My Company

By

Captain Carroll J. Swan, U.S.A.

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MY COMPANY

The Presentation of the Company's First Mascot

MY COMPANY

By

CARROLL J. SWAN

Captain Company D
101*st Engineers, 26th Division U. S. A.*

At present Major attached to 10th Engineer
Training Regiment U.S.A.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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Dedicated to
the most loyal, the cleanest
the bravest, the best soldier in the world
the American boy in France
as typified by the boys of
"MY COMPANY"

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The photographs of the Company's works were taken with the Company's photographic outfit, part of the equipment of an Engineer company. The other photographs were taken chiefly by newspaper correspondents.

MY COMPANY

MY COMPANY

CHAPTER I

GOOD-BYE, BROADWAY

"Good-bye, Broadway! Hello, France!
We're ten million strong.
Good-bye, sweethearts, wives, and mothers;
It won't take us long.
Don't you worry while we're there;
It's for you we're fighting, too.
So good-bye, Broadway! Hello, France!
We're going to square our debt to you."

D Company was marching down Huntington Avenue for the last time. "Slim" Edwards was leading the song. Every one was happy, for after months of drilling and training we had received sudden orders that day to leave for France at once. There had been a mad flying around to get all equipment and baggage loaded and where possible to notify father or mother or sweetheart. Many never knew we had gone until the next day, when the boy could not be found in Boston. In some ways it was hard, but that stealthy night getaway was the best way to go.

We were D Company, 101st United States Engineers. We had formerly been D Company, First Corps Cadets of Massachusetts, a battalion of Infantry with a proud record since 1741: the oldest, and we, of course, felt the best, outfit in the service. When it looked as if our country was going to war, the War Department, needing an Engineer Regiment in the New England Division, put it up to us. So from a battalion of three hundred Infantry we changed to a regiment of seventeen hundred Engineers. We sought first a Colonel, and fortunately learned through Washington of George W. Bunnell, of Worcester, a West-Pointer ranking high in his class, an expert engineer and a born leader of men. So it was Colonel George W. Bunnell.

At this time I was a Shave Tail in D Company, later First Lieutenant, and in the following July my great ambition was realized, I was Captain of "old D" with five officers and two hundred and fifty men in my company.

Our recruiting campaign was a whirlwind. The veterans of the old Corps, a splendid group of enthusiasts, gave liberally of their time and money. The active men quit business, organized teams, and opened recruiting stations; we had speakers on the Common, at street corners, and in the theaters. We sought the men in colleges and engineering schools — organized committees in towns. The little town of Norwood alone gave me thirty-two lads. It was a merry little game and great fun for all concerned.

In the early spring we started training. Wentworth Institute, an engineering school, turned over their whole plant and personnel to us. All that spring and summer the men received engineering training half the time and military work the other half. In August, word came that the new Tables of Organization called for increased numbers in an Engineer Regiment. Men from the Coast Artillery of the other New England States were sent to us to fill up quickly to full strength. In D, we received sixty men from Rhode Island, Maine, and New Hampshire. The boys welcomed these new comrades-in-arms and made them feel they were at home. Among these men the town of Warren, R. I., gave D Company alone twenty-three men. They furnished so many to us and to the cause that the town was exempted from the draft. The older boys would say to these men: —

"So you're from Warren, are you?"

They would answer, "No — Warren, R. *I*."

Then cheers for Warren, R. I.

The whole company soon became one great big family; no thought of where a man came from or what he was before. "Once a D man, always a D man" — a happy phrase they coined.

A few days before our final call came, the men themselves published a little book containing a complete roster, songs and cheers, a chronological history of the First Corps

Cadets from 1741 to September 21, 1917, and other items of interest to the men. The preface reads: —

> We D Company men are not a bit "stuck up," but we do admit we have the *best* company, in the *best* regiment, in the *best* division, in the *best* nation in the world.

That feeling of being the *best* in everything lasted right through our whole campaign. It's the feeling of every true American soldier in the service — a feeling of pride in one's own outfit that makes for better morale and better discipline, and for success. If a soldier thinks his own organization is not the best in the service, his place is not there; it's in the outfit he thinks is better.

To show you the spirit of our men I'll quote something from this little book the men themselves wrote: —

THE D COMPANY SPIRIT

We D Company men must constantly endeavor to perpetuate the honorable traditions of our organization and to do this we must cheerfully per-form the duties which present themselves to us, no matter how tedious or irksome they may be. It is our privilege to serve our native country in a magnificent cause. If a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well. Doing well to us should mean always doing things a whole lot better than is expected of us.

Let us ever strive to keep up a spirit among ourselves which will make us laugh at misfortune and smile in the face of the greatest danger. To do this we must work every moment to keep D Company first in everything. Whether it be the routine duties of camp life, or the more supreme test of going "over the top," let every one of us jump to it like a good fellow and lead the way.

No one should resent being assigned to any duty, no matter what it may be. The more service we can render, the better will be our satisfaction with ourselves when it is time for us to come back to America. We have devoted ourselves to a life of service, so we must make that service the very best. Let every squad strive to outdo the others and let every man endeavor to do a little more than his bunk mates.

Remember, optimism is the best cure for all troubles and industry makes time pass swiftly. D Company first in everything with a smile for every misfortune is our creed.

The men seemed imbued with this spirit, the spirit of loyalty to our country, our organization, and each other, and the answer to that spirit in a company of men is just one thing — Victory!

Now, shake hands with our little troop.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Principals:

Captain	Carroll J. Swan	The Skipper
Senior 1st Lieut.	Thomas W. Bailey	Old Tom
Next 1st Lieut.	Harry L. Spencer	Stubby Harry
Junior 1st Lieut.	Frederick L. Warner	Baby Fred
Senior 2d Lieut.	Harry Cole	Big Shave Tail
Junior 2d Lieut.	Robert MacMillan	Little Shave Tail, *alias* Little Mac
1st Sergeant	Parker B. Jones	T. S.
Supply Sergeant	Edward F. Walker	Odds and Ends
Mess Sergeant	Enoch W. Lyman	Skeeter
Stable Sergeant	Robert W. Davis	Old Dave

Sergeants, 1st class, Duty Sergeants, Corporals, Buglers, Cooks, K.P.'s (Kitchen Police), Wagoners, Saddlers, Horseshoers, Orderlies, Dispatch Drivers, and just plain Privates (Soldiers).

256 in the Company 256

A company about to participate in the greatest show ever staged in the history of the world.

The first touch of war enthusiasm came as the next morning we sailed down East River on barges, and people lined the docks and buildings and cheered. Those cheers got a wonderful counter-attack from our men.

When we marched over that long gangplank of the good ship Andania (may she rest in peace in her grave in the bottom of the sea), we realized we were leaving our own beloved land for a long time and that many of us would never step on those shores again. Yet all thoughts were of the future and what it had in store for us — not a thought of turning back. Our ambition, to be among the first, was being realized and we were among the first 60,000.

It was the first ocean voyage for most of us and the first time many of the men had ever seen the ocean. As they marched on, each with a little ticket numbered like this: "F Deck No. 128" — they were escorted "en masse" to their staterooms consisting of tiers and tiers of wooden bunks jammed in together with an absolute minimum of aisle space. The whole regiment was housed in that rather small boat. "Squeak" Harlow said, as he climbed over two other men to get in his 7 by 3 box: "This reminds me of my room at the Copley Plaza, it's so different."

That first experience with soldiers' accommodations was a lasting one, and all through our campaign, when we struck a barrack or cave with those tiers of bunks, there would be a general chorus of "Here's the old Andania; me for an outside room."

When the old boat finally cast off and moved down the harbor, the *crowd* bidding us farewell cheered and cried "Bon voyage." *He* was a deckhand and *had* to be there.

On entering Halifax Harbor, some days later, we were greatly stirred by the magnificent reception from the British ships there. The Jackies lined the decks, the bands played, and for the first time we were proud to stand at rigid attention and hold our salute to "Rule Britannia" and "The Marseillaise" as we had done so many times for our own beloved "Star-Spangled Banner."

When we posted the Submarine Guard, the

men selected were looked upon with envious eyes. For years, many of us had done our tricks at guard duty against an assumed enemy with a feeling of intense seriousness and pride. Now, we were up against the real thing, an active, actual enemy, and no men were ever more keenly alert, or more anxious to knock an enemy out, than this guard. Each member of the guard had his particular mission to accomplish when the "sub" was sighted, and each officer had his lifeboat and crew well drilled.

One serious problem with us was what to do with our three sick men — Dexter Harrison down with pneumonia, Ed Sullivan with a dislocated hip, and George Kennedy going blind. Fortunately they afterwards recovered. They were below decks aft in a little hospital; the rest of the company were on the lower decks away forward. The lifeboat I was to have with the first six squads was amidships starboard. Three of the huskiest men of the husky first squad, "General" Woods, Thayer

Quimby, and Corporal Elmer Buswell, hit upon a scheme. They were so bunked that they could get to the decks ahead of the company when the "abandon ship" signal was given. They were then to race the whole length of the ship, dive down to the deck aft where the sick men were, each grab a certain designated man and carry him to our lifeboat. We were not to lower until those men were safely in the boat. The plan would have worked if the ship had been "subbed," for every afternoon I saw those three chaps rehearsing it, dashing wildly out of the forward hatch, across the C Deck, and down the rear hatch. They had it all down to a science and swore that every one of our sick boys would be in that boat.

Harrison, the boy with pneumonia, was intensely patriotic, and every day he'd say, "Captain, I sure do want to see our destroyers when they come. They'll let me up to see 'em, won't they?" And when, entering the danger zone, one morning, out of the mist those eight destroyers suddenly hove into sight, it was indeed an inspiration! Then the word came from the bridge that they were Uncle Sam's. Wild cheering all over the ship as those beautiful greyhounds came at us going at top speed, thirty-five miles an hour. It seemed as if they were putting every ounce into it to save us from a common enemy. Poor Harrison was so sick he could n't be moved, so missed this great sight. I hurried down to tell him that our own destroyers were now protecting us, but I could n't get into the hospital, as his whole squad were grouped around him telling all about it.

The British too — the Andania was a British transport — caught the enthusiasm. And all through our voyage of fourteen days those British officers and men did everything in their power to help us, to please us, and to make our stay on their ship a delightful one.

Despite the efforts of our English comrades, the men were pretty lonesome and a bit homesick on the trip. It was the only time in the entire year that it was noticeable. The sudden parting from all that was dear to them so fresh in their minds, the vivid picture of that loving face ever present, and then the absolute lack of touch with the outside world — all combined to spread occasionally little glooms about our usually happy crowd.

But all glooms fled when our New England Regiment finally arrived in Old England — for there was much work to be done.

CHAPTER II

HELLO, FRANCE

In Southampton we were fortunate in having many English, Australian, and Canadian regiments near us. They were splendid troops. We enjoyed watching them drill; their snappiness, smartness, and soldierly bearing were a revelation and a stimulus to our men.

We knew how those English and their Colonial troops had fought. We had read much of their valorous deeds against the enemy — their enemy and now our enemy as well. We all seconded the sentiments of "Bab," Sergeant Babcock, "When we get up there, if we can only show up half as well as these British troops, these pioneers who have blazed the way, we'll have nothing to worry about. These fellers who've been takin' the gaff for four years are just big enough to pat us on the back and say we're the goods, when we're just starting something they 've been doing all this time."

That is the spirit throughout the American army across the water, the spirit of help and coöperation — not the arrogant idea "We're over here to win the war for you," but "We're over here to help. After your three years of hard fighting and suffering, *you're* going to win the war. We're proud to be of assistance to you, proud to be in with you fellows at the glorious finish."

One incident in Southampton was most unpleasant to us and to the British authorities. For the first and only time, I think, in the history of the American Army, a regiment was paraded for and inspected by a *woman.* This woman reported that she had been assaulted by an American soldier — the most hideous crime a soldier could commit, one that demands the severest punishment, death. We took one company at a time. I had to march D Company to a field — "Open Ranks — March — Front" — and then walk with this woman down both ranks while she looked at each one of those fine boys, some just married, all having just left their homes and mothers and sisters. It made me boil, and after inspection I gave "Close Ranks" — "Squads Right, Double Time, March" — and we got away from that field just as fast as a group of soldiers could. This unfortunate woman, in one company following us, spotted a man. "That's the man!" Our Colonel and Adjutant took him, put a new hat and coat on him and placed him in the ranks of the next company. Again this woman saw him. "That's the man." Of course, the man was arrested despite his protests. He claimed to have been in a café having supper at 9.30 the night before — the time the crime was committed! The authorities went to the café and the proprietor swore the man was there at the time specified. This alibi saved him, yet there was a stigma upon that man and upon our regiment. The men worried for fear some of our newspapers would get the news and a sensational story would be published in the States. After a month in France a letter of apology came, stating that the woman had confessed. This terrible crime had never been committed. Whether it was the result of a disordered mind seeking notoriety, or whether, as many of us thought, it was a piece of German propaganda, we never found out. This incident, however, showed us how easy it is to create a wrong impression about our soldiers and their morals. And when *you* read or hear of some terrible story of our soldiers and their relations with women, remember the story of the woman of Southampton.

As we marched down the street at Southampton to the Channel transport, again, "Good-bye, Broadway! Hello, France!" was taken up all along the line. Little children, tots two, three, and four years old, lined the sidewalks for blocks and patted our hands, as we went swinging along, and cries of "Good luck, soldier boys!" came from all sides. We felt we were really beginning a wonderful thing.

As our transport docked at Havre a British hospital train was run in on the wharf. There were hundreds of brave English soldiers, most of them badly wounded, just from the battlefields. Our men in unison cried, "Hello, Tommies!" and back from the whole train came, "Hello, Sammies!" And then hundreds of cheering messages — "Good work, Tommies!" "You're the boys!" "We've come over to help you fellers!" And back came, "Welcome to our city, brothers!" "It's good for sore eyes to see you!" "You look good to us!" "When you see Fritz, soak him one for this bloomin' leg he gave me!" That spirit of comradeship between the soldiers of two great nations, one group showing the result of three years of hard fighting, the other fresh from home, ready and eager to get into it and help, was a great omen of the brotherly spirit that is to hold the Tommy and Sammy as pals during the years to come.

"Good-bye, Broadway! Hello, France!" never was sung more enthusiastically than on that march through Havre. We were here at last — we had stepped on French soil — we were among the first, and we were going to fight for our country — American flags everywhere, the people cheering and shouting, "Vive l'Amérique." Can any imagination depict a greater incentive for enthusiasm?

We were at a British rest camp that night and the authorities showed the same consideration to us as at Southampton. In both places they loaned every one of our men heavy woolen blankets. Not one American soldier was allowed to sleep cold.

This date, October 19th, the day we set foot on French soil, was the one hundred and seventy-sixth anniversary of the founding of our organization in Boston. The English officers learned of it and a very pretty ceremony was staged in their officers' club. Our Major, Porter B. Chase, a member of the outfit for over twenty years, was our spokesman. He is a man who always does and says the right thing at the right time. Incidentally, I was proud to have succeeded such an officer as Captain of D Company when he received his well-deserved majority. Major Chase traced the history of our regiment and toasted the British, the French, and the Allied cause. The English Colonel replied, as only an eloquent English Colonel can, and welcomed us as brothers in arms. We sang the patriotic and war songs of both nations and listened to the stirring tales of life at the front, and altogether it was a delightful evening for all of us.

Orders came to move the next day. It was midnight, dark and cold. That long, winding, silent column gave one a weird sensation; but the tramp, tramp, tramp of thousands of marching men caused many a casement to be thrown open, and there, silhouetted in the candle-light, would be an old man or old woman watching that long column and saying softly to us, "Bon voyage" and "Bonne chance." No singing or cheering now — our movement was secret.

The first troop train was our best in France. All the men had second- or third-class compartments. These little dinky rooms have eight seats crowded in together. When each man stows away his rifle, bayonet, and belt, and his huge pack, and then himself, the chances for stretching out and having a good night's sleep are fairly remote.

But already the men were beginning to take with a laugh whatever came along, and to use the phrase, used millions of times later, a phrase that always made discomforts and hardships so much easier to stand — "C'est la guerre."

Orders said, "You will go to Rolampont." Whether Rolampont was in Asia, Africa, or the first-line trenches we did not know, and the maps we had did n't show any Rolampont in France. We thought at least the higher officers might have told us something about our future home, but the more we saw of this affair the more we learned that we were not a Cook's Tourist party. The gentleman named

Baedeker, we learned, was a boche, so the Government would not issue his book to the troops. That they even told us the name of the town was greatly appreciated afterwards. On later moves we did not know whether the destination was Paris or Italy or the firing-line.

Speculation as to Rolampont was so rife among the men that I decided to investigate. At some station where the train stopped to rest the engine, I debarked and approached a French guard. Now, be it understood, I'd had four years of regular college French and here was a chance to air it before my officers and some of my men. Said I to this guard in perfectly good Harvard French, "Où est la ville de Rolampont et dites-moi la distance au Rolampont?" The Frenchman in his real French replied most politely, "Je suis fâché, mais je ne comprends pas l'Anglais!" Big glooms and quick return of the company commander to the compartment.

Rolampont was still an undiscovered land!

It proved a day later to be a little picturesque village in the east central section of France on the far-famed Marne. And this was our home for two months. Here we first lived with the delightful French peasant folk we learned to love so well. Here we saw a bit of what war meant. In one billet where the boys lived they found a poor old refugee, a woman who had n't a single worldly belonging except a pile of straw and a few tattered blankets. The boys in some way "cherched" [1] blankets and a bunk for her, and all the time we were in the town that woman had three square meals a day which they brought from our kitchen.

In another billet lived Henry Saillant and Tom Watts, both boys from the Coast Artillery of Warren, R. I., with an old lady who had given eight stalwart sons to the cause. Seven of her boys had been killed, and one day they brought home from the trenches in a pine box, her eighth and last, her baby. The old lady sat before the fire all night long holding her boy's picture, softly moaning. My two boys would try to comfort her, but all she would say was, "It's all for France." And "It's all for France" was the answer, all over this marvelous land, to the deepest sorrow and suffering. Patriotism beyond belief! These two boys did everything to help the old lady after the day's work. And it was good hard work, too. They would go out in the forest and cut wood. When they left, she had a supply sufficient for all winter. These cases are typical of the treatment of the French people by our American soldiers.

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[1] "Cherched" — a much-used expression among the soldiers, meaning "to *get*" something. The American soldier uses his head in obtaining something necessary to complete his equipment, to satisfy the inner man, to make his pal's or some one else's life brighter. He does n't steal it. He may buy it, or borrow it, or find it, or it may be salvage, no one knows — but he gets it, and no questions asked. That's "cherched."

During our stay in this village the men were building barracks, stables, refectories (mess halls), Y.M.C.A. huts, and shower baths.

There was one American Division that

raced with us in the States for the honor of landing in France first. I shan't mention the name, for we don't believe in rubbing it in. But we were building these barracks for that Division while they were on the ocean! And they afterwards relieved us when we moved from Rolampont.

Bathing facilities in France are "pas bon," but the boys hit upon an ingenious scheme and "cherched" and bought enough material to build a Turkish bath. They made it of concrete in an old basement, with a steam room, Roman bath, and shower. We charged our men a few centimes per bath and men of other companies many centimes. Then, when the aforesaid rival division relieved us, the Sergeants went to their Sergeants, showed this wonderful invention to them, and sold the whole works for a good price. With the money taken in and the sale price we more than cleared all expenses and the cost of material. The bath was of no further use to us and we could n't take it with us. The transaction resembled a senior selling the windows and radiators to the freshman coming in.

Our first holiday away from home was Thanksgiving and, as the boys said, "It was some party." Our husky college football team played a team from the Engineer Train. A harder-fought battle was never waged in any stadium. And the French folk looked on in amazement at these American soldiers on their first French battle-ground. Then came a banquet in the barracks we had erected. Mess Sergeant Lyman and his crew of cooks and K.P.'s had worked nearly all night. The taste of that Thanksgiving dinner, in that little French town, still lingers. From soup to nuts inclusive, everything was cooked and dished up as the mother away back on the little New England farm would have wanted it for her boy. We had our company phonograph going. The men would sing and then eat some more; cheer the mess crew, then eat still more; even dance to make room for more.

We never knew men could stow away so much food.

Yes, Thanksgiving was a grand success, but we all dreaded the next holiday. Somehow Christmas seems to be the one day of the year when a fellow wants, more than at any other time, to be with his loved ones. But the folks at home made it easy. For weeks boxes came in, and the home people got together and made up huge packages of sweets and good things to eat, and sweaters and all sorts of useful remembrances. Every man in the company had something and every man had that touch of home brought to him that meant so much. The spirit of giving was rampant over there too. The boys all chipped in to a good-sized pot of money for the poor people of the town. The Christmas dinner was another feast. No "poulets" were to be found, but roast pork proved a delicious "pièce de résistance." The many delicacies, the candies and cakes and sweets from home, were all pooled and every man received an equal share. The thought of the dear ones at home for us over there was making our first Christmas in a foreign land a real one. We'd almost forgotten we were at war.

Suddenly a dispatch rider handed us orders. "D Company will be ready to move at once." Immediately war was declared again. Party was off — no grumbling, just a wild scrambling around to complete equipment, packing up, and "au revoirs" to our many friends.

It was Christmas Day and it was snowing. The packs were pretty heavy on our full stomachs — pardon, I mean on our backs. Bob Swain, our Poet Laureate, well expressed the men's sentiments: "I don't know where I'm going, but I'm on my way; and anyway this is the end of a perfect day." And then, "Companee 'Shun, Right by Squads, March; Column Right, March; Route Step, March." And the men marched away in that blinding snowstorm on Christmas night singing, "Good-bye, Broadway! Hello, France!"

CHAPTER III

BEHIND THE FRONT

Bettaincourt, our new home, proved to be one of the finest little towns in all France — clean and neat, people delightful, billets good. Here every man had a bed or a good bunk in a warm house. During our stay of six weeks the boys were very happy and worked efficiently and cheerfully on barrack construction with occasional drilling and maneuver problems. Here we had our first casualty, and the men felt it keenly. Bert Fletcher, a Sergeant, one of our best, and a fine type of man, had been sent to Bordeaux on a special mission. There he contracted spinal meningitis and it took him away from us forever. It was hard to break the news to the men. Bert was a popular hero to many of them and his loss affected us all. It was the first break in our happy family that was to be broken up so badly during the months to come. Word came to me one night, and at reveille the next morning I broke the news to the men. They were lined up in a long company front in semi-darkness. I could see the emotion down the whole line, tears in many eyes, and then suddenly the bells on the little church tolled mass, a tender tribute of the French to our dead. Don't ever believe that soldiers lack emotion, that they are unaffected by the loss of a comrade. They are hit just as hard and sometimes harder than are people in civil life. The men eating, sleeping, working, and fighting together for months and perhaps years are very close to each other and the closest bonds of friendship and comradeship result.

When a pal goes as a result of enemy action, "killed in action," the men are filled with a spirit of revenge, an intense desire to make the enemy pay dearly for their crime, and woe be unto the boches when that boy's pals get at 'em.

Sergeant "Bert" Fletcher wearing the Old Cadet Full-Dress Uniform

The younger boys, the "buck privates," always delight to get something on the older men. One of the old "trusties" was Sergeant Robert Davis. "Old Dave" the boys called him. He had been nine years in D Company and six years before that in the Regular Army in the Philippines. He had served as cook, Mess Sergeant, and Stable Sergeant, and was now acting First Sergeant (top). We used him as a general utility man, for he could make good on every job. He was a stickler for promptness, never missed a formation in his fifteen years of service until something happened in this town. One morning at reveille roll-call, "Old Dave" was missing. Consternation among the Sergeants, joy among the buck privates, causing wild cheering when the company was dismissed. He had overslept that morning. It was tough on Dave, but he finally lived it down.

New Year's Day brought another big "feed" and a day of good cheer and good wishes for the company and their French friends. It was a wonderful day for me. I never before had realized so clearly the paternal feeling of a Captain for his men. I will describe my feelings that day, as they are typical of those of every company commander over there.

I had been detailed to staff work at General Headquarters in the late fall, and on New Year's Eve I had secured my release. Good old Tom Bailey, the Senior First Lieutenant, who had handled the company splendidly, came to take me back. We rode all night in a blinding snowstorm and on New Year's morning I was back *home* for good. It was the happiest New Year's of my life. Once more I saw D Company as *my* company, *my* boys. Every boy there seemed like a son or a brother. While I had been separated from them, it seemed as if my own family had been taken away from me.

To my mind the company commander has the best job in the service to-day, and all the Captains I've talked to feel that way, and have that strongly developed feeling for their men. The Captain's responsibility is a great one. Every one of those two hundred and fifty boys look to him for everything. Their morals, their discipline, their training, their joys and sorrows, their health, their very life and death are in his hands. If you have a boy over there with the right sort of company commander — and I've failed to find one yet who is n't the right sort — you may be sure that boy is looked after and cared for in every way.

Our month in Bettaincourt was most pleasant for us all. We were the only troops in town. Our living accommodations were excellent; our food supplies came regularly and we added many things from our mess funds. The work, although hard, was healthful and pleasant. One detail seemed to be especially keen about their task — the wood-choppers, under Corporal Elmer Buswell ("Buzzie") and Corporal Joe Mayne. They would go out to the forests right after breakfast, heavily clad, with their axes and saws and gather in the wood supply. It was like the woodsmen's life in the great Northwest. Dattoli, an all-round man, whether it was hammering out beautiful vases from "75" shells or making doughnuts, served as chief cook and bottle-washer, and the tales these woodsmen brought in about their appetizing "specials" made us all envious. Each night, coming in, the Corporals would hike the men through town in a most dignified military way, and then, for the edification of the others, would put them through the manual of the axe and saw.

This chap Mayne was our best little exponent of the squared circle in the one hundred and thirty-five pound class. He was detailed as boxing instructor, and each man was allowed time off to learn how to get the other fellow first, so that when we boxed the Kaiser's "Pets" with cold steel our footwork would be niftier than theirs.

The real affection of the French for the

American soldier was brought out strongly the morning we left this town. The company assembled with full equipment at six in the morning. As they marched away they were magnificent, every head erect, arms swinging, and a smile of happiness on every face, for "Joe" [1] said we were soon to go to the front. The good French folks lined the streets to say "Au revoir." There was hardly a boy in the ranks who was not embraced by some old French woman or man and kissed on both cheeks. Tears were rolling down the cheeks of many of those French people, who realized they were seeing these boys for the last time.

At the next town, Montot, some of my men had built barracks and had lived in the house of an old lady there. This lady walked away down to the station as our train pulled in. She took me aside. "Captain," she said,

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[1] "Joe," the Christian name of the best-known man in the American Army, "Joe Latrinsky" (sometimes spelled differently), the father of Dame Rumor. Every one from commanding generals to buck privates constantly spoke of "Joe Latrinsky," or plain "Joe," and what he was saying.

"when your boys go to the front some will be wounded or sick. Just send those boys back to me; I'll care for them and just mother them." That was the spirit of all the French people. When our men were figuring on "permission" (leave) long afterwards, many of them came to me. They did not want to go to Paris or some big gay city. They wanted to go back to Rolampont or Bettaincourt or Montot, to live there with the old French people who had been so kind to them. They wanted to rest and sleep with never a bugle call nor a drill order.

In our next home, Fréville, we lived in Adrian Barracks. Cries of "The old Andania again" when the men saw the tiers of bunks. Here we completed our training, gas-mask drills, bayonet work, "over the top" problems, and rifle practice.

The financial standing of a French peasant is gauged by the amount of stable refuse in front of his house. Our first impression of Fréville was that every citizen was a millionaire. Yet the people were very kind and allowed us to move their stores of wealth to the fields and make a general clean-up of the town. The American Army chiefs are most insistent about cleanliness, not only for the soldier, but in the soldier's environment. The first work undertaken in any new area is the cleaning-up of everything, and upon departure leaving that area as clean as one's own home. This sort of thing is prevalent throughout the country, and we have in a small way repaid the French villagers for all they have done for us by showing them sanitation.

One day a Y.M.C.A. secretary blew into Fréville to look over a site for his hut. The coöperation and help given by our company pleased him so much that he erected the tent right next to our barracks. The boys worked for him and even tended counter.

Unless one has seen a "Y" tent, one cannot understand what a blessing it is to the men. Here's what it meant to us. Our barracks were cold and rather gloomy. After evening mess not a thing for the men to do but to go to bed to get warm. Two of the men, who missed the bright lights, slipped down to a near-by town at least one night, and spent the evening in cafés with perhaps too much red wine. Then the "Y" came to town. Every night I would walk through the tents. My boys would be everywhere there, some reading, some writing, others playing games, and always a big bunch around the piano where Bugler Dexter ("Dex") held forth. And each night those two boys were leading the choruses and having a great time — a good clean wholesome time with their comrades. That's the influence of the "Y."

When definite orders finally came to be ready to move to the front, the enthusiasm of the men was remarkable. Every one laughed and sang and joy was unconfined. We were to send one squad on ahead for special duty. The honor fell to the Ninth Squad, as it was an exceptionally good one. Johnny Russell, the

Corporal, was a cool, level-headed chap and had his men "eating out of his hand." The men were all pals and hung together in good shape. We all gathered around our heroes to say good-bye and cheer them off. One of the boys was Jimmie Walsh, an Irish boy. His bunkie and inseparable comrade was Harry Slepian, of Jewish extraction. Just before leaving, Walsh put his arms around Slepian and sang: —

"The reason that I love you is 'cause you're Irish."

He sang it to his Jewish brother many times after that, once just before they went "over the top" together, and it always brought down the house. The United States Army is the greatest "melting-pot" in the world.

That incident shows, too, the democracy of our Army. The life over there is the greatest leveler in the world. It makes no difference who or what a man was in civil life, when he puts on the uniform of Uncle Sam he starts on the same footing as every other man in that command. In the old days in our outfit, we sought as recruits college men and men with business and social standing, but when it comes to working with a company going to war, one's ideas change. The man of Italian or Russian ancestry who fought with pick and shovel before the war would do a better job in building a quick trench under fire than a fellow who came from the sacred precincts of the Back Bay. The man who killed the King's English would kill just as many (perhaps more) of the Kaiser's Germans as the fellow who had received one hundred per cent for his thesis at Harvard or Yale.

This mingling of men for months and years, men of many minds, and from all walks in life, now all living the same kind of life, eating the same food, doing the same work, experiencing the same joys and sorrows, is a great thing for every one of them. It is a great thing for our country. After this war we shall have a nation more closely knit, more homogeneous, and a nation infinitely stronger than at any time in our history. And we who are fortunate enough to be in the Army of the United States are seeing this new nation in the making.

In the army much attention is given to religion and religious services. Most regiments now — perhaps all — have two chaplains, Protestant and Catholic. Church is an ordered formation. Many a man has been to church more in the past year than ever in his life before. It makes him a better man and hence a better soldier.

The greatest care is exercised to see that every man follows his own religious belief. The Protestants have their own services, the Catholics theirs, and, whenever possible, the Jews theirs. When the Jewish holidays occur, the soldiers of the Jewish faith, except those at the extreme front, are given leave of absence to observe these holidays. When this order came out, the increase in the number of Jewish boys we had was remarkable — but only those who had been of that faith previously were allowed to go.

Knowing the intimacy with their church and what it meant to them, we always arranged for the Catholic boys to attend confession and communion before going to a front.

I've known of some of my Catholic boys, when we were away from any church, to hike three or four miles in order to attend a service, and they were always allowed time off on Sunday for it. A soldier's business is killing, yet he does n't kill because he wants to take human life. He kills because it is necessary to kill to save and protect many more lives and to win for his cause that he knows is just and right. Therefore the more he upholds his religious views and teachings, the more effective is his work as a soldier.

Church service on our last Sunday behind the lines was a most impressive ceremony. The whole regiment was consolidated for the first time since arriving in France. B and C Companies had marched over from a near-by town. The regiment was drawn up in a hollow square. Chaplain Edwards, our spiritual and moral helper, the boon comrade of every man, stood in the center with his six feet three of soldierly straightness. He talked to us squarely from the shoulder — a regular man's talk: "We are going to the front, the land of our dreams; we are going to fight for our country, for that flag waving there. Every man of us will uphold our country's best traditions; every man will prove himself the kind of American soldier his country expects him to be." When the band played the "Star-Spangled Banner" and we came to rigid "present," the old flag seemed to burst out in the breeze. We realized then that some of us would perhaps never see that flag again, never again hear the strains of our national anthem. It was a never-to-be-forgotten sight, that beautiful sunny day in the little French village, the regiment in steel helmets and with front-line equipment. An indescribable emotion filled every one of us and a thrill of pride swept down the whole line. We marched away better men and better soldiers for that scene.

CHAPTER IV

THE FRONT AT LAST

8 Chevaux
ou
40 Hommes

— the sign on every one of our Pullman sleepers. It may strike the reader as a difficult problem for forty men to lie down and sleep comfortably in a car where eight horses are usually stowed away. And the reader is right.

By this time, however, the men took things as they came, with never a grumble or complaint. They knew it was the best that could be done, so made light of discomforts. "Duke" Farrow, the optimist, gazed upon the small, hard car floors, and remarked, "C'est la guerre." Then the company said, "C'est la guerre." When things go wrong and a soldier says "C'est la guerre," it's the final word. Everything is all right.

I really think those horse-cars are more comfortable than the officers' quarters; at least the men can arrange shifts at lying down. The officers have first-class accommodations, eight officers to an eight-seat compartment. It's fine in the daytime, but oh, ye nights! It seemed on almost every lengthy move I drew the Chaplain as my bunkie in the opposite seat. Now, be it known that my legs are of lengthy proportions, but the Chaplain's! We afterwards used them to measure deep shell-holes by having him stand in the bottom of the excavation. Anything of great length was compared to the good parson's legs.

