one bad stretch just as we swung into the road at the edge of the woods, and we had to use "snap teams" to get up. As we had no extra animals this meant "doubling up," two teams taking one limber up the bank and coming back for the next one, so it was slow and tedious work, but we finally got there. This was the method always resorted to when teams got stuck, and in spite of its troublesomeness it saved the horses a great deal. The underbrush had to be cut out with axes before we could get standing space for the horses, and room enough to stretch the picket line between the trees.

Our bivouac in the forest at La Chalade was a pleasant one, for the weather was clear, we were high enough to be out of the mud, and the work was not burdensome. We could hear the boom of the guns in the distance, but were still out of range of shellfire and felt fairly secure from the "Jerry" planes that flew over us at night, for we kept our lights concealed and were clear of any town or other natural target.

It was almost a continuation of our rest period, though we knew it might end any day, and that we were on the verge of another drive. The companies occupied the drill hours in training their new men with rifle shooting and bomb throwing and practised with the Browning automatics, which had just been issued to us in place of the old Chauchats, so that the ravines rang with the rattle of every kind of weapon. Meanwhile the limbers were making their trips up and down the hill daily, bringing rations and water and ammunition from the dumps along the main road.

The French in past days had built some fine dugouts on the sides of these hills, and these were utilized for the different battalion and company headquarters. The ravines were so steep that the shelters were not properly dugouts, but rather log shanties constructed on the level ledges and squeezed up close against the bank and roofed over with rocks and earth. That they were French and not Boche in origin was evidenced by their "southern exposure;" it was only when we got farther up into the forest that we found them on the northern slopes. In one of these our battalion headquarters had been established and as it was one of the prerogatives of my new job to live with the headquarters crowd since I had left I Company, I dragged my bedding roll into the "old Frog dugout" as our little home was generally referred to. With the battalion surgeon, the dentist, Lieutenant Rouzer, who was now adjutant, and several enlisted clerks and runners, we made up what we grandly referred to as the "staff," though our only claim to this exalted title was our lack of any company connections, and it was this collection of "odd-job artists" who shared the Major's quarters. The nights were now getting very chilly, and we were thankful for the little fireplace that we found in the room. There was an abundance of dry wood all around, and in this one respect we were better off than we would have been in billets. Carefully covering the door and all cracks with blankets and clothing to keep the light from showing out, we had a cosy little home. The dry autumn leaves provided us with as soft a bed as could be desired. One learns in the army to take whatever luck the day brings

without worrying about the morrow, and we had as much fun in those evenings, sitting on the floor in front of the fireplace, talking and smoking, as though we had been camping in the Maine woods.

One day all the battalion commanders, with various followers, went up by motor truck to reconnoitre the sector of the line that we were to take over from the 82nd Division. They returned late that night, and we could see from our Major's description of the terrain that we would have a rough job when we started to "drive." Plans began to develop, and the order came to take the road. The regiment had formed and had reached the main road by the monastery, and we had the wagon train lined up behind them, awaiting the command to start, when a message came down the line to turn back to our old camp in the woods. We hesitated at first, for we had never heard of such late change of plans; then it was verified, and each company turned about and marched up the hill amid great rejoicing, for the armistice rumors had been growing stronger, and many of the men thought that we were turning back because "the war was over." Unfortunately, that was not yet true, and it was only a matter of a few days' delay before we finally went up the line. All kinds of rumors reached us as to the cause of the postponement, but we never found out for certain. The job of "snapping" the teams up the hill again took my exclusive attention for so long that I had little time to meditate on the practical jokes perpetrated by the so-called "brains of the army."

We hated to leave our dugout, and appreciated it the more when we returned to it. Each day the moving orders were expected, and each evening we settled down by the fire in thankfulness that we had one more night there before we would again have to do our sleeping amid the rain and the shells. On October 30th, the order came, and this time there was neither mistake nor delay about it. Packs were rolled, an early dinner cooked, and by noon the battalion was ready for the long hike to the front. Kitchens were put in shape, limbers and wagons loaded, and the Transport "hitched in" ready to move. Our last tour of the front was commencing.

Our route took us up the main road only a few kilometers; then at Le Four de Paris, a "corners" of about three buildings, we turned to the right and plunged into the thickest part of the forest. A long, steep hill confronted us, the road gradually climbing the side of a great ravine, and the scene was a picture of desolation, both natural and induced. It must have been an utter wilderness even in peace times, for the only remnants of human habitation were some groups of Boche shanties clinging to the opposite slope of the ravine. The sky was overhung with heavy clouds, and the air was chilly and raw. The shattered trees and scattered remnants of Boche equipment that we passed added to the effect of destruction. The road was bad, and we were forced to stop several times to let the horses "blow." When we were near the top of the hill a short halt was ordered and the nose-bags were put on, while the men hastily grabbed slices of bread from the kitchen and split open cans of "goldfish" for their supper. Darkness set in very early, and by the time we were ready to resume the march it was black as midnight, for the woods were thick on both sides of the road. It was while we were halted that we noticed a large quantity of picks and shovels piled carelessly in the road ditch and evidently belonging to some Engineering outfit that had been repairing the road. Before we started we were plentifully equipped, for they often "came in handy" with us, and all our old tools had been stolen from us by the companies. The Transport men were the best "crooks" in the regiment, and if it had not been for their skill on many occasions the whole battalion would have suffered. We salved our consciences with the maxim that "it all belongs to Uncle Sam," but property rights were surely in a slump in the Argonne.

That dark ride through the forest seemed interminable; now and again the column would come to a halt, and our section of it would have to wait, too, not knowing what the trouble was nor how long it would last; again it would go too fast, or some infernal motor trucks would cut in ahead of us, and we would have to hurry and look sharp to keep contact with the forward part of the train. There was no

way to get a look at the map, and it was not long before I was forced to depend altogether on following the battalion ahead. The M. P.'s on the crossroads were more of a nuisance than a help, for they would sometimes hold us up and let a string of trucks cut us off, and they never knew how to direct us when we did get separated. Near Varennes I had to trot forward alone for nearly a mile, to find the way, and to use pure guesswork at one corner in deciding which way to turn. We had not gone much farther before we began to hear shells crashing ahead of us. I shouted back the order: "Put on your tin hats," and we kept on going. Luck was certainly with us that night, for the noise seemed to stay about the same distance ahead of us as we advanced. We were held up again just before Apremont and the transport of the 82nd Division which passed us going south told us of heavy shelling in the town. We crawled along, going sometimes less than a hundred yards at a hitch before we were blocked again, and we felt very pessimistic about our chance of getting through a shelled village at that rate. As it turned out, the delay saved us, for as we entered the ruined main street the road suddenly became clear and the shelling had stopped. Evidently the head of the column had waited its chance, and then each team had made a dash for it. The air still reeked with the fumes of the explosions, but not a shell did we get. We were now in open country, in the valley of the Aire river, with the forest on our left. At Chatel-Chehery we turned eastward and crossed the river, and another half mile brought us to a group of large stone buildings that had been a monastery or some kind of a Catholic institution, with a diminutive village near it.

This was our destination for the night, and a guide from the head of the column met us and showed us the driveway off the road. We turned into the monastery yard, backed the wagons close against the hedge of trees, and wearily dismounted. The animals were quickly unhitched and tied to the wheels, for there was no space nor time to bother with a picket line, and we turned in for what was left of the night, as it was now nearly three o'clock in the morning.

I slept that night in the little chapel of the monastery, with about twenty of the men, and if we had felt any doubts about the propriety of sleeping in a house of worship, they would have been set at rest when we saw Father Wallace himself rolled up in his blankets at the foot of the altar, for he had spotted the place ahead of us. Our only doubts were whether there was more chance of a shell coming in through the stained glass window than there was of one landing on the lawn outside.