The task of "parking" those two sets of legs for the night was a difficult one, even for engineers. We'd take turns holding the other fellow's legs in our laps. We'd doze off and find somebody's legs encircling our necks, and once I was awakened by the parson's feet doing a fox trot on my stomach. We contemplated hanging them out of the window, but the nearness of the telegraph poles prevented that. Yes, all in all, I think those horse-car Pullmans of the men were more attractive.

It was a really enjoyable trip. That long troop train went winding through beautiful valleys, around hills and past the picturesque French villages. The people would wave good luck to us; the boys would cheer and sing our songs to them. Every one seemed happy to be approaching the big show, and the nearer we got to it the more buoyant the spirits of the men. As we kept getting nearer and nearer, the more interesting things became. Here we passed an ammunition dump, there an aviation field or a field of tanks — looking fit and ready for action. Gradually we began to see the result of hun shell-fire, and as we rolled into Soissons, our detraining point, the full significance of war burst upon us: buildings demolished, homes destroyed, churches with their spires in the street; yet this was nothing compared to sights we were to see later.

There were civilians in Soissons who greeted us as we marched through. Even good-looking girls (not the usual one-tooth variety of old women near the front) waved to us. Several of the men missed seeing many historical features on account of this special attraction. Harry Dalzell, he of the æsthetic and unselfish nature, cried, "Have a good look, boys; it's the last femme you'll see for beaucoup de weeks."

The regiment was now divided; each company was sent to a different sector. We saw nothing of the other companies until we left this front. We were given maps and our journey to Carrière (Quarry) R–1 was traced for us. "Good-bye, Broadway! Hello, France!" and other songs resounded through the streets of Soissons and the near-by towns as we tramped through. Gradually the martial strains died away as we reeled off mile after mile and those packs became heavier and heavier. Then we began to have trouble. The men were not as hard as we had hoped; the packs *were* mighty heavy; that constant pounding on the hard French roads began to tell on many poor tired feet. It was our first real test of a long hike with full equipment and we were not standing up to it as we should. Later we should kill a hike like that and never show it.

The officers went up and down the line encouraging the men and exhorting them to stick it out. Despite their best efforts some could not hold out and dropped exhausted by the roadside. We had no transportation of any kind at this time and we *had* to make that march. Sergeants were detailed to stay with these men and bring them along as best they could. At noon we decided to make a long halt for dinner. That halt was our salvation. We found an old ruined château on a hill near a little wood. It was a cool, delightful spot and there was water. The men bathed their tired, aching feet, stretched out and rested, while the cooks got busy. Gradually the stragglers were brought in and we were able to check up every man. Then we filled up with as fine a steaming "slumgullion" as one ever tasted, and hot cocoa and bread. Out came the old pipes and cigarettes, the men lay back on the soft ground — the war looked much better. No further trouble on that hike. From this point on, we traveled in small detachments. The nearer a command gets to the front, the smaller the groups, on account of possible enemy action.

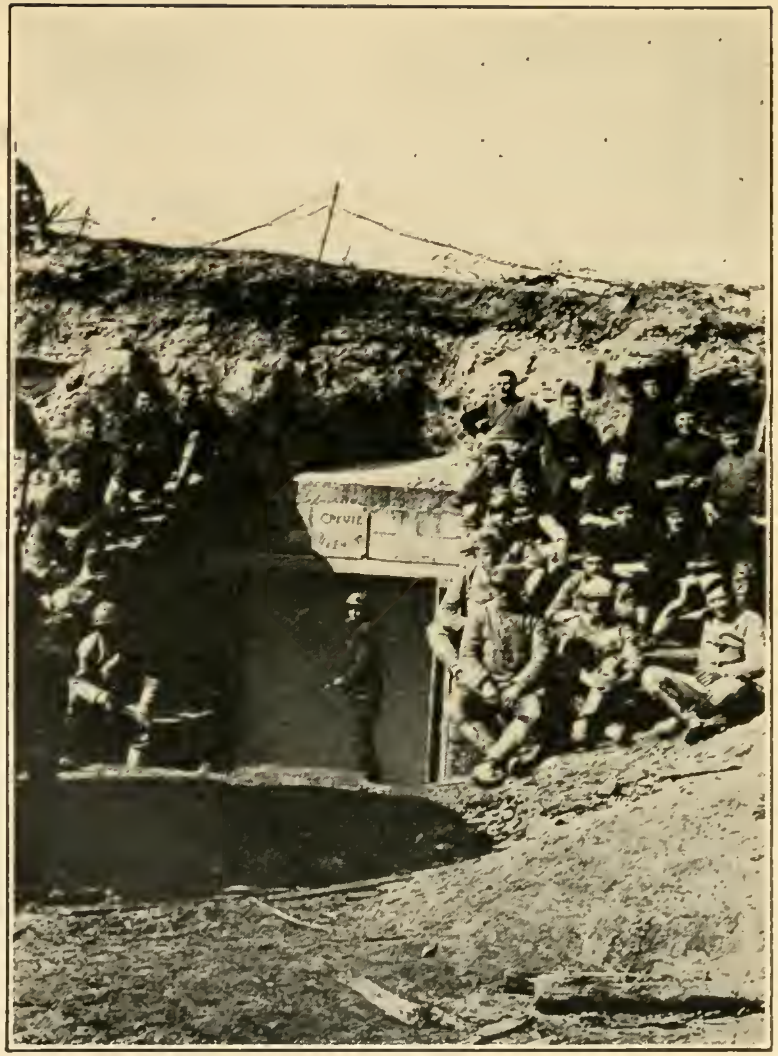
The first detachment had proceeded a mile or two when three French officers met us, Captain Poiteau and Lieutenants Borge and Petro. They were the officers of the French Génie (Engineer) Company 11/63, 6th Regiment, with whom we were to work and live. They and their men were as fine a set of fellows as we'd ever hope to meet. On rounding a turn, a big French "sausage" burst into view, fifteen hundred meters in the air. Captain Poiteau explained that the balloon was over the spot where our new home was to be. Suddenly a whizz and a roar and a shrapnel shell burst over the balloon. Wild cheering and enthusiasm by the men. Lieutenant Petro, who evidently had a mild form of shell-shock, ducked and executed a figure 8. These American boys, new at the game, were delighted. They'd seen shell-fire at last. All thought of aching feet and tired backs vanished; all were eager for more excitement and more war scenes.

When the French officers finally said, "Here's our home," in astonishment we said, "Where?" No buildings, no apparent change in the ground. They led us down a road and then into a deep gully. It was Main Street, kitchens, officers' dugouts, mess halls, all built into the sides of the gully. We walked ahead to the end of Main Street and into the principal hotel, a deep cave, exactly like the Andania again, with rows and rows of double bunks filled with straw. The cave was electrically lighted and was half filled with the French soldiers, Poilus. They all stood up as we entered and greeted our boys warmly. It seemed but a moment before they were fraternizing, trying to talk to each other and swapping smokes.

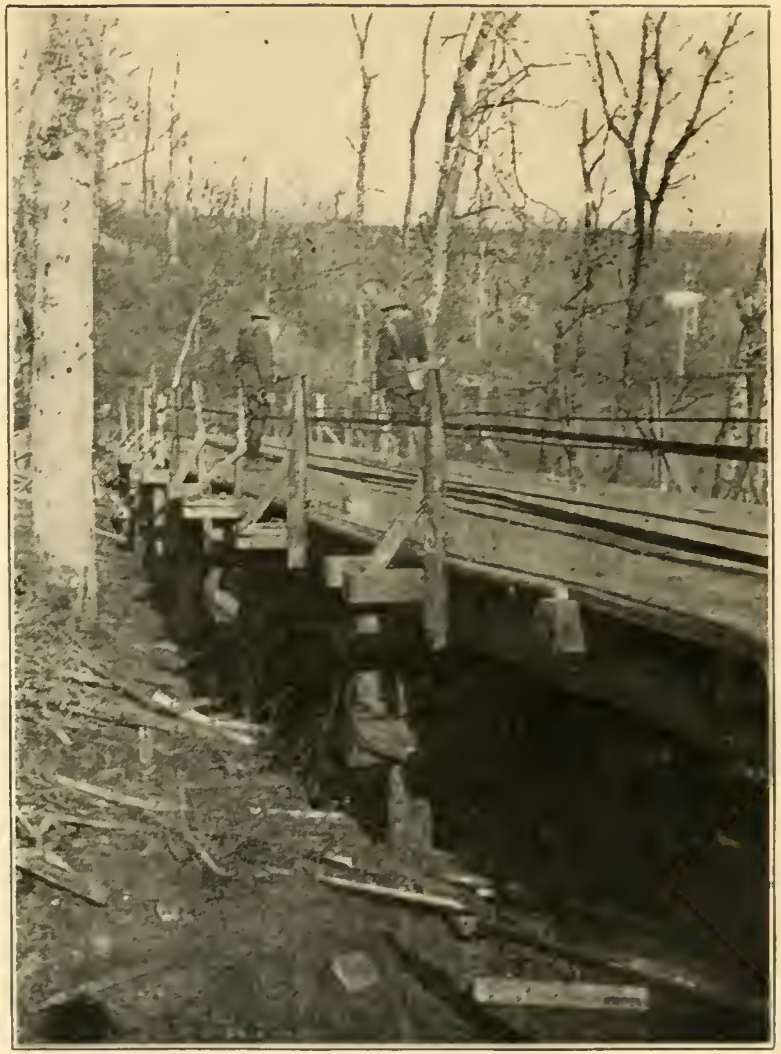
The company was to be divided; one half was to be located in another cave a mile or more forward, a place called Allemant. After another good hot "chow" the detail chosen for the forward position marched out. We passed by the famous Laffaux Cross-Roads on the Maubeuge road. This was about three miles west of the Chemin des Dames where it ran into the Maubeuge road. The men already had picked up much of the story of the fighting here from their French compatriots. Corporal Johnny Noyes was explaining to his squad: "It was last October, when the huns occupied all this ground, that the French, after a tremendous artillery preparation, drove through and took it all back clear to the canal, two miles ahead, and that canal divides the two lines now."

Swen Nelson, who was always worried for fear he'd never get a chance to crack a boche, spoke up: "Take us down and we'll swim their old canal and bring some of those sons of huns back with us."

The terrain here was as terrible an example of the results of shell-fire as anywhere on the whole front. Not a tree, not a spear of grass for miles. Shell-holes so numerous they all ran together. The towns just one mass of débris. The town of Allemant, just down the hill, did n't have a two-foot wall standing. We marched down a wide path on the side of a hill and then into the hill; for there was the tremendous cavern of Allemant, occupied by the Germans only a few months before. They called it the "Iron Grotto." The men were forbidden to wander in the cave. French soldiers had wandered before us and never been seen again. With all its corridors, it measured anywhere from twenty to one hundred miles — depending upon the one telling the story. It seemed dark and forbidding at first, and one could almost smell the huns who had been there. The men soon accustomed themselves to the dark and dampness. They literally be-



Entrance to the Great Cave of Allemant, the "Iron Grotto," showing our Masonry Work



The Bridge on the little 60-cm. Railroad at Pinon

Built by Boches, destroyed in their retreat, and rebuilt by us. Note heavy German construction

came cave-dwellers and referred to each other as such. One boy was "Stone Hatchet"; another, "Gyp the Blood"; and one, "Shell-faced Bill." One very quiet, unassuming chap, James McMahon, was "Fire-eating Jim." Philip Lasell, formerly one of the "Merri Merri" in the Winter Garden shows back in the States, was always laughing, so he was "Lantern-jawed Phil." The boys claimed they called him "lantern-jawed" because "it made his face light up."

The next morning the French officers told us of the various works we were to build with them: a little railroad, machine-gun emplacements, barbed-wire systems, dugouts, excavations, trenches — all most interesting to us. One of the works to be pushed was the little railroad, a "soixante" (sixty centimeters) gauge. It was to carry supplies and ammunition right down to the first-line trenches at night. It was originally built by the Germans and destroyed by them in the retreat. Our work was to regrade and lay the track again.

Allen Milliken was an expert road man from Ellsworth, Maine. "By gosh," the men would say about his home city, for Allen's benefit, "the town with a tree in front. Cut down the tree and Milly will never find his home burg." Give Milliken a job of putting a road through a swamp or through a mountain and then forget it. You'll have your road on time. Later, I detailed him with fifty men to do this grading for the soixante. Lieutenant Borge had previously been in charge of this work. He was an Algerian officer, a handsome hero type, full of fun, and a great mimic. This afternoon he was to guide three of us to the railroad, and he "guyed" us well. Besides Milliken and myself, Sergeant Henry Garceau came along to act as interpreter. We had gone a mile or more through this devastated district when suddenly a shell hit in the road two hundred yards ahead of us.

Every soldier wonders about his first time under fire. All my life I've wondered what my sensations would be, how I should act.

My great hope was that I should n't run if ever I was fortunate enough to be actually under enemy fire. Here we were in that position at last. The sensation was a peculiar one. We did n't run, we were not afraid. It all seemed so impersonal, not meant for us. The sensation to us was one of joy and intense interest. Milliken said: "They can take away our rank, they can send us home, and take everything away from us, but they can't take away this experience." We really were delighted. Soon our delight was tempered with a bit of nervousness, for it seemed the boche had planned to send some more things our way.

Those shells popped so close that Borge remarked, "We'd better 'allez' to a shell-hole." I was the senior present and heartily concurred. Our shell-hole became rather warm, as the shells followed us to it. Again I allowed Borge, with his three years' experience in this sort of thing, to make suggestions. "We'd better allez to another hole." We dropped in one thirty yards away and within two or three shots after that a big shell landed squarely in the hole we had just vacated and blew the ground all over the landscape. Then they dropped around our new refuge so close that dirt and refuse went all over us.

By all the laws of Field Service and Drill Regulations, we should have been sent back, as "out of action," by the Umpire, for shells dropped in front of us, on our right and on our left. But the Umpire was n't looking, so we stuck it out. As it looked as if we might be marooned here some time, we decided to entertain each other. A minstrel show seemed in order. I sang the opening chorus of "Just give my regards to Broadway" in true Cohanesque style, and the next day all agreed that my voice had the sweetest tremolo effect they'd ever heard.

Milliken next was introduced. He told an Irish story and we all laughed heartily. Later I asked him what it was about and he could n't remember what it was, so that story is lost to history.

Then Borge felt the Thespian spirit and took the stage. Garceau's stunt was to interpret for him. Borge's story was of his cousin and a pal who were caught in a shell-hole with boche fire just like this. "Suddenly," he said, as a shell struck near by, "just like that, a shell landed in the hole where they were. A detail came out next day and buried one leg, all that could be found of them, and put both names on the cross."

We laughed uproariously at this humorous anecdote, and we three Americans sat there in that shell-hole while hun shells were landing all around, and soberly matched to see who would have the honor of having his name inscribed upon the cross in case they found one leg for two of us. Milliken was odd man, so the winner. We all agreed, if one of us got away, to see that his name was preserved to posterity.

It lasted just an hour, then suddenly Borge stood up. "It's all over," he said; "they're greasing their guns." We told him our Supply

Sergeant had a whole lot of grease that could readily be spared, if more was needed to keep those blamed boche guns quiet.

Now came the real nerve test. He led us straight ahead at those hostile batteries for a mile. I'll confess I wanted to call it a day and enforce the union closing laws, but felt it was my duty to see it through. Just as we arrived at the little soixante, a mile beyond, the real bombardment started. But now we laughed at those shells, for we were away under the arc. They were ranging on our batteries a mile back. We counted fifteen to twenty shells a minute, and they fired for over an hour. They threw more than a thousand shells. Later we went back and saw where they'd landed. Then the tremendous waste of war appalled us. Not one shell had killed a man or destroyed a piece of property — just blown up more devastated ground. Garceau remarked, "Guess the Kaiser will have to sell some of his U.S. Steel bonds to pay for this."

Our home at Allemant was very near the

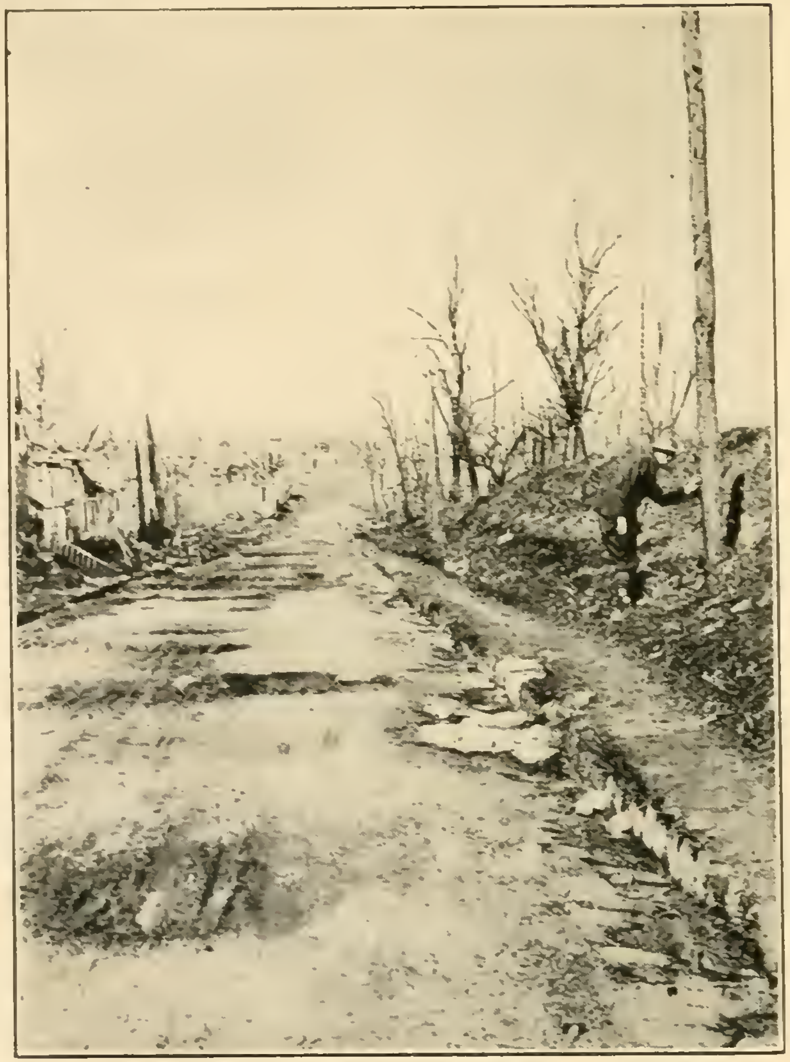
batteries being shelled, and the men had all been watching the fun; so we had received our baptism of fire, and we were all glad for it. That night the French seemed much pleased because the American soldiers had taken it all so coolly. They said, "It's the boche welcome to the Americans, the first ones here to be under fire." It was a warm welcome, too! Welcomes are all right in their way, but we felt, now that we had attended their reception, it was entirely unnecessary to hold another during our stay here.

CHAPTER V

CARRYING ON

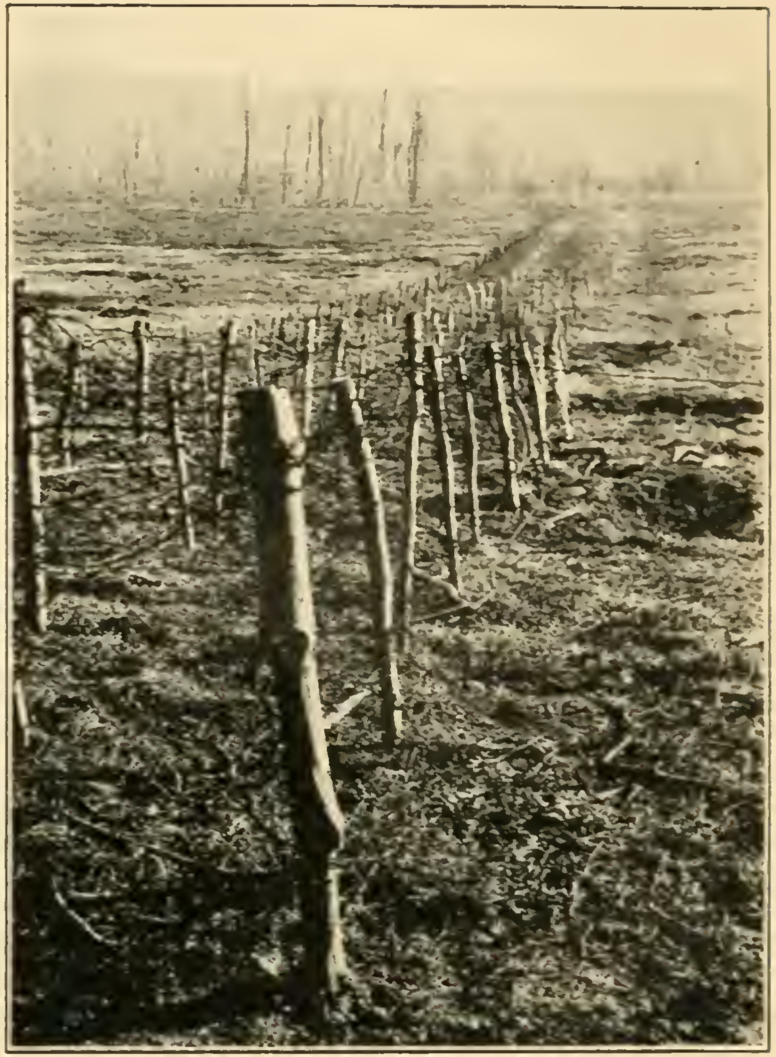
AFTER this first welcome, if a day passed without the caves or the batteries or some of our working parties being shelled, we worried for fear the boches were sick of it and had called the war off.

There were many exciting moments and many narrow escapes. "Slim" Edwards was bending over to lift the handles of a wheelbarrow when a huge piece of H.E. (high explosive shell) whizzed by his head and struck the wheelbarrow, demolishing it. "Slim," with a wave of impatience, cried, "Damn it, I suppose the Government will blame me for busting this blooming machine and dock my pay." Later, the boches threw over some gas-shells and caught "Slim" and Ray Boomhower before they could get their masks on. These first gas casualties proved not serious. They both



THE RUINED CITY OF PINON

The field of fire from one of our machine-gun emplacements



A SAMPLE OF OUR BARBED-WIRE WORKS STRETCHING ACROSS A VALLEY BEYOND CHEMIN DES DAMES

Protected on both ends by machine-gun positions

came back from the hospital in a short time, but, like many gas cases, it was months before they regained their old time "pep."

The next gas casualty was a severe one. A platoon had been sent to another cave about four miles to the east. It was at Montparnasse beyond the Chemin des Dames. Sergeant Newhall, a man of mature judgment and much experience, was in charge. One night the enemy launched a heavy mustard-gas attack. All the platoon but one man took refuge in the cave protected by the many gas doors. Private Casala, a boy who had never been strong, but, always a faithful, uncomplaining worker, had gone to fetch water and was caught in the gas. Newhall ordered his men to stay where they were, then adjusted his mask carefully, and went out alone in that gas to find his missing man. When brought in, Casala was immediately given treatment and sent to hospital. This gas affected him for over seven months afterwards.

This was our only casualty that night, and there was an excuse for it, as the boy was alone with a French soldier and neither got the alarm. During the night hundreds of French soldiers were evacuated to hospital with gas. This happened many times and well showed the gas training of our troops.

The average American soldier is sometimes considered foolhardy and reckless in the face of danger, but he takes no chances with gas. At the first sound of an alarm, that old mask is on in the prescribed six seconds, or less.

This cave of Montparnasse was a wonderful place, very large, well lighted by electricity, and laid out like a city — streets with signboards, mess halls, secret passages, and eighty-six feet of solid rock and earth protection above. During the famous battle of the Chemin des Dames the French trapped over five thousand Germans in this cave; fifteen hundred more escaped through a secret passage leading through the rear to a stone stairway of eighty-six steps. The boys delighted to explore passages like this and show them and other interesting sights every time I visited them.

On top of that cave was a hole made by a "510" shell, the French told the men; the biggest ever fired. The whole platoon could get into the hole and still have room for most of their comrades.

James Lewis, a deep thinker, a quiet youth who always wanted to study out the reason why and wherefore, stood by this excavation and pondered. "There's a big hole in the earth twenty-five feet deep, fifty or more feet wide. Tons of dirt and rock have been removed, and where the devil is it?" And where was it all? Not a sign of extra dirt around the top. Where does the immense amount of earth driven out of shell-holes go to? Lewis finally figured out a solution. It sounds reasonable. He gave a learned talk to the men grouped around their bunks one night.

"You see, gentlemen, that shell strikes with such a terrific force that nothing can withstand it. The rock and dirt by that impact is pulverized into minute particles. These fine particles are driven through the air at a great velocity for miles around. They are so spread around that on no one part of the surrounding ground are they noticed."

This learned discourse was greeted with cries of "Good boy, Professor; you're there"; and "The kid's clever all right. Does he snuff that stuff or jerk it in his arm?" James simply smiled benignly upon these comrades in their blissful ignorance and retired to his bunk with the satisfied appearance of one who had solved a weighty problem for the world.

The work of this platoon was highly praised by the French officers. They built a tunnel through solid rock under the Maubeuge road. It connected two boyaux (communicating trenches) and was filled with high explosives. The pretty little game was to blow it up if German tanks came over. It was an interesting job for the men. When putting in a charge of Sheddite, Bill O'Brien, one of our expert demolition men, would say, "Make it good, boys; we'll cause more expense to my namesake Bill and make him cut down the Clown Prince's allowance."

After we had left this sector, and learned that the boche had come over, there was much excitement and questioning on the part of this platoon as to how much damage their hard work had inflicted. Perhaps some day they'll find out and learn that they builded better than they knew.

All our movements had been made secretly. We felt that it would be a long time before the Germans would know there were American troops in the sector. Yet, the first day after one of our Infantry regiments had occupied a front-line trench, a big sign appeared above the opposing enemy trench. It read: —

WELCOME 26TH DIVISION

But they were afraid of Americans. The German propaganda was spread among their troops that the Yankees were wild Indians, gave no quarter, and tortured and butchered prisoners. Captured documents caused us to smile when we learned what horrible cut-throats we were. This propaganda at first was effective. The boches would surrender to the French, but would resist capture to the last by Americans.

One morning about seven a French patrol brought in some thirty prisoners to Carrière R–1. They looked tired and hungry, seemed poorly equipped and glad of a chance to get away from it all. Just as they came in, our 22d Squad, under Corporal Joe Youlden, were going to work. Now the "Fighting 22d" was a crowd of young bloods filled with good-natured deviltry, always ready for anything. One was Hal Chapman, who claimed to be the only retained " Big Leaguer" in captivity in France. He was formerly a catcher with the "Cubs" and Joe Tinker was still interested in him. The whole squad, like Hal, could stand any kind of pitching.

When these Indians spied those thirty boches they let out a war-whoop and made a dash to give 'em the once-over. You should have seen those poor cowed Germans duck, throw up their hands, "kamerad," and seek shelter behind the laughing French guards. They were sure their time had come and they were to be drawn and quartered by the blood-thirsty Yanks. Instead, these wild boys rounded them all up, "cherched" some cocoa and bread for each one, handed out smokes, and saw them on their way to Headquarters. At first the boches did not know what to make of it, but when they found they were not to be tortured, but fed and treated like human beings, they went down the road singing.

This same 22d Squad with Joe Mayne's 19th Squad, working together on mitrailleuse (machine-gun) emplacements, had the honor of firing our first shots at the enemy. A hun aviator one day flew very low over them and opened up a machine-gun fire. Our boys seized their rifles and plugged away at him, but he got away. This aviator was a daredevil. He'd fly everywhere, usually low, right over the trenches. The boys called him "Handsome Harry," and at times he was most annoying. One night when the boys came in there was much rejoicing — "The shrapnel boys got Handsome Harry to-day. He's through bothering us."

The home folks wonder what their boys at the front do for entertainment. No theaters, no movies, no circuses. Why, hardly a day goes past but some of the world's greatest aerial performers appear for their benefit, and almost every night some stirring show is staged.

The boys greatly enjoyed watching the balloon directly over us at R–1. They called it "our sausage" and resented any boche attacks upon it. Its principal mission was to watch Laon, an important German stronghold and railroad center. The observers obtained much valuable information and many attempts were made to "get" this sausage — four successful ones while we were there.

One of the observers was a Lieutenant

A French Anti-Aircraft Gun protecting "Our Sausage"

A Machine-Gun Position

Three entrances, long major gallery, and three shafts going up to top of hill where guns are located. Hun trenches just down this road

Donahue, from Providence, Rhode Island. He landed in France as a casual officer. The officials said, "You'll go in the balloon service."

"All right, me for the balloon service," he replied.

"You'll report to the Balloon Company near Carrière R–1, ten miles beyond Soissons."

Donahue reported, and the French officer said, "You'll go up to-day with a French observer."

"All right, I'll go up to-day."

He was a most agreeable person, although he had never seen a balloon in his life outside of the Brockton Fair. We watched them go up, to the end of the cable, fifteen hundred meters. Suddenly four boche planes appeared on our right. All our anti-aircraft batteries opened up and the air was filled with shrapnel and H.E. So fierce was the onslaught that the planes could not get closer. This was apparently a camouflage, for, as all our fire and attention was directed at these planes, a fifth, a little fellow concealed in a cloud above the balloon, darted down like a shot. The balloon burst into flames from his incendiary bullets, the observers "hopped" in a parachute, the boche shot several rounds at them, and then fled back home.

"Mike" Schoenly, our company clerk, was on the spot when the parachute landed. He helped Donahue extricate himself. "Gee, Lieutenant," he said, "I thought you'd never come down."

"Oh, I knew I was coming down all right," Donahue replied nonchalantly. "I did n't know just what condition I'd be in when I landed, but old man Isaac Newton made me sure of coming down."

A few days later he paid us a visit wearing a Croix de Guerre. "What'd you get that for?" we queried. "For coming down." And his citation read: "This brave American showed savoir-faire and jumped joyously from the balloon to the parachute."

One morning just after the men had messed, we heard a German plane coming, and rushed out. This little fellow was going at a terrific rate. All our gunners must have been at breakfast, for he met no opposition, just ran right up to our poor old "sausage" and blew it up. This boche must have been a pretty decent fellow. He did n't fire upon the men in the parachute, just circled around them, saw them safely landed. We thought he even waved "so-long," and went like a streak of lightning back to bocheland.

It was not always as one-sided as this. One beautiful Sunday afternoon a plane came over, and, flying high, attempted to get over the balloon. This time our batteries were working well, and one shell split the plane squarely in two. The observer and driver fell about five thousand feet, landing not far from us. One was a young chap and not badly disfigured. He was lying flat on his back, arms outstretched, eyes wide open looking up at the sky, his battle-field. In his pocket was a picture of a sweet-faced girl, evidently wife or sweetheart. We really felt sorry for the poor fellow lying stretched out there after a horrible death, the result of Prussian Militarism. We could afford to be magnanimous, for we had got him instead of his getting us. Yet we could not help thinking of that girl back home and wondering if she would ever know. I guess we were really not fully hardened yet.

When our new rolling kitchen and water-cart arrived at R–1, we were all like a crowd of kids with new toys. The cooks took that "soup gun," as they immediately nicknamed the kitchen, all apart. The new kettles, pans, knives, and boilers were a delight to them. They cooked our next "chow" on the kitchen and were delighted with the results, and, better still, so were the men. Soon our other transportation began to arrive — the ration cart, and combat, ration, and forage wagons. Then came our horses and mules, some good ones, many "pas bon," and some just plain "skates," but each one was taken in hand by our stable crew and treated like a prize beauty. It was always a pleasure to the officers to see how each wagoner groomed and cared for his quartet of mules or horses. Each man knew his were the best and studied each animal's characteristics, and took the greatest pride in making them the class of our stable. John O'Brien was now Stable Sergeant, in civil life an expert fire-engine driver from Lawrence, Massachusetts — a training that fitted him ideally for this army job. Not only were the animals, wagons, and carts always looking spick and span, but the stables also were kept as scrupulously clean and neat as a kitchen. Inspecting officers invariably complimented our stables and equipment.

When the riding horses came, the officers had lessons in equitation under the tutelage of Old Dave, the expert. We were all pretty green, especially the Captain. Shell-fire was mild compared to that first ride on the horse selected for me. He seemed twenty feet high, and his gait shook up everything I'd ever eaten. But after riding up and down a shell-swept road in utter darkness, and not falling off, we felt we could make a respectable showing even on the bridle path of Central Park. Strange to relate, we green horsemen stuck on, but our instructor had trouble. One of the men wrote in his diary, I saw later: "The Captain said he wanted to get a lot of practice before he appeared before the company on his 'Arabian Beauty.' It is reported that Sergeant Davis, the master of wild steeds, was thrown from his 'Jenny Mule' while out with the officers this evening. The Captain is now a veteran rider after having outridden our old Cavalry Sergeant."

Next to the men's cave at R–1 was another cave made over into a first-aid hospital. It was splendidly equipped with the newest and best apparatus. All the French and American dead and wounded in the sector were brought here. The first American soldier killed in this

Wagoner John Coolidge with his Trick Mule Jumbo

sector was brought here, and we buried him in a little French cemetery close by. D Company furnished the firing squad and body-bearers, and Dexter blew a muffled "taps." We gave that boy as fine a funeral as a soldier could receive.

A few days later the first officer to be killed in our Division was brought in. He was also reported as the first American Army officer killed in the war. It was Lieutenant Eadie, of the 103d Infantry. The French officers all joined us in paying a final sad tribute to this gallant officer who gave up his life for the cause. Shortly afterward, a French officer was brought in. He was a close friend of Lieutenant Borge and a well-known officer in the service. Two French Generals attended the funeral. It was most impressive and we Americans were just as proud to salute this brave comrade as we were one of our own men, when he was laid in his last resting-place.

Gradually our little cemetery grew bigger and bigger. Almost every day some poor chap was brought in. The boys always seemed anxious to see that each received a burial with full military honors. It was difficult, at times, to muster enough men for the firing squad and body-bearers, as nearly all the men were out on the works. Cooks, stable-men, the sick, every one available felt honored when asked to assist. I remember one firing squad consisting of the First Sergeant, Barrack Sergeant, Mess Sergeant, two cooks, dispatch rider, a wagoner, and a sick man: a motley crew, but all glad to be of help in the sad ceremony.

February 17th was a memorable day for the men. Beaucoup mail! The boys simply devoured those letters from home. Now, a word about letters to the soldiers. If you have a boy or brother or sweetheart or friend over there, write him early and often. He is pretty sure to get it and is bound to feel happier for it. Our Army Postal Service is constantly improving and a surprisingly small number of letters go astray, if properly addressed. When you write, talk about pleasant and joyous things, tell all the gossipy news about the folks, the friends, and the town. Don't tell him you're suffering because the lid is on and you can't get any chicken. He's probably eating cold "canned Bill." If he ever did something to you years ago that you did n't approve of, forget it; don't keep harping upon it in your letters. Tell him how much every one is doing at home to help the cause, how enthusiastic all are. Above all, pat him on the back; tell him of the good things his friends are saying about him. It makes no difference whether he is in the fighting trenches, in the S.O.S. (Service of Supply, formerly called the Lines of Communication), or a clerk away back in some Headquarters. He's over there a long way from you and all he loves. Make him feel like the hero that he is.

I've seen the boys get letters like this, when they were discouraged and tired and perhaps hungry. Their whole aspect of life changes; they'll suffer any hardship, fight all the harder in trying to live up to the ideal in those letters. Such letters will not only make a boy happy, but they'll make him a better soldier and a better man.

Now, if you happen to be the proud young lady in whom he is particularly interested, impress upon him constantly that he is the *only* one, that you admire him and are proud of him. The other boys in the town look so out of place in civilian clothes, and are so uninteresting to you. It seems as if nearly every soldier gets the impression that some chap at home is stealing his sweetheart away. And so many reports get around about our women at home that even married soldiers worry for fear the wife's affection may be transferred to some one who is "Johnny on the spot." This kind of German propaganda was worked in a terrible way in the Italian armies and did much to hurt morale. Kill it forever in our own Army by writing such letters as I suggest, and writing them often.

As to letters from the boys, don't expect too many. You should write three or four to their one. In the first place, they have but little time and few conveniences for writing. I've seen men stretched out in the bottom of a trench, or on the cold floor of a cave with a candle stuck on a helmet, men in all sorts of uncomfortable positions, trying to get off a note, perhaps long deferred. Many times at the front it is impossible to write at all. We've been for days and days on an advance move, hiking all night, resting days; no mail could even be accepted. Again, every letter has to be read and censored by an officer. Imagine, perhaps, where there are two officers available for duty with two hundred and fifty men, the number of letters those officers have to read. It's sometimes a physical impossibility to get all those letters out immediately. The officers of the American Expeditionary Force work overtime on the men's correspondence; they realize how much those letters mean. Almost every night you'll see the company officers working on their men's letters, and working late into the night, long after the men themselves are sleeping.

In D Company the men were most thoughtful in regard to letter-writing. They appreciated the task set for the officers and did not make it an impossible one. We did insist upon the men writing their mothers each week. We talked to the men a good deal about their mothers, how much they would worry when no letters came, and how they were the real sufferers after all. The mail orderlies checked these mothers' letters, and if a boy was not writing to his mother we would get after him.

You, soldier, going over there, write your mother every week at least, if you don't write another person. You owe it to her a thousand times over.

Every Sunday we would declare a legal holiday, devoting the day to a general clean-up. Back about two miles was a good shower bath at Pont Rouge. The entire company would bathe there and, much to Supply Sergeant Walker's delight, the men would get new underclothing, some even new clothes and shoes. At these Sunday parties many "cuckoos" died a dishonorable death. "Cuckoos," or "cooties," as we afterwards called them, were proven to be of pro-German proclivities, and our common enemy. The men swore "Death to the hun cooties — never take a prisoner." Cootie-hunting was the king of sports with them.

"I just captured a cootie sentry in my shirt," one chap would say.

"That's nothing; I got a whole outpost and slaughtered them."

Then the worst sufferer: "Gosh! I got a whole platoon doing squads right and squads wrong on me manly chest. I put down a heavy barrage, but I think some got away and will get me again soon."

Later, cootie machines were installed and did much to destroy these troubles. The men's clothes and blankets were subjected to a high pressure of steam, destroying all animal life. The men had hot baths and clean underclothing, and "pas de cooties" for a while.

Another disturbing animal was the rat. Not the agile little animal running around the barn rafters, but a husky creature of gigantic proportions. But these "young dogs" were not bad; they were really quite friendly. Sometimes on awakening a boy would find a friendly rodent nestled up against his face, a nice little bedfellow; but the bunks were pretty small and the men insisted upon sleeping alone. They were even rude at times, but the rats never seemed to resent it and treated us all with deep respect.

We might as well speak of all the unpleasant things at once, so now for the last — the mud, and there were veritable seas of mud up here when it began to thaw. Going through our communicating trenches, sometimes the boys would go up to their knees in it. One fellow wrote about a visit our parson paid to an emplacement. "We almost lost our Chap-

The King of Outdoor Sports

A Cootie Hunt in the woods just presented to us by the flying Huns

lain, who not only became camouflaged with mud, but those long legs sank away down into it, till we thought he was ticketed for China." The squad leaders would quote our General to our men: "Don't let your glance rest on the mud of France; turn it upward and forget what is underfoot."

All of our work in this sector was of a defensive character. All of our orders and instructions came from the French Major, Commandant Cloitre. He was a splendid fellow, big and jolly, always most considerate of us, and always pleased with the work of our men. We had at one time twenty-three different works going, and Commandant Cloitre not once offered a criticism. On the contrary, he was most complimentary.

Our boys did work well. It was all new and interesting to them. The French soldiers working with them had been doing the same thing for three years and naturally lacked a bit of our boys' enthusiasm. On the little railroad, for example, our crew would do what was considered two and one half days' work in one day.

The men enjoyed it, but began to think of some offensive work. "A" Company of our Regiment had tackled a little offensive action, and although it was a disastrous venture, we were all proud of the "A" detail and anxious to tackle something of the kind in "D." There was to be a raid, and "A" Company was to throw a bridge over the canal for the Infantry to cross. Their plans were well laid and everything was going like clock-work, when a shell struck squarely on the bridge, as they were carrying it to position. Lieutenant "Connie" Beard was in charge of the detail of a dozen men. All but himself were killed or wounded. Connie worked wonderfully to get those wounded and dead boys out under fire, and he succeeded in bringing all the wounded and most of the dead on his back, to first-aid stations. Then he found his way to our place and dragged himself in there, a sight, pale, tired almost to the breaking point, and covered with blood. Our whole regiment was proud of Connie (now Captain Beard) and of his citation (Army Corps) the highest in our Division, and of his Croix de Guerre and his D.S.C.

Our Colonel hurried to R–1 when the report was 'phoned in. He was much worried about the detail. Some of our men overheard him talking with Beard about the missing men. Sergeant Davis stepped up, saluted, and said, "Sir, there are two hundred and fifty soldiers in D Company ready and anxious to go out and find those boys."

The Colonel smiled his appreciation, but was unwilling to sacrifice more men.

Many of the nights up here were wonderful to behold. Sometimes hun planes would come over in squadrons bound for a raid on Paris. Then our anti-aircraft guns would belch forth, powerful searchlights would search the sky for miles, and thousands of rockets and flares made the greatest Fourth-of-July fireworks celebration we ever hoped to see.

One of the biggest parties came one night just after supper. The boches started a little raid across the canal after putting over a barrage. That barrage was costly to them. It evidently had been planned just at the wrong time for them. Our own artillery — and we had a great number of guns — started. Well, we'd thought we had seen artillery work before, but nothing like this. It was appalling. Every gun, both French and American, in that sector, covering many miles, was going. We could just picture those artillery boys throwing the shells in just as fast as they could work.

I thought of the men forward at Allemant. Realizing they were closer to the fun, I felt it my duty to go up and look them over. Lieutenant Shadburn, the only officer at R–1 with me, was standing by.

"Shad, I'm going up to Allemant."

"Well, Captain, I thought the same thing. Can't we put Sergeant Davis in charge here and you and I go?"

Just then Davis came along. We had to

almost shout to be heard. "Sergeant, we're going to Allemant, so look after things here."

"Very good, sir," he replied, "but may I suggest this? There are some important reports Sergeant Turner has up there I ought to get to-night. Perhaps the Captain would allow me to go with him and leave the Supply Sergeant in charge here."

"All right," I laughed, "come along."

It was a glorious night, almost as light as day from the flashes of that long line of thundering guns. There were camions and trucks dashing in all directions and at Laffaux Cross-Roads it seemed like the busiest hour on Fifth Avenue and Broadway. Hundreds of these ammunition trucks going like mad to the battery positions. Empties coming back for more.

"The thing would be complete," I shouted, "if they only had a traffic cop."

"There he is." Shad pointed.

And sure enough, in the center of that crossroads was a tall French Sergeant with a semaphore bug-light, coolly motioning these trucks forward, those in another direction, and not one bit of congestion.

We found our platoon in full fighting regalia all ready to "stand to." But the boches did n't come over into that maelstrom of shells and no orders came for us to move. The boys were really a bit peeved, for they were all keyed up to it. That bombardment seemed like music to them. They were like bloodhounds on a leash ready to go to it.

The noon meal was sent out to the men on the various details in marmites (buckets with a Thermos bottle effect that keep the food hot). One day, while two boys were returning with a marmite, the shelling began. They took refuge in a crater. A shell suddenly landed squarely in that hole beside them. Fortunately it was a "dud" (defective). Those boys were some frightened; ran all the way back to the cave. When the shelling stopped, they remembered the marmite which they had abandoned in the excitement. Much consternation when it could not be found. Our respect for

Government property was keen and the loss of one marmite was a sad blow. I told the two men they did exactly the right thing. Their lives were more important than all the marmites in France. We reported the loss with the full story, and Captain George Parsons, our efficient Regimental Supply Officer, was so affected by our tale that he sent us two new marmites to replace the one.

One night a detail was going down to a very advanced position close to the canal. A French Sergeant was guiding. The communicating trench suddenly ended in front of a road. Old Dave, the T.S. (Top Sergeant), went forward to reconnoiter. Returning in a few moments, he cried: "It's all right, boys; nothing but machine guns down this road." That became a by-word in the company. When we were in a hazardous position some one would express that cheering message, "Don't worry, nothing but machine guns down here."

Our Chaplain, always planning for some

one else's enjoyment, put up a plan to the officers for a surprise banquet to our Colonel. It was to be some banquet. Gridiron Club features and stunts. We rehearsed with the band for entrance songs, opening choruses, and songs about the Colonel. We even discovered a French cook at Allemant who was a one-time opera singer. We were going to work the band overtime. This party was to be at Regimental Headquarters some distance back of the lines and great preparations were made for it. Everything was staged beautifully, but as usual the boches tried to spoil it all. The Colonel, not suspecting anything, was being conducted to the messroom by the Adjutant; the band, camouflaged behind an old ruined wall, all tuned up and ready for "Hail to the Chief," "Big Night To-night," and other Broadway favorites, when it all happened.

Two boche planes blew over and dropped some bombs. The interlude, entrance songs, and opening chorus had to be sung without accompaniment, as we were unable to find any of our talented band after that, although reports stated they had been seen scurrying in the direction of dugouts. The party looked pretty sad for a while, but everything went off finely except the musical features.

CHAPTER VI

COMRADES-IN-ARMS

The non-commissioned officers were not to be outdone by the officers in having a "beaucoup de feed." One day before we left R–1 our French comrades arranged a field day. In the afternoon our Non-Coms played their Non-Coms at Soccer football, à la French style. It was a hard-fought battle on a shell-torn field. Toward the last our boys, most of whom had played football in school or college, put a little old-time American football tactics into play. Several remarks from the French players to the purport that the game was "très-sauvage." It must have been a strange sight for a couple of German aviators who blew over, as well as for the French flyers who protected our game by driving them off, these athletes of two allied armies fighting at play out there in that Laffaux battle-ground.

The game happily ended in a tie, 2–2. After the old company cheer, given with a will for the French team, our players were tendered a reception and afternoon feed.

That night came the big party, a banquet given our Sergeants by the French Sergeants. Great preparations had been made. Our artists had drawn up an attractive menu and place cards. The French "cuisinier" worked overtime, as the menu shows: —

Salmon — Mayonnaise Sauce
Roast Beef
Stewed Beans
French Fried Potatoes
Dandelion Salad
Desserts
Cheese Jelly
Flaked Eggs
Cake
Coffee
Beaucoup Smokes.

In describing to me afterwards the speeches and how our boys got along with the language, Carroll Harris said, "Dave, as toastmaster, gave every one a chance to speak from his heart. Some of the speeches were in French, some in near French, and some in just guttural sounds!"

This spirit of "camaraderie," of good fellowship between our soldiers, pleased the French officers as well as our own. The paternal feeling of the French officers for their men was also a pleasing thing. The French soldier always speaks of his Captain as "mon Capitaine." He seems to take pride in the use of the "my." Some of our own men copied this happy phrase, "my officer," and referred to us as "mon lieutenant" or "mon Capitaine." It kept before us the thought of our duties to these men. To my mind this "family" idea, without in any way lessening discipline in a company or in any unit, makes that organization all the stronger in morale and in efficiency.

Other fête-days were the days mail came. Big rejoicing all around.

At the Allemant cave the men organized two clubs. Those who still held their sweethearts back in the United States belonged to the "Tried and True" Club. Harold Hayes was President. He was later commissioned and sent home to join a new Division. Now the charming bride, Mrs. Harold, is Secretary of the "T. and T."

The others, who from their letters found that some one else had supplanted them with their loved ones, joined the "Loved and Lost" Fraternity. After each mail the leading members of each club went around seeking new members. They judged each case on its merits, deciding what "frat" would accept the man. It was a lot of fun, but behind all the foolishness there was much real feeling. The leading lights of the "T. and T." Club fought hard for members. When they lost one, they tried to cheer him up and often wrote the girl.

Even second-class mail came to us occasionally. It was interesting to see the boys read the home papers. What seemed to interest them most was the life of the men in the training camps.

One bitterly cold day George Morse was Barrack Sergeant. He was sitting in the cave on a keg, wrapped in sweaters and blankets, reading from the "Boston Post."

"By Gosh!" he exclaimed, "what's this war coming to! The steam heat gave out at Camp Devens. Those fellows will catch their death of cold!"

Yet, with all the joshing about the men not over yet, there was a wholesome feeling of respect and admiration for them. The feeling of all the men over there for the people of America is entirely different from the way it is pictured. I've heard men say about their comrades: "Poor Bill is stuck over in the States in some camp, just wild to get over here"; or, "Jack has a job in a department with a desk and all that; is worried for fear he'll never see any fighting."

The men at the front realize that they are the fortunate ones. They are having the good times. They are enjoying the biggest thing in the world, and are a part of it. They all talk of the people at home and how much more they are doing and getting no credit: such as the men in camps and clerical work, the men spending their time and effort in Liberty Loan drives, in Red Cross, Y.M.C.A., Salvation Army, Knights of Columbus work, and in a thousand ways, all for the benefit and backing of the boys at the front.

And the women, too, with the war relief work, the charities, the constant thought and effort to help. It seems to the boys in France as if all the men and women in the home land were doing everything in their power to help and protect them.

The boys in the trenches feel that if there are any heroes, they are the folks working and sacrificing at home while they are over there getting all the joy and glory.

Again, it is remarkable to see the feeling of the men of one branch of the service for those of another. Every one seems to think that the other fellow has a harder time and is doing a better job than he. My men used to say, "Golly, those 'Doughboys' have a tough time, and how they can fight"; or, "Is n't our Artillery great; that barrage last night was a pippin — just perfect."

When we were shelled in Boucq, the Signal Corps boys went out under fire, mounted the telephone poles and repaired the wire, seemingly oblivious to the shells whizzing by. Our boys just looked on in admiration and cheered them.

The Navy, too, comes in for its share of praise. "Just think of what those fellows have done! With the English Navy they have brought over two million of us, with supplies, ammunition, and guns, and have n't lost a ship. And the poor fellows are out of luck. Can't get into a decent scrap. Only hope the boche navy comes out before the thing is over and sees our Yankee Tars knock them to pieces."

It's a great feeling to see. Everybody throughout the American Expeditionary Force knows the other fellow is good and admires him. And that other fellow has to be good to live up to his reputation.

The Veteran Association of our Regiment publish a quarterly giving historical sketches, current news, etc. While in this Soissons sector copies of the fall issue were sent to us. The old outfit for nearly a century have had a distinctive full-dress uniform made of a fine white broadcloth. This copy of the quarterly published a story of the history of this uniform which said it was copied from the French as a compliment to a French regiment that had much to do with the winning of the battle of Yorktown in the Revolutionary War. That regiment was the famous Regiment of Soissons.

This story was especially pleasing to our French comrades-in-arms and proved one more link in the chain that bound us together.

We were all really sorry to leave our homes in this sector and more particularly our good friends of the French 11/63. We marched out in the early morning in small groups. The boches seemed to know of our departure. They shelled us from the time we first started until our last wagon left R–1. Then they stopped and began dropping big ones into the city of Soissons, our destination.

The town of Crouy, Commandant Cloitre's Headquarters, was halfway on our journey. Here we consolidated the whole company for the first time since our arrival. Captain Poiteau had ridden down with me, and Commandant Cloitre came up to wish us all "bonne chance." My company lined up and presented arms, and I presented each French officer with a gold wrist identification band inscribed from our officers. Then I gave "At ease." The Sergeants dashed out in front of the company and led them in our company cheer for each of these splendid officers who had done so much for us and whose instruction was to prove of the greatest value to us. They both seemed quite affected. Our feelings were evidently mutual. Captain Poiteau afterwards wrote: —

It is my pleasure to express to you the deep sentiments from all the sous-officiers and officiers of the 11/63. Your departure has created an empty feeling and has made us think more often of the sympathy and affection born between our two companies. We know that you come to take your part, every day a greater one, to endure the hardships, the long combats for right, for civilization, without desire of conquest, without material gain, to urge you on. The most humble of our men have suffered the misery of invasion and destruction of the enemy and this is the basis of the sympathy, the fraternity that from the first contact has reigned between the two companies.

In our admiration of the generous and spontaneous aid of the United States of America to our France, you and your company hold the places of dear friends, of true brothers-in-arms. The memory of the weeks passed together makes our hearts grow warm and increases each time our chances for a final and complete victory.

We thank you, your officers, and your men for the kindnesses, too kind, that you have shown to each French comrade.

Our entry into Soissons was like a triumphant march. The company made a brave appearance. The people came out of the stores and houses waving American flags and shouting "Vives" to the American soldiers back from the front.

The famous Cathedral of Soissons was our home for the night. It proved to be far from the peaceful, restful place a cathedral should be. The boches kept up their shelling and at night sent over some bombing squadrons of aeroplanes. Most of our time was spent in the "abris" with little sleep.

All our entraining plans were suddenly changed. Soissons was too hot a place for trains to work coolly. The point selected was several miles to the rear. My company was to go first. After we had gone three or four miles we halted for a rest. We were now out of range of any hun guns. I breathed a sigh of relief and thanked God. For with me that morning, in safety, was every man of my company I had taken to the front!

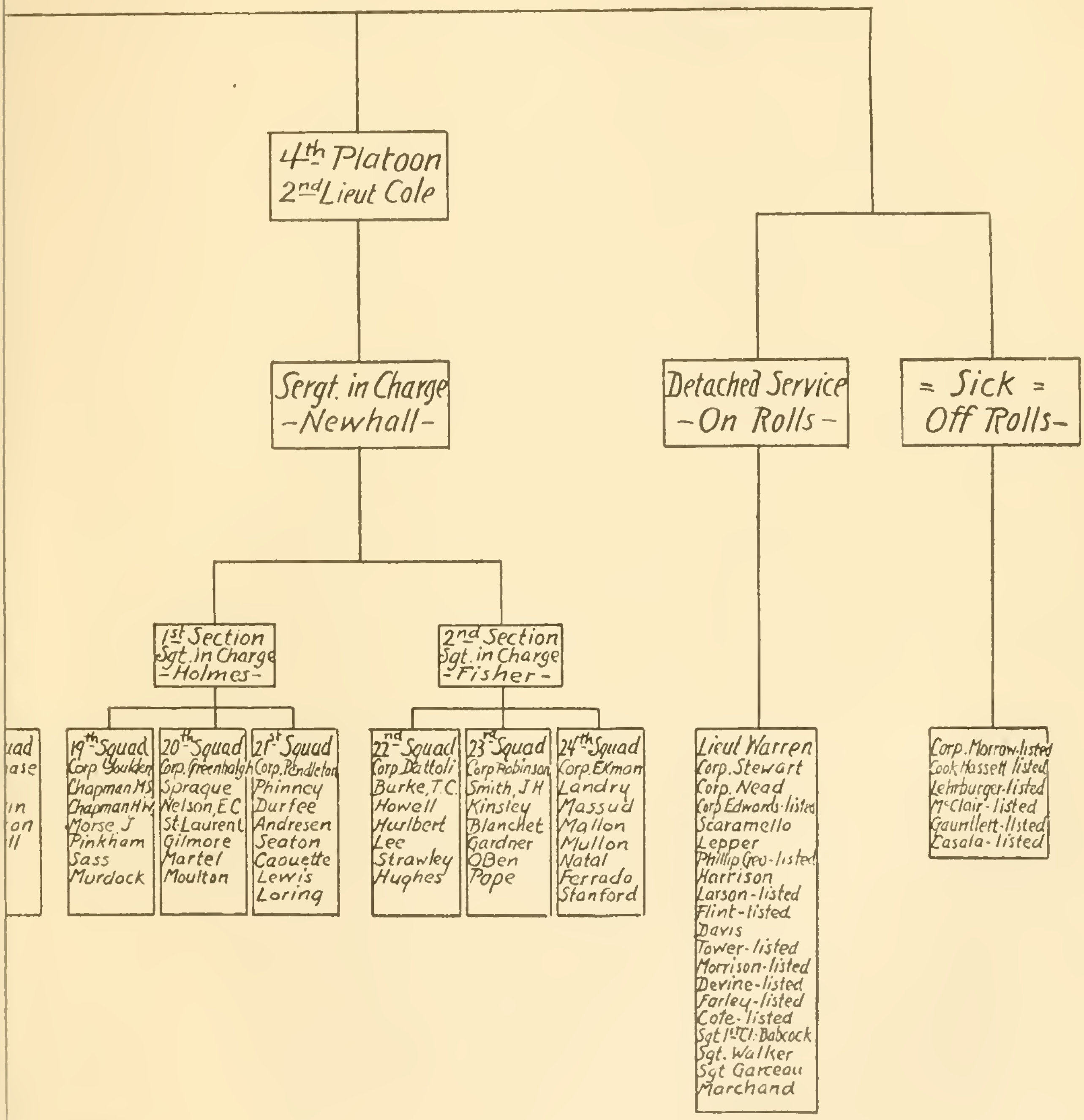
CHAPTER VII

OUR "REST CAMP"

THE general scheme now was to have a big Divisional maneuver. We were to hike every day after reaching our detraining point. After the usual twenty-four hours' train ride we reached Brienne le Château. Here a very happy meeting was awaiting us.

Back in the winter an old friend of mine, George W. Coleman, of Boston, prominent in all civic and philanthropic works, a man known to most of my company, had written that he was coming to France on a special mission and would look us up. We smiled at this last. It was like saying, "I'm living in America this season; if you get over, look me up." I've had people write, "I've a friend over there in some outfit or other; be sure and remember me to him." They don't realize we have two million stretched from Switzerland to the Channel. Yet, when

I hopped off that train and ran down the platform to see about the unloading, there stood good old George Coleman awaiting us. He somehow had learned of our destination, and had waited seventy-two hours at that station to bring us a message of cheer from our homes. He hiked with the company that night and slept with us in our billet. Next morning the company assembled after mess. George gave us one of his inspiring, cheery talks and then brought individual messages to many of the men whose folks he knew back home. It was a real home touch for us. Later we were all thrilled by a letter from him. He spoke of being invited to dine with Lloyd George in London. When that great man inquired about the spirit and temper of the American soldier, Coleman told him all he had learned about D Company. Lloyd George replied, "If that's the spirit of the American troops, they will win." It was most flattering to have the Prime Minister of England's opinion of our Army based on us.


4th Platoon
2nd Lieut Cole
Sergt. in Charge
-Newhall-
Detached Service
-On Rolls-
= Sick =
Off Rolls-
1st Section
Sgt. in Charge
-Holmes-
2nd Section
Sgt. in Charge
-Fisher-
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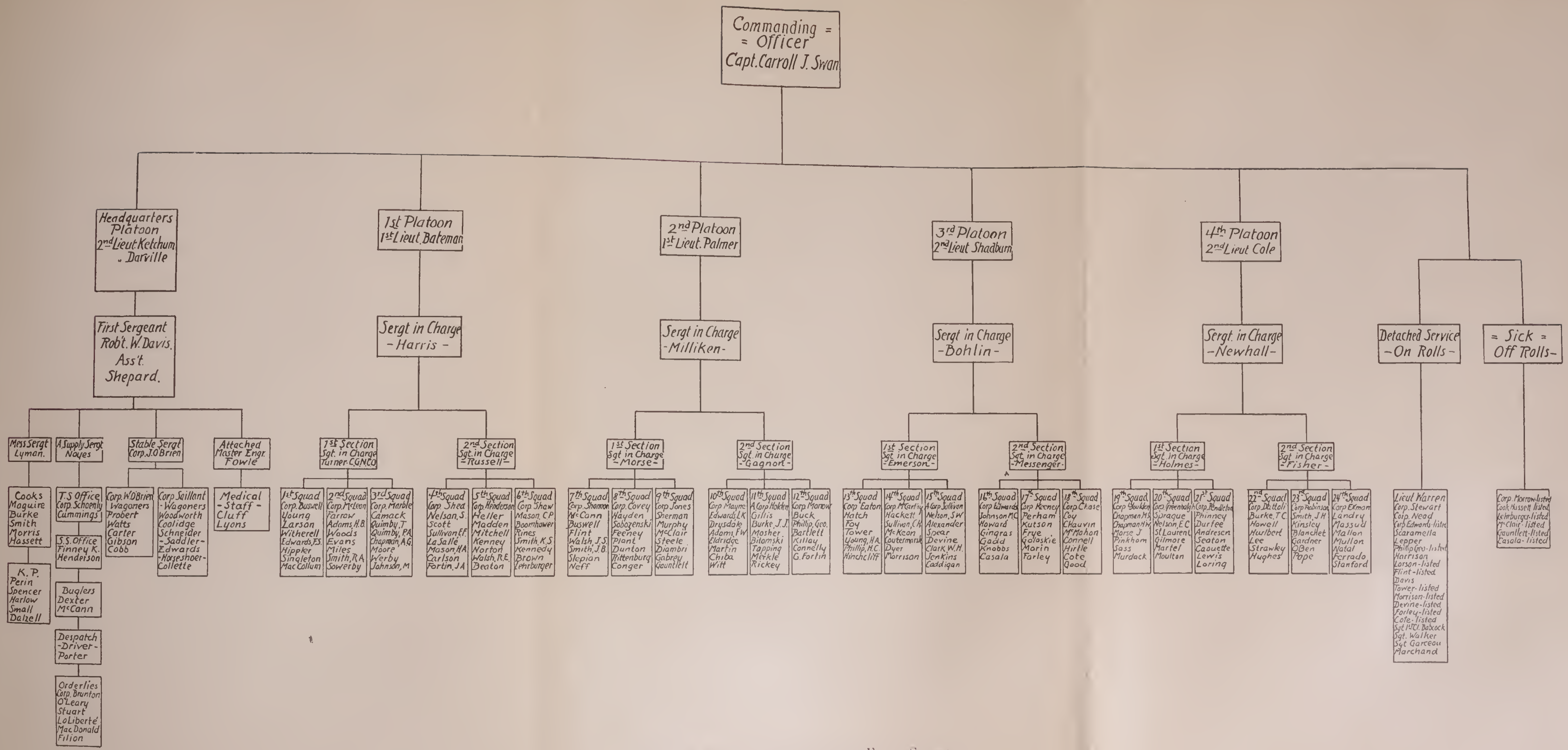
19th Squad
Corp Youlden
Chapman M.S.
Chapman H.W.
Morse J
Pinkham
Sass
Murdock
20th Squad
Corp. Greenhalgh
Sprague
Nelson, E.C.
St. Laurent
Gilmore
Martel
Moulton
21st Squad
Corp. Pendleton
Phinney
Durfee
Andresen
Seaton
Caouette
Lewis
Loring
22nd Squad
Corp Dattoli
Burke, T.C.
Howell
Hurlbert
Lee
Strawley
Hughes
23rd Squad
Corp Robinson
Smith, J H
Kinsley
Blanchet
Gardner
OBen
Pope
24th Squad
Corp. Ekman
Landry
Massud
Mallon
Mullon
Natal
Ferrado
Stanford
Lieut Warren
Corp. Stewart
Corp. Nead
Corp Edwards-listed
Scaramello
Lepper
Phillip Geo-listed
Harrison
Larson-listed
Flint-listed
Davis
Tower-listed
Morrison-listed
Devine-listed
Farley-listed
Cote-listed
Sgt 1st Cl. Babcock
Sgt. Walker
Sgt Garceau
Marchand
Corp. Morrow-listed
Cook Hassett listed
Lehrburger-listed
McClair-listed
Gauntlett-listed
Casala-listed


Commanding = = Officer Capt. Carroll J. Swan
Headquarters Platoon 2nd Lieut. Ketchum " Darville
1st Platoon 1st Lieut. Bateman
2nd Platoon 1st Lieut. Palmer
3rd Platoon 2nd Lieut Shadburn
4th Platoon 2nd Lieut Cole
First Sergeant Rob't. W. Davis. Ass't. Shepard.
Sergt in Charge -Harris-
Sergt in Charge -Milliken-
Sergt in Charge -Bohlin-
Sergt. in Charge -Newhall-
Detached Service -On Rolls-
= Sick = Off Rolls-
Mess Sergt Lyman.
A. Supply Sergt Noyes
Stable Sergt Corp. J. O'Brien
Attached Master Engr. Fowle
Cooks Maguire Burke Smith Morris Hassett
K.P. Perin Spencer Harlow Small Dalzell
T.S Office Corp. Schoenly Cummings
S.S. Office Finney K. Henderson
Buglers Dexter McCann
Despatch -Driver- Porter
Orderlies Corp. Brunton O'Leary Stuart LaLiberté MacDonald Filion
Corp. W.D. O'Brien Wagoners Probert Watts Carter Gibson Cobb
Corp Saillant -Wagoners Woodworth Coolidge Schneider -Saddler- Edwards -Horseshoer- Collette
Medical -Staff- Cluff Lyons
1st Section Sgt. in Charge Turner-C.G.N.C.O.
2nd Section Sgt. in Charge -Russell-
1st Squad Corp. Buswell Young Larson Witherell Edwards, F.S. Hippler Singleton MacCollum
2nd Squad Corp. McLean Farrow Adams, H.B. Woods Evans Miles Smith, R.A. Sowerby
3rd Squad Corp. Marble Camack Quimby, T Quimby, P.A. Chapman, A.G. Moore Werby Johnson, M
4th Squad Corp. Shea Nelsan, S. Scott Sullivan E.F. La Sallé Mason, H.A. Carlson Fortin, J.A.
5th Squad Corp. Henderson Heller Madden Mitchell Kenney Norton Walsh, R.E. Beaton
6th Squad Corp. Shaw Mason, C.P. Boomhower Rines Smith, K.S. Kennedy Brown Lehrburger
1st Section Sgt in Charge -Morse-
2nd Section Sgt. in Churge -Gagnon-
7th Squad Corp. Shannon McCann Buswell Flint Walsh, J.S. Smith, J.B. Slepian Neff
8th Squad Corp. Covey Hayden Sobozenski Feeney Plant Dunton Rittenburg Conger
9th Squad Corp Jones Sherman Murphy McClair Steele Diambri Gabrey Gauntlett
10th Squad Corp Mayne Edwards, L.K. Drysdale Adams, F.W. Eldridge Martin Chiba Witt
11th Squad A. Corp Holden Gillis Burke, J.J. Mosher Bilomski Tapping Merkle Rickey
12th Squad Corp Morrow Buck Phillip, Geo. Bartlett Killay Connelly G. Fortin
1st Section Sgt in Charge -Emerson-
2nd Section Sgt in Charge -Messenger-
13th Squad Corp Eaton Hatch Foy Tower Young, H.A. Phillip, H.C. Hinchcliff
14th Squad Corp. McCarthy Hackett Sullivan, C.H. McKeon Coutermarsh Dyer Morrison
15th Squad A. Corp Sullivan Nelson, S.W. Alexander Spear Devine Clark W.H. Jenkins Caddigan
16th Squad Corp Edwards Johnson M.C. Howard Gingras Gadd Knobbs Casala
17th Squad Corp Keeney Perham Kutson Frye Goloskie Morin Farley
18th Squad Corp Chase Coy Chauvin McMahon Connell Hirtle Cote Good
1st Section Sgt. in Charge -Holmes-
2nd Section Sgt in Charge -Fisher-
19th Squad Corp Youlden Chapman M.S. Chapman H.W. Morse J Pinkham Sass Murdack
20th Squad Corp. Greenhalgh Sprague Nelson, E.C. St Laurent Gilmore Martel Moulton
21st Squad Corp. Pendleton Phinney Durfee Andresen Seaton Caouette Lewis Loring
22nd Squad Corp Dattoli Burke, T.C. Howell Hurlbert Lee Strawley Hughes
23rd Squad Corp Robinson Smith, J.H. Kinsley Blanchet Gardner O'Ben Pope
24th Squad Corp Ekman Landry Massud Mallon Mullon Natal Ferrado Stanford
Lieut Warren Corp. Stewart Corp. Nead Corp Edwards-listed Scaramella Lepper Phillip Geo-listed Harrison Larson-listed Flint-listed Davis Tower-listed Morrison-listed Devine-listed Farley-listed Cote-listed Sgt 1st Cl. Babcock Sgt. Walker Sgt Garceau Marchand
Corp. Morrow-listed Cook Hassett listed Lehrburger-listed McClair-listed Gauntlett-listed Casala-listed

Our Company Organization in the Early Spring
Afterwards came many changes

Now we started on a week's hike, making a different town each night. After that we were to have a month in rest camp, "permission," and other attractive features. Our march was a pleasant and interesting one, not too long per day, and with prospects of arriving early each afternoon in some pretty French village. It seemed almost like a traveling show, with our long line of performers, wagons, rolling kitchen ("calliope"), and prancing steeds. The men caught the spirit of the thing, and when we arrived in a town it was interesting to see how quickly they adjusted themselves to their surroundings. A few moments after arrival their packs were unslung, beds were made up in a barn or field, and they were hunting a place to bathe or clean up for the evening banquet.