We awoke to a clear crisp morning and found the cooks already working on the bacon and coffee. I found the monastery buildings and grounds more thickly populated than I had expected, for it was being used as headquarters by both Division and Corps, and the whole area was crowded with transport of every description, including the headquarters troops which would inevitably pre-empt the best places for picket lines. My enthusiasm for the place rapidly cooled; first, because I thought that our proximity might tempt some General or Staff Officer to "butt in" to my business; and secondly, it occurred to me that the monastery would be an excellent target for an air raid if not for the artillery itself. It sounds well enough to say that "if a shell has your name on it, it will get you," but personally I always preferred a little headwork to any such fatalism, and that concentration of men and animals seemed to be tempting fate a little too much. I scouted around while the drivers were taking care of their horses, and soon selected a place five or six hundred yards across the meadow opposite the buildings, where the junction of the Aire and a small run afforded us a protecting fringe of trees on two sides. It was far enough from the road so that nobody would be likely to shoot our way unless they spotted us in particular, and we would not suffer from someone else's carelessness. The teams were moved across the field, the wagons backed into the bushes and camouflaged with boughs, and a picket line fixed up between the trees, while the men set up their tents or arranged their beds under their wagons while they had the chance. We rather expected to lie there securely that night and watch Headquarters get raided, and while

we wished no one hard luck, we were perhaps just a trifle disappointed when nothing happened.

There was little for the Transport to do that day after getting settled. A truck was provided for once, and at dusk a hot meal was rushed up to the troops by the mess sergeants. It was their last chance to eat before "going over" as they were then lying in their "fox holes" along the St. Juvin-St. Georges road awaiting the dawn which would be "H Hour of D Day." At the picket line we turned in early. I shared a shelter tent with my orderly and the Horseshoer, and we were glad to have it crowded because it kept us warmer.

Early in the morning of November first we were awakened by the most stupendous racket that ever smote on human ears. The whole sky ahead of us was aflame with the firing of the guns. The big guns just in front of us and the "75's" farther ahead roared and barked, while occasionally the sharper screech of an incoming shell trying to find our batteries varied the noise. The barrage was on, and soon our battalion would start forward. There was nothing we could do then to help them, but every man in the Transport promised himself to do his limit to support them, for there was nothing that could come to us that was half as terrible as what the boys up ahead would be going through. As the sky became a little more bright with a beautiful autumn dawn we saw a great flock of American planes sail over us toward the front, and hoped that this time our aviation service would be of more help to us than it had been three weeks before near Cunel.

An order came to take ammunition up to Regimental Headquarters, and we started out with the six limbers that were ready loaded, five with rifle cartridges and one with bombs and grenades. The main road was alive with traffic. There were other limbers going up and limbers returning empty, artillery caissons, staff cars, motor cycles and Ford ambulances. Our artillery was banging away from positions in the fields on either side of the road. We went through Fleville, where the sign boards were all printed in the weird characters of the Boche language, and had congratulated

ourselves that it was not being shelled. Then a half mile farther on we heard the familiar swish and bang, and a black cloud rose up in the field on our left. Six or eight big ones landed about the same place at short intervals, all safely in the vacant field so that the flying steel just fell short of the road. The driver in the lead remarked that that was as close as he wanted to see them come, and, fortunately, they came no closer. A stream of wounded were walking back, and presently I met some of my old company. They said that things were going badly up the line; the battalion was held up and was being badly mauled. I saw Lieutenant Taliaferro of L Company; he was waiting for an ambulance, with three bullets in his leg, but insisted that he wasn't hurt much.

Things were, indeed, going badly, as I learned when we reached regimental P. C., a couple of kilometers behind the lines. The battalion was being subjected to an open sweep of machine gun fire from front and flanks, and a man could hardly lift his head out of his hole without being instantly shot. I could not wait for further news, for the teams had to be taken back as quickly as possible, and when the next report did come, it was sad news indeed. We were met on our return to the picket line with the report that Major Emory had been killed. I rushed over to Divisional headquarters to make inquiry, hoping against hope that it might prove false, but it was on the bulletin board as official, and was indeed true. A machine gun bullet had pierced his breast as he was leading his men forward against a withering fire, and he had died as nobly as he had lived. Two other officers of the battalion had been severely wounded at almost the same moment and our casualties ran high.

The cooks had been busy during the early part of the afternoon, and about four o'clock we started forward with the rations. Four limbers contained the load this time, and the Horseshoer and I walked along to direct the drivers, for we preferred the labor of a long hike to riding where there was any shelling. We were nearing the corner where an artillery track turned off the main road to the P. C. when shells started breaking on the crest of the hill just beyond

the corner. We were well out of the reach when they started, but were going straight toward them, and also wondered when one might clear the hill top and come dashing down into the road. My eyes were glued to the crest, and as they all landed in exactly the same place, I had an unusual chance to see how much faster light traveled than sound, for the ugly black cloud would appear each time quite a perceptible instant before the rush of the shell and the noise of the explosion would be heard. But I had more to figure on than natural phenomena. Loaded limbers can only be trotted for a short distance at a time without winding the horses, and I was measuring just when to give the order for a dash around the corner, so as to decrease the danger rather than hurry into it. We got almost to the turn, one had just crashed in the same old place, the fragments reaching the road, and then we started, dashing up a bank and down the sideroad with a rattle and bang and getting through before the next one landed.

It was getting dark now; we had timed it that way because the last stretch of our route could not be covered in daylight, being too close to the line, and under direct observation. The track faded out, and we turned up over the ridge, following a white cloth tape laid out by the Engineers. Then the tape ended, and we kept on by general direction, winding and twisting between shell holes. Down into a valley, up the next ridge, and down-grade again we went; a couple of kilometers altogether from the main road and the P.C., until we met the carrying parties who were to take the rations the final half mile to our companies, for even the limbers could not go on to where the sound of wheels would have drawn fire. We unloaded at the side of St. Juvin-St. Georges road, near where the boys had jumped off that morning, and started back. I was new to that kind of work, and I watched the drivers steer their teams between shell holes in the dark in dumb admiration. They were wonders at their job, and I went along more for the moral principle, of taking them rather than sending them into danger, than for any good I did. They were just as steady, too, when shells began to sprinkle the field, as they

had been when fancy driving was their only worry. None came dangerously close, but we breathed more easily when we struck the main road again and found everything quiet. On the home stretch now, those of us not in the saddles jumped into the empty limbers, and were half asleep by the time we reached Fleville.

In the morning notice came to carry some rifle ammunition up to the line by pack mules. These animals can travel in places where a limber cannot get through, but can only carry two boxes of cartridges apiece, while a limber holds eighteen or twenty, so we expected to run a series of short trips back and forth between our temporary dump at the P. C. where we had unloaded the six limbers the previous day, and the front line a couple of miles beyond.

What was our surprise when we found the dugout deserted, except for a signalman who told us that Headquarters had moved to Imecourt! Our last news the night before had been that the advance was still held up and that the line had hardly moved forward a kilometer. And now we were told that the P. C. was clear through to the other side of the Boche resistance, a good five kilometers, as the crow flies, from the old location. Some miracle had happened, we thought, as we started on across the hills to catch up with them. I was riding "Mike" a shrewd and phlegmatic little mule, in preference to the high-spirited "Queen," because he acted more sensibly when firing or shelling was going on, but the precaution was not needed. Not a sound of war was heard, and the field we had crossed the night before with the rations, in constant expectation of trouble, was as safe as a boulevard. Even our own artillery was ahead of us, and evidently moving too fast to fire.

We passed through the wrecked pile of masonry that had been St. Georges, and found the muddy road up to Imecourt filled with American field guns and caissons, still moving forward. Momentarily we expected the road to be shelled, for we had heard not an item of news and the extent of the Boche collapse, after their terrific resistance of the day before, was hard to realize. We began to ask questions of some men coming back the other way. "The Boche

are running like hell!" was the universal reply. The signs of the struggle were still there. Every kind of equipment, American and German, was strewn over the ground. Wrecked machine gun nests, some of them the strongest we had ever seen, were filled with dead Boche, and all too many American bodies lay on the open ground that the guns had swept. Pack mules travel slowly, and it was past noon when we reached the town, dumped the cartridge boxes in front of the ruined house that was the new P. C. and hastened in for news and orders.

The stubborn and desperate resistance that the Boche had made on the first of November had been on the last of the strongly prepared lines of defenses, and when that line went, the whole works snapped with a suddenness that surprised us completely. Our whole line had suffered heavily and had fought for every yard of ground on that first day, but our battalion, which formed the assaulting waves of our regiment, had been caught in an especially bad hole. The American barrage, tremendous as it was, had at that point been too "long," and had left untouched a row of Boche nests between our men and the bombarded ground, so that when "H" hour came the battalion was met with as murderous a fire as though the barrage had never fallen. The Major and the Colonel had known of this defect in the artillery plans the previous night and had appealed frantically to have them changed, but it was a Corps plan, and someone on the Staff, way back in safety, had "known it all," and had refused to amend the orders to the batteries. It was no more the fault of the artillery line officers than of the infantry; like most blunders, it was made higher up, or, at least, farther back. All day men had fallen, and little advance had been made, but meanwhile the 319th on our right was making better progress, and when early the next morning a new start was made, it was found that most of the Boche had pulled out on account of this menace to their flank, and our advance gained speed at a surprising rate. Then later in the day the fresh 159th Brigade relieved the 160th, and went on at a merry clip for the momentum was so great that the Boche guns could not stop long enough to fire, and the machine

guns that our men overran and cleaned out were in improvised rear-guard positions rather than in organized system of protected "nests."

Such was the surprising news that we learned at Imecourt, and we realized that our Transport was miles in the rear. We mounted our mules again and started back, for there was no way to get in touch with the picket line and get rations started up except by going there, and our camp at Chehery was almost ten miles away. The road was congested and slippery, and the little mules hard to hurry, so that it was after dark when we reached the monastery and cut across the meadow to our camp, where to our great satisfaction a hot supper was awaiting us. The men up at Imecourt had to have "chow" for the next day, so we started two limbers up that evening, waiting for daylight before we should move the entire train.

Sunday, the third of November, was "moving day" for us, and judging by the amount of traffic on the roads, for almost everybody else. We took the road in a regimental train, my section of it following on the heels of the First Battalion Transport. The roads had been routed by this time, forming a one-way circuit, and we were forced to take a longer way round than on the pack-mule expedition of the day before, though we got a much better road. Every road in that area was a continuous stream of transport; there were no gaps between one outfit and the next for miles, and it took considerable jockeying to get a place in the stream and keep another outfit from cutting in at cross-roads and making a split in the column. In the fields by the roadside burial parties were at work, and already in places there were the rows of rough board crosses that showed the cost of the victory. At other places which these detachments had not yet reached we passed many American bodies as well as dead Boche and dead horses. It is impossible to see a dead American soldier without some feeling of emotion, common as the sight may be, and they did not look ugly, as they lay on the ground as if asleep, a look of restfulness in their faces, except in a few cases where the bodies had been torn beyond recognition. A dead Boche, on the other hand,

arouses no emotion at all. We did not gloat over them nor rejoice at their destruction, but they did not seem like human beings. Their natural ugliness and weird animal-like appearance seemed accentuated in their death, and it was hard to realize that the shrunk waxen faces, that lacked any expression whatever, had belonged to living men. They were no more to us than the dead horses that lay bloated in the ditch, which if anything we pitied more.

We passed through Sommerance, Landres et St. Georges, and on through Imecourt to the bivouac of our battalion, reaching them in time for the rolling kitchens to give the men a hot supper. Not a shell nor a gun had we heard that whole day, and this fact added credence to the rumor that an armistice had already been signed. It seemed too good to be true, and yet for the Boche to be retreating so fast that his artillery could not fire seemed equally so. That night a few shells landed about a mile away, and a few of our guns ahead of us started up—just enough to kill the rumor.

Someone of our crowd had picked up the expression "pursuing the Hun" in some magazine or newspaper, and it struck us so funny that we soon adopted the phrase. It seemed to lend a touch of romance to the job, and rather tickled our fancy even as we laughed at it. Heretofore the "pursuit" part of it had been rather imaginary; we had found them all too easily, and our troubles had begun when the "hunt" ended. But now "pursuing the Hun" had become the literal reality. We had had the last of the bitter struggle, and our other brigade was having the pursuit, but we had to do considerable traveling to keep close enough behind them. Instead of going back toward the rear when we were relieved from the front line, as we had done three weeks before, we had merely stopped and let the fresh regiments go on through us. Then even that left us too far behind, for we still had our function as their support, and we had to take the road and start "pursuing" after them, ready to relieve them in turn when their strength gave out.

All kinds of optimistic reports and rumors drifted back to us as we started forward on the morning of the fourth. No one had any real idea how far the line was ahead of us, nor

how fast it was moving. Our skepticism of the early reports had changed to an even exaggerated idea of the speed of the retreat, and we took our freedom from shell fire to mean that the Boche were really farther away than was the fact. We were now well into the German "back areas" of the four years that had preceded the American drive, and the country was much less desolate than the region of the old stationary front. There were ruined houses in the villages and shell holes in the fields, and all the marks of a few recent days of sharp fighting, but there was not the accumulated destruction of four years. The villages were standing and the fields were green, and the landscape on the whole was fair to the eye. Signs of the Boche occupation were everywhere, and it was apparent that they were comfortably fixed and had expected it to be permanent. We went through the small village of Sivry-les-Buzancy, and saw a German hospital with an operating room fitted with glass sides like a sun parlor. Elaborate sign boards informed us of recreation rooms, movies, and canteens, as well as the headquarters of various units. We approached the larger town of Buzancy, and pulled into an apple orchard for a halt, until we should find out what the plans were for the regiment. We hesitated to advance the wagon train too far without first seeing what we were getting into, so Captain McDonald, who was the Regimental Supply Officer and in command of the combined train, called the battalion "T. O.'s" together, and we started to ride forward. The regiment was in Buzancy when we entered the town, and we found that orders had just been received for a further advance. The companies fell in, and the whole 320th Infantry started up the road "in pursuit of the Hun," the Colonel and his staff riding at the head of the column. It gave me a thrill to see the whole outfit marching together into the enemy's country in the old-fashioned way, our strength proudly revealed, after the months of silent night traveling by companies or platoons, to which we had become accustomed. We rode behind the Colonel's staff, having decided to reconnoitre the route and the destination before bringing up the train.

Buzancy must have been a center of some importance in the Boche scheme of things, for the signboards, and the remnants of furnishings and equipment that we could see through the open doors and windows along the main street, gave evidence of the quartering of Huns of high degree. There was a "Kommandantur" of this or that unit advertised on the front of every prominent building, and over the gate of a chateau just beyond the town an enormous sign announced the "Kommandantur" of the "Ardennes Group" whom we thought must be the equivalent of an army or at the least a Corps commander. A railroad station and yards in a good state of repair between Buzancy and the adjacent town of Bar showed that the region had been far enough behind the danger zone for rail communications. There were no civilians in the town, though the brigade ahead of us came to inhabited villages not much farther back, but there were unmistakable signs of civilian and feminine habitation, and it is probable that the imprisoned French people were only moved out when the town came under shell fire. This region was a paradise for the souvenir fiends, for the vacated billets of the Boche officers yielded up many a fancy helmet, and any kind of weapon and equipment that a man would want to burden himself with. The size of one's collection was limited only by the limit of useless weight that one wanted to carry. I didn't want to carry any junk, so collected none, but I saw enough to keep me from wanting to buy any of it later, when souvenirs became one of France's leading wares. It was in Buzancy and Bar that the boys unearthed a large supply of high black silk hats, of the style of Civil War photographs, and the sight of these things topping off a mud-stained khaki uniform in place of the well-known "hard derby" was as laughable a thing as we had ever seen.

At a fork in the road a couple of miles past Bar we came upon a battery of "75's" from the 77th Division getting in place to fire, and were told by them that the Boche were only a few kilometers away and might be expected to start shelling at any minute. We hardly believed them, for our march had been so undisturbed and the rumors of flight so rosy. Events of the afternoon showed that the battery officers

were nearer the truth. The troops were now within sight of the woods where we were to make our camp, so we turned back to ride to Buzancy and bring up the train, while the regiment went on into the woods and got under cover of the ravine while things were still quiet.