In some of the towns we passed through, where American troops had been before us, the little French children would welcome us by singing in broken English —

> "Ail! Ail! De gang's all here."

Loud cheers from our boys greeted this welcome.

After five days of this, came a change of orders. We were hurried to Humberville, our rest camp. "Joe" again took the floor. "Now, we're going to have that month's rest — perhaps, and perhaps not."

"Perhaps not" was right. Our month narrowed down to twenty-four hours. We were hustled out during the night after our arrival, loaded on French camions, and off for the front again. This time it was the Toul sector. It was a very secret move, so no one knew where any one else was, but we fared better than the rest. We landed in Hammonville and relieved an Engineer company of the First Division. The truck with our provisions was lost, and our wagons would take three or four days to get up. It looked a bit like a bad war again.

These First Division officers came to our rescue. They had been here some time and had accumulated a goodly line of stores which they could not transport. Captain Oglesby, an officer with a great record both in our service and with the British Engineers previously, said, "They 're yours." Our mess that night, cooked on an old range, was one of Lyman's best with all sorts of fixings.

Next day, still no word of the rest of our regiment. Our officers were escorted by the First Division officers over the sector: saw all the works and were delighted with everything. We went over the famous Dead Man's Curve, into Mandres, Bourmont, and Seicheprey (where the first real American battle was waged later), into the Bois de Ramières within a couple of hundred yards of the German trenches, and had an all-round exciting sight-seeing trip.

During the afternoon the First Platoon was sent to the engineer dump to unload engineer supplies. The Germans seemed to resent the intrusion of these newcomers and threw a lot of supplies over that were not on our bill of lading.

Sergeant Harris pulled the detail out in the nick of time. A big shell landed right between two cars where the men had been working ten minutes before.

We turned in early that night, but not to sleep. I was awakened by Captain Oglesby. "There's a train come in at the dump. It must be unloaded and released before daylight or it's a 'gone' train. Can you help me?" I surely could, to repay for his many courtesies to us; I routed out the Second, Third, and Fourth Platoons and we went up. The huns did n't seem to want us to unload that material. They threw things all around us and for good measure began to gas us. The men worked fast. Each squad had one car and as soon as unloaded they were hustled back home. The whole train was finally released. We went back to check up. Seventeen men missing! They were all in one platoon under Corporal Milliken that had gone to a siding near Dead Man's Curve. Porter wheeled out the side car and we hustled up there. Milliken had rounded up most of his crew and had taken refuge, with masks on, in a gully. We gradually found others whom the gas had driven to shelter; all but Dave Rittenberg, a Jewish boy from Boston, one of our most faithful and conscientious soldiers. Early the next morning Dave reported, much to our relief. He had taken refuge in an artillery dugout.

Right here I want to say a word for the Jews in this war. I have been fortunate enough to have had several in my company and we are proud of them. They are as clean and as brave as any soldiers you can find in our Army.

This place looked awfully good to us. The huns looked easy meat. One of the officers under Captain Oglesby told us of a "party" he had a few nights before. He "hopped off" with a couple of squads from the Bois de Ramières with orders to bring back some prisoners. They got them — three. Coming back, one began to cry. The Lieutenant talked German. “What’s the matter?” he asked. “My brother is back there all alone,” the hun answered. “That’s all right, tell me the place and I’ll send a Sergeant with a detail back to get him.” It was a straight story. The Sergeant returned in a short time with the brother, the family was reunited, every one was happy, and we had one extra prisoner.

Our stay here was to be short, however. The next morning the Colonel came in. We were ordered to Jouy sur les Côtes, a few miles away: “Jouy with the cooties” the boys called it.

Shortly after our arrival at town Headquarters, I was summoned to the ’phone. The voice said, “This is Mr. Cole. I want to see you.” At the front one never uses titles. Every one is “Mister.” Harry Cole was my Second Lieutenant. I replied: “Well, if you wish to see me, come to my billet.”

“No,” the reply came back, “I’d prefer you’d come to see me.” “What’s got into

Cole?" I thought. "He never acted like this before. A Second Lieutenant ordering me, a Captain, to call on him." Then a great light came to me. I turned to an orderly inquiring, "Is General Cole in town?" "Yes," he replied, "you're talking to him." Quickly I grabbed the 'phone. "Very good, Sir, I'll be there at once"; and ran all the way to his house to apologize. He appreciated the joke immensely.

General Cole was in command of the 52d Brigade, and later on we saw much of him and had the honor of being attached to his brigade in another sector. General Cole is the ideal soldier and did wonders with his brigade.

A few days at "Jouy with the cooties" and we were ordered to move, now nearer the front, to the town of Roulecourt. This town was very near Lorraine and the dirtiest town we had seen in all France. It was almost impossible to find billets, stables, or a place for the kitchen. We all went to work to clean up, "cherched" lumber, floored barns, built stairways and bunks for every man. Sam Nelson and his expert crew of masons concreted a floor for the kitchen. John O'Brien kept his wagoners busy. And before long we had a very comfortable little place on Forty-second Street, corner of Broadway. Every street in town was officially labeled like the streets of New York.

This was the first and only place in France we had seen where the people were not delightful. There were only ten or a dozen civilians in town. We were tipped off when we came in that they were to be watched. Right away they acted suspiciously.

Roulecourt was near the lines. The towns of Loupmont and Apremont were just in front of us, clearly visible. They were held by the Germans. The enemy shelled in front of us, all around us, and for six to eight miles back of us. But never a shell landed in Roulecourt. We felt grateful to these suspicious civilians for their thoughtful protection of us, anyway.

Right off we selected a "sleuth" squad with

Sergeant Johnny Russell in charge. These men kept secret watch at night of all the civilians. They observed many things, most of which probably meant nothing, while some were undoubtedly significant.

The usual ploughing in the fields with black and white horses, the moving of the hands on the church clock, and the hanging out of blankets of many colors on the enemy side were reported. They caught one man pacing off our wire, another watching the ammunition and wagon trains going by. For every wagon passing, he took something out of one pocket, placing it in another, while a child with him apparently counted the men on the teams.

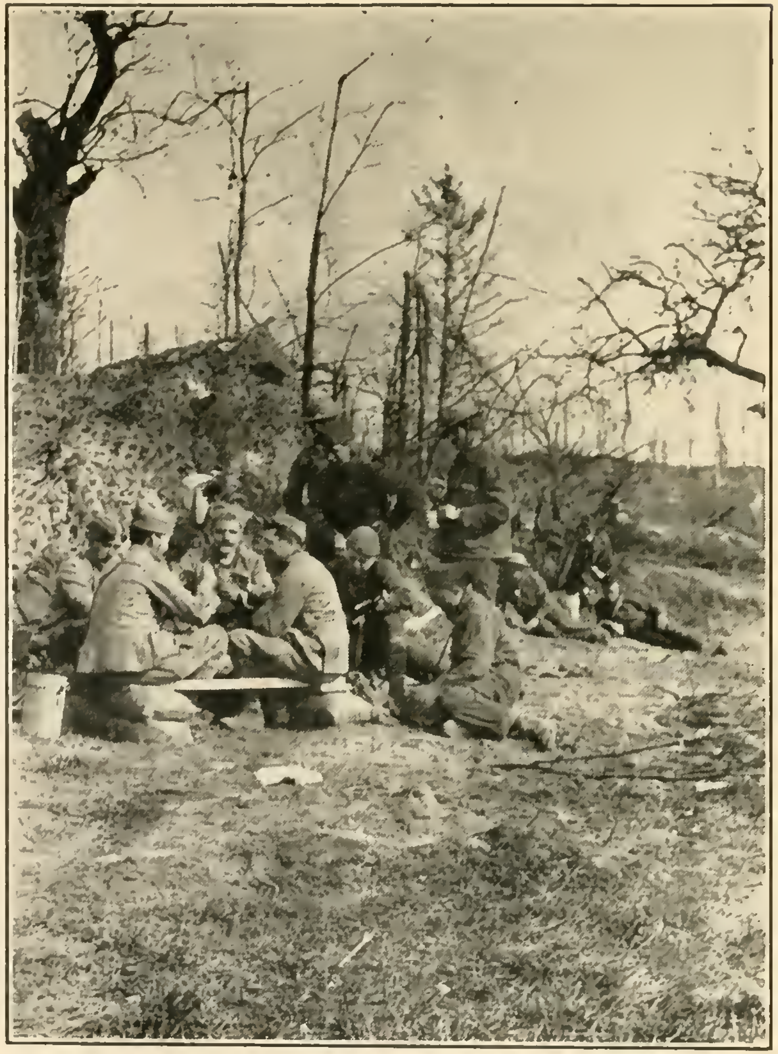
Of course, no lights were allowed anywhere at night, yet there was always much quick flashing. The sleuth squad tried all sorts of tricks to get enough real evidence to arrest one of these people.

One night it came. Johnny Russell ran to my billet.

"Captain, we've got him!"

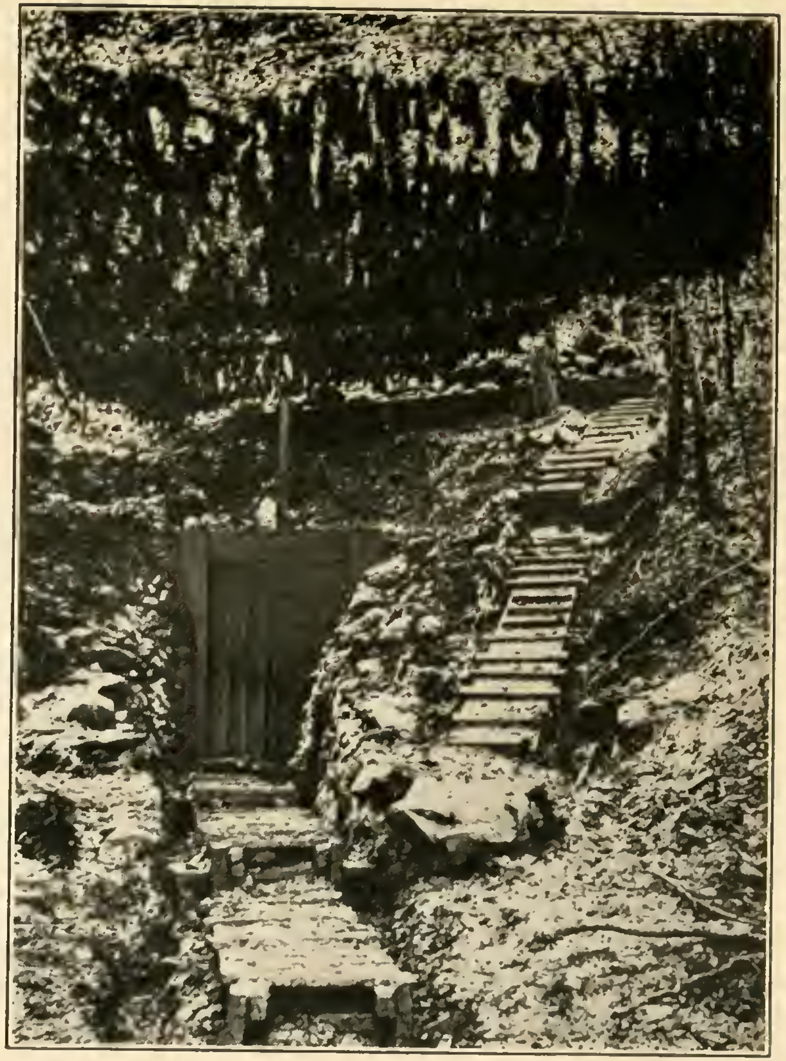
One of our suspicious characters was an old fellow. We referred to him as "the boche," as we knew he talked German. He lived in a little room with one window which was in full view of Montsec. This mountain was just across the valley, an enemy stronghold. The boys used to say: "Don't worry about Montsec, it's only a bluff. It's all boche."

Johnny had two sentries, Bill Shea and Bert Blanchet, both conservative, reliable fellows, posted in different places, but both watching this house. Both had simultaneously reported distinct flashes, on a dot and dash system, coming from this window toward Montsec. The window was covered with burlap, all but one panel in the corner. It was through this panel the flashing came. We went in quietly. The old man was in bed, a torchlight, now extinguished, by his head. We talked to him, not disclosing our suspicions; told him he must not have lights in his room at night. Immediately he said he had not been signal-



Entrance to one of our Machine-Gun Emplacements

French and American comrades-in-arms enjoying the noon hour



One of the Entrances to the Brigadier-General's P. C.

Built into a mountain in the Toul Sector

ing to Montsec, he knew nothing about signaling. A sentry behind a curtain took down everything the man said. Then I posted the two sentries in their original positions back of the house, lit the light, moved in front of it, took it around the room, and did everything that the old man might possibly have done to cause flashing. No sensation to the watching sentries like the one they had seen. Then I made dots and dashes by rapidly moving the light back and forth by the panel.

"That's it!" they cried.

We arrested the old man and turned him over to the French authorities. This flashing may have meant nothing, but the next day our batteries to the right were shelled so heavily and accurately from Montsec that they were forced to seek new positions.

Our old Major, Porter Chase, was now given the First Battalion and a new Major, John C. Greenway, came to us. Years ago he was renowned as "Jack" Greenway of Yale, famed end and catcher, later as a Rough

Rider with Colonel Roosevelt, and more recently he became prominent as a mining engineer of the West. He was tall, athletic, an expert horseman, hard as nails, an all-round "he" man. He never seemed to tire nor to think of food or sleep when there was work to be done. The three or four months I served as one of his Captains brought me a wealth of information and experience gleaned from his great store.

We had built a large amount of barbed-wire system all through this sector. One day the boys working on the second line of wire were delighted when General Edwards, commanding our Yankee Division, came along and complimented their work.

"That's good honest wire, boys, as good as I've seen anywhere. And this line is where we lick them or die."

A word like that from a big man like our General meant volumes to the men.

Now, the Major laid out plans for a trench system behind our first line of wire. Each company commander had one thousand Infantry in addition to his own company. They worked mighty well. Under hard conditions they built that trench — covering perhaps three miles in length — in one night. It was dark, raining, and very hard digging.

The great work the Red Cross is doing over there showed to full advantage that night. At about two o'clock in the morning, when everybody was wearied and cold, these Red Cross men brought out big cans of hot cocoa and fed every one of those twenty-five hundred men.

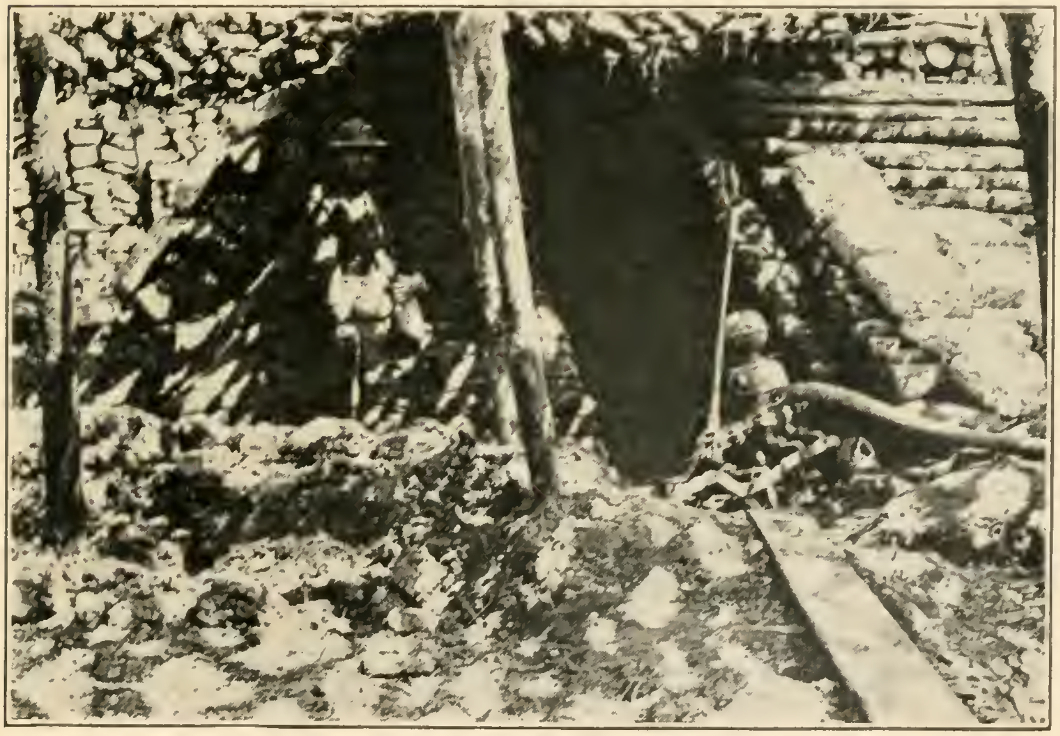
We had a run of three days' fever in the town and our own little infirmary was overtaxed. These Red Cross men made over a barn, and at one time I had at least twenty of my men there on comfortable iron cots with plenty of blankets and mighty well cared-for. Every afternoon one of the Red Cross men would come in and, to the delight of the men, inquire, "Do you all desire tea or cocoa with the cakes this afternoon?" The Red Cross workers are everywhere, and a soldier cannot spend a cent with them. Everything is given.

In this town, too, we saw the work of the Salvation Army for the first time. They built a hut, which was in charge of an elderly man, a minister in civil life, and for his assistants he had the McIntyre sisters, two charming girls who made the most delicious pies, cakes, and doughnuts for the men. Afterwards we saw much of the Salvation Army work. It is growing all the time and is one of the greatest factors for good and for helping the men that there is in France.

At times in this sector our company was pretty well split up. We had a platoon working in the front line, a good deal of it in No Man's Land. Afterwards we were ordered to send this platoon to Boucq, where Division Headquarters were, to work on a P.C. in the side of a mountain. (A "P.C." is the Post of Command of an officer — his Headquarters.) Then we had a platoon in the Nauginsard Woods on our right, building another P.C. for

A Bit of our Camouflage Work over the Observation Post

Boches just beyond



The Artillery Observation Post in front of Montsec

the Brigade General. About half of this platoon preferred to live in the woods and they made a pretty little camp. I gave them their own kitchen and George Fortin, an expert cook. They thoroughly enjoyed it in these woods despite the things that the boches threw there at the Artillery.

Two other squads under Sergeant Harris and Sergeant Holmes built an O.P. (Observation Post for observers to get enemy artillery flashes, thus locating their guns and notifying our own Artillery of the locations). We were quite proud of this O.P. We built it for Captain Lyman of the Flash and Sound Range Engineers. He was Professor of Physics at Harvard University and was intensely interested in this work. This was the first O.P. ever built in France by American forces; in fact this sector was the first sector of the front to be taken over entirely by an American Division. We flattered ourselves we were seeing history in the making.

The remainder of the company were building machine-gun emplacements, barbed-wire entanglements, camouflage, and other interesting works. We got along very well in this town. We improved our billets all the time and our food supplies came pretty regularly. We were also able to buy a good deal to help out the men's mess. Lyman and his cooks, when the issue did not come very well, would frame up all sorts of fancy dishes — delicious griddle cakes in the morning made from bran mash stolen from the horses, which were put out to pasture and would not miss the bran. They camouflaged "canned Willy" in a dozen different ways and even made macaroni out of the Jew bread which is now an article of issue. One Sunday we even turned two platoons loose in the fields, and as a result had a delicious mess of dandelion greens for Sunday dinner.

One of the ten inhabitants remaining here was an old woman in our street. She looked like a witch — the usual one-tooth variety, a neck that hung in folds over her shoulder, and a fiendish face. When the "chow" was skimpy, one of the cooks would escort the dame to the head of the mess line and feed her so that the men passing by could get a good look at her. It was allaying to the most ferocious appetite, and the slim "chow" would prove sufficient.

Eddie Walker's supply department were able to "chercher" a great deal of needed articles except pants. In working on the wire at night a great many of the men tore their pants beyond repair. They pestered the supply department so much that the Sergeant had a big sign made and posted on his door: —

THIS IS PANTLESS DAY

NO NEED TO ASK FOR 'EM
WE AIN'T GOT NONE

To save the men's hands from the wire our wrecking crew salvaged a large number of old shoes. Saddler Edwards cut out the uppers, fitted them over their hands, and made thongs for the back. These saved many a badly torn hand.

Every time you asked Eddie Walker about what he needed, the answer was, "Odds and ends." He would want to go to Headquarters to see about supplies. "What supplies?" "Odds and ends." That term "odds and ends" covered a multitude of things and "Odds and Ends Walker," as the boys called him, obtained everything obtainable for the Company.

If anything, our life here ran a little too smoothly. At one time the men seemed to be getting a bit stale and needed something in the way of action. It came one day when the Colonel told me very confidentially that there was to be a raid. A battalion of Infantry was going over to take some prisoners. Twenty-five Engineers were to go with them. Our work was to follow the barrage, blow up the enemy wire with tubes of Sheddite, go through the gaps with the Infantry carrying bombs, blow up the boche dugouts, then continue

Charles P. Mason

A type of American Soldier

to their third line, blow up some more, and beyond that destroy a bridge and a mill. After this we were to call it a night's work and go back home.

Colonel Bunnell told me that I could send ten men from my company, and as the work was very hazardous suggested that I call for volunteers. This was all very secret, but the men have an uncanny sense of getting wise to anything stirring.

When I came back to our town from Headquarters the whole company seemed to be waiting for me. I assembled them on the floor of a barn, went up the stairway, and stood on the floor of the loft to tell them about it. I made it out just as bad as I could, telling them of the great danger and said, "Now, if there should be a man in the company who wants to volunteer, I want him to think of his home, his parents, and his future before absolutely deciding. Now, after all this, if any man wishes to volunteer, let him come up the stairs here and I will talk it over with him."

Charlie Mason, a clean-cut chap who had left his own large plantation in North Carolina to go to France with us, had slipped around to the back of the barn, climbed through a window, and was there followed by a number of others the moment I had finished talking. Then in the stairway in front there was a wild scramble. I thought I was going to lose some men, the fight to get up was so intense.

Every single man in the company came up to that loft to volunteer! We drew lots, and afterwards I saw many of the losers try to buy the chance of the lucky ones. The ten winners left us the next day in a truck and were loudly cheered off by the rest. The raid was successful; all of my men were gassed, but not badly, and came back from hospital within a couple of weeks.

CHAPTER VIII

FINE ARTS AT THE FRONT

THERE was a town a little way in front of us, very close to the first-line positions, and some barbed-wire construction was needed there. We were ordered to send one platoon under an officer to that town. I picked our Senior First Lieutenant, Osborne Palmer, a man of much experience in handling men as an engineer and an expert in this line of work. Charlie Bateman, the Junior First Lieutenant at this time, was going forward at night to find dugouts and see that there were accommodations for the men going up. Charlie had been with the company for a few months and the life up here seemed to agree with him; in fact, always inclined to corpulency, it seemed here to increase.

Just after dusk he went ahead in a side-car motor-cycle, and, going through the next little town, he noticed that for some unknown reason the sentinels did not challenge, and he traveled on to where the men were at work without being molested. Down the last stretch of the road a German sniper in some way had got into a wood and had been shooting up and down the road and had hit one of our sentries. Bearing this fact in mind, after Charlie had billeted the platoon and started to return, he said to the driver: "Never mind the speed laws; beat it." Just as he was dashing into the first town, a sentinel in French uniform jumped to the middle of the road. Charlie then remembered that this town that day had been taken over by the French. He leaned out of the car and said: "Abbéville Albert" (the countersign and parole for that night).

The sentinel simply stood there in a crouching position at "Charge bayonets." Charlie afterwards swore that that piece of sharp steel was four feet long. In answer to his password the sentinel simply shook his bayonet and said, "B-r-r-h!"

"No, Monsieur, you don't understand. Le mot est Abbéville Albert."

Again came nothing but the determined shake of the bayonet and "B-r-r-h!"

Big Thayer Quimby was driving the motorcycle that night. "He is a nut, Lieutenant; let me ride him down and we will get by 'tout de suite.'"

Charlie, having great respect and admiration for our French allies, said, "No, I will get out and talk to this gentleman." He went up to the end of the steel pigsticker, leaned over it, and much to his consternation, discovered that the French sentry was as black as the night. In his very best French he commanded: "Appelez vous, s'il vous plaît, Caporal de Garde, ou le Sergeant, ou les Officiers, ou somebody."

The only reply was another "B-r-r-h." Then my stout Lieutenant realized that this French soldier could not understand either French or English; that he was one of the Senegambians, just arrived, and was very much on the job. Charlie thought he knew one or two words in Senegambian that he had learned from French troops, but was very much afraid they were cuss words and did not dare to use them. Suddenly he thought of his identification tag with his picture in it which he carried in his hip pocket. He reached for it with his right hand. Much agitation of the steel pigsticker. Many and loud "B-r-r-hs" and the cocking of the rifle on the part of the sentry. The officer immediately changed his method of attack and "kameraded."

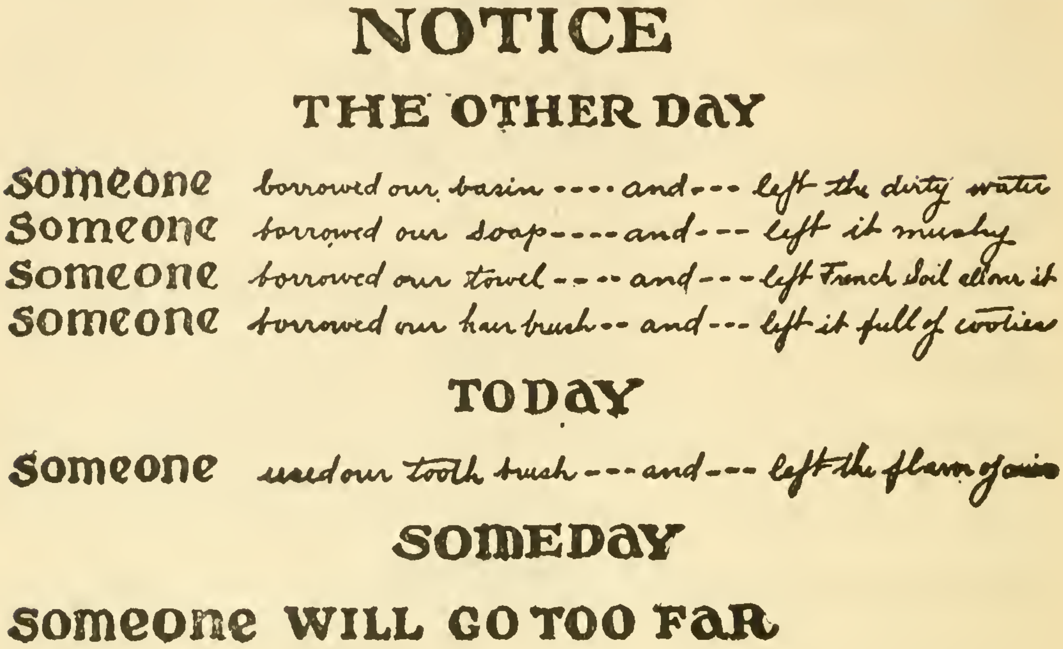
This sentry had evidently misunderstood his orders: would allow anybody to go out of the town, but no one to come in. A wagon train was coming down the hill. Charlie, with his hands above his head pleading with his opponent, spied them and yelled, "Don't go out of here, you will never get back. Send somebody back quick and get a regular Frenchman to come down here and tell this nigger that I am one of his pals. Hurry up, for I don't think I have very long to live."

The driver was gone perhaps ten minutes: Charlie claimed it was an hour and a half; and all this time the steel pigsticker was resting on his rotund stomach with the rifle behind it cocked and a wild determined African soldier back of that.

A French Non-Com finally arrived, explained to the son of night that this was a perfectly good officer of the Allied Army and not a fat boche, and for the first time the black man lifted the pigsticker from Charlie's stomach and grinned and came to "Present arms."

An officer never returned a salute with greater pleasure. He jumped into his car and hurried back to my quarters. He hunted up all orders and pamphlets regarding a matter of this kind to find out, had the black man plunked him, if he would have been entitled to a wound stripe.

Some of the boys were troubled because others not so fortunate borrowed their toilet articles and other things. One artistic chap had the accompanying sign made, which he put up over his bunk.



NOTICE

THE OTHER DAY

Someone borrowed our basin ---- and --- left the dirty water
Someone borrowed our soap ---- and --- left it mushy
Someone borrowed our towel ---- and --- left French Soil all over it
Someone borrowed our hair brush -- and --- left it full of cooties

TODAY

Someone used our tooth brush --- and --- left the flavor of onion

SOMEDAY

Someone WILL GO TOO FAR

This sign was copied by others and did much to alleviate the situation.

Many boys feel that they are not soldiers until they begin to "beef." One of their chief topics was, of course, the grub. Then it would be about the work, about their billets; in fact some of them are not happy unless they are "beefing" about something. One night our dinner was an especially good one and there were "seconds" for every one. I noticed Corporal Robinson and his squad, which we called the "foreign legion," sitting on the woodpile by the kitchen apparently "beefing." I said: —

"Boys, was n't the dinner good to-night?"

"Yes, Captain, it was great," one answered.

"Is n't the work easy enough now?"

"Yes, sir, very easy and interesting."

"Are n't your billets all right?"

"Yes, sir, they are fine."

"Then, for Heaven's sake, what are you beefing about now?"

"Well, Captain, we are beefing because we can't think of anything to beef about."

The men don't beef about big things, real hardships encountered. Those are dismissed with the usual "C'est la guerre" or the word "Aujourd'hui," which they say means "I should worry."

One of the chief topics for conversation was getting back home, and "Joe's" most famous and most believed remark was, "There's a big sign on the Statue of Liberty which says 'Welcome Home, 26th Division.'" This

"Joe" spread all through our Division. It was surprising the number of men who actually believed it and that our Division was going home for work in America and then return later. They had the officers' baggage at one of the base ports; they had our ship all picked out, and even the date of the parade up Broadway. Many thought we were going home to help in the third Liberty Loan drive, and they had some good arguments, too. We had received a beautiful Christy poster, the caption being "Fight or Buy Bonds." The boys added the line at the bottom which read, "We Do Both."

The majority of men held bonds of the first loan, and all who had any amount of money left of their salary after allotments, insurance, etc., were deducted, bought of the third loan. The men thoroughly understood the benefits of all the splendid measures of the Government taken for their protection and to help them save. Every man in D Company had the maximum War Risk Insurance of ten thousand dollars, and every man fully appreciated what Uncle Sam had done for him in putting through these great insurance policies.

Many of the boys tried to be poetical in their letters describing the life and incidents at the front. Young Jimmy Smith, one of our fifty-seven varieties of Smiths, wrote an effusion in his dugout by candle-light and showed it to the rival poets. "You fellows think blank verse is clever, but this is real poetry, with rhymes and all that stuff."

"Yes, Jim," they replied, after listening to his efforts, "your story interests us, but it's so blankety-blank-blank, you need n't worry about any one mistaking it for the real thing."

Jimmy's poem really gives a fairly good idea of the men's viewpoint, so you may be interested: —

I'm under the ground in my dugout, all, all alone,
Save for the rats and the odors which help share this home.
I have to laugh when I write this, 'cause if you could but look,
You'd see a picture rarer than in any comic book.

This subterranean cellar, smaller even than a tiny sin,
Was fitly named when we called it our little "Crawl Inn."
A winding, narrow pathway through which you have to stoop
Forms the part called "entrance" to this funny little coop.
Once you're on the inside there ain't no looking out,
For the roof and sides are covered with stones and earth about.
Because it must be "shell-proof" and "gas-proof" as well,
In case a German shell arrives to blow us all to hell.
Although there are no guarantees anywheres about,
I hope I'm not inside here when its safety's tested out.
This little box bedroom — for that's all it means —
If made of tin 't would be excellent for sardines.
The air's scarce, but the dinged thing's water-tight,
Only you can't move round much and move round right.
We've got five bunks, and five is sure some crowd,
For there's hardly room left for one to talk out loud.
Two bunks above two bunks; that accounts for four;
Mine's a single bunk quite low towards the floor.
The floor and ceiling are of wood, the walls are of rock,
It's as clean and dark in here as a piece of old burnt cork.
We've forgotten Edison and electricity's working might;
We use a waxen candle to furnish us with light.
Now, for the living things which pass in this review,
There's cuckoos and small mice and even large rats, too,

Which hold their secret meetings and dote on mass formations
And never seem to sleep or lack for daily rations.
We've got some rats right here, of which we're surely proud.
Why, they'd push a freight train better than a crowd.
They jump from bunk to bunk, and, oh, the noise they make.
Upon first time hearing you'd think your life's at stake.
But this is all "old stuff," a "matter of course" to one
Fighting for Democracy against our foe, the hun.
Now, don't think I'm complaining 'cause I describe this to you,
Or think I'm despondent or feeling the least bit blue.
I'm just damned glad I'm living and in this hole can squeeze,
'Cause I might be standing shivering, in water to my knees.
Now, my comrades are returning, four in single file,
So I must quit and hear their peculiar line awhile;
Listen to some funny joke on what they heard or saw,
Or some one's new version on "How to win the War."
That's all for now about our palace where we are
At the Front, Somewhere in France, so Au revoir.