We decided to move forward at once only the kitchens, ration limbers, and water carts, leaving the vehicles that were not essential to the feeding of the men to be brought along the next morning when the traffic congestion would probably be less severe. It was fortunate that we did split up this way, for it proved much easier to get a short train through than a long one. We had just reached the road where we had talked to artillerymen a few hours before, when a shell landed square on the road about three hundred yards ahead of us. We were going up grade, and there was a curve at the top of the hill, about where it landed, that was exposed to observation for a distance of some miles to the northward. We saw an artillery team stampeded down over the field, though nothing but the wagon was hit, and in about thirty seconds another big one came in almost the same place. The battalion train ahead of us was almost around the bend when the show started, and had whipped up, getting across, and into the concealment of the woods, with only one mule wounded. I halted my outfit, and we waited for ten or fifteen minutes, while "Jerry" pounded the empty road ahead, hoping that he would not take a notion to shift his aim a little and hunt for us. Then it stopped, and we started forward. We had reduced our margin by about one half when with a rush and a bang it started again. We pulled up sharp, and this time were so close that we were not at all confident of their all landing in the same place. A half dozen or so came; then all was quiet again. We could not risk further delay, or we might lose our best chance, so I gave the signal, and up the hill and around the curve the teams trotted, not pulling up till they were well beyond the danger zone. My orderly had taken the riding horses across at a breakneck gallop, and I waited at the curve in case any of the drivers should need help. The last team just made it in time, for a shell landed a bare hundred

yards behind it in almost the same old spot, and more followed that we did not linger to observe.

We pulled into a deep wooded ravine, near Fontenoy, where we found the regiment already "at home." It was an ideal location, for a bivouac so close to the line, as there was no possible observation on it, and there were many more prominent patches of woodland nearby for guesswork shelling. Considerable axe work was necessary to make room for the picket line in a thick grove of spruce and pine, but once accomplished, our camouflage was perfect. Along the roadside, from the head of our ravine back to where we had been shelled our "75" batteries were lined up, and they pounded away all evening with a terrific racket. I had never seen so much field artillery nor firing at such a fast rate. They had not even stopped to camouflage, and next morning they were moving on again, still "pursuing the Hun." I happened to see that curve again late the same afternoon, and there was a caisson overturned in the ditch, several dead horses and three dead men mangled and piled together in a heap—a direct hit! We had, indeed, been lucky to have run through at just the right moment. When Sergeant Hurley came up the next morning with the rest of our Transport he heard not a shell; the troublesome battery must have been put out of business during the night or have hastened to join in the retreat.

It was on the same day that both Lieutenant Titus and I got our promotions from Second to First Lieutenant, for which we had been recommended after the first drive. It was after dark when we finished getting things in shape, and had eaten supper, and I took the oath lying on my stomach in a pup tent with the adjutant, a candle hidden under the edge of a tin hat to read by. It made no difference whatever in my job, which, as luck would have it, was indeed easier from then on than it had been before, and it seemed of little interest when my mind was filled with the death of so many of our comrades, the great success of the drive, and the details of the Transport. I find that I even failed to make mention of it in my brief diary. It was not until we returned to civilization far enough to buy the new

insignia, and mix once more with people outside of our own immediate outfit, that we began to appreciate it or give a thought to it.

The days spent in the ravine were restful and not unpleasant. We were not disturbed, though each evening we would hear a few shells break on the hill in front of us, sometimes far enough away so that it was debatable whether the noise was from a shell or a gun. As each day passed, our location, of course, grew safer, and we lost the apprehension of shelling that we had felt on the first night. The men rested and were well content to do nothing else; the Transport hauled rations each day from the newly established dump in the nearby village of Vaux, and had plenty of time for resting, too. Never did a crowd of active young men go to bed so early. Nights were coming on very early, especially in that shaded ravine, and supper had to be finished and all fires extinguished before dark. A few men succeeded in hiding lights, but for the most part we did without them, as no one wanted to take any chances with air bombs, and all had some back sleep to make up. By six o'clock about the entire regiment would be sound asleep. We started an officers' mess for the whole battalion, had a rustic table and benches built, and began to enjoy ourselves. Captain Howell of H Company, who had come up to command the battalion when the Major fell, remained in command and proved to be a popular as well as an efficient leader.

We got very little news, local or general, and I do not know yet how far the 159th Brigade got before they were in turn relieved. We received rumors each day of how many kilometers the line had advanced, and it was approaching close to Sedan before we left the ravine. Rumors about the armistice negotiations were rosy, but vague, and we did not know how much credence to give to them. Our chief question was whether our next move would be "up" or "back;" we expected to have to relieve the other brigade again as soon as they ran out of wind, but we were pretty well "fed up" and entertained some hopes that a fresh division might relieve the 80th altogether. On the evening of the seventh we got word to be ready to move in the morning

and thought that our turn had come to "pursue the Hun" again. I went up to regimental headquarters to learn the route for the march, and was informed that our destination was the town of Marcq; it was not until I had located this place on the map and had seen that it was way back on the edge of the Argonne Forest that I realized that we were going back, and that our "Hun hunting" for the present, at least, was over. It was a pleasant surprise, and no one made the least attempt to conceal it. The 320th was always ready to do what was asked, but not to be glad when we were going back out of it would have been preposterous. The whole First Army Corps was being relieved, and divisions that had been through less of the drive were coming up to take our places. We felt that our work was over, and that whether the armistice rumors should materialize immediately or not, it was unlikely that the war would last long enough to see us in another drive.

CHAPTER VIII

La Guerre Finie

OUR journey back into and through the Argonne Forest involved some hard traveling, and took us past sights just as terrible as we had witnessed on the march up, but it was free from shelling and was lightened by thoughts of the coming rest and hopes of the armistice. We left our ravine and took to the road, but it was by no means an ideal highway that we had to deal with. Roads in the Argonne and beyond are scarce, and traffic moving toward the front was given the right of way and the best roads. We were shunted down the back roads, and even took a stretch on the field at one time to avoid being held up by a stream of motor trucks that filled the road as far down as the eye could reach. Horses were scarce in those days; we never got any replacements for the animals lost in the first drive until long after the armistice, and went through the Argonne show without a single spare animal. If a single one had been disabled, we would have had to abandon some wagon. In making our detour through the mud a kitchen got stuck and the Sergeant had to hitch his riding horse in front of the team to pull it out. The regiment, marching on foot, was not allowed on the road at all; the whole column had to cut across fields, and even though they saved a little distance, the mud made the hiking a severe job.

On the northern slope of a ridge near Fontenoy a row of eight Boche field pieces stood untouched and undamaged, still in perfect alignment and still trained down the road toward Buzancy. Such was the speed of the retreat that apparently no attempt had been made to withdraw them. There was enough Boche equipment—machine guns, ammunition boxes, rifles, grenades and clothing—along these roads to have stocked a warehouse with "souvenirs." Nor did it take a detective to recognize places where bitter last stands had been made.

We covered nearly thirty kilometers that day, without a halt so far as the Transport was concerned, except when a

block in the traffic compelled it. It rained off and on, and the mud was deep with the accumulation of weeks of bad weather, especially on the stretch of "second-class road" that curved westward from Harricourt to Briquenay and which enabled us to avoid the inevitable congestion of the highway through Bar and Buzancy. It was along here that we passed a patch of woodland posted with signs warning people to keep out of it on account of gas. The warning was hardly needed; the place had been so drenched with mustard that the bushes were stained yellow and the ground was covered with the dried splashes. The smell from the road was strong enough to be unmistakable, and a few days earlier it would have been dangerous. We had never experienced such a concentration of gas, but we realized then that that was our good fortune, and not because it was impossible. We could not tell whether it was the Boche or our own guns that had done the job, as both lines had been through there so recently.

Many of the streets in these little villages had been renamed by the Boche occupants, the blatant signboards covering up the inoffensive "Rue de Something" of the original name, and needless to say, the new titles were always characteristically and patriotically Hun. But it was their turn to be superseded now, and at one place we saw a neat "Kaiser Wilhelm Strasse" crossed out and "President Wilson Street" chalked up in its place. The looks of the street made one wonder where the honor came in, in either case. The Boche, in distributing names, seemed to have the same absence of sense of humor which sometimes results in the worst hotel in American towns being named the "Washington House," for often the fanciest title would go to the worst looking little alley that France could produce. The most forlorn attempt at a "village square" that I have ever seen bore the proud title of "Hohenzollern Platz." Some of our big guns that we passed were named; "Old Dutch Cleanser" and "Peace Talk" were about the only ones that had anything to do with war, the rest being about the same as would be found in a bunch of sailboats at a summer resort.