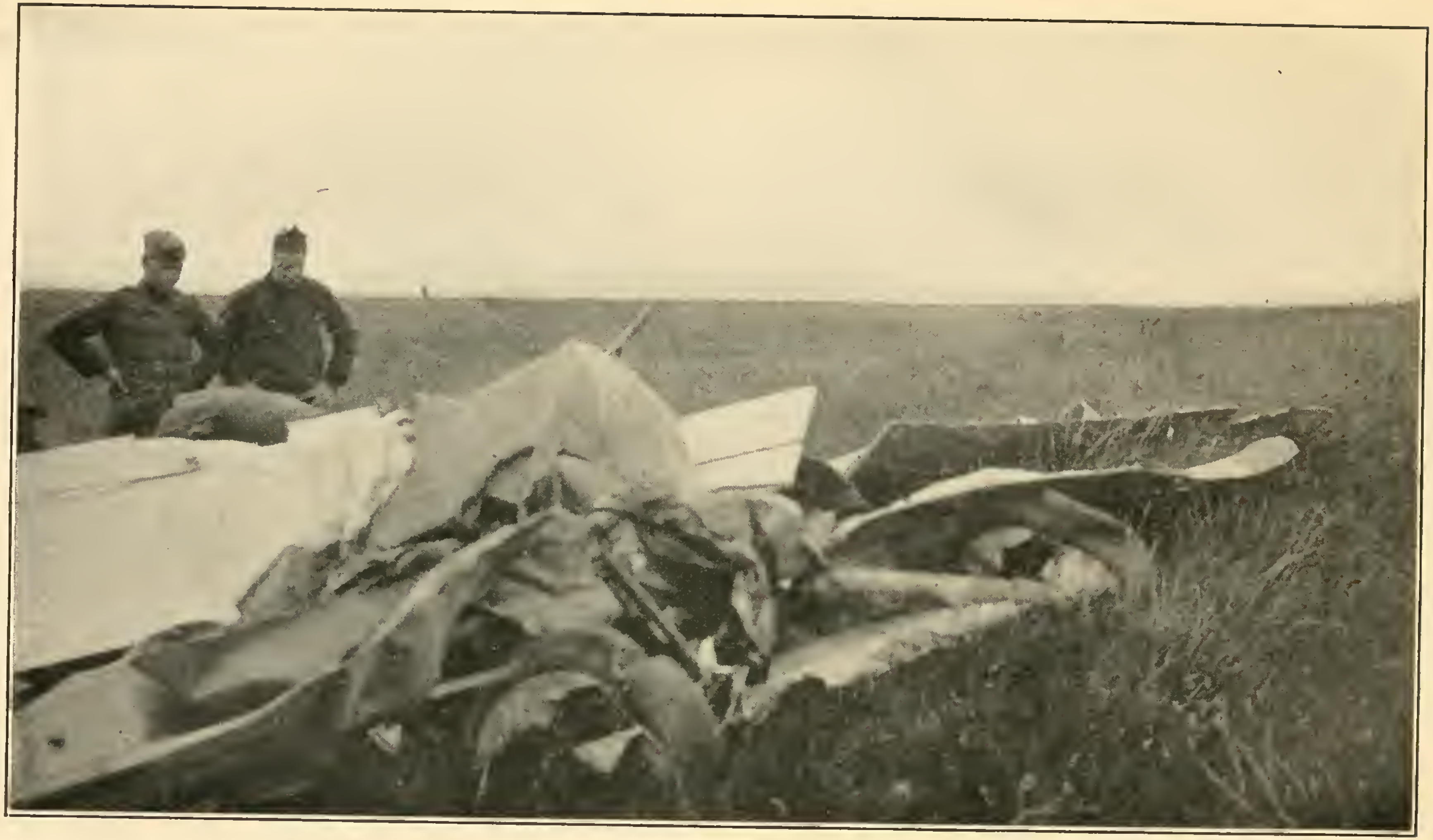
One bright May morning we were honored by a call from Frank P. Sibley, war correspondent of the "Boston Globe." "Sib" was attached to our Division and a friend of every man in it.

While with us he contracted the three days' fever. The boys made over a billet for him, cemented the cracks to keep the rats away from our distinguished guest, built him a bunk, and then tried to entertain him. Each night our quartet would come down. "Sib" would be in his bunk by the open fire enjoying it while the concert was on. One night as the first song was finished, it was repeated outside the window. Joe Gabrey had organized a rival quartet who sang the encore to every song which the original crew rendered. The play of the men impressed "Sib." One afternoon about twenty of the boys organized a Jazz band and had a parade. Perley Quimby was bandmaster, flourishing a French cane. A whole squad carried a piece of sheet iron as a drum, others made melody from bacon cans, and then the real musician played a harmonica obbligato. This crowd of soldiers at the front, playing soldier, greatly amused our guest.

Towards the last of "Sib's" sickness, one afternoon he was bemoaning his fate. Having been sick for a week, he had been unable to get enough exciting material for his weekly story. While he was discussing it, an aeroplane making a great racket flew very low over our billet. It sounded as if Henry Ford was coming to call. We rushed out. It was an American plane. Just beyond us it started to rise, then came back tail-end first. With a terrific force it crashed to the ground. We arrived on the scene a few moments later. The two American aviators were driven several feet into the ground. It was a gruesome sight. The huns had been firing upon them. It was thought the pilot had been hit and fainted, losing control.

Lieutenant Cooper, the moving-picture man for our Division, was on the job as usual. This fellow — "Coop" we called him — was a character. He went everywhere for pictures and obtained some "wonders." In one of our towns he caught in his movies the church being shelled to pieces. His most amazing exploit came later. This incident happened at the first push on the left of Château-Thierry. It sounds like a yarn and few believe it, but I have the word of the general officer that it actually happened, and "Coop" modestly admitted it, although he said, "I deserve no credit; I was scared to death."

A regiment of Infantry was to "hop off" early in the morning, going over to take a certain town. "Coop" was right out there working his movie on the boys going ahead. Suddenly to his consternation eight boches came out of a shell-hole right in front of him. He started to "kamerad," but to his surprise all eight of the enemy threw up their hands and "kameraded." He took heart, began to realize what the situation was, and turned the crank of the camera as fast as he could. Shrieks and more "kamerading" from the huns. They thought he had a machine gun on them! It was a laughable sight to see this moving-picture man marching behind the eight boches, all their "hardware" on him, and they carrying his moving-picture apparatus.



The American Aeroplane that fell beyond our Billet

We were sorry to see "Sib" leave us, as we all enjoyed him thoroughly. The boys were delighted to see a story he afterwards wrote for the newspapers telling about them. It read:—

> The company is one of the cleanest I have seen. It has had wonderful luck and has only had two men court-martialed, which in itself is nearly a record. The men have so obviously a pleasant time that the other outfits who work sometimes with these young engineers on a job in the woods say openly that if they should ever be transferred, they want to be sent to D Company.

The men delighted in playing that they were back home. In their play they would impersonate various characters. One of the principal places for these scenes to be laid was at Thompson's Spa, a famous lunch-room in Boston. I have seen boys in the first-line trenches, one acting as a customer and the other impersonating Bessie, the charming young lady behind the counter.

"What would you like to-day, sir?" inquires camouflaged "Bessie."

"Oyster stew, chicken on toast, asparagus, iced coffee, mince, apple, and squash pie," and then on with a complete list of everything that Thompson's Spa ever sold. Then this "Bessie," with the tin helmet on, gas-mask at the alert, and rifle in hand, would hand the customer a piece of "canned Willy" and hardtack.

The boys delight in joking each other about their sweethearts and what heroes they will be to them when they get home. I heard Harry Evans, a tall, lanky Yankee boy from the wilds of New Hampshire, with real New England farmer wit, one day joshing another in this way: —

"You will be walking down Tremont Street with the old Derby on and a big flaming red necktie; then you will spot *the* girl just going into Huyler's for an ice-cream soda. She will turn around to see her hero. You will swell up. Then Jack, your hated rival, will sneak up behind you and holler '*gas.*' You like a big gink will forget where you are, knock off the lid with one hand, and shove the tie up in your face with the other."

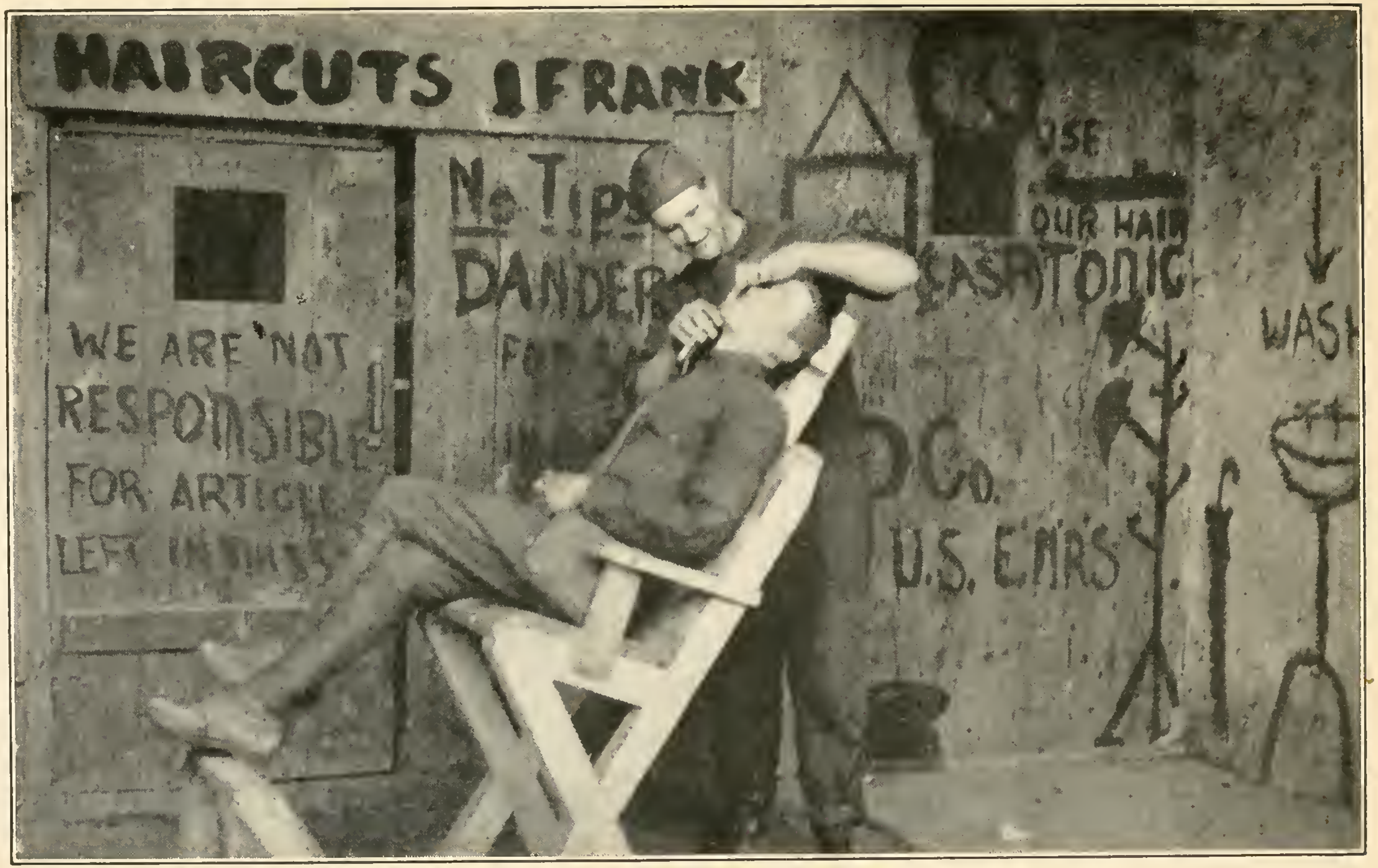
One of the great topics, of course, when a group of men get together, is the question of peace terms. There seems to be only one thing the men over there are afraid of. It is that the people in America are going to think about the men in the trenches, what they are going through and all that, and perhaps consider terms.

The men over there don't want terms; they want to get into Germany. They don't want to commit atrocities of any kind or destroy property unnecessarily, but they do want to give Germany a taste of the medicine that they have given the people in the cities of northern France and of Belgium, and the only kind of peace they want considered for a moment is the unconditional surrender of the Germans.

While in this town we arranged for our regimental dentist, Dr. Ewing, to come up and give us the once-over, checking up every man in the company on the teeth. We built over a ruined house for a dental parlor. Our expert carpenters, the Chapman boys, "General" Woods, and Steve Perham, built a dentist's chair that was a work of art. It was made entirely out of duck boards; had arms, a head-rest, foot-rest, and even a cuspidor attachment from a boche helmet. We afterwards loaned it to the company barber, Ralph Gardner, for his shop.

This shop in itself was most artistic. It was situated on 42d Street, ground floor, and had everything that a barber shop should have, mostly simulated or drawn on the walls. Here is the picture that "Sib" took of it.

In a town in front of us was stationed Lieutenant Colonel Robert Goodwin, an Artillery officer and a college classmate. In our town, in addition to Captain Brush and myself, of this class was Lieutenant Harold Winslow, a liaison officer with the Infantry. It seemed fitting that our annual class banquet be held at this time. The party was held in Colonel


HAIRCUTS 1 FRANK
WE ARE NOT
RESPONSIBL
FOR ARTICL
No Tips
DANDER
USE
OUR HAIR
TONIC
Co.
U.S. E'NRS
WASH

Barber Shop with all Modern Conveniences and Apparatus

Goodwin's dugout with occasional enemy disturbances. Among the after-dinner speakers, I was orating about the great and glorious class of 1901, when a loud ringing on the 'phone rudely disturbed my efforts.

"Pardon, just a moment, Mr. Speaker." And the Colonel took the 'phone.

Some outfit in the front trenches was getting a heavy fire and wanted retaliation.

"All right, I'll send over five hundred rounds at 8 o'clock," he said.

Then he 'phoned his batteries just back of us the necessary instructions.

"Now go ahead with the speech."

I continued, without noticing the time, was about to reach a grand patriotic climax, when suddenly the bombardment started. The speech ended abruptly; no one could hear me. Perhaps this was the reason we voted the first college banquet under fire a great success.

Our various works began to be finished. Headquarters were anxious to rush the big

P.C. at Boucq, so another platoon and Company Headquarters were ordered there. Boucq is a very pretty town on the side of a hill. It is several miles from the lines and had never been shelled since the beginning of the war. People were living there. It was much like a peaceful country village in the central part of France.

There was an American cemetery not far from here. On our Memorial Day the French people with all the little children of the town gathered flowers and made wreaths. They decorated the graves of our boys and said prayers over them. We learned afterwards that this pretty tribute was universal throughout France.

One morning about three o'clock I was awakened by a terrific whizz and roar. For a moment I could n't realize what it was all about. Then another and another. I began to realize our quiet town was under fire. I was sure of it a moment later when a big shell hit the house three doors from mine blowing it off the sky-line. At the same time Corporal Brunton appeared in my doorway, saluted, and said: —

"Sir, I beg to report that war has been declared."

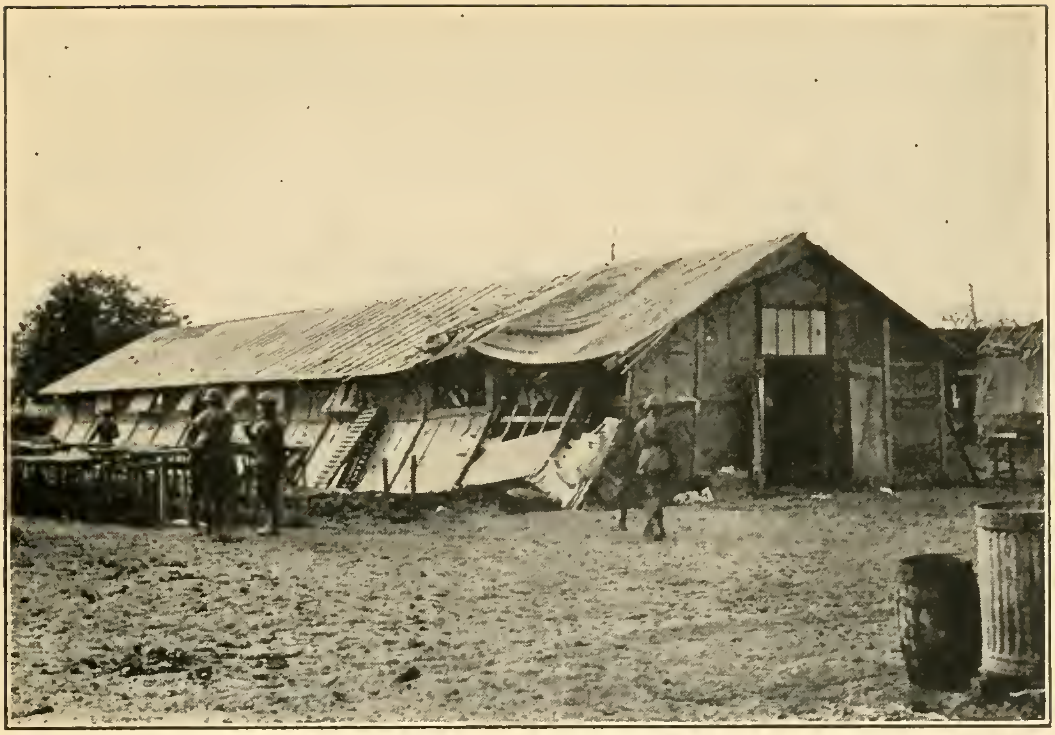
Just a word about "Denny" Brunton. He was a man from Springfield, Massachusetts; he had worked up a nice little metal-roofing business, but had given it up to fight for his country. Of a better all-round man and soldier I cannot conceive: quiet, unassuming, absolutely without fear. If he had a bad habit or fault, we never could discover it. He was the chief of orderlies and mail clerks, and the Captain's personal orderly.

Denny was a demon for work, the most thoughtful man I ever knew. When there was a breathing spell I would find him washing my linen, polishing my boots, or mending my uniform. Whenever we would strike a new place I would never think of my own billet. After the men were all fixed up, Denny would say: "Does the Captain wish to see his château?"

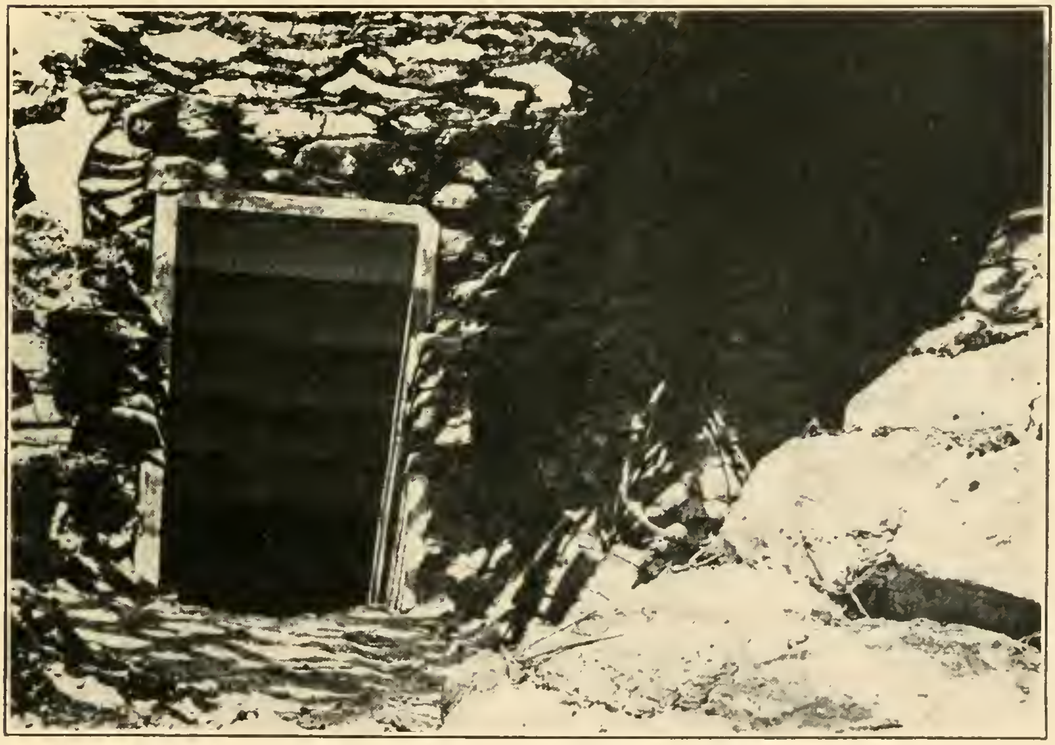
It might be a room, a cave, a dugout, or just plain "pup" tent in the woods, but each time we would agree: "It's the best billet we have had in France."

He would never leave me, especially when in danger, and never once thought of his own comfort or personal safety. Give a Captain a company of Denny Bruntons and they could lick a whole boche division.

After receiving his report this morning, we went out to see about the men. One platoon in billets was sent down to the P.C. The others were in a barrack. Two shells hit that barrack, but the Sergeants had got the men out five minutes before. It was pathetic this morning to see the poor French people, especially the women, shaking with terror. Our boys tried in every way to help them. Three very old ladies were trying to get up the hill to the convent. We ran to help them. They were hardly able to totter, trembling all over. When our boys put their arms around them, the poor old souls gave in and just



Our Barracks at Boucq after a Morning "Party"



An Abri under the Road

Refuge for artillery observers

leaned on their protectors. We took them to our kitchen. The cooks brought them bread and meat and hot coffee. We had to feed them; their trembling hands would n't hold anything. Then we took them up the hill and turned them over to the good Sisters at the convent. These pitiful sights, defenseless old women and little children being fired upon, made our boys hate the huns the more.

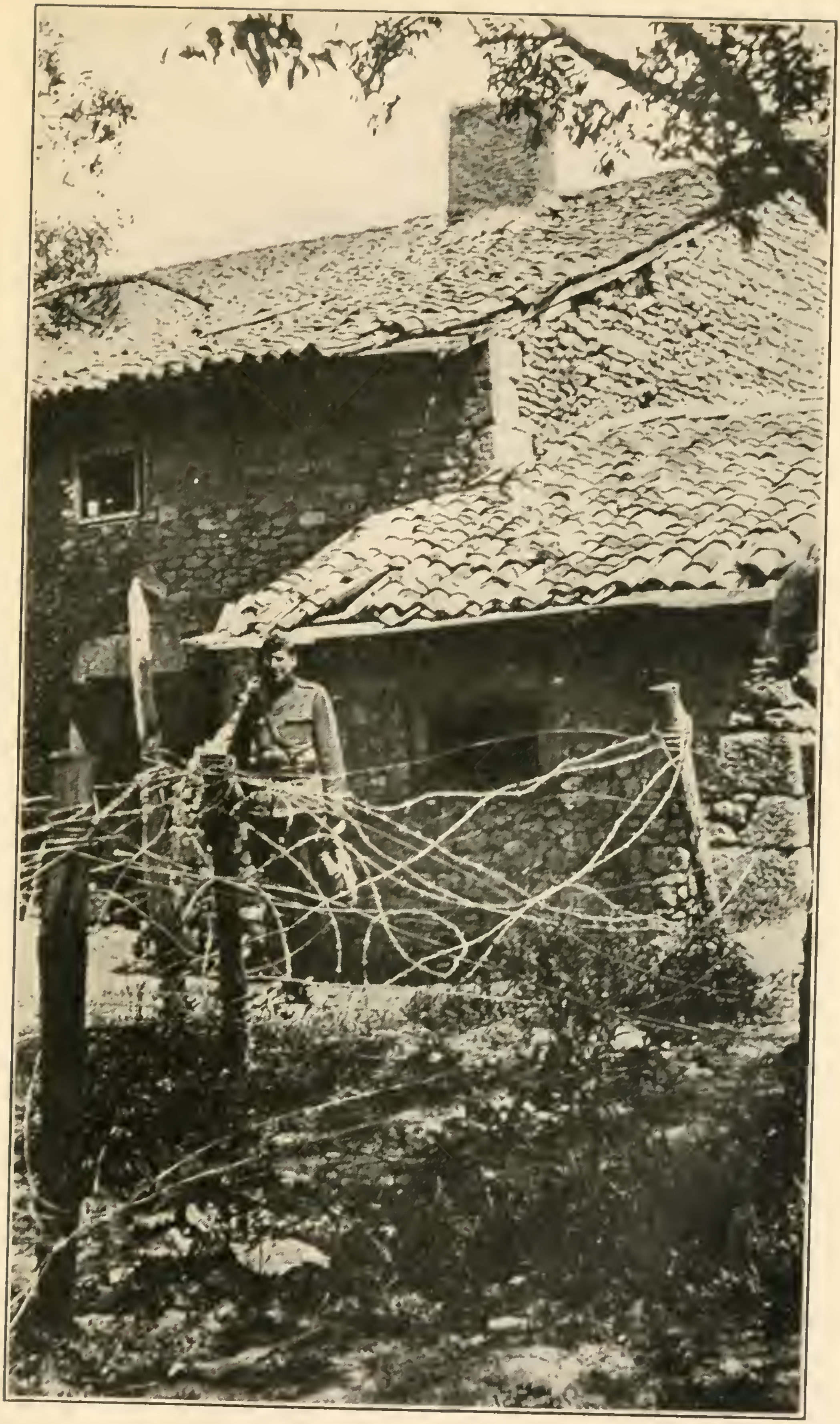
They shelled us three days, regularly at certain hours. Then they quit. No more excitement, and our life went on as usual.

CHAPTER IX

"JOE" GOES TO PARIS

Our pleasant sojourn in this pretty town was suddenly brought to a close, by orders to move. The officers' advance guard of the new Division came in. We showed the Engineers all the various works we were building. The men were always anxious to finish a job once started, and during the last few days speeded everything up, so all were completed but the big P.C. in Boucq and one three-machine-gun emplacement at the front. In one town we had a complete network of trenches and wire surrounding it and machine-gun positions everywhere, in woods, converted houses, basements. Mr. Boche would have received a warm reception if he had come through. Now he is many miles from there, in the direction of his home station.

Lieutenant Shadburn's crew worked fever-



A MACHINE-GUN EMPLACEMENT IN A CONVERTED HOUSE PROTECTING OUR WIRE

Chaplain Edwards (Charlie Chaplin) in the foreground

ishly, and at noon of the day of departure declared the P.C. in the woods was completely finished. It was a good job and the detail received well-deserved commendation.

"Shad" was a Georgian and spoke with the delightful Southern accent. At our officers' mess, when he would start to talk we'd stop him, much to his own amusement, and send an orderly out to hunt up an *interpreter*.

Two Sergeants, Carroll Harris and Johnny Noyes, stayed behind two days with the Engineer Sergeants of the relieving regiment and showed them all our detailed plans of work, the way we handled our shifts, the getting of supplies; in short, gave them all the help possible in getting a good start.

Colonel Bunnell wisely insisted that our sector be turned over in the most complete manner. All maps, drawings, and plans were gone over carefully with the new officers and our officers took them over the whole terrain. This coöperation pleased our new friends mightily. From our experience in previous sectors we knew how essential it was. The feeling of our officers and men was that it was just as important for the cause to do all we could for these new troops, coming to an unknown territory, in order that their work could be accomplished quickly and efficiently, as it was to us to finish the work itself. This feeling of helping the other fellow is prevalent all through the service and it's the sort of thing that brings success.

Finally, the time for departure came, the men all ready for the hike, the animals well groomed, and the wagons and whole "circus" train lined up, and we were off.

"Joe Latrinsky" was very busy now. He said we were bound for Paris to parade on the Fourth of July. This was the last of June. With that thought in mind, our hike to our destination, Choloy, was an easy one.

Here we were comfortably billeted in barns. The men were having just enough work to keep them in good condition. On July 2d came orders to entrain. "Joe" was now positive it was Paris. "Just in time to make the big parade on the Fourth." There was much cleaning of uniforms and burnishing-up of equipment. We were going to make a brave appearance in the big city. It looked to us all as if "Joe" was right this time.

The long night ride passed quickly for the men. The cooking crew, who always slept under the "soup gun" on the flatcars, were up with the sun. At a stop for water we got steaming oatmeal, coffee, bacon, and bread for the company. It was a bright, sunny day, beautiful country, and we were going straight toward Paris. The men lay back in their "8 Chevaux ou 40 Hommes" cars, smoked, and remarked: "It's a great little war, after all."

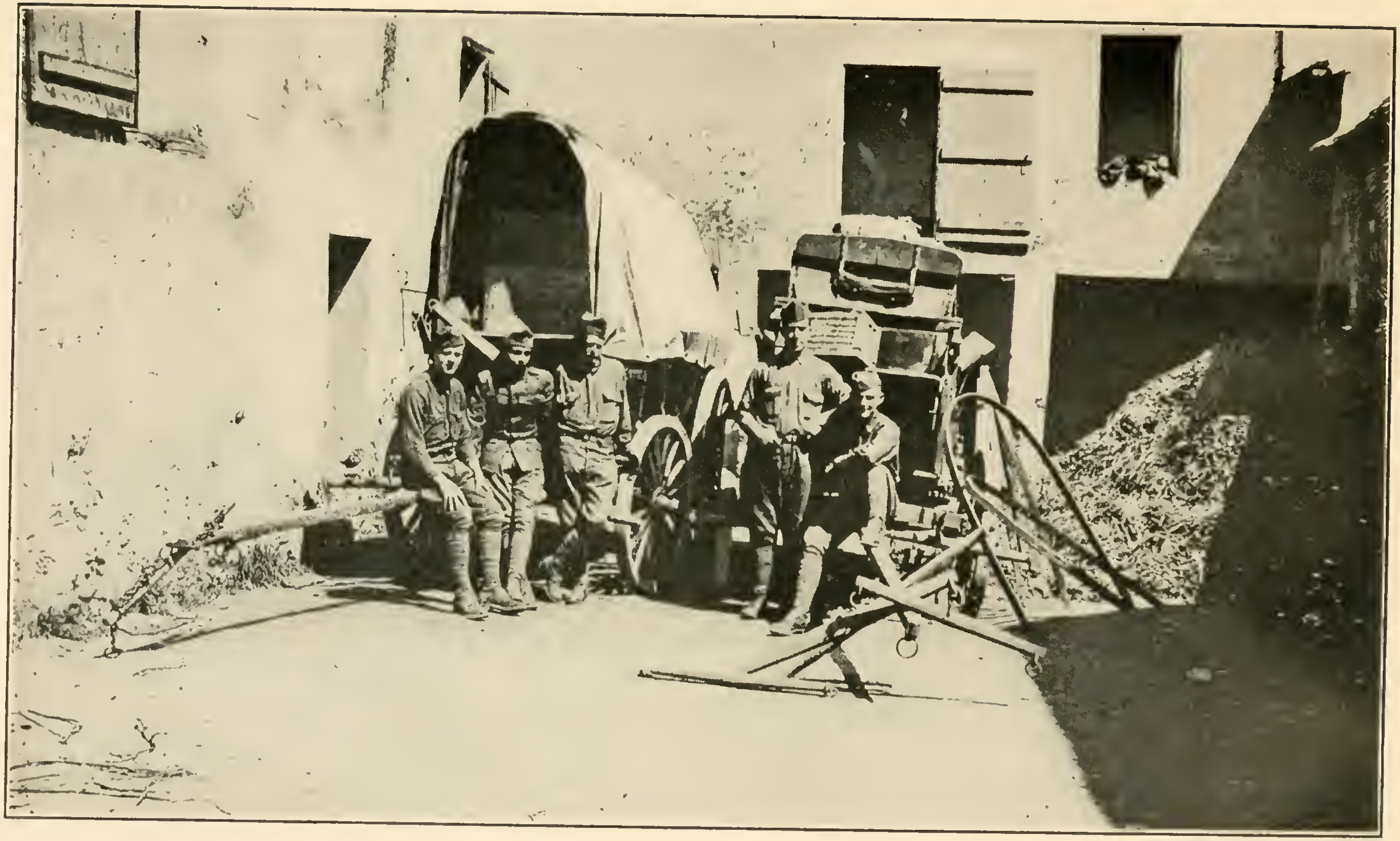
Gradually we began to go through large cities, the largest we had seen for months, and to see beautiful buildings and parks, no sign of war and devastation, and even "jolies femmes."

A soldier is no different from any other human being. The vision of a beautiful woman, with all her teeth and a pretty dress, bonnet, and all the fixings, is an inspiration after seeing for months hardly a dozen of the genus feminine, and then mostly the one-tooth variety of old woman like the appetite-destroyer of Roulecourt.

These pretty girls, waving at us from buildings or from the stations as we sped by, were cheered enthusiastically by the boys. Their artistic natures were touched as by a picturesque country scene, a beautiful sky effect, or the picture of a well-directed shell blowing up a hun artillery position. They never showed so much "pep" as this afternoon, singing, cheering, laughing, and listening to "Joe's" tales of beautiful Paree and the reception that awaited us there.

Maps were eagerly studied. As we drew into one station, a suburb of Paris, we found it on the map. Gil Singleton, our tallest Corporal, who could see higher than any one else, cried: "There's the Eiffel Tower!"

Our Lieutenant-Colonel, Crecelius, a splen-



THE SUPPLY DEPARTMENT

Private Sowerby, Corporal Henderson, Sergeant Walker, Corporal Finney, Private Cummings

did officer and gentleman, was in charge of our train. He took me with him here to report to the detraining officer and get the joyous news. Orders were handed to him, and even he, a man with a wonderfully even disposition, forgot to give profuse thanks. Our orders were to turn about and go *straight back to the nearest front.*

The men were getting all ready to detrain and were brushing the straw off their uniforms, when the train pulled out in the other direction. They soon sensed the situation. Somehow the cheering and singing subsided. The pretty women seemed to have lost interest in us. That silent, mournful train moved back to the land of devastation.

I think the Corporals told their men to cut the racket for a while, to get all the rest they could, and be prepared for whatever might be in store. "Joe Latrinsky" was in bad with every one. One more remark and he subsided for a long time: "So this is Paris! — Bah!" Singleton remarked, "Was n't Eiffel Tower pretty? Anyhow, we got closer than his Knobs the Kaiser ever will."

Then the usual chorus of "C'est la guerre," and the company felt better and went to sleep.

It was n't that they did n't want to get back to the front. They did; but they also did want that one holiday "Joe" had promised them in the city they had heard so much about, and to parade those streets as American soldiers back from the front.

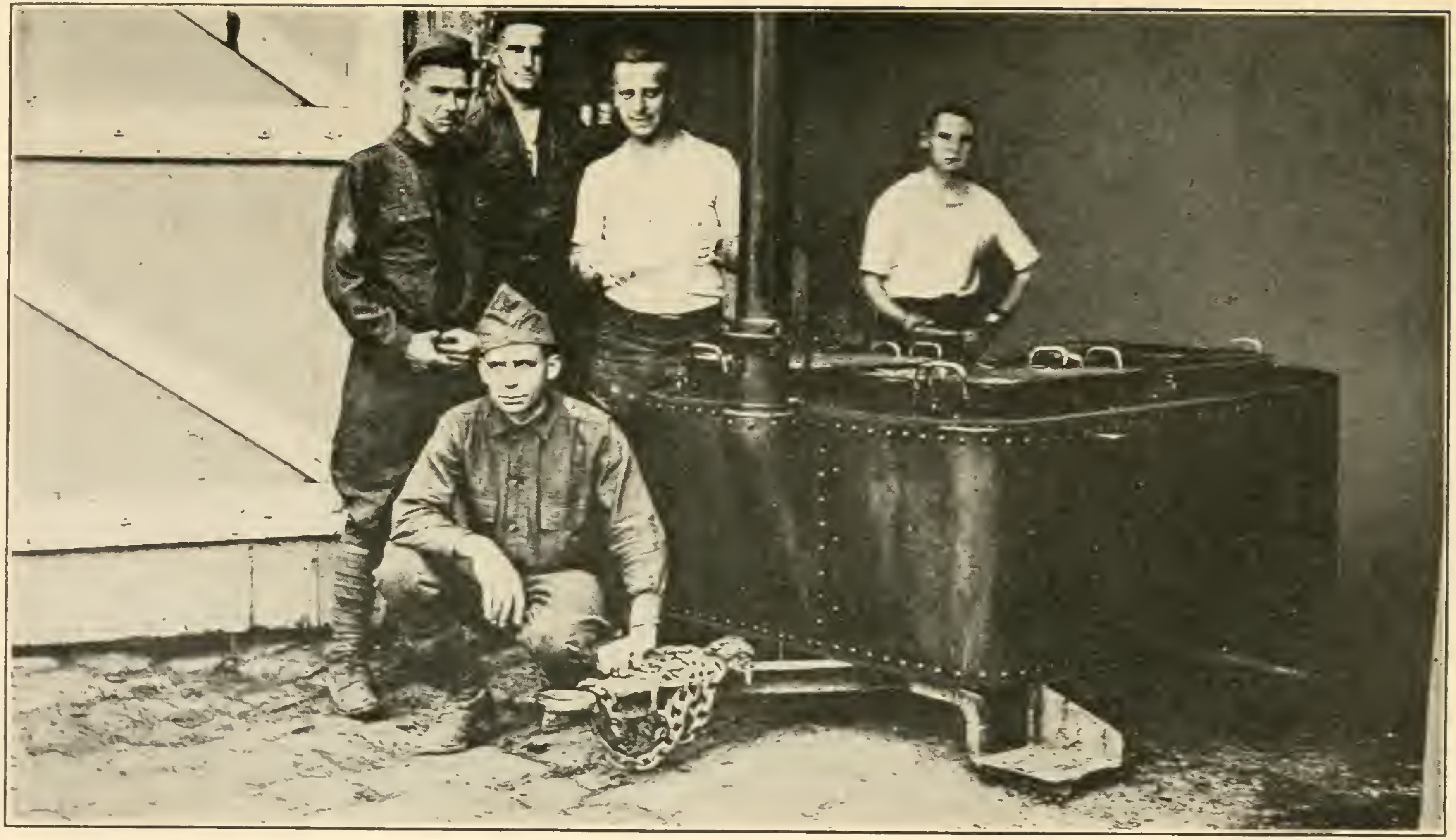
The detraining point the next night was a hard place to work from — no raised quay, two old ramps or runways the only available means of getting our transportation and baggage off. Sergeant Ed Holmes was given charge of the work. He picked a crew and laid out a regular plan of action. The men were tired after the long train ride, but they went to it with a vengeance, as an artillery train was due later and we had to clear for them.

We had the kitchen, wagons, and carts off, the animals all hitched up, baggage loaded, cars policed, and the whole works marching away in an hour. The detraining officer here, Lieutenant Leavitt Parsons, was to make a report on the detraining of the troop. He sent us off all set up by saying: "It's the best detraining I've seen and a record in the Division." Lieutenant Parsons, years before, was a member of D Company, so perhaps his compliment was tempered with a bit of pride in his old outfit. He also gave us the cheering news that the boches had nightly air raids over this place. We decided to keep moving.

The men had had nothing hot up to this time, a long hard march was ahead of us, and we decided to take a chance and en route to cook some coffee. We got the old rolling kitchen going in the rear of the column. Only soft dry wood was available, and, ye gods, what a trail of sparks it left behind that column. It seemed to us like a night picture of Broadway from the sky. The cooks worked like Trojans to get the water hot and to camouflage the light. "Shorty" Morris and El Parin got away with new shoes from our supply department later, by burning theirs trying to stamp out the sparks that night.

And then we heard the boche planes coming over. I don't think I ever worried more about my company in France than on that night. It seemed inevitable! Those terrifying, destructive bombs must land in a minute! We got the company off the road quickly, then rushed to the kitchen. The cooks hated to do it, but the fires had to be extinguished. And, thank God, the coffee was hot. Every man but Lyman and his cooks themselves had a steaming cupful. It was a life-saver! Some of the men could never have made that march without it. You can talk all you want to about stimulants for troops: the best thing in the world, before a hard forced march or an attack, is a good old mess cup of hot coffee.

We hiked all night long. The boche planes stayed around for a while. Much to our re-



THE COOKING CREW AROUND THE "SOUP GUN"

Skeeter Lyman, Mess Sergeant; El Perin, Burkie, Shorty Morris, and Charlie Smith (seated), cooks

lief, they did not throw anything at us. It was one of the longest and hardest marches we had experienced. The officers themselves marched, making men who were knocked out ride the horses, and carried packs of the men who were known to feel a hike the most. This kept the men going; the memory of the coffee was still with us, dawn came on, so we could smoke, and we finally landed, footsore and weary, at our ordered destination. This was a little town, Chamigny, on the Marne. Other troops had come in, so the billets we were to have were occupied. The men just sank down anywhere on the ground and slept. Some wisely bathed their poor, aching feet, then unrolled the packs and made a more comfortable bunk.

Denny Brunton had found a deserted house for the officers. It was evidently an artist's — beautiful paintings, statuary, tapestries, etc., and the house most artistically arranged.

At the German advance the owner had evidently left everything untouched in his anxiety to get his loved ones away from the oncoming savages. I'm sure many of us would have given much for a little piece of tapestry or one of the many silver ornaments strewn around, as a souvenir of that pretty home. Not one thing was taken or even disturbed. I often wondered how the Germans would have treated that home, left untouched by American troops.

This morning we had just dozed off when word came that Lieutenant Colonel Crecelius wanted me. Upon my reporting he said, "There's some mistake in this town; your company will have to move to a farm a few miles ahead."

I said, "Very good, sir." But those few miles for these men with their heavy packs seemed a long distance. He sent me in his car to find this farm. On returning, still thinking about those packs, I discovered an ammunition train of the 2d Division in the woods. I got the Captain out of his bunk and begged for a truck. Some day I hope to meet that 2d Division Captain again and buy him the best dinner the Biltmore can set up. He gave me a big four-ton truck with driver. We got the men up, loaded on every pack, and covered the pile over with tarpaulins, so it looked like a load of supplies. Then the usual chorus of "Let's go." It's surprising how much more enthusiastic that cry of "Let's go" sounds without the packs.

On the way to this farm we passed other American troops, apparently just over, for they wore the old campaign hats (we were allowed only the overseas cap and trench helmet). Queries from my boys, "Are you American soldiers?" This questioning was always a part of the game when we met new troops. It seemed ludicrous to look at a perfectly good robust boy in the old khaki right from the States and inquire his nationality.

The next morning orders came down that French troops were coming into this farm and that we were to move back to Chamigny. A good night's sleep in the fields had rested every one, so no one grumbled, at least audibly. Back in the town, new troops had beaten us to it and what few billets were to be available for us were taken; even our artist's home was occupied.

A few hundred yards out of town we found a wood that looked very attractive. With some hay we were able to buy, we made ourselves comfortable and happy until we were ordered forward a few days later to the most interesting part of France we had yet seen — Château Thierry.

CHAPTER X

WHERE PARIS WAS SAVED

Château Thierry was a few miles to the northeast of this town we were in. Almost due north of us, perhaps ten miles, was the Bois de Belleau, and that sector where our 2d Division had stopped the mad drive of the enemy.

We had heard a lot about this "scrap" and were proud of the work of that Division. No one knew just what did happen before that. The French were very tired. We should have been tired, too, if we had been at it as long as they had. Human endurance could not stand the strain. The overwhelming odds were too great. They were forced to give way. The Germans swarmed over in front of Soissons, took away all the pretty works my company built there in February and March, and came into Soissons. Then they kept on going like mad and drove clear to Château Thierry. In this particular sector in front of us they ran up against our 2d Division, thrown in there hurriedly, and were hurled back.

"Joe" had been very quiet since his retreat from Paris. Now he ventured to remark, "We're going up to relieve the 2d Division."

This time he was right. Major Greenway said one morning to me: "I'm going up to look over the sector; should like to have you go with me."

I was, of course, glad of the chance. We first drove to a forest, the Bois de Gros Jean, where some engineers were. It was to be our future home. Then we went on as far as we could and hiked into a wood in front of the boche positions. A Colonel of Marines detailed a Lieutenant as our guide. He showed us all about the woods, took us to an O.P., we crawling singly, and pointed out all our and the enemy's positions. It was most interesting. On our right was a little valley and then on a rise another wood. We looked at it with longing eyes. It was the Bois de Belleau. The Major expressed a strong desire to go there. The Lieutenant smiled and, pointing to the little valley, said: —

"That place you have to cross is 'Death Valley'; the point beyond is 'Suicide Point' — both well named. It's almost impossible to get over there except at night."

"All right," the Major said, "we'll come out some night," thanked the Lieutenant for his kindness, and dismissed him. Then he turned to me.

"Captain, now we'll go to the Bois de Belleau!"

If he had been a Captain or Lieutenant, I should probably have argued the matter, but he being a Major my only reply could be, "Very good, sir, we'll go to the Bois de Belleau."

After crawling down to the edge of these woods and figuring the shortest distance across, I said, "Do you wish me to go first, sir, or do you prefer to go ahead?"

He very generously told me to do as I wished.

In college I ran on the Track Team and felt that I still had a good sprint in my legs. I reasoned that if I went first, I'd simply attract the enemy's attention, and I'd be going so fast any enemy fire would fall behind me. I did n't wish the Major any hard luck, but felt he could turn back quickly when the shots fell behind me. This reasoning was for my own personal information. I thought it might be as well to adopt another line of just as logical reasoning with him.

"Major, I'm the junior officer and should be the sacrifice if that be necessary. If I go first and get mine, you can report my heroic demise and see that my folks get the Government 'Ten Thousand.' Then you can size up the enemy fire and judge what your chances will be. If nothing happens, of course, it will be all right for you to hit the trail."

I don't know whether my reasoning appealed to him or not, but he gave me: —

"On your marks, now, set — Go!"

I wish some one could have had a stop-watch on my 440 dash. But, at that, the Major, starting back of me, almost beat me to it. When we entered those woods, we felt like standing uncovered; it seemed like sacred ground, the very spot where our boys had stopped the onrushing huns. A child would have known that an awful fight had gone on in those woods: trees all shot to pieces, foliage destroyed, clothing, rifles, mess kits, ammunition, even machine guns, both American and German, strewn everywhere. And then the dead of both sides. Sometimes two opponents were almost in a death grapple. And every one of our boys, the Marines, we saw, was *facing* the enemy when he fell.

Here was a German machine gun with the gunner chained to it. (We afterwards learned this had something to do with the mechanism of the piece, not to keep the gunner there.) There were two Germans in a little firing-pit, cuddled up together, both in the same posture and both sighting their rifles held at the same position. In a little clearing was a group of eight of our boys, apparently a squad who had charged a boche machine gun when it got them all. Their bodies showed intense action and a "do or die" determination.

We came upon one Marine who must have been a splendid physical specimen. He was perhaps six feet three inches in height, splendidly proportioned. He was lying flat on his back looking up at the sky. He had torn open his blouse and taken out a little Bible with his mother's name on the fly-leaf. When the end was coming, we felt, he had remembered his mother's teachings and wanted to see her Good Book for the last time. He died with his hand resting on that opened Book on his breast.

Whenever the man over there senses great danger, when he "goes over," or when he thinks the end is near, his thoughts turn to higher things. He thinks of his mother and loved ones, and of his God.

The living, too, — those Marines, — showed the terrific struggle they had been through. With faces drawn and tired-looking, eyes dull, they seemed dazed. We talked to a great many of the officers here. Many different ideas were expressed about the fighting they had gone through, but all were of one opinion regarding the enemy. "You get the boche out in an open fight and he shows a streak of yellow a mile wide."

We made a thorough reconnoissance of the woods and studied the hasty intrenchments, machine-gun positions, and advanced posts. On the left we saw a shallow trench extending through a wheat-field. In that trench there were men lying down in the hot sun. They could hardly move without exposure to hostile fire. No one could get to them except at night. Every morning at three o'clock a detail crawled out with a cold meal of "Willy" and hardtack and one canteen of water. That was their sole repast for twenty-four hours, and that one canteen had to suffice for drinking, shaving, and bathing. Not pleasant, but part of the game, and they took it all philosophically.

On the other side of the woods we came upon a clearing. In the center, in full view of the near-by German trenches, was a very pretty hunting lodge. We took a chance and entered it from the rear. It was partly demolished. Handsome mural hunting scenes were still hanging and a large, costly vase, still filled with flowers, was suspended from the ceiling — a quiet, restful scene in strong contrast to the picture of devastation outside and the disturbing noises of shrapnel and machine guns.

On peeking through a hole in the wall we were startled at finding ourselves completely surrounded by huns! Luckily, they were all dead. There must have been twenty there, some sprawling on the ground, others hanging in trees or on the wires, where our shells had probably blown them.

We were suddenly joined by three other

American officers, who had crept in to make a study of the terrain in front — in front of the town of Bouresches, opposite. These officers were Engineers who have to do only with gas and flame. Theirs is a merry life. They jump from place to place, play one-night stands, launch a projector gas attack where the boche needs a little extra dose of nasty medicine.

We had been with these Engineers once before near Bernecourt. There they played their best show in France. The huns were acting badly and needed a lesson. The gas fellows had fifteen hundred of these projectors filled with deadly gas, all ready to shoot over at one charge. The wind was just right. Our zero hour was to be at 3 A.M. We learned afterward that the enemy had planned an Infantry attack that morning and for zero hour they had picked 3.20 A.M. Thousands and thousands of the enemy were massed in their first-line trenches all ready to come over.

Then our fifteen hundred projectors released that brilliant German instrument for modern warfare, the gas. They never came over. Our aviators reported that for three days and three nights the huns were carrying back their dead. It's encouraging to give them such a pleasant dose of their own medicine with such results!

After exacting a promise from our brother officers of an invitation to the one-night stand if they played Bouresches, we split up and crawled back to the woods. All in all, our first visit to the Belleau Wood was most interesting and instructive.

The Major reported to General Cole, whose Infantry brigade with our battalion of Engineers was to occupy the sector. He described the terrain positions and strongly recommended that all dead be buried before our troops went in. The General at once saw the necessity of this from a sanitary standpoint if nothing else. It was a gruesome, unpleasant job and fraught with danger, but my company felt complimented when the General and

Major selected us. That day we secured four big trucks and I took half the company, leaving Chamigny about midnight. It was some wild ride! Not one of the drivers or men had been on these roads before or even knew our destination.

Perhaps you have ridden in a big lurching truck for ten miles in a black night, over unknown narrow roads through woods, and wondered just where you'd land. Add to that the sensation of going in that blackness without lights of any kind, no noise, the wheels slipping off the road, going over unseen shell-holes, expecting every minute hostile shells or bombs, not knowing just when you may run into an enemy anxious to get you, and with the responsibility of a hundred and twenty-five men, every one depending on you. You then get a touch of my feelings that night.

However, when we left those trucks and started in the darkness to find the Belleau Wood over a mile and a half farther, all previous sensations seemed trivial. We went safely through one wood, and then, stealing stealthily along, holding on to each other's rifles, started through another. Then we lost our bearings completely. For a moment I thought we were in No Man's Land (we were pretty close to it). One false step and I should have sacrificed my whole command, perhaps even landed in boche trenches. We were ready to fight, but our mission was to bury dead, and we did not want more than were already there.

To make matters worse, morning began to come on. I ordered the men to take cover in the woods and with faithful Denny Brunton tried to locate somebody or something. We finally found an American sentry, who piloted us to his Captain. I aroused him and secured a runner as a guide. We started off again, but after a half-mile or so the guide lost his bearings as well. Fortunately, just then I spied a landmark I recognized and called to the men to follow me, and we hurried to it. We skirted another wood, got to a wood road, and entered the Bois de Belleau at last.

It sure was some trip! We first found all the American boys and gave them the best burial possible; took their tags and little belongings. We were especially careful of the little Bible on that boy's breast. I took one platoon ahead to find more bodies. Suddenly I discovered that we had gone beyond the little trenches or breastworks and that no one was around. This time I was sure we were in the wrong place and too far forward. I signaled the men to lie down and take cover. About fifty yards ahead behind a log were two forms — one moved, so they could n't be dead. I crawled ahead with drawn pistol, determined to find out where we were. I was a bit startled by a noise right by my side. There was Denny Brunton with pistol raised. He would n't leave me. We crawled along together until we found our two supposed enemies. Much to our relief they proved to be one of our own small outposts. They showed us some more German trenches filled with dead huns.

The boys started on their interment. We buried upwards of fifty that morning, all we could find there that were not too far out in No Man's Land to reach in daylight. It was a pretty tough job. Some of these bodies had lain there for two or three weeks and were in terrible condition. Many of the men put their gas-masks on, as the stench was stifling.

At noon I called it off and sent the men creeping back through the wheat to the south, one hundred yards apart, to the Bois de Gros Jean, for food and shelter. Almost as the last man left we saw the tall form of Chaplain Edwards coming through the woods. He knew of our work and had come away out there to pay his respects to these dead American boys. We visited every one of these graves; a cross with tag had been placed over each one. It was a strange sight, we two standing there uncovered in the bright sunlight a few hundred yards from the enemy who had killed these men, the good parson with the open Book saying the last words and a prayer over these brave Americans who had given their lives for their country in this gallant fight.

Just realize these conditions — our proximity to the enemy, the hasty burials, the shelling going on, the dangerous task of the Chaplain getting there. Then, perhaps, you can realize what kind of fellows our Army Chaplains are, and can realize that every American boy, no matter where he may be killed, is given a proper burial and the last sad rites by a man of God.

Our home, now, was in the Gros Jean Forest, fairly close to the front lines and very thick. Great precautions were taken to keep the woods undisturbed and unnoticed by the enemy. No noticeable traffic in or out during the day, no lights or fires of any kind at night. Our whole battalion was located in this forest, and so good was the discipline of the men that the boches apparently did not know any one was living there. They shelled in front of us and around us and three or four miles in the rear, but never during our stay threw anything into our own woods.

The men's billets were different from anything we had yet had. Each man dug himself a little hole in the ground perhaps seven feet long, three or four feet deep, and three or four feet wide. Then he covered it over with brush and called it his P.C. Some of the men made more elaborate homes, and for the officers they made bigger holes in the ground covered over with sandbags. We were all very comfortable here, and the men seemed to enjoy our method of living. Many of them had signs over their homes, such as, "Sneak Inn," "Hotel Astor." On the tree where the kitchen was parked, they put up a large sign, "Lyman's Café," and one wit, remembering our many travels in horse-cars, put up a sign, well printed: —

0 CHEVAUX
1 HOMME

As soon as the battalion was all consolidated they were given a day off to make their little homes and get rested. Major Greenway had several conferences with General Cole in laying out a defense plan for the brigade sector. The General was in hearty accord with everything and gave the finest kind of coöperation to the Engineers. When the plans were approved, Major Greenway had a conference with his company commanders and the work was all laid out for each company.

There was practically no defensive system in front of us, except a few places where the men had dug themselves in during the fighting. We were to lay out and build a system of trenches and wire in front of them, and later machine-gun positions, the same as in other sectors. It looked to us as if the plan would be to hold this line, and we feared there was still no thought of offensive action, something that we all heartily desired and really needed.

In front of us was the town of Lucy Bocage. Lucy was a very bad girl; no one could stay near her very long and live. That town seemed to be a favorite spot for boche artillery to go for. It was decided that the Engineers should build a trench in front of Lucy running to the Ravine Gobert, to the right of our sector. This ravine ran for a long distance, and our working parties went through it every night to keep clear of fields and roads. Gobert must have been a brother of Lucy's, for he was a bad actor, too. The very first night we went out, we got it, and lost three men. The next night, almost at the same point, the shelling started. We had just begun to issue the tools in a little dump we had organized. I ordered the company to take shelter on the enemy side of the ravine, and watched the shells break.

They were coming on a straight line, each one nearer. We moved the company forward a hundred yards, and had just got away when two shells landed squarely in the ravine where our Fourth Platoon had been. Unfortunately, the company following us had moved and they got it. A number of the brave fellows in their First Platoon were killed and many wounded.

Every night going down that ravine, every man knew we should surely be fired upon, and after our work was seen by enemy aviators that we'd get shelling in the trench as well. No one showed fear or any desire to quit.

Mind you, it's infinitely harder to be shelled by an enemy, shelled every night, expecting every minute to have one land right on you, than it is to go into action where you can at least make a fight for it. The men stood it wonderfully, but it got to a few.

After one of these affairs, on checking up in the morning, a Corporal was missing. Searching parties failed to find him. Later we found an ambulance-driver who stated he had picked up a Corporal answering this description. The Corporal was not wounded, simply lost his memory. All he knew was that he was an American soldier and came from somewhere in the United States.

Another night, they were shelling us while working on the trench in front of Lucy. I had a man I'll call Bond, because that is nothing like his right name. He was a good soldier and brave. A shell hit directly in front of the part of the trench where he was working. With a yell Bond started to dive from the trench to where the shell landed to "get the hun who came over on it." His comrades pulled him back. Then he seized his gun and bayonet and began wildly to stab five of the enemy he said were there. It took four men to control him and get him back to our woods. The next morning Bond talked as reasonably as any one until he said: —

"Captain, I'm sorry those four boches got away from me last night. I'll get 'em yet. That feller I killed is gone for fair. Had n't you better send a detail out to bury him? He'll begin to smell in a few days, I cut him up so."

No boches were anywhere near us that night. Poor Bond simply went out of his head; the strain was too much.

Every precaution has to be taken to prevent cases of this kind, everything done to harden men to keep cool under fire. These cases are very few, but often one man, timid and nervous, may see an imaginary enemy and stampede a whole command. A case of this kind happened one night at the other end of the line. There was another long section of this first-line trench to be dug by the Infantry. Major Greenway detailed Captain Brush of our F Company to build one half and I was to have the other half. We each were to have four companies of Infantry. We had a tool dump at the back of the woods, where after night came on my four companies reported in long single files. After receiving tools, they moved forward, led by Major Greenway, to the trench. I was to superintend the distribution of tools, then follow the fourth company to the line. They were going nicely. Three companies or more had gone ahead and we were hurrying up the fourth. Suddenly I heard a noise — I thought a command. There in the dark that whole crowd, three companies, were tearing back toward me, throwing away tools, and running like mad. It was necessary to draw a pistol and threaten to shoot any man that passed. They cooled off, and with the assistance of their officers they were reformed and sent back with their tools. They then worked efficiently and accomplished a splendid work before daylight. Some nervous chap up among the first imagined he had seen the enemy and had yelled, "They're on us; to the rear double time!" In the dark, many thought it an officer's command, and all had stampeded.

At the front we would never allow the order "To the rear" to be given. If necessary to march or turn men to the rear the order would be "About face. Forward, march" — always the idea of *Forward.*

Even in this serious mix-up there was an amusing incident. When it all happened the Major was leading. The men turned back so quickly he could stop only the man nearest him. He hooked that man around the neck with his trench cane, and shaking his finger in the man's face cried in a dramatic way: "Young man, you're on historic ground. Here is where the American boys saved Paris and held the enemy. Hold your ground; don't stain this sacred place by turning back."

At the Major's mess many times afterward we would rehearse this stirring and melodramatic scene, to the Major's own amusement.

During the day experienced Sergeants would be sent up with the officers to where our night work was to be done, to tape it out, mark location of dump, etc.

Even though the first-line positions were only a couple of miles forward, and perhaps shells were falling a mile behind us, the boys would usually make a great scene. They would crowd around these Sergeants as if they were going to war. Cries of "Get a hun for me!" "Bring us back a souvenir of the war!" Then they would go back to the Sergeant's little shelter homes and hang out Service Flags!

After my company had finished the trench, it was necessary to put up the barbed-wire system in front of it. The work had to be done in one night. To save the hike out and back and to avoid going through the Ravine Gobert, Major Greenway obtained some trucks which took us after dark to a wood just back of Lucy. They were to return and await us there at three in the morning. We had the work all planned out; each squad had its own task to do, working in teams. The strongest men were to drive the stakes with mallets covered with burlap to prevent a noise, others to reel off the wire, others to wind. When each squad finished, it was to leapfrog over and take the head of the line.

The work was going along nicely, when suddenly two boche aviators came over. They pulled a new trick and a terrifying one. Parachutes were dropped with large torches in the baskets. Those torches lit up the landscape for miles. My men had good trench discipline and immediately dropped. Not a man moved; every man just made himself part of the terrain. It seemed ages before those torches finally landed.

I had a carrying party from another organization. They moved and must have been observed by the enemy. Soon the shelling started. Twice it was necessary to take the men out and scatter them or put them in a ravine in the woods. When the shelling stopped we returned.

At about two in the morning we had only a hundred yards to go. Corporal Walter (Broxy) Shaw's squad, the 6th, had just leapfrogged over. I gathered them around me like a football team.

"Boys, only one hundred yards more; make it fast. We'll be through in half —"

Whizz — CRASH — BANG!

A shell we had not heard landed squarely in us. We shall never forget that terrible red light, nearly blinding us, and the terrific roar ringing in our ears for days. When I came to, I was lying down covered with earth. I thought I was dead, but my legs seemed all right, my head was on, and I stood up. There down the line were the men, apparently dazed, not knowing what to do. Feeling sure more shells were coming, I yelled: —

"Everybody jump to the trench, quick!"

Just as I arrived at the parapet, I turned and looked back. The smoke was just lifting from that hell-hole. There on the ground were seven or eight of my boys. Turning to the men jumping into the trench, I cried: —

"Who's got the guts to go back there?"

Every man who heard it jumped out and ran back. There was Broxy, the Corporal, dead, the others all wounded, some badly. Every one of those wounded boys refused to be touched until the others had been fixed up. Fred Adams, an old Newton High football player, had his leg shattered. He said: —

"Captain, don't bother about me; mine's only slight. Take Jimmy Mullen, he's hit bad. I just feel as if some football feller had kicked me in the shin, and I'll get that feller yet."

Jimmy Mullen protested: “I’m all right; take Jim Lewis.”

Johnny Rines was helping get the men on stretchers when some one whispered: “Captain, Johnny’s hit, too.”

I went to him while he was working and only knew he was hit because a part of his shoulder was gone!

When we got them to the first-aid station, Lewis, who had been hit again by the next shell, refused to be taken in for treatment until every other wounded comrade had been attended to. Afterwards he proved to be the worst of all, with two bad wounds.

There’s the American soldier for you! God bless him!

One more incident this night. The Sergeants checked up their platoons and sent them back to the point where the trucks were to pick us up. As we hurried back through Lucy, a Sergeant discovered he could n’t check one man, Ralph Gardner. It was, of course, my duty to try and locate him.

"You all go on to the trucks. Hold the last one for me. I'll go back and try to find him," I ordered. After running a few hundred yards, I somewhat repented my action. There was n't a soul around, it was yet very dark, they were still shelling, and for all I knew the enemy might even be around that trench. Frankly, I was a bit nervous. It was so blamed lonesome I would have given my month's salary to turn back. However, I had made the bluff and had to see it through. I reached the trench and went up and down it searching and calling, "Gardner." I went down to the awful place where we had been hit, and all around the place. Finally I decided Gardner must have gone back in one of the first trucks (as we found afterwards he had). I started to turn back, when suddenly in the road I saw a dark figure watching me. With pistol at the alert, I challenged, "Who's there?"

"It's Milliken, Captain." He had dogged my footsteps all the way down here.

"What the devil are you doing here?" I demanded. "I ordered you to the trucks."

"I know, Captain, but I could n't let you come back here alone."

Can you blame an officer for loving his men?

The next night came another experience for us. At evening mess an order came down. We officers laughed, for it sounded just like our old maneuver problems back in the old camp days in the States, and no more thrilling. Something like this I read to the men at mess: —

> The enemy have crossed the Marne to-day in three places. Will probably attack our forces during the night. D Company will move after dark, and take a position on the right of the road leading north from Voie de Châtel. You will be prepared to repel any enemy attack and hold the position at all costs.

The men cheered lustily and seemed elated. "Hurrah!" one said, "no work to-night, just fighting."

This position was about two miles away. It was reached by leaving the road near Paris Farm Cross-Roads, going down a gully, then through woods. Every man carried a shovel, and every second man a pick as well, in addition to every bit of trench equipment. We took along our salvaged "chau-chauts," extra ammunition, and even some machetes. My company resembled a young arsenal, and were ready for a fight or a frolic. The roads were very congested, the Infantry and machine-gun outfits were moving up, too. There was much tiresome delay. We made good progress after leaving the road, through the gully, until — we went into GAS! It was phosgene — not a heavy concentration, but bad enough for the masks to be instantly adjusted.

Getting through those woods was some job. The men kept in touch by each holding the end of the front man's shovel. It was pitch darkness; we were going through unfamiliar woods, wearing masks, and stumbling along with all our hardware and junk. After a time I tested for gas. It was past us now, so I ordered the masks off. The going was much easier for a few moments until this time we got mustard gas! Masks on again. More groping and stumbling along. One good thing those masks with mouth and nose pieces do — they prohibit cursing.

It really is strange how a company of over two hundred men stretched out in single file — a long column under such circumstances — ever reaches its objective. They somehow do it.

When we took our position the men were ordered to take two-pace intervals and dig themselves in. Some of the men, always inclined to work easily, did not hurry in the digging, and at first leaned on the shovels a good deal. Then came the fireworks, the fastest shelling we ever saw. The sky was ablaze — flares, rockets, bursting shells, with beautiful blue lights, "eighty-eight" Austrian "whizz-bangs" coming so fast we could n't count them, and the bigger ones bursting on the ground.

It was a wonderfully weird sight, and would have been most enjoyable were it not that occasionally we would remember that some of this fireworks effect might hurt somebody. After that how those boys did dig! I never saw a better job of trench work accomplished in so short a time.

This bombardment seemed like a preliminary barrage before the attack, but the boches were either held up by our own artillery or something else happened, for they did n't come over that night. Most of the shelling was on our right, where F Company was standing to. They were badly hit and lost a number of men. We were fortunate. Indeed, when we landed back at our holes in the ground at daylight, every man checked in. Much relief and rejoicing, but still a bit of peevishness for not getting a crack at the huns.

CHAPTER XI

THE BIG PUSH

My company had now been at various fronts almost six months. Our work had always been of a defensive nature, miles and miles of trenches, thousands of miles of barbed wire, dugouts, mines, camouflage, P.C.'s, O.P.'s, machine-gun positions, and about everything that goes with playing a long waiting defensive game. There never seemed to be a thought of tackling an offensive.

"Joe Latrinsky" told the boys, "Some gink — I think he was a French officer named Napoleon — said, 'You can never win a war by being on the defensive all the time.'"

Although the boys jollied "Joe" about it and handed out, "You'd better advise General Pershing in the matter," or, "Tell it to the Marines," they all agreed with him. Their job was to win the war and they knew it. They would say, "Just give us a chance at 'em and we'll win this old war."

In May and June everybody seemed to be discouraged. They were tired and a bit stale. Everything was going wrong. The Russians had blown up. The British and Italians were simply holding on by desperate efforts, and the French had given way before that long and terrific drive of the Germans at Soissons. It looked pretty bad. No one doubted that the Allies would win, although jokingly the men would say to Logg and Bob Turner, our expert swimmers: —

"Teach us to swim; we may need to swim the Channel."

At all events, it looked like a long war yet.

Then on July 17th orders came to us, and in three days everything was changed. Our whole outlook on life was different — we were happy. The orders said that our Division was to make a drive. My company was to furnish one platoon at first with a Second Lieutenant, to go over with a regiment of Infantry. Great excitement and rejoicing.