We went through Grand-Prè early in the afternoon. This town had been right in the middle of the fighting when it was still going slowly, and it looked it. The streets were so littered up with wreckage that it was hard to get a wagon through, even though the biggest obstacles had been cleared away. We crossed the Aire on a rough Engineer bridge, for the old stone bridge had been wrecked a few days before by air bombs, as the great holes in the river bank showed. A few more miles brought us to Marcq, where we encamped for the night, stretching our picket line between the trees of an apple orchard.

Marcq was in a fair state of preservation, as towns go in that region, and most of the houses were intact, though messed up and dismantled inside.

We scouted around and found a room for an officers' mess, with a long table, chairs and an effective kitchen stove. In the same row were several fairly respectable bedrooms, and we joyfully made ourselves at home after a brief investigation to see whether there were any hidden explosives on the premises or "crimson ramblers" in the beds. We were especially tickled at our luck because for once our occupancy was disputed by neither the Boche nor the French and we could use what we could find without the "advice and consent" of a pestiferous local mayor. All through that region were large patches of cabbage, intended for the winter's supply of sauerkraut for "Jerry," and our boys helped themselves plentifully. For several days no meal was complete without a liberal plateful of this booty, and it was no small help to the variety of our rations, not to mention the added pleasure of reaping what our enemies had sown.

All that day, as we had ridden through the villages, we had been greeted with the rumor that an armistice had already been effected. All along the road we had passed the usual number of disreputable-looking French soldiers, and to our questions the answer was always the same: "La guerre finie!" We knew that they often got news sooner than we did, and we began to be hopeful that the news was already true. Then one of them gave me a French newspaper and

as I rode along at a walk I read of the departure of the Hun envoys to meet Marshal Foch.

The march was resumed early the next morning, southward along the valley of the Aire, with the forest on our right. We reached Apremont, through which we had passed ten days before under such different circumstances, and turned into a side-road that entered the woods. Up and up it wound, the ravine growing deeper on either side, and several times we were forced to stop and "blow" the horses. We were now in the Bois de Apremont—each little section of the Argonne Forest having a separate name of its own—and it was as heavily wooded and as hilly a section as we had seen. On the plateau at the summit were groups of well-built shanties, and the inevitable Boche signboards, while down on the southern slope of the hillside was a large cluster of wooden houses stuck on ledges and connected up by winding paths and steps with rustic railings. This novel little vertical village was the "Abri St. Louis," and this was our destination for the time being. The name and the fact that its best protection was on the northern side showed its French origin, but many improvements and elaborations had doubtless been made by the Huns during their four years of occupation, and they had lived in luxury. It reminded one more of a cottage colony at some mountain summer resort than of anything connected with the war. There was room for the whole regiment in these buildings, and many of the men even got bunks; there were tables and benches and stoves in some of them. Nights were getting cold, and we considered ourselves very lucky.

We rested all the next day, which was Sunday, at the Abri St. Louis, and it was a welcome rest, after two hard days of marching. A French lieutenant who was attached to our Brigade as a liaison officer took dinner with us, and told us of Marshal Foch's terms to the Hun envoys, which we had not yet heard, and much of the afternoon was spent in discussing whether they would be accepted. He thought they would not be, and indeed they did seem almost too favorable to be true, for we were not certain that the Boche was badly enough licked to allow us to march clear to the

Rhine without a single machine gun nest in the way. We restrained our impatience, knowing that the morrow would tell us whether our job was done, or whether we had a winter of fighting ahead of us.

On the morning of the memorable eleventh of November we moved again, back through the heart of the forest, another stage toward civilization. There was a penetrating cold mist that morning, so dense that one could hardly see a hundred yards, and the mud was so nearly frozen that a single step chilled the feet thoroughly. We made an early start, the Transport for once going ahead of the companies, and we needed it, for the road was abominable and our progress slow. We were now too far back for the more recent marks of battle, but all along those narrow woods lanes we passed graves. There was no cemetery, for the trees were too thick; just small groups at the roadside and isolated ones in the very ditches, American, French and Boche.

The mist was clearing and the sun beginning to shine as we were already on the long hill that we had climbed on our way up to the front; it had been so dark then that we did not recognize it when we first came to it again. We turned into the main road at Le Four de Paris at about eleven o'clock, and from then on the stream of traffic, the M. P.'s and the "Frogs" gave us plenty of opportunity for asking questions outside our own outfit.

"War's over," "Guerre finie," "All over," we heard everywhere, with an occasional more detailed bit of information. At first we were wary, as we had been fooled several times in the past week, but before long the reports were so universal and positive that we believed them. There was nothing to do about it; every man felt relieved to the depths of his soul, and a sort of general grin and holiday spirit came over us in place of the chronic grouch that most of us had developed, and we kept right on down the road.

We pulled into our camping place near Les Islettes about noon, the Transport using some old French sheds and the companies going up into the woods to pitch their tents. Once through with the hike, we had more chance to talk over the good news, but it was impossible to express how

glad we were, and we were little interested in the political details. There was not much chance to celebrate, and it made no immediate difference in our day's routine. But then and there most of us began to lose all interest in things military and turn our thoughts to the hope of going home. We all felt like an Engineer private whom I overheard as he was working on the road, "Well, if it's over," he said, "why in hell don't we quit?"

The church bells were ringing that afternoon in the town a mile away. In the evening each little group of men lit their camp fire, and we sat around ours, smoking and talking quietly. It was a welcome change even to be allowed to have campfires; for weeks we had shivered through the evenings in darkness on account of the aeroplanes, and the bright illumination of the woods seemed unnatural. We felt mightily relieved, and happy in the knowledge that now we were practically certain of getting home, and glad that we would be in good billets for the winter and not in fox-holes, but we were not wildly hilarious like the people at home. It was all too fresh in our minds, and we were still too tired, and the losses we had suffered too recent, to admit of much celebrating.

We had suffered grievously, though plenty of outfits in the A. E. F. were hit even worse. Of the "original bunch" of officers of our battalion, just six of us sat around the fire together on the night of the eleventh of November. Five had been killed, and the rest were in hospital with wounds or sickness. In Company I about one man out of every ten had been killed, and the casualties of all degrees totalled one hundred and seventy-six. We were glad there were to be no more.

The next day the men had a chance to take a much-needed bath in the army shower bath house at Le Cleon, and clean clothing was issued. Then in the evening we had a little celebration in the shape of a gigantic bonfire about which the whole battalion gathered, while such "local talent" as was left entertained us with songs and jokes. The regimental band was sent up, and added much to the pleasure of the occasion.

The days at Les Islettes were pleasant ones; it was crisp autumn weather, but we did not mind the cold now that we could have all the fires we wanted. Our main job was cleaning up, and gradually the accumulated hardened mud of the Argonne roads began to come off the limbers, as warnings of parades and inspections came around. We knew that now that the shelling nuisance was over, the inspector nuisance was bound to begin. As long as we were in the danger zone, we were never bothered nor helped, but once let us get back to the regions of safety, and Veterinarians, Quartermasters, Division Inspectors and Corps Inspectors would begin to take a remarkable interest in the "efficiency of the Transport," by which they meant not our ability to "get the stuff up," but the appearance of our animals and equipment as we stood resting after our vital work was done.

Speculations and rumors as to whether we would go into Germany, and how soon we would go home, were the main interest during those first days of peace. We did not want to go to Germany, for we knew it meant a long march and thought it would involve more strenuous guard duty and stricter discipline than living in France, and we also figured that the divisions that went would be longer in getting home. All kinds of hopeful rumors flew around about sailing in December or January, and although they proved false, we considered it a good sign at the time when our next moving orders directed us on south into the undamaged interior of France. The long two weeks' hike that the regiment had from Les Islettes to our winter quarters does not form a part of my personal experience, for, as luck favored me, I was not with them.

It was only three days after the armistice that an order came granting leave to a small percentage of officers in each battalion, and in our outfit Lieutenants Rouzer, Titus and I were the lucky men. We decided, if possible, to go to England, which it had always been our hope to see, and getting our "Permission Militaire Americaine" blanks filled out for London, we set out the next morning. A truck took us from Les Islettes to the larger town of St. Menehould, which was

the end of civil railway service, and from there we caught a slow train to Chalons-sur-Marne. The third class compartment was crowded with French soldiers going home on furlough, and a few who were just getting back from prison camps in Sedan. Lieutenant Titus passed around a package of cigarettes, which they all joyfully accepted, and we enjoyed quite a little comedy; they all went to sleep, or appeared to, but whenever he would take out the cigarettes again, they would invariably wake up one by one and eye him hopefully until he produced another round.