The First Platoon with Lieutenant Shadburn was selected as the heroes for this party. When they marched out at dark, the others cheered them off with the battle-cry, "Remember Broxy," our popular Corporal the huns had killed a few nights before.

In front of the first-line positions of our sector were three towns, Torcy, Belleau, and Bouresches, held by the Germans. A railroad connected all these towns and went on to Château Thierry. Our orders were to take these towns and the railroad.

Our position was taken with a battalion of Infantry at the edge of the Belleau Wood. Our particular objective was the railroad between Belleau and Bouresches. Zero hour was to have been at 5 A.M., but something held it up, so it was about 9.15 that the advance was ordered.

We "hopped off" in skirmish-line formation with the first waves. The Germans opened up at once with machine guns — they had a great number of them in nests. In the excitement of the moment there was a mix-up, and our platoon had to take over a whole company sector on the left of the Infantry battalion. Our intervals (space between men advancing) were therefore extended.

One by one they began to get us. Those machine guns were terrible. The first man on our right was Jimmy Walsh, then "Fat" McCann, then Harry Slepian. McCann was hit quite badly in the leg, so lay down to rest. A boche machine gun just across the railroad in a clump of woods got him. Walsh was good and mad and started for that gun. Now, he knew that behind that gun there were probably three or four of the enemy. They had a machine gun. All he had was a rifle and bayonet. Yet that boy, the same as every other American boy over there, knew he was master of any three or four huns that ever lived. It was not bravado; it was his honest-to-Gawd feeling, for he went after them! Jimmy got to the railroad, and crawled over it dragging his rifle after him. Then he got his. His right arm and hand were hit. He realized the odds were against him then, as he could n't use his rifle. He abandoned it, crawled back to where McCann was lying, pulled out his first aid and bandaged up his leg. Then he yelled to Slepian: —

"Hey, Sleepy, come on over and help me get Fat out of here."

These two boys got McCann around the shoulders, rose and ran ten feet, and dropped. As soon as they stood up the boches opened up. By fast advances of a few feet at a time, they finally carried McCann to the Bois de Belleau. There they found a stretcher and a "bearer" to relieve Walsh. When they got to the first-aid station, McCann was taken in and treated. Jimmy Walsh finally said to the medical officer: —

"Lieutenant, is McCann fixed up all right?"

"Yes, we're finished with him."

"Then would you mind looking at my arm? Somebody hit it awhile ago."

It was a physical impossibility to go farther than this railroad against this terrific machine-gun action with a frontal Infantry attack. The battle gradually narrowed down to a series of combats between small units. In the mêlée, all thought of any one organization was lost; every man saw where he could do the most good and went to it. Here would be a few Infantrymen crawling to get a machine-gun nest by the flank. One of our men would see their object and join with them. There would be another group trying to get around a little wood; others would run to help them out.

Bill Sobozenski, one of my best shots, spied some Germans in the trees to his right. He threw up a little breastwork, squatted down behind it, and coolly began to pick those boches off the trees. Soby said afterwards: "It seemed just like shooting at the targets in our old rifle range."

Freddie Maguire was a boy the proprietor of a Boston hotel had sent to me a year or more ago with a note, "This boy will go through hellfire if you get him mad."

Now Freddie was mad. He'd seen some of our boys, while going through a clump of woods, shot up from the rear. He spotted a hun sniper hidden in a tree, crawled over, took careful aim, and fired. He registered the white disc for a bull's-eye. Freddie watched that hun helmet hit the ground, and noted with satisfaction that the sniper's head was inside. He then crawled along to hunt more game, but the pesky machine guns got him. Some of the other boys found him that night cutting a notch in his rifle stock. His only comment on the way to hospital was, "I'm an awful boob; I should have five notches on that gun."

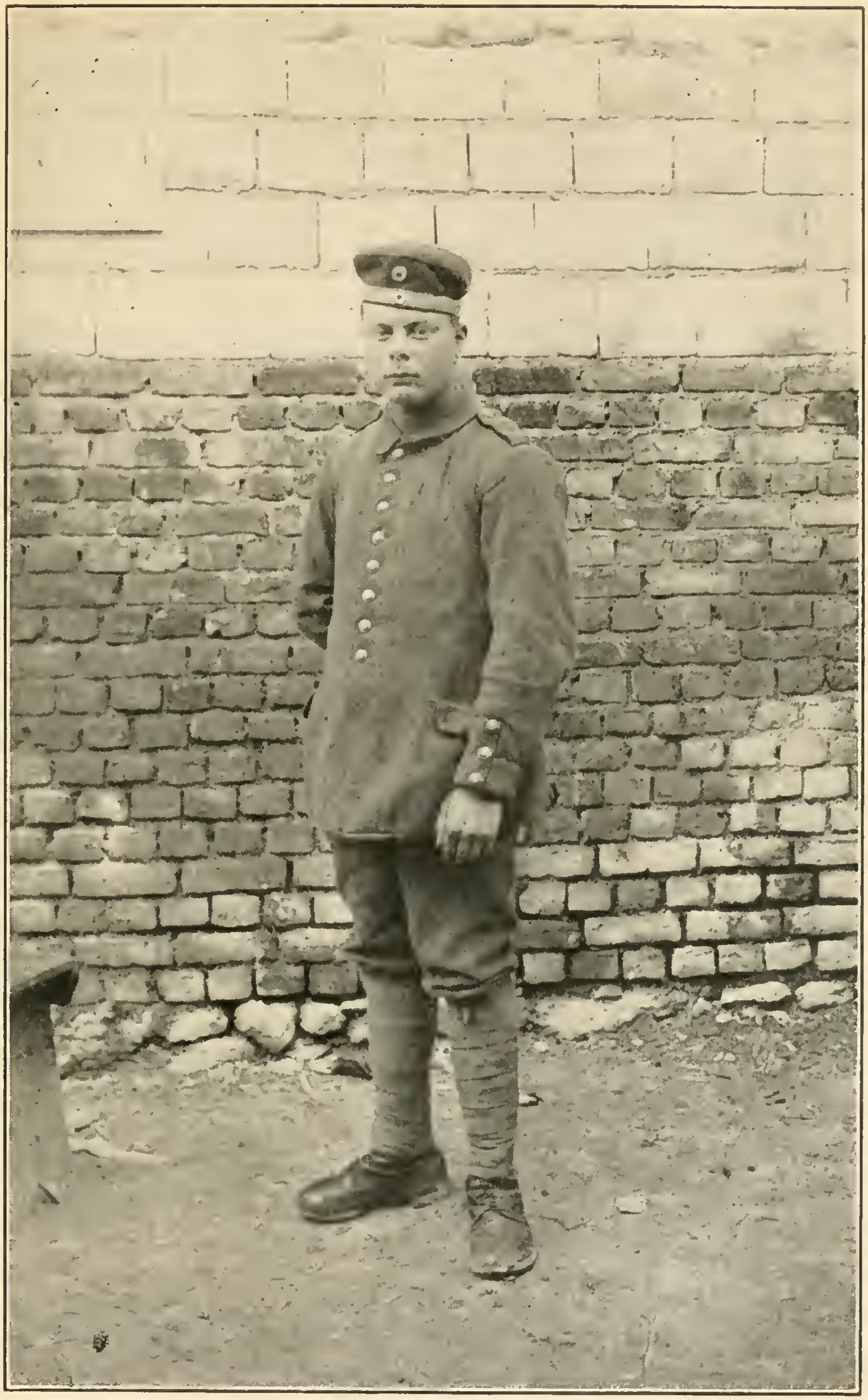
So it was with them all, going into their first real attack and close fighting, cheerful, daring, and happy to be in it.

Lieutenant Shadburn was splendid. How

he ever escaped death is a miracle, walking up and down the railroad track shooting huns with his pistol, encouraging and watching the men.

Suddenly the enemy started to pour through the open space on our left to cut us off. Shadburn sent word to the Infantry officer in charge. He ordered the men left in this position to retire to the woods near by and hold there to prevent being flanked. Later the whole line moved forward again. This time the boches could n't hold. Our men had got on their flank and they could no longer withstand the determined American attack.

A few hours later our men were in Torcy, Belleau, and Bouresches. The enemy held positions just outside the towns, keeping up their fast machine-gun fire, but our mission in the first advance was accomplished. Our own men who survived had been separated and mixed up with the Infantry. After the scrapping, one by one they reported back to our woods. The first man in was Platt Spen-



Our First Prisoner, the "Class Baby"

cer. He thought he was the sole survivor of our party. Then "General" Woods blew in. Leon Porter, the motor-cycle driver, came next. Much to our delight, he had another fellow with him carrying all his equipment. He was a boche whom Porter had captured. The boys called him "Our Class Baby." This picture of him I took from his pocket was a souvenir of our first captive.

All the men showed what they had been through — clothes torn, bodies scratched by the barbed wire, covered with grime and dirt, but all filled with enthusiasm and "pep" over their experience.

Carroll Harris and Ken Henderson, the Sergeants with the party, were missing. They had done wonderful work leading their sections and encouraging their men. Toward night they reported and were warmly welcomed. They had stayed back to check up on all the men and to see that the wounded were cared for.

Still no word of "Shad." The last man to see him thought he was wounded. Afterwards I took First Sergeant Bohlin and Denny Brunton in a search for him. We went directly to the first-aid dressing-station just back of the line. There we found Lieutenant Kirkpatrick, a medical officer friend from our home town. He had been on duty thirty-six hours, and hundreds of cases of wounded had passed through that little hole in the ground of his that day. He felt sure an officer, badly wounded, had been brought there tallying with "Shad's" description, and had been sent back to a base hospital. His Sergeant thought so, too.

Back in my dugout about midnight I was thinking about poor "Shad" and hoping his wounds were not serious, when I heard voices outside. Suddenly a form burst through my blanket door and there stood that tall Georgian youth, laughing, and without a scratch! We hugged him for sheer joy. He had been searching for men he thought missing before he would report himself. Filled with his story, he was like a schoolboy, just bubbling over. There were yet three men unaccounted for: Corporal Buswell (Buzzie), Corporal Earl Covey, and Dave Rittenberg. Three searching parties out, all volunteers. We found poor Covey in the wheat. A machine-gun bullet had stopped him and apparently a shell bursting near killed him. Long afterwards we learned that Rittenberg had been wounded and taken prisoner. He is now in a German prison hospital. No trace was ever found of "Buzzie." He had been wounded, and we felt when the huns swept around the flank they also captured him.

The next morning I secured some transportation to visit every first-aid station and evacuation hospital in our brigade sector, and obtained a complete report on every one of our wounded and the nature of the case. Out of our little band who went out to this "party" more than half were killed, wounded, or missing.

All of these stations and hospitals were filled with men just brought from the battlefield. I saw hundreds of them. Another day, later on at the station at Château Thierry, I saw rows of wounded boys on stretchers just brought in. Those rows were four deep and extended several hundred yards. In all of these places I probably saw a thousand or more of our American soldiers with every conceivable kind of a wound — some with legs or arms blown away, some with eyes shot out, many with chins gone, others with every muscle in their bodies shaking as with palsy, shell-shocked, some with bodies burned by gas so badly that they were black.

In one little operating-room a Sergeant was brought in with eighteen wounds. He spied a friend there. With his one good hand he waved greetings.

"Hello, Bill; what the hell are you doing here?"

"I got a little lead in me last night."

"That's nothin'; I beat yer. I got a whole arsenal in me," the Sergeant laughed.

Corporal Elmer Buswell

(Buzzie)

As they laid him on the operating-table, he said: —

"Say, Doc, don't a Buddy drag a smoke out er this mess?"

The doctor gave him a cigarette. He took a long puff; then: —

"Gee, that's great; now go ahead with your dirty work, Doc," and went under.

That's just one case in thousands. Consider the numbers of wounded men I've told you of, then consider the fortitude of the American soldier when I tell you that I have yet to hear a wounded American boy complain, murmur, groan, or in any way intimate that he is suffering. It is marvelous. We had all admired the spirit of the British and French soldiers when wounded, but you talk to the doctors and nurses over there and they'll say, as I do, that there is nothing the world has ever seen to compare with the nerve and the fortitude and the courage of our boys when they are wounded.

Those doctors and nurses over there are

America's best. Our whole hospital system has been built up wonderfully well. The officers and men sent to the base (S.O.S.) hospitals receive as good treatment as it is possible to obtain in the world. I can speak from personal knowledge, as I was in Base Hospital 15 for two weeks in the fall of 1917. If I had been paying a thousand dollars a week, I could not have had better, more thorough care nor more scientific treatment. The men there were just as well looked after. If *your* man in France is in a base hospital, you may be sure he is well cared for in every way.

Now that we had made a start, it was evidently the intention of the leaders to keep on. I received orders to send another platoon to join the Infantry going forward. This time it was Lieutenant Bateman with the Fourth Platoon. We went up in trucks until shells began to drop around. Then the drivers felt they had only gasoline enough to get back from this point. I led the men in single file.

Lieutenant Bateman brought up the rear to keep the men closed up. We had a mile or more to go to the point where they were to go over. This night taught us how easy it is for men to lose contact in the dark. The trail was circuitous and left the road at a sharp angle. I took a very slow pace, looked back every few minutes, sent runners back, and all seemed going well.

Arriving at the designated point I had the men pass me and lie down to rest until further orders. To my consternation only about half my men went by. I had Oscar Bohlin with me this night as an officer. Orders came that day making him a Second Lieutenant. If ever a man deserved a commission it was this old tried and true First Sergeant. I sent him in one direction and faithful Denny Brunton in another. Bohlin saved the day for us. He found the lost sheep almost in the enemy lines by Torcy.

The men in the middle of the line had been carrying heavy bombs we had made. They stopped for a moment to change hands. That moment was enough to lose contact with the men forward. Instead of turning to the right at the trail, they went straight ahead toward the enemy. It was two hours before they were all rounded up and the cold sweat on my brow disappeared.

Then I reported to the Infantry Major and turned my platoon over to him. They worked and went forward with this battalion for several days after that.

The next morning orders came to move forward again. This time it was Torcy, the town we had just wrested from the boches. It was a sad mess when we entered. Think of the main street of a country village with all the trees felled across it, and half the buildings in the middle of it. For good measure pile in it all the old junk, clothing, and empty cans you can find; dig up dead horses and mules and humans, add them to the collection; then turn on all the gas jets in town. Perhaps you'll have a very mild picture of Torcy or of any of the many towns we went through on this trip.

Our first job was to turn "white wings" and clean the streets. Artillery would be coming up later. We must make way for them, and we did.

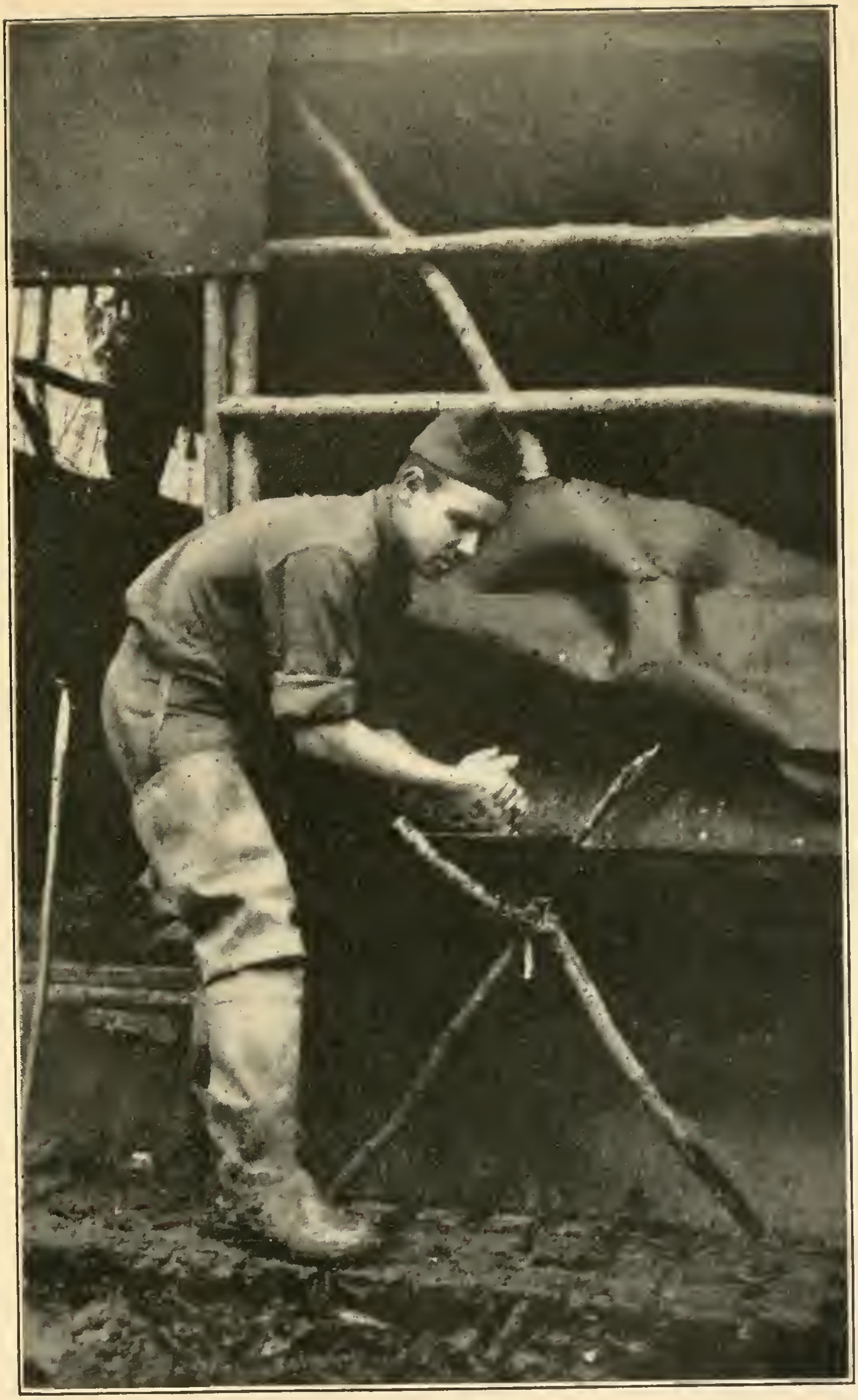
Orders were to stay in Torcy that night. It was filled with dead. There was gas still around and noisome smells everywhere. It was no place for an honest man to pass a peaceful, happy night. I, therefore, moved the company out at night to a wooded hill near by. We pitched our little "pup" tents, got the old "soup gun" going, and had a bountiful repast, a good smoke, and a big night's sleep.

On the move again, bright and early in the morning. Word came that the huns had just evacuated Etrepilly. We were to go there, working on the roads en route, filling in all shell-holes and making the roads passable for the Artillery to follow our advance.

The men worked hard this day, and when

we marched into Etrepilly at dusk, they were tired. This town, like Torcy, was not a fit place for men to stay. We again found a wood close by and made our camp there. The wagon train came along. Our cooks soon had the old stew steaming up. We were enjoying this gypsy life and the one-night stands. But as Phil Saele — he of the Winter Garden Show Company — said, "This must be a bum show town; can't even play one night here"; for at mess a dispatch rider dashed in with new orders. Our battalion was ordered to move ahead at once and go into action as Infantry. It was a crucial time; every man was needed to fight. My company was to report to the 102d Infantry, who were to attack at Trugny. Zero hour was to be 3.45 A.M.

Now, we had heard a lot about Trugny that day coming up. Three times Infantry had gone against it, and three times the terrible hun machine-gun fire had mowed them down. It was an impossible position to take in that way.



Camping Out: One of our Shacks in the Woods
"Bernie" Murdock with an Improvised Helmet Washstand

And would you believe it? When I read the orders to those tired men, who had been hiking and working for ten hours, and who knew what those machine guns at Trugny meant, they cheered and shouted, "Come on — let's go."

When orders were given to leave the kitchen and wagons behind, there was almost a mutiny among the cooks and stable crews. They came to me and begged to go into the fight. It was a spirit you could not overlook. I took the Mess Sergeant and all the cooks and all the stable crew I could. We had a few sick men and put them in charge of the kitchen and wagons under John O'Brien, who had to stay in charge of all our animals.

About midnight we halted in a field to await a guide. I told the men to get all the rest they could until we moved again. It was a night not one of us will ever forget. Dark and gloomy. To add to our gayety it began to rain.

Captain "Hi" Landon, our Battalion

Adjutant, an old crony of mine, sat with me. We leaned up against a tree and handed each other all sorts of little pleasantries. Neither spoke of the morrow. Gradually our chatter seemed to subside, and unconsciously each was wrapped in his own thoughts.

Many people have asked how a man feels, what he thinks of, just before going into action, especially when he feels he is not coming back. I talked afterwards with many of my men about their feelings that night. They were all very much like mine. This is how men feel in a like situation.

As they sat there that black, rainy night practically each soldier felt in his own mind his chances for another night on earth were very small. He thought of his career in France, and how fortunate he had been to stick it out as long as this. He thought of those at home and sent a silent message three thousand miles to them. He was n't afraid, had no feeling of hesitation or dread, but rather one of pride and honor to have this thing wished on him, and a feeling of "Thank God, I'm here, I'm fit, and I'm in Uncle Sam's uniform. The only place in the world for me this night is right here."

It was not bravado, not false courage, but the spirit of the American soldier among these men. Above everything else my thoughts seemed to concentrate on an intense desire for my company to put up a gallant fight and win a glorious victory when the gong sounded for zero hour. I looked down that line of splendid men lying behind the stacked rifles. I knew their thoughts were the same as mine, and I knew they were ready and that no boche living could compare with these men. Then I went to sleep and dreamed of eating mince pie at Thompson's Spa in Boston.

We were rudely awakened an hour later by Major Greenway returning with our guide.

"Let's go!" again. We shook off the water and started. We marched through fields and woods for a mile or more. Then our guide coolly announced that he was lost. The Major, with his wonderful knowledge of the terrain, and his uncanny sense of direction, took over the guiding himself and led us on.

Each company had brought one tool wagon with picks and shovels. We now distributed them to the men, sending the wagons back. Sapper Engineers have a very warm regard for these articles, especially when taking a position under fire in the open. The lesson of digging and digging fast is one of the great lessons of this war. Major Chase always said, "It's ninety-five per cent digging and five per cent fighting."

I gave the whispered command to pass down the line. "Follow me in single file, keep one hand on the man in front — Forward!"

That long, quiet column of serious men wound through more woods. Then out into a clearing. The whirr of machine guns told us we were in front of Trugny. I ordered the men to lie down in a fringe of woods and dig themselves in. To accelerate their work, the huns began throwing "77's" (shells) at us. They landed in front of us and right behind us, so close our nostrils were filled with smoke. Then to make our work still more efficient they opened up machine-gun fire in front and on our flank.

It was now 3 A.M. We were to "hop" with the regiment of Infantry at 3.45. I was getting worried, for no Infantry was around. Five, ten, fifteen minutes went by. I could stand it no longer. I *had* to find that Infantry. I had left Denny Brunton on the last hitch to carry a message to the Major, and he apparently could not find us, so I had "Squeak" Harlow as my runner. I turned the company over to Lieutenant Palmer and called to Harlow, "I'm going out to see what 's what and who is around here."

His lips tightened a bit as he saluted and replied, "Very good, sir, I'm with you."

"On your marks," I gave him. "Now, set, over the top"; and over we went. We went forward as far as we dared; no one ahead except the enemy; we dashed to the left a way and ran into Captain Brush with his company. He had found no one.

"Eddie, our orders are to go over. What do you say we go over, anyway, without that regiment of Infantry?"

"It sounds attractive," Eddie replied in his slow, quiet manner. "But our orders are to go under command of the Infantry Colonel."

We discussed it and wisely decided Eddie was right, as usual, and that he would bring his company over near mine and I should hunt the Infantry. It was now approaching zero hour and we were in a serious situation. I searched for the Major, and finally found him with his Adjutant, Captain Landon, in a wheat-field just back of us. His P.C. was a little clump of wheat. He, too, had been unable to locate the Infantry. I led him back to see my position. On our right we found one of our own machine-gun batteries. It was just getting light and the machine-gun Captain, a most efficient man, pointed out the enemy guns in front. We could count fourteen nests of them. There were probably twice that number concealed.

The Major looked it all over. "I'm convinced now, Captain, that it is physically impossible to take that position by a frontal attack. We've got to take it. We must get around on their flank."

"Right-o," I heartily concurred; "but in the meantime had n't I better hunt farther for the Infantry?"

He agreed and sent Captain Landon with me. Away over on our left we saw some troops. They proved to be the 103d and 104th waiting for orders. Some French soldiers came running through the woods still farther on our left. To my delight I spied an American soldier with them. It was Denny Brunton. After delivering his message he had searched for us. We had left. He did n't know where, but found a French company who were going over to take La Gonnetrie Farm. Brunton felt his duty was to attack the enemy, so he attached himself to this French outfit and went over with them.

They had met the same fierce machine-gun opposition that we had. Out of that French company only seven French soldiers and Denny Brunton came back.

There was yet an unexplored wood on our extreme right. We made for that. Brunton was now chief runner, "Slim" Edwards and Harlow assistants.

In that wood down a path were more Infantry. They were the 102d at last. The Colonel was sitting in a shell-hole surrounded by his staff. This was Colonel Parker — "Machine-Gun" Parker they called him — a man full of fire and fight. This morning he was drenched through, his face drawn and a bit haggard, unshaven, and with the stain of the mud and smoke of battle. Eyes sleepy, but with the old-time fire burning in them.

When I looked at these officers I began to realize that we ourselves were not the handsome heroes this morning that the folks at home pictured us to be.

" Colonel, I have the honor to report that D Company is going on a party with you this morning."

"There ain't going to be no party," the Colonel quoted the Rube comedian. "My orders say the 101st will attack. I'm to remain in support, as I'm pretty well shot up. It would give me great pleasure, Captain, to have your society at a party, but I fear it will be 'demain.' Anyway, I'll send a runner back to Headquarters to check up our plans."

I thanked him, promising to return to get the answering message. Then I searched for the 101st. Farther to our right, nearer Trugny, was a battered-up farm, "Bretelle Farm." I decided to make for that and succeeded. An outpost there said they thought a battalion of the 101st was in the woods on the right across the road. This road was swept by machine-gun fire. Remembering old Bob Davis back at Pinon Forest, I cried to the runners, "Nothing down here but machine guns; come on."

By dashing across the road we could approach the woods from the rear unobserved. There, sure enough, was Captain Joe McConnell's battalion. He had the same idea as Major Greenway as to the attack. He was creeping up on the enemy's flank. It was a pleasure to me to find Joe's outfit here. He was formerly a Corporal in my company back home, and as capable and heroic an officer as any in France. Joe was afterwards killed leading his battalion in another similar attack.

This flank movement looked awfully good. I worked my way back to Major Greenway, reporting all my findings. He ordered me to take the company around to the right, get up on the flank, and join the Infantry. My company had dug themselves nice little homes and were nearly all sleeping despite the din around us. It seemed tough to rout them out, but "C'est la guerre."

The journey around to that right flank was exciting for all of us. We rested at the Farm a short time for the enemy to quit shelling between us and the woods. We seized the opportunity for the men to get a bit of "canned Willy" and hardtack from their emergency. Soon we were able to make the woods and took position with the Infantry there.

We were now right up against those pesky machine-gun nests, but on their flank, and our guns were going at them from the front. The fire from along our line was telling on them, too. Things were looking better for us. The German position was becoming harder to hold and our fire finally drove them out, and the next morning we went into Trugny.

It was most interesting to us to go over that town we had been watching at a distance from many sides and with longing eyes. There were German dead everywhere. Our fire had been accurate! By one machine-gun nest we found a pail filled with manure and water. The hun apparently had been dipping his bullets in it, poisoning them. Here's hoping he was one of those we buried.

Our boys were joyous, inspected all the ruined buildings, being careful to look for "man traps," counted the enemy dead, and picked up relics of the fight. The usual stench of a hard-fought battle impregnated the place, the stench of smoke, filth, gas, and dead bodies. Working parties were sent out to bury the dead. Some of my men reported that two of the machine gunners buried were women!

CHAPTER XII

STILL PUSHING

THESE "man traps" we looked out for here were ingenious devices of the huns for killing us after they had retreated. We first saw them in the Soissons sector. I was walking through Pinon Forest with Captain Poiteau. I noticed on the ground a pretty little metallic disc about two inches in diameter. I started to pick it up to examine it when Poiteau seized my arm. "Don't touch! — it will blow you to pieces."

The huns strew these little discs behind them in a retreat, even drop them from planes. There's a bomb underneath which explodes when one steps on the disc, and, as the men say, one goes "Bluey, Bluey." In this last advance many kinds of traps were reported and we were given orders as to handling them.

In houses and dugouts all sorts of contrivances were found — doors, chest drawers, and entrances when opened exploded mines; branches camouflaging entrances to dugouts had wires supporting them; books and pamphlets had strings tied to them; every possible use was made of wires and strings — all had mines attached. Sometimes you would see a protruding nail or a loose board. Don't step on it. There's a mine underneath. In the road there would be a mine gallery containing big shells. A wagon train going over will cause enough depression to explode them. Shovels or picks apparently thrown around at random were attached to explosives. Even their barbed wire strewn around the grass had mine attachments.

There were dozens of other cases like these officially reported and hundreds more "Joe Latrinksy" told about seeing, many of which were probably true. When troops were burying German dead, mines concealed under the bodies exploded. This worried us some, for our undertaking business had grown considerably. The story of the cat we understood was afterwards printed in the States and "Joe" had it pretty straight over there.

An officer with a detail going into an abandoned town was passing a church. He heard a cat crying. On investigating he found the poor animal hung by its hind legs on the altar. The officer immediately cut the string to release it, and he was blown to pieces.

Another one "Joe" claims is true is the story of the piano. A company of Infantry went into an evacuated town. In searching for billets for the night, they found a fine grand piano in good condition. Now, in every company there's a soldier who can beat out the ragtime for his Buddies. That soldier in this company was seized by the others and a concert followed. "It's a long way to Berlin, but we'll get there," and many other stirring ballads were loudly applauded. But every time that boy struck a key on the piano, without knowing it he blew up a mine in another part of the town and killed his own comrades!

It was difficult for us to conceive of a human mind so filled with the desire for maiming and killing as to invent all of these ingenious devices.

That night we went to Bretelle Farm to sleep. "Skeeter" Lyman, on the job as usual, "cherched" the kitchen and got his rations. John O'Brien brought up his wagon train with our supplies. Lieutenant Charlie Bateman reported with his platoon. We had won the day. The war looked very attractive to us all.

During a drive like this, one sees some stirring sights, some exhilarating beyond measure, others that tear at your very heartstrings.

Captain Brush and I sat in a clump of woods looking at a pretty little town just across the way on a hill. In there were much enemy stores and artillery. Suddenly our "155" long batteries in the rear began to roar. We saw every shot register perfectly on that town — houses toppling over, earth and débris blown into the air. Then with a tremendous explosion the air was filled with wreckage. We had hit an ammunition dump!

Major Greenway and his company commanders were lying on the parapet of a trench watching the bombardment of Fère-en-Tardenois, an important enemy railroad center, and one that they held on to tenaciously until we flanked it.

That American shell-fire was beautiful. Big ones landing everywhere. Faster, faster, faster they came. The roar was deafening. The Major was a study. His big athletic figure was tense with excitement. He suddenly jumped up, waved his arms, and yelled, "Give 'em hell, Yanks!" — cheering like a wild college boy watching the pigskin going over the enemy's goal. The cheering was not confined to the Major, either.

At another place our Infantry was advancing across a field. They were fairly well closed in. We were lying in the field to the right watching and admiring these fine lads of our own flesh and blood. To our horror, a big shell landed squarely in the line. The smoke slowly cleared away. We saw men running, some starting to run and then falling, others staggering and crawling like poor injured animals, and some lying perfectly still.

This warfare of movement entails many serious and difficult problems not encountered in a warfare of position. All the laws of keeping off roads in daylight, moving in small groups, keeping out of sight, have to be forgotten. There is the problem of moving troops quickly to take full advantage of a successful fight, the problem of getting artillery up to more forward positions, of getting up wagon trains of supplies and food. They simply have to go.

Standing by a farm during the advance, I watched a column of men moving forward like that, closed up, with wagons and supplies. Then came a rain of shells falling everywhere around us. As I watched the close column, a shell landed. Wagons, animals, and men were blown everywhere. The smoke lifted. It was heartrending to see that big vacant space in the column.

The nights were most wonderful of all. The sky ablaze with lights of every kind and color — flares, rockets, bombs, and bursting shells. Our artillery flashes everywhere, and our shells bursting along the whole line. The whole front seemed to be one big red glare. Night after night the huns would set fire to the towns and villages and even woods. They seemed to want to destroy every single thing before we pushed through. Then every little while a tremendous blaze would burst forth when they blew up their ammunition dumps. It was all one grand inferno of destruction, roar, and flame.

The battles in the air were marvelous to behold. We had seen many before, but none quite like these. The fleets were larger, and during this advance they flew lower than we had ever seen them. We had a very large number of balloons. They moved forward behind the troops on each advance.

Near Etrepilly we counted eleven observation balloons in a long arc. It was a beautiful sunny day. Ten enemy planes came like a whirlwind for those "sausages." Our aviators were ready, rose quickly, and went for them. We ducked for cover, for the action was right over our heads. Lead was falling around us. Our eyes were glued on that wonderful sight. The balloons at once began to descend. One boche left the fleet and blew up one of the balloons. That seemed to be the only damage we suffered. Two of our planes maneuvered beautifully, getting above their adversaries and driving them down in flames. The other hun aviators immediately turned and raced for bocheland with our planes in full pursuit.

When we were at Bretelle Farm there were two of our "sausages" near us. One day three *French* planes appeared. Much to our consternation they ran up to our "sausages," shot incendiary bullets into them, watched them burst, and hurried across the enemy lines. They were captured planes manned by Germans.