We waited half the night in a French officers' rest room in Chalons, and took a train for Paris, where we arrived in time for breakfast after a tiresome ride. It was our first chance to see Paris, but we could not linger there long, as the army rule placed a time limit of twenty-four hours on stop-offs while traveling through. The lights were all on again, and the streets were gay, but we were a few days too late to see any real celebration. An express train on Sunday brought us to Boulogne, near which we had spent our first weeks in France, and we found our trunks safely stored where we had left them in June. Best uniforms and overcoats put away for such an occasion were unpacked, and we felt more respectable, for we had come straight out of the Argonne with the mud still on our "working clothes." Walking was difficult at first; we slipped all over the street with the smooth russet shoes, after having worn nothing but hobnails for five months.

The British army "leave boat" across the channel did not run until the next morning, so we went to the British Officers' Club for the night, and learned from some other Americans there that leaves to England were not allowed, and were being held up here at Boulogne in spite of the signature of regimental commanders. We determined to make an attempt, and "get away with it" if we could, so we reached the dock early the next morning, in time to "reconnoitre." There was the boat, and the two gangplanks guarded by two Tommies, who told us we would have to await the arrival of the American M. P. before going aboard. We knew that an interview with him would be fatal to our chances of

reaching England, and our hopes were at a low ebb, when we discovered a third gangplank, an unguarded and inconspicuous one up by the bow. We "eased" toward this, knowing that porch-climbing methods were now necessary, and had just reached the end of it when one of the ship's officers came bustling along and called sharply not to block the gangway. We didn't block it; we crossed it at a dash, and were on our way to England.

Our week in London was the supreme holiday of our lives. Of the details, little need be said; we saw the usual sights, and took in the usual round of theatres and restaurants. But the contrast and the suddenness of coming directly and unexpectedly from the Argonne Forest to London, arriving there just a week after the armistice had begun, and the relief at not having to go back to war again when the leave was over, gave a degree of pleasure that language is inadequate to describe.

We rejoined the outfit on December third, after traveling in a circle, from Paris to St. Dizier, down to Dijon, and back towards Paris again to Ancy-le-Franc, for it was a job to find out where they were. Our battalion was billeted in the little village of Channes, one of the quietest towns in the world. Living conditions were comfortable, and we settled down for a long stay, grateful enough at first that we were not moving about and sleeping in the open in the winter weather. But the men's need for a rest soon wore off, and rest was all that Channes had to offer. There were about two hundred inhabitants in the town, and only one store, which sold nothing that soldiers could possibly want. There was not an estaminet for miles around, though there was plenty of wine and cognac to be bought privately—all the disadvantages of the tavern with none of its good features. Nor was there a Y. M. C. A. hut. The men would have forgiven the "Y" for its failure to live up to its advertisements at the front, but we could see no excuse for not having a good active hut in a town where a whole battalion was quartered for the winter.

The men "carried on" with their usual good discipline and philosophic acceptance of the situation, but in many

ways the hoped-for winter of peace was a disappointment. Everyone had taken it for granted that most of the things we had gladly put up with to "win the war" would now be done away with. But drill continued morning and afternoon, in all weathers, even though clothing was still short and most of the men had only one pair of shoes and no extra uniform. Reveille continued to be before daylight all those cold winter mornings; with what object, when we were only killing time anyhow, only the mind of a high regular army officer can conceive. Strenuous tactical maneuvers kept coming on the schedule, often requiring the whole brigade to assemble from the scattered towns before the affair started, and on one of these occasions our Second Battalion had to get up at 2.30 on a freezing morning. Inspections grew more strict, and red tape once more came into its own. At the front, paperwork had been reduced to a necessary minimum; now it came back in redoubled quantity and increasing pettiness. During hostilities, the Boche and the rigors of Nature had been our obstacles, but we were not bothered on our own side. Now we were being increasingly "picked on" by our own higher command, with useless restrictions and annoying interference with local affairs. As some of the men used to say: "It wasn't such a bad war, but it's a hell of an armistice."

Through the long winter the men have stuck to the job and carried out their schedule with as much "pep" as could be expected, and a few entertainments and athletic events have helped to pass the time, but in every man's mind the great question: "When do we go home?" has reigned supreme. Rumors have been our meat and drink, and the least point that might have any bearing on the great question has been discussed and thrashed out over and over.

Finally Division Headquarters showed a stupendous lack of knowledge of human nature by issuing an order to suppress rumors because they caused discontent, but as it was not taken seriously it did no harm and furnished some amusement. Our outfit is a disciplined organization and our men are soldiers; they will do their duty to the last minute, but they do not pretend to have had any real interest

in it since the eleventh of November, and their longing to get home is beyond the power of words to express.

It is with mingled feelings that we look back on the days of the war. Truly it was the greatest time in our lives, and no one would have wanted to miss it, but none of us would want to go through it again for a million dollars. Each man has his own individual experience, not identical with that of any other man, yet similar to that of millions of men in all the allied countries. To be one of the great body of war veterans is something that a man will treasure all his life. The exhaustion, the hunger and thirst, the feeling of being shot at and of having shells bursting around you, the fear, that all know though almost all control and conquer, and the horror of seeing comrades killed and mangled and human flesh blown to pieces—these things will remain vividly in our memories for years to come. But with them there will be other memories as lasting and more precious—the singing of the platoon on the march, the thrill of success when a machine gun nest was cleaned out, the deeds of sacrifice and devotion that we have witnessed, the friendships formed and tested by fire, and the feeling of carefree abandon—the great American "don't give a damn" spirit, which really means trust in Providence—with which we went forward in attack. The monotony, the petty annoyance, and the impatience to get home after it was over will soon be forgotten, but the real events of the Great Adventure will remain always fresh in our minds, and whenever in future years two or three old 320th men are gathered together, pipes will be filled, the old light will come back to our eyes and the hard look will return to our jaws, and the wet "Bois" and shell-torn fields northwest of Verdun will be dragged back from the pages of history and fought over once more.

THE END.

OFFICERS OF THE THIRD BATTALION, 320TH INFANTRY ON BOARD U. S. S. "MERCURY," JUNE 4, 1918.

From left to right, bottom row: Lieutenants Page, Lukens, Kappock and France.
Second row: Lieutenant Titus, Major Sweeney, Lieutenant Davis, Major Emory, Captains McNulty and Weikert.
Third row: Lieutenants Dunmire, Tuggle, Franzheim, Taliaferro, Terry, Captain Thompson, Lieutenant Schultz and Captain McGraw.
Fourth row: Lieutenants Thompson, Martin, Rouzer, Holton, Haley, Captain McDonald, Lieutenants McKelway and Coldeway.
Top row: Lieutenants Calkins, Temple and Parkins.

THE LAST DRIVE

And

Death of Major G. H. H. Emory

PREFACE.

Four years ago today in a little court-yard in the demolished town of St. Juvin, I stood before a rough wooden cross on which were the words

"MAJOR G. H. H. EMORY,
320TH INFANTRY,
KILLED IN ACTION
NOVEMBER 1, 1918."

The cross marked the temporary resting place of a noble man and fearless soldier who had made the supreme sacrifice in a most heroic manner.

As a tribute to the memory of my very dear friend and Commanding Officer, Major Emory, and to record in a permanent form the circumstances of his death and the part performed by his Battalion in the last act of the Great War, I have decided to add this Chapter to "A Blue Ridge Memoir" in which Lieutenant Lukens has given such an interesting account of his experiences and which is in effect a splendid history of the Third Battalion, Three Hundred and Twentieth Infantry.

E. McClure Rouzer.

Baltimore, Md., November 14, 1922.

THE LAST DRIVE

And

Death of Major G. H. H. Emory

Lieutenant Lukens has described the pleasures of our life in the Argonne, near La Chalade, during the beautiful autumn days from October 23rd to the 30th. It is one of the delightful memories of the War. Like all good things, however, it soon ended, and on the morning of the 30th, we reeived orders to move out at noon.

We knew enough of the general situation to realize that we were about to take part in an attack of the greatest magnitude and importance. The Army objective was to destroy the German lines of communication by capturing the railroad running from Metz through Sedan and Mezieres. This would force the withdrawal of the enemy from France. Our part in the proposed plan was to break through the last of the great German trench systems, which had been planned and constructed with their usual thoroughness and care, and seize the high ground north of Buzancy. This contemplated an advance of about eleven kilometers the first day. Major Emory had already reconnoitered the ground and his report was far from encouraging. We were to attack in a salient between St. Juvin and St. Georges subject to a flanking fire from our right. We knew that the preliminary barrage would not touch the enemy machine gun nests in our front and on our right flank, because of the salient and their proximity to our own outpost positions. The Major endeavored to have our outposts drawn back and the barrage line changed, but it was too late, and so we knew that our men would have to do the work of the Artillery in overcoming this initial difficulty.

Our Battalion, through heavy losses, was greatly handi-

capped to meet this enormous problem. We did not have a single Captain, and averaged only two officers to a Company, several of whom were replacements and practically unknown to the men. Many of our best N. C. O.'s had been killed or wounded, and about thirty per cent. of our strength consisted of replacements who had been with us but a week, many of whom had been working at the docks and supply points, and knew nothing about rifles, grenades and other implements of warfare.

It was with a full realization of the seriousness of our task that we marched forth on October 30th. All of us will remember that march through the Argonne from noon until late into the night; more than twenty-five kilometers with heavy packs, over rough and unfamiliar roads. As we were to be the assaulting Battalion in the attack, we led the way. Through La Chalade—le Four de Paris—Abri St. Louis—Bois d'Apremont—Chatel Chehery—Cornay—Fleville to a ravine southeast of St. Juvin. Beyond Fleville we ran into some shelling, which wiped out one of our accompanying one-pounder crews. That night the Germans seemed very nervous and treated us to a display of pyrotechnics that rivalled the wonderful exhibitions we had witnessed during our experience in the trenches south of Arras. Compared with them, our 4th of July fireworks at home seemed to fade into insignificance.

We had expected to relieve the 325th Infantry, 82nd Division, in the front line positions, but at Fleville orders were changed, and instead we relieved the support Battalion. It was a welcome change, and after seeing that our Battalion was located in a ravine which offered some slight protection from bursting shells, the Major and I found a little fox hole that was about three feet deep and just large enough to accommodate us. It was covered by a canvas shelter half that furnished imaginary protection. Several times shells struck closely enough to give us a shower of dirt, but we were so dead tired from the hike that we were asleep almost immediately.

About noon on the following morning (October 31st), Major Emory received orders for the attack which was to

be made at 5.30 A. M., on November 1st. Our Division sector was over a front of two kilometers between St. Juvin and St. Georges with the 2nd Division on the right and the 77th on the left. Our Brigade (160th) led the attack with the 319th Regiment on the right and the 320th on the left in columns of Battalions. The 3rd Battalion, Major Emory commanding, was the assaulting unit in the 320th Infantry. We therefore had a front of one kilometer with the 319th on our right and the 77th Division on the left. The Major designated Companies K and M as the assaulting companies, with Companies I and L in support.

It may be of interest to the reader to outline briefly the plan of attack that was followed in theory. I say in theory because in practice it was the natural tendency of inexperienced men to close up and get together, which resulted in increased losses, as a better target was presented to the enemy. The ideal plan can be accomplished only by well disciplined and experienced troops under competent non-commissioned officers. Because of our heavy losses in previous offensives which necessitated a large percentage of inexperienced replacement troops to bring us up to strength, we could only hope to approximate the ideal. As I have stated, Companies K and M were to be the assaulting troops of the Battalion, with a front of one kilometer. The Commanding Officer of each Company then designated two of his platoons as the assaulting waves with the other two platoons in support. Each platoon, composed of approximately fifty men was to advance in two lines of twenty-five men each, so that the assaulting waves would consist of lines of one hundred men each with ten-yard intervals between them which made a poor target for enemy fire.

The afternoon and evening of the 31st were spent in final preparations for the attack. There were a thousand and one details to arrange with the artillery, machine guns, one pounders, Stokes mortars, signallers, liaison agents and our own Company Officers and Medical and Supply units. A first aid station for the wounded had to be provided and arrangements made to send up rations and ammunition. Runners from Brigade, Regimental and Company Headquarters,

as well as from the artillery and Machine Gun Battalion reported to Major Emory, so that with our own runners, S. O. S. (Snipers, Observers and Scouts) Section, and signallers (who were to maintain telephonic communication with Regimental Headquarters) our Battalion Headquarters was a small army in itself. This unorganized crowd of about seventy-five men, recruited after darkness and mostly unknown, was placed under my command. In addition to the telephone, we had all kinds of signal apparatus, a bunch of pyrotechnics that would have delighted the heart of any boy, panels for aeroplane signalling and finally, late in the evening, we received a basket of pigeons. It all sounded very well, but the German shells soon put our telephone out of commission, red rockets proved to be white, our aviators were taking a vacation that day, and my next sight of the basket of pigeons was three days after the Armistice when, with Colonel Gordon, I went over the battlefield and ran across the basket and the dead pigeons beside a fresh grave that told its own story. The most reliable means of communication was by runners, and at this point I want to express my admiration for those brave men who, all alone, through darkness as well as in daylight, traversed shell swept and unfamiliar ground and maintained communication between the front and the Regimental Headquarters in the rear and made possible the use of artillery when needed to assist the infantry. Runners and Stretcher-bearers have received scant praise for very hard and dangerous work.

After darkness had fallen, two of our platoons were sent to relieve the outpost positions of the 325th and 326th Regiments in our sector. At 11.30, Major Emory moved out with the Battalion. The line of departure or "jumping off" point for the attack was the St. Juvin-St. Georges Road and the Battalion was to be in position at 1.30 A. M. (November 1). I remained with Battalion Headquarters to get a report of the relief and that the Battalion was in position.

About 1.45 the Major reported to Regimental Headquarters "the omnibus is full," which indicated that the Battalion was in position. At 2.30, as I had received no word of the relief of the outposts, I assumed that the runner had

reported direct to the Major, closed our headquarters (which had continued to be the fox-hole in which we had spent the previous night) and with my "command" started for the line. I found the Battalion in position in the road. There was some shelling, and the men were taking every advantage of the north bank of the road which offered some protection. At 3.30 the barrage started, and immediately the Germans began a counter barrage. It is beyond my ability to describe that barrage. I learned latter that it was the heaviest in the history of the war and that if all the guns in action over the whole front of the attack had been placed side by side there would not have been three feet between them. The noise was deafening, and the big shells passing over head sounded like express trains. The pleasure and assurance we received from hearing our own guns was somewhat off-set by the effect of the German answer. They seemed to divine our plans and position and their shells fell in and on both sides of the road with remarkable rapidity, regularity and accuracy. At about 4.30 there was a slight cessation in the enemy barrage and at the same moment word came along the line that the Germans were advancing. Orders were given to fix bayonets and we prepared for an attack. The tension was terrific. It was a false alarm, and in a few minutes the enemy barrage was resumed in all its fury. Notwithstanding the shells that were falling all around, the Major went up and down the road encouraging the men and keeping up the morale. It was a wonderful example of bravery and coolness. Our casualties at this time were not so numerous, but were serious. Our Stokes mortars and one pounders were put out of commission, so that we were without the aid of auxiliary arms to overcome the Boche machine gun nests that were awaiting us.