This "dirty boche trick," as the men called it, was atoned for later. A whole fleet of German observation planes came over. Our boys went after them, and we had the pleasure of seeing four enemy planes fall in flames. The men go wildly enthusiastic over these battles in the air. When an enemy plane is downed, they cheer madly.

After this fight one of our aviators flew low over our farm. The men gave him a great ovation, waving everything they could grab and yelling. He waved back to us like a conquering hero.

In one place there was an American battery of 75's right back of us. The gunners had no protection against enemy fire — just had to sit and take it. One day this battery was being heavily shelled. Every few minutes a regular joyous American cheer would burst forth from them. Then we would know a "dud" (unexploded shell) had landed.

At the farm there was much cleaning-up of débris, removing of walls and pushing-up of roofs before we could find room enough to sleep the men. But they were accustomed to unusual resting-places and soon were enjoying their first real sleep in forty-eight hours. The next day seemed to be a stand-off with the boches. The roads through Trugny were badly shot up. Ammunition and wagons had to come up to feed and supply us. We again tackled the road-repair job. No unions over there. We worked an eleven-hour day.

At night we came back to the farm a fairly tired crew. Just after mess, Lieutenant-Colonel Crecelius drove in with important news. The enemy were retreating in front of us. Five thousand French Cavalry had just been brought up and in the morning were to make a dash on our left through the woods to turn the retreat into a rout.

There was an old wood road extending

about eight kilometers that had to be cleared for this cavalry dash. We were elected "the people's choice." The whole battalion was to go out. The company commanders drew lots for their sector. Captain John Langley drew the first end of the road, I the middle, and Captain Brush the farther end. He was in luck, after all, for more than half of his sector was still hun territory and he could n't work efficiently there.

I ordered the company out, gathered them around me, and explained what an important job we had, how it might mean the turning-point in this whole attack, and that this drive we were in was perhaps the crucial point of the whole war. The men were weary and sleepy, but they seemed to get a "second wind." Usual cries of "Let's go!" and we were marching away again. The boches apparently had a kick left, for they shelled us before we could get to our part of the road. No damage to us, but they killed an Artillery officer and some of his men right next to us.

As we kept on, some more shelling came. Some one cried, "The damned huns put another quarter in the meter; we're going to get gas."

Sure enough it came. While getting their masks on, some men were affected, and I sent them back for treatment. Sergeants Allan Milliken and Joe Youlden got it, but said nothing. It developed the next day and they were sent to hospital, so that was the last I saw of those two hard-working, faithful boys. I pray they are back with the company by this time.

Despite these difficulties, the boys worked unceasingly and well. By morning that road was in good shape and passable its whole length. When we called a halt, the men lay down. No one needed to be rocked to sleep that morning.

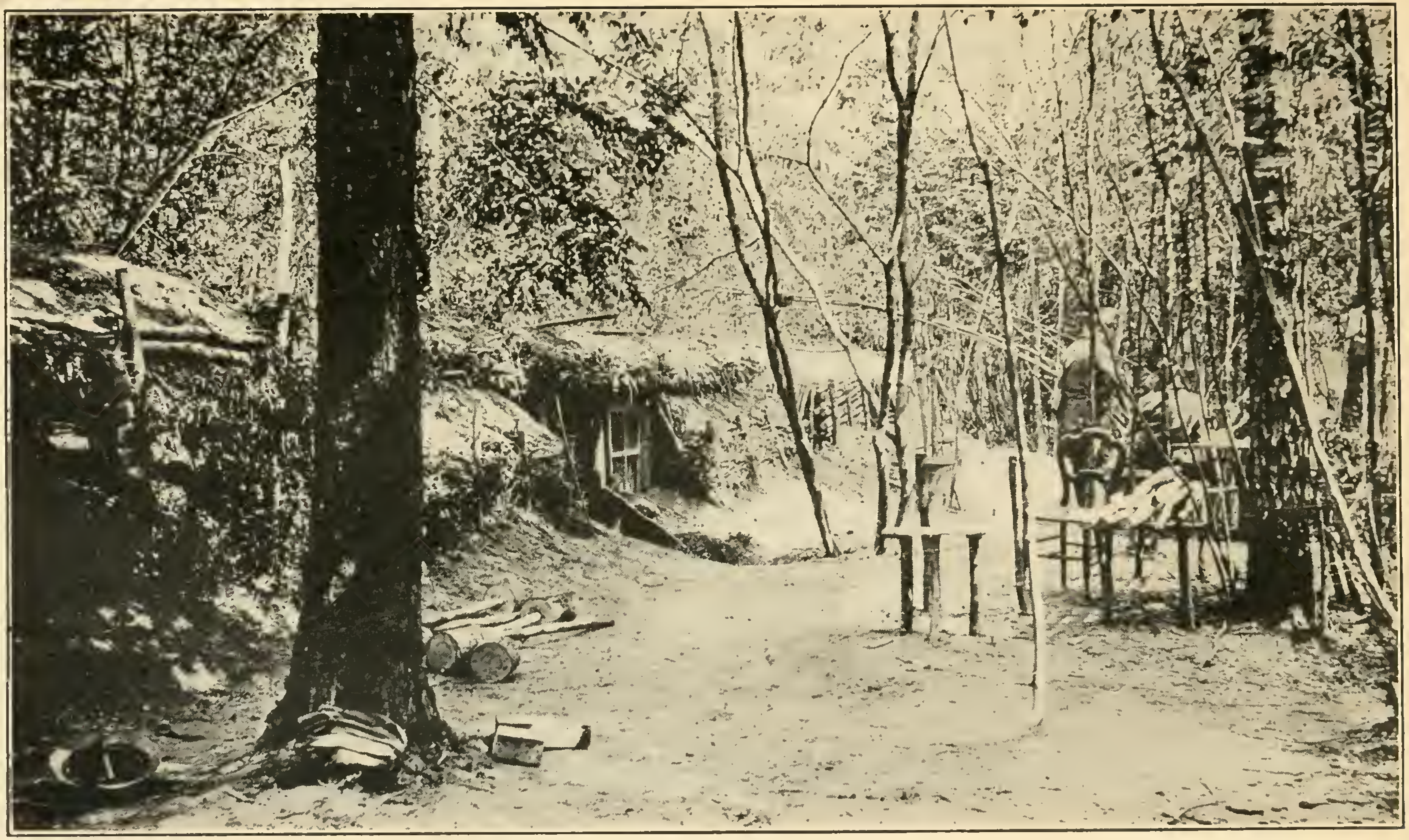
Apparently the cavalry work had been unpleasant for the enemy. Soon we were ordered forward again. The town of Beauvardes had just been evacuated. We marched beyond it to a thick wood. The men started to pitch tents, gather leaves for their beds, and make themselves generally comfortable. The other officers and I made a trip around the wood trying to find better conditions. To our delight we discovered a little hun village of dugouts they had just left. There were streets laid out, tables built, and enough dugouts for the whole company. They had bunks, log sides, and roofs, and everything cozy for a fall season in the woods. "Skeeter" Lyman found a fine place for the kitchen and food supplies. Eddie Walker got all his wagons and equipment camouflaged close by, and John O'Brien established as fine a picket line as we had had.

We really felt very grateful to the huns for all these things they had built to make our stay pleasant. Yet the boys refrained from giving the company cheers for them.

Work was ready for us in bounteous quantities. The roads were in terrible condition. The accuracy of our own shell-fire was a joy to us, in spite of our work in filling in the big cavities made. We had registered hits everywhere, especially on important points; and cross-roads. In one place at the junction of two important roads, our artillery had made a clean hit with a very large shell. The hole must have been fifteen feet deep and thirty feet wide. The cross-roads was just a big hole.

The men were becoming experts in military road repairing. The roads, in all directions soon showed the result of their work. A day or two before this we saw at a distance a big body of American troops coming up the line. "Joe" shouted: "It's our relief! Hurrah!"

Our Division had been going now for ten days, fighting and working our way straight through the enemy lines. All of us — the Infantry, who had fought nobly, Artillery and Machine-Gun men, and all the rest — were beginning to show the strain. Some were almost at the breaking point. How they needed a rest! Our Yankee Division had gone eighteen and one half kilometers against the enemy



The Little Village built by the Boche for us

and had *won* in the first American advance of the war. In our Regimental Headquarters there had been a sign hung up many months back —

"GET THE HUN ON THE RUN"

Now the artist pasted an O over the E in "get" —

"GOT THE HUN ON THE RUN"

I told you that back in May and June our boys were disheartened and discouraged. They needed offensive action, to get up against the enemy and try and drive them back. Now they had had just that thing. They had been up against the huns and had licked them. The whole aspect of life and things, the whole idea of the war, changed in the minds of my boys, in the minds of every man in our Division, and in the entire American Expeditionary Force over there. For them the end of the war was in sight. Every man felt and knew he was the master of any three or four boches that ever lived. They knew they had licked the enemy, that they could lick him any time they went after him. With that feeling came a great joy to every one of these men, the joy of winning — the joy of VICTORY!

CHAPTER XIII

GOOD-BYE, FRANCE

"JOE" was right. The Division was to be relieved by this new Division fresh and ready to keep "the hun on the run." Great joy around our camp. Then orders came to this effect: —

"The Division will be relieved except the Artillery and Engineers, who will push ahead with the new Division."

Big glooms chasing little joys off the map.

"Cheer up, everybody," old Bob Turner would say. "We're so bloomin' good they can't win the war without us; consider yourselves complimented."

Our next objective was La Croix Rouge Farm. The line of attack when the push started was almost due north; now we were moving to the east after the retreating enemy. The boches were occupying the woods to the southwest of the farm, but were quickly driven out of there, abandoning the farm as well. The next day we moved into those woods to clean them up and bury the dead. This time I took ten mounted wagoners, sending them ahead as a "cavalry screen." They were followed by the company going forward in four waves of skirmishers at wide intervals. The horsemen would find a body and report it to the nearest Corporal of the first wave, and that squad would officiate at the obsequies. In this way we combed those woods completely. In one place we found sixteen horses, all killed during the night by one burst of shrapnel.

Even a distasteful task like this has its humorous incident. Most of the American dead were wrapped completely in blankets. We found one poor fellow covered in this way. The boys started to dig his grave, and the Corporal went to get the dead man's tag, when the man suddenly came to life, jumped up, and protested. Like Mark Twain, he claimed

Our Cavalry

Our Pack Mules, the "Buckskins," with Denny Moore and Wild West Kenny

the reports of his death were greatly exaggerated. Our boys insisted that his grave was all ready and he was a dead one. He explained how he had wrapped up in this blanket, dead with exhaustion, and his company had gone ahead, forgetting about him. We had to excuse him from the ceremony.

On our left, Fère-en-Tardenois still held out. The French were working upon our left; we were trying the right flank. When the town fell — we figured it would be soon — the Artillery were to go forward rapidly to new positions. The main road to Fère was in very bad shape. We hustled over there one day, working from Beauvardes up to the reverse slope of a high rise. On that rise we were in full view of the enemy in Fère. It was necessary to see how the road was beyond this rise, so I crept along the ditch for about three hundred yards, finding five or six shell-holes. Beyond that it seemed passable. I went back, gathered the men together, and drew a little sketch showing where each hole was. I detailed a non-commissioned officer and his squad to each hole. Then we found some old French carts, filled them with stones, and drew them up behind the crest of this rise. We rested a moment, all took a good deep breath, then, like a crowd of kids at play, drawing the carts along, we dashed over the top, with a whoop, in full view.

Each squad ran to its allotted shell-hole, some poured in rock, others made a crown of dirt. My! how fast those boys worked! The enemy saw us and opened up with one-pounders. Their range was poor. We stuck to it, finishing the job, and got back without a scratch.

Every day or night some thrilling job like this was wished on us. The pleasure of making good at whatever it might be, and the excitement incident to it, kept us all buoyed up with enthusiasm. And best of all, the huns kept going back constantly and we advancing. Only one night after this did they bother us much. This night several planes flew over the works where we were sleeping and dropped countless bombs.

Now, shells are pretty bad, yet you have a chance to duck or dig in. With bombs you just have to sit and take it. They sound so blamed familiar, so close by, and their explosion is terrifying. These bombs seemed to be dropping right on top of us. Actually they fell several hundred yards away and did considerable damage to the Infantry near by. In one company alone there were one hundred and sixty-four casualties from one bomb.

Every day Major Greenway kept up his study of the terrain. He went everywhere and many times honored me by taking me along. When our Infantry was relieved, a new brigade was to come in on our left. The Major and I, the night before they came in, went over to the sector they were to occupy. It was just in front of a stretch of railroad which the enemy held strongly. There was a crest perhaps four hundred yards from the railroad and a slope from there to it. It was possible to crawl along the reverse slope of this rise, but if a fellow appeared for a moment on the crest, it was R.I.P. for him.

That night the Major told me that this new brigade was to "hop off" that crest the next morning and that our General had delegated him to go with them as guide. Much to my delight he added, "You know this terrain also, Captain, so I want you to go with me." We reported to General Cole's Headquarters, met the General of the attacking brigade, and got the "dope." The hour of attack was to be 8.30 A.M. We found the Infantry all ready, pointed out the positions and various places of interest to their officers, crawled up on the reverse slope of the crest, and awaited developments. The Infantry battalions moved forward. They were splendid fellows: just over, and in their first battle. All seemed eager and happy to be in it at last. Onward and onward they moved, straight up to the crest. We held our breath. They arrived on the crest. As they stood there silhouetted against the bright sky, they offered a target no one could miss.

"My God!" Greenway exclaimed, "it's going to be hell!"

But, no, the line moved forward, and executed, out in No Man's Land, what we said afterwards looked like an evening parade and a couple of guard mounts. On they went and rested on the railroad. They had taken their objectives without firing a shot.

Happily for us all, the enemy had retreated during the night.

At last Fère-en-Tardenois had fallen. Our next objective was Fismes.

We had now been in the line, fighting our way through and advancing, for sixteen days and nights. Our Engineers had been in just six days after the Infantry had been relieved. We naturally wondered about our relief.

"Joe" said, "The Engineers are to be held in the line until the evacuation of Berlin." He was wrong. On August 3d we were near Fismes, when our orders came. Great excitement and returning of the joys. We were ready in jig time. For the first time in months we were marching away from the enemy. The men were full of spirits at the prospect of a rest. They laughed and sang. “Over There” was a favorite now, only they sang it “Over Here,” shouting the last line *con expressione*, “We won’t go home till it’s over over here.”

Late in the afternoon we marched into Château Thierry. We had been there six months before coming back from Soissons. It was a much-changed city now. The work of the huns was seen everywhere — houses demolished, wanton destruction of public buildings, and everything ransacked.

One of the most pathetic sights to us was when the French people came back to their homes in these ruined towns we had released from German occupation. When the invader came through, these poor people left their pretty homes — their all in worldly belongings — still intact. Now there would be nothing but a pile of stones and débris — complete ruin and destruction.

We saw one old lady — a little dog her sole companion — come into Torcy. She sat down on a stone and looked at what was once her home. Apparently she had felt it would still be there. Her poor old body shook with sobs. Everything completely ruined — everything gone. Not a thing left in the world for her.

We saw thousands of such pictures. Somehow Home was the thing uppermost in their minds. Just as soon as a town was captured, these people would begin to stream back. Some were simply stunned; others gave way to their emotions when they saw the destruction and ruin of their homes and the towns wrecked by the retreating huns.

It was most pathetic, too, when a town where civilians lived was shelled. The women would almost go frantic — simply overcome with terror. Soldiers are supposed to be shelled and to suffer hardships, but it did seem tough on these poor women to have to endure such things.

Our boys would always try to comfort them. They'd laugh at the shelling and explain to the poor people it would soon be over and amounted to nothing. Our men were marvels to these people. They could n't understand our apparent indifference to shell-fire — our smiles and even laughter at the boche efforts.

The French soldiers, too, always admired the Yank's goodnature and smiling attitude. They said, "The American is a great soldier; he digs with his left hand, fights with his right, and laughs all the time."

On the side of the hill was a large convent. It was shot up pretty badly, yet made fairly good quarters. Our whole regiment was billeted there that night. My company had the top floor. The rooms were just one mass of stuff — bedding, feminine attire of all kinds, furniture, crockery, strewn everywhere. The huns had pulled out everything and apparently taken anything of value. It was laughable to see our barrack that night. Some men had old beds with high sides, some huge box mattresses, others arranged feminine attire of delicate material for a soft, warm bunk.

Just before mess, I entered one of the large dormitory rooms. The First Platoon were lined up for parade, every man in skirts, or waists, or bonnets perched on the side of their heads, each Corporal carrying a parasol as a mark of his distinguished position. After all these boys had been through, after a hard day's hike, they still had the American boys' spirit of fun.

Down the winding Marne Valley the next day was as beautiful a trip as one could find in the world. We thoroughly enjoyed the scenery until the last stages of the trip, when the long, hard pull of twenty-four kilometers began to tell on us. We passed many fresh troops going up. Our boys laughed when they saw these new troops. Now many miles back of the lines, with their masks at the alert position, "Andy" Huppler alarmed them by shouting, "Get your masks ready, there's gas along here." And others increased their discomfort by a warning message, "They're shelling the road up here; get ready for it." Of course, no gas or shells within a dozen miles.

Our home now was Nanteuil-sur-Marne. A day off for rest and to get well settled, then drilling. Now, if there's one thing a soldier just back from the trenches detests, it's doing "squads right and squads wrong" eight or nine hours a day. We made it as interesting as possible for the men by putting in games; then we had a field day and ball games. Yet, at that, the sentiments of John Pendleton were echoed by most of the men — "Wish they'd send us back to the trenches, so we could get a rest."

Ten days of this, then back to Château Thierry again. This time, however, we were not ticketed for the trenches, but our "8 Chevaux, 40 Hommes" Pullmans took us a day later into Châtillon, back still farther to the rear.

Just outside the city we pitched our tents in a field, got the old kitchen going, animals watered, and men cleaned up, and spent a most delightful night. Off at six in the cool of the morning, we hiked until late in the afternoon. As we passed through towns in our area, companies would drop out of the regimental line and remain in the town where they were billeted. We were the last of all, and alone marched into Chemin d'Aisey.

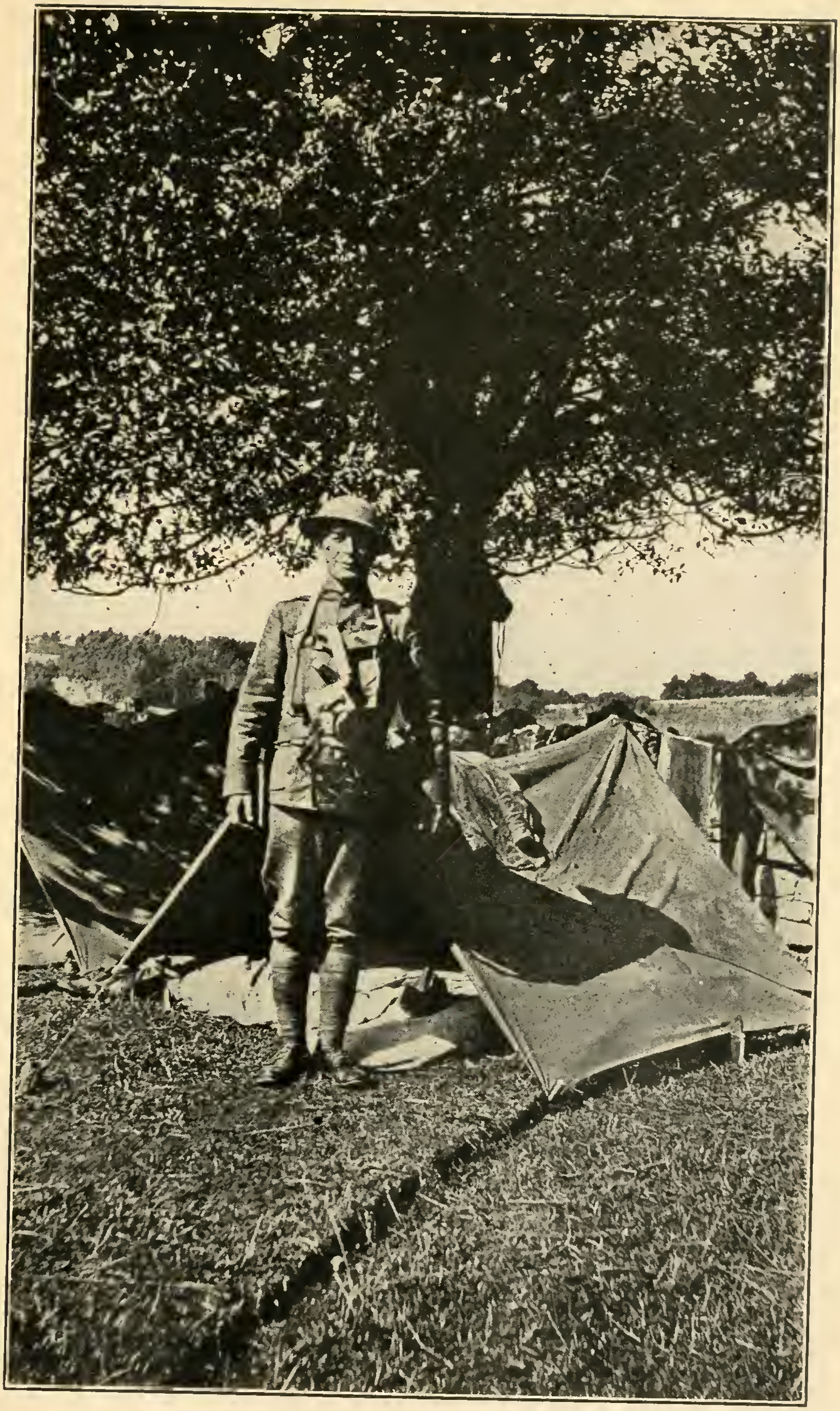
Nelson Fisher, our expert billeting Sergeant, had gone ahead to arrange our homes. Everything was all ready. The men had good clean barns, but many preferred to sleep in the open, so pitched tents in the fields. We were the first American troops ever seen in this town. All the inhabitants were out in force to greet us. They had heard of Château Thierry. They knew we were returning from the fray there. They made conquering heroes of us. Those good people brought out buckets of fresh milk and bread. They gave us straw for every man. And when we tried to pay them, they refused the money, saying, "Demain." But "demain" it was the same thing.

The French were the same everywhere — good, clean, wholesome folk that loved America and American soldiers next to their own beautiful country and their own delightful people. Our boys are just as keen for them, too.

The company now was very much changed from the company that left Boston nearly a year before. All of the original officers but myself were gone, transferred, sent as instructors to school or back to the States. First Sergeant Brad Jones had been commissioned in Infantry and had been killed in July. Bob Davis was now a Master Engineer. Oscar Bohlin, Bob Swain, and Harold Hayes had received commissions. It was hard to lose men like these from the company, but we were glad to see them become officers. Our Non-Coms had changed a good deal, and we had received more than a hundred replacements. The older men had taken these new men in hand, and all soon had the same D Company spirit that had prevailed for so long a time.

In this town we found a poor French woman, a refugee from the northern sector, where the huns had destroyed her home and all, while her husband was fighting. Here she was living in a little room in an abandoned house. Top Sergeant Gagnon found her and took me in to meet her. There was not a thing there but two old trundle-beds, in one of which were three little children, the oldest ten, in the other a fourth child, while the baby, about two, was in her arms. And nothing to eat! The boy, ten, supported the family. He left at seven each morning, walked three miles, and worked all day in a mill, receiving eleven cents a day. It was pathetic to us to see the poor woman just at dusk go down the road through the woods to meet her little boy so he would n't be afraid. You may be sure that bounteous meals for six were served at least three times a day by my boys all the time we were there. Then the boys passed the word around about laundry. The woman had so much of it she was figuring on hiring assistants when we left. They paid her well, and the little boy cut out his mill job for a while, too.

Usually, in striking a new town, after billeting the men, one of the first duties of a company officer was to investigate the café and liquor situation. Now, I want to tell you about the conditions regarding liquor in our Army over there. I find it is very much misunderstood. This case in Chemin d'Aisey is typical. There was one café in town. Now, a café over there cannot be compared to anything in our country. This one was run by a kind elderly woman. It was something like a country store. She sold little articles of clothing,



Our Last T. S.: First Sergeant Malcolm W. Gagnon, ready for Gas or Anything

knicknacks such as needles and thread, candy, and other things as well as wine. I explained the orders about selling liquor to soldiers, and she, like all other people there, obeyed them religiously. No liquor of any kind could be sold or given to a man in uniform except between the hours of five and eight-thirty at night. And at no time could hard liquor be sold. They were allowed to sell beer or light wines ("vin ordinaire"). Whiskey, gin, and drinks of that kind are unknown.

The French are not a drinking nation in our sense of the term. They nearly all drink wine, but drink it and use it almost as we do water. In a year in France I can honestly say I never saw a French man or woman intoxicated. Even these light wines that were obtainable at night very few of the men seemed to care for. Nothing of this nature was ever a part of the ration issue in our service as in some of the foreign armies. Such a thing as a "rum ration" before an attack is unknown. In fact, rum is absolutely forbidden in any form. In short, the drinking in our Army in France is practically a negligible quantity. A man in the service, as regards the liquor problem, is a hundred times better off over there than in his own country.

Our General Edwards, before we went to our first front, addressed our regiment in his masterful manner. He talked about our morals, how the eyes of our loved ones were upon us. He told us of stories that were being spread about immorality in our Army, and showed how we must live all the cleaner lives to offset this German propaganda. He told us of a minister in Massachusetts who said to his congregation, "When these men come back from war, don't let your sisters or your daughters associate with them. They are too immoral, they're filled with vile diseases."

An uglier falsehood was never spread abroad by any boche. The decency and purity of the men are remarkable. The "bête noir" of any army is venereal disease. In past wars some commands have been fifty to sixty per cent afflicted. In civil life, doctors say, twenty to thirty per cent of people have some form of sexual disease.

When I was in staff work we had in our office the official daily and sick report of the whole American Expeditionary Force. Never in the time I was there was the percentage as high as one half of one per cent, and in June, 1918, it was one nineteenth of one per cent. I'll defy any one to find a record like that in the world. It's not due to prophylactic treatment, not due to the strict orders; it is due to the clean, wholesome, respectable lives those men are living.

I've told you of the women of France and of their treatment of our boys, and I've told you of the respect shown the French women by our men. The stories of the women of Rolampont, of Bettaincourt, of Chemin d'Aisey, are typical of every little French town where American soldiers are billeted. No greater respect and chivalry could be shown to their own mothers or sisters. And yet stories are spread broadcast over this country of our "rough soldiers," their disorderly conduct with French women, American soldiers' insults to women — all dirty lies and German propaganda.

I've been with troops in France for one year, I've watched them closely, and I've yet to see an American soldier show anything but the deepest respect, the utmost chivalry, to any woman of France. If any one you know tells a different story, send him or her to me and I'll make him prove his case.

While in Chemin d'Aisey we received our fifth quota of replacement men. These were splendid fellows, mostly from the West, and made good soldiers. Our little company was changing a great deal. In some ways it was a good thing for us all. Now all thought of whether a man was of the selective draft, or in the service before the war, was gone. No longer was there a man of the National Guard, of the National Army, or of the Regulars. We were all the Army of the United States. All

THE OFFICERS

First Lieutenant Bateman, Captain Swan,
Second Lieutenant Daniels

CAPTAIN SWAN AND "FRANK," THE PRIDE OF THE STABLE

wearing the U.S., working and fighting "one for all and all for one."

The men seemed to enjoy the drilling while in this place. We tried to make it interesting in every way. We arranged several maneuver problems, part of the company being an enemy. The keenness of the men to win a decision was a joy to the officers. One time we had an all-day problem, fighting over again the battle of Trugny. Lieutenant Bateman took one platoon and fought a rear-guard machine-gun action. The rest of us went after them. We called them the huns. They called us the huns. It made the rivalry greater.

A mile or two outside of town my forces were checked by a rapid-fire gun. We "lost heavily" before we could locate it. "Lon" Edwards, one of the enemy, was found with one of our "chau-chauts" under a haystack in the field to our left. We had horsemen for messengers — our wagoners. The way those boys rode would have filled a ranchman's heart with delight. Every man was as anxious to win as if we were actually real enemies. We fought it out, and at noon decided to call it a draw. Then we went into the woods and each man cooked up his own mess. The pack-mules under old Bob Davis, now Master Engineer, brought bacon and potatoes and tomatoes. We had a feast fit for the gods.

Coming back into our town at dusk, I brought the company to attention. Bob Turner bugled, "You're in the Army now," and we marched by the applauding townsfolk like the veterans we now felt we were.

A few days later came the blow — to me.

Colonel Bunnell sent for me.

"Captain, I have news that will make you feel badly, I know, but it's all for the good of the cause. I consider this a great compliment, and you must look upon it as such. You are ordered back to America to join a new Division and come back with it."

My Colonel that morning treated me like a favorite brother, and gave me much of his wholesome advice and counsel. I did feel this sudden order as a compliment after his talk, but when I thought of my company and of leaving those boys forever, all the joy was taken out of life. Fortunately, I yet had a few days, as we were going to the front again.

Many farewells to our good friends in Chemin d'Aisey, a hike to Châtillon, a long ride on the Tenth Century Limited, and it seemed no time at all before we were detraining and hiking again back in the land of the "Big Doings."

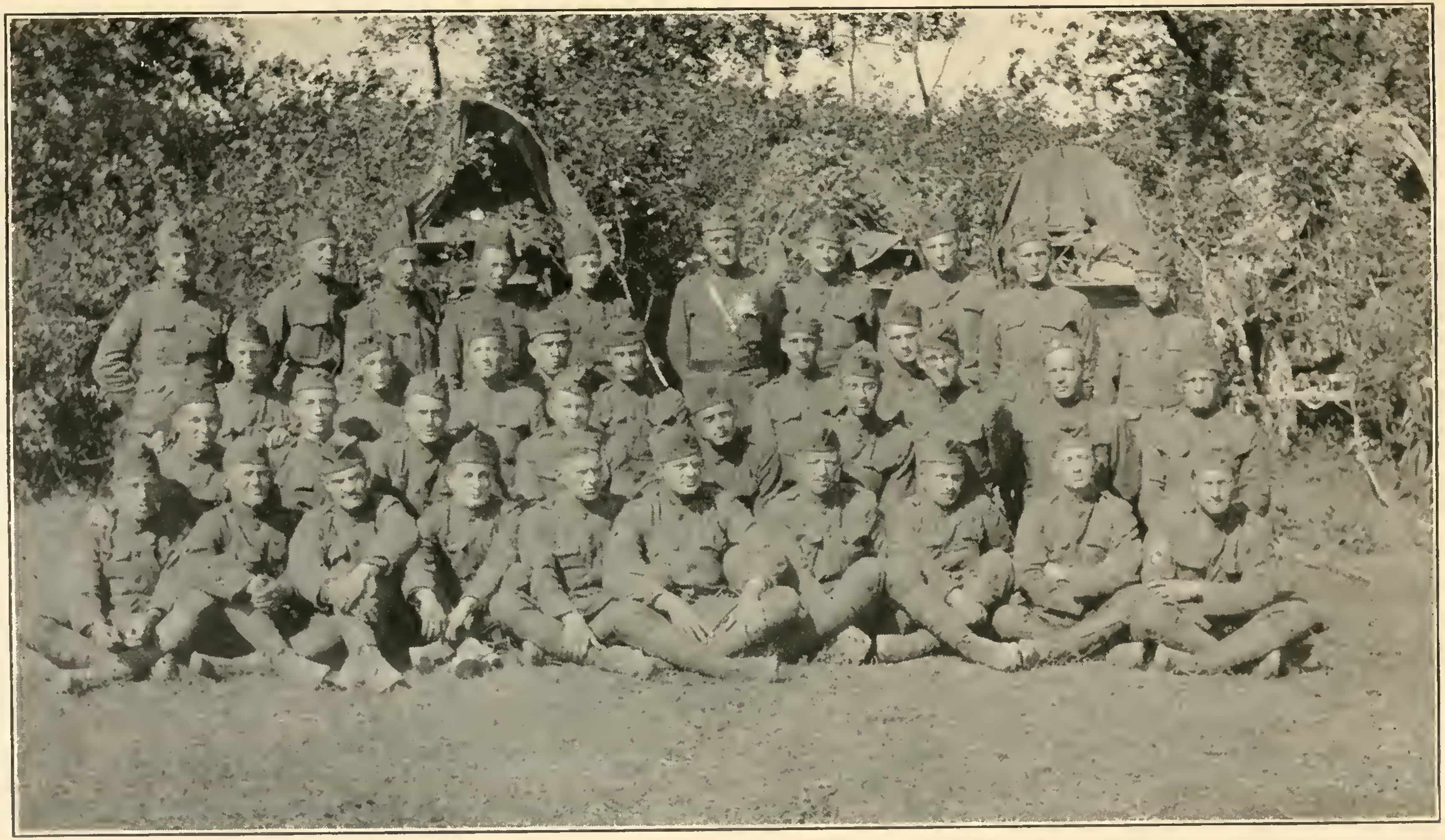
Just before we left Chemin d'Aisey, "Skeeter" Lyman scoured the country for extra "chow." He came back with two sheep and a large quantity of new potatoes which he was able to buy from the farmers.

On our hike, instead of "canned Willy," or "monkey meat," the company had as delectable a fresh lamb stew as one could wish for. No one knew what conditions we should have at this front, so we made the most of that delicious stew. We marched nights and rested in the woods in the daytime.

Now, approaching Verdun, "Joe" had it we were going to Saint-Mihiel and were to start something as we had done at Château Thierry. Again we heard the roar of the big guns, again saw the beautiful pyrotechnics at night. And it all brought back the same feeling of exhilaration we had experienced our first time at the front, away back in February.

Then the fateful day for me came, the day I was ordered to leave. We were almost at Verdun, and it was especially