At 5.15 K and M Companies moved forward to get as close to our barrage as possible, and to be prepared to advance as it was lifted. H hour (time of attack) was 5.42, and a few minutes before, I and L Companies followed K and M, so that the whole Battalion was prepared to advance at the appointed hour. Our barrage covered selected points and objectives, and was to progress by successive bounds,

according to the actual advance of the infantry. At H hour the Battalion advanced as the barrage was lifted to its next objective. As we had expected, the barrage had not destroyed the enemy machine gun nests on the north slope of the Ravin aux Pierres and before our line could reach them, the Germans had their guns in action. There was a veritable hail of bullets. The enemy positions were well chosen. The Ravin aux Pierres ran from southwest to northeast (left to right) across our Sector. K Company reached the Ravin on the left of our sector, where it was open and unprotected, but the Germans held the Ravin on the right, where it was heavily wooded. Their position commanded the whole Ravin and the approaches to it. Beyond this Ravin, on the left of the sector, was another deep ravine, while on the right there was open ground which gradually sloped to the north for about one-half a kilometer, and then a large and very dense woods, known as "Hill 214," which commanded the whole sector, as well as the country to the right and left. It was an ideal defensive position. For about three hours the Battalion fought to gain the Ravin aux Pierres. Company K gained a foothold on the left, but M was unable to advance. Early in the fight, Lieutenant Davis, commanding K Company, was shot through the chest. I saw him being carried away on a stretcher and thought he was dead. I went over to him and spoke to the stretcher-bearer, whereupon Davis opened his eyes and smiled rather faintly. It was a great relief, as we were close friends. We also learned a little later that Lieutenant Taliaferro, of Company L, had been wounded. The loss of Davis and Taliaferro was serious, as they were experienced men and excellent officers. There was a temporary loss of contact between K and M Companies and, as our casualties were heavy, Company I was moved into the front line on the right of K. We had no accompanying artillery piece, our Stokes mortars and one-pounders were out of commission, and we had to depend on rifle fire and rifle grenades to clean out the enemy nests. Owing to the severe shell fire, which had cut our telephone wire, we could communicate with Regimental Headquarters only by runners, which was very

slow, as the distance was about two kilometers and the way most difficult. As soon as Major Emory saw that our advance was checked, he ordered me to fire a red parachute, which was the signal to hold advance of artillery fire. The first was a fizzle, the second proved white, which had the contrary meaning (continue advance of artillery fire) while the third was all right. The Major and I were with K and I Companies. They finally gained the north slope of the Ravin on the left of the sector and, through well directed rifle and automatic fire, were gradually advancing up the Ravin to the assistance of M and L Companies. On our left the Seventy-seventh Division had not advanced. Meanwhile the north slope of the Ravin was being swept by machine gun fire, which made further progress almost impossible. The Major realized the importance of the attack, and was very restive over the hold-up. He personally directed the fight, and was constantly exposing himself to the machine gun and artillery fire. Time after time I begged him to keep down, but he showed an utter disregard for his own safety, and went from one part of the line to another while under direct enemy fire. At about 8.15 we were in a shell hole on the crest of the north slope of the Ravin talking over the situation. His whole thought was to advance. He started toward the right of the line. I followed, to beg him to keep down. He had gone only a few yards when I saw him fall. I rushed to him and lifted his head. He murmured, "My heart" and became unconscious. He did not speak or move again. His faithful orderly, Corporal Lean, was with us, and, although I knew there was no hope, I at once sent him in charge of the Major's body to the first-aid station in the rear. Lean went to a dressing station of the Seventy-seventh Division in St. Juvin and there a medical officer made an examination. Later our Chaplain and Lean placed the body in a well-built case and conducted the burial in the courtyard outside the dressing station in St. Juvin.

I at once reported the death of Major Emory to Colonel Peyton and Major Holt, who was in command of the support Battalion. I also advised the Colonel of the situation.

A little later I saw the troops of the Seventy-seventh Division (on our left) withdraw from the north slope of the Ravin. The enemy machine gun and artillery fire was very heavy, but our men were holding all gains and were making some progress. Shortly after 9.30 I received a message from Colonel Peyton that the artillery would fire on Hill 214 from 9.40 to 10.10. We determined to advance while we had the aid of the artillery. About the same time the 319th on our right had flanked the machine gun nests that were holding up Companies M and L, so that as soon as the artillery opened our whole line advanced. The advance continued to the south edge of the woods on Hill 214, a distance of about one kilometer. Ten prisoners, three minniwerfers and about twenty machine guns were taken.

I notified Major Holt of the advance and requested him to move up the support battalion. Our line now extended from a point about 400 yards in the 77th Division sector to the centre of our own sector. The inclination to the left was due to the fact that the 77th had not advanced on even terms with us. K, I and L Companies were now in the front line, but our total strength was reduced to about 200 men. At this point the advance was again checked by heavy machine gun fire from our unprotected left flank. We determined to move the line to the right within our own sector and to secure one Company from the support battalion to gain and maintain contact with the 319th. Liaison with the 77th Division was being maintained by Company A and a platoon of the Machine Gun Company, both under command of Lieutenant Merriam. About this time (1.40 P. M.), Captain Howell arrived with an order from Colonel Peyton to take command of the Battalion. He approved the proposed plans, the line was moved into our own sector and Company H of the support battalion was ordered to move to the right of the woods on Hill 214 and to flank the Machine Gun nests south of Alliepont while Companies I, K and L moved through the woods. This movement was held up until darkness interfered by the stubborn resistance of the enemy and a false report that our artillery was about to shell the woods on Hill 214. During the evening outposts

were pushed forward into the woods, and Captain Howell and Major Holt made arrangements to have the artillery shell the north half of the woods and the town of Alliepont from 11 P. M. to 1 A. M., which was done.

At 5.15 A. M. (November 2) the attack was continued and the Battalion advanced through the woods and the town of Alliepont to a point about one and one-half kilometers north of that town. Here we received orders to halt and hold gains. We had fought our last fight. We remained in support while the 159th Brigade took up the pursuit of the flying Huns. On the 4th we continued after the enemy through Sivry, Buzancy and Bar to a beautiful wooded ravine north of the Bar-Vaux road. Here we remained until November 8, when we began to move backward. It was rumored that our Division was to take part in another drive south of Metz, but on the morning of the 11th came the glorious news of the Armistice.

I have attempted to give some account of the part played by the Third Battalion in the last drive of the war, and particularly to relate the circumstances of the heroic death of Major Emory. Although this is written four years after the events happened, they are indelibly impressed on my memory, and, in addition, I have had the benefit of my diary and report of operations which were written at the time.

It will always be a matter of great pride to me to have served in the Third Battalion, 320th Infantry, under the command of Major Emory. The Battalion saw hard service and made a glorious record. We were with the British in the trenches south of Arras, then in the St. Mihiel drive, and finally the Argonne-Meuse offensives. Three times it broke through the enemy's main lines of defense on September 26-30, October 8-12 and November 1-2. Its losses are a fair indication of its activity. The total losses of the whole Division (approximately 25,000 men) were 210 officers and 5,464 men, including 37 officers and 592 men killed. Our Battalion, with an average strength of about 840 men, lost 13 officers and 587 men, including 5 officers and 84 men killed, and 24 men who died from wounds. We received over 500 replacements.

The splendid record of the Battalion was due in a large measure to the wonderful personality and splendid leadership of its commanding officer, Major Emory. He possessed to a remarkable degree the entire confidence and sincere devotion of every officer and man under his command. He was entirely unselfish and shared every hardship of his men, and was constantly looking after their welfare. In a word, he was the ideal leader, and every inch a man and a soldier, with all the splendid qualities that those terms imply.

From the time we sailed for France it was my privilege to be with Major Emory almost constantly. I was devoted to him, and his death was the most severe loss that I have experienced. I have heard many people express surprise that he should leave his home and family and the brilliant future that was before him as one of the leading members of the Maryland Bar, to enlist in the hardest and most dangerous fighting branch of the service. We talked it over many times and the answer was clear. German Emory possessed a keen sense of duty. He had been a strong advocate of war. The honor of the country and our duty to humanity required us to fight, and he could not advocate war and not do his part. He alone was the one to judge what that part should be.

For the bravery displayed by Major Emory in the attack of November 1st, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. The recommendation was made by General Brett, commanding the 160th Brigade. The citation is as follows:

> On the morning of November 1st, 1918, the 3rd Battalion, 320th Infantry, had advanced under heavy enemy artillery and machine gun fire to the north slope of the Ravin aux Pierres, north of the St. Juvin-St. Georges road. The crest of the slope was being swept by a murderous machine gun fire and the advance of the battalion was momentarily checked. Without care for his personal safety and inspired only by the thought that his battalion must go forward, Major Emory, though exposed to direct machine gun fire and in plain view of the enemy, calmly moved back and forth along his whole front, encouraging his troops and personally directing the attack. While thus engaged, he was unfortunately killed. By his magnificent example of coolness and bravery, he so encouraged and inspired the men of his command that they held this very exposed position and finally succeeded in overcoming the enemy resistance.

What an honor to serve with such a man!

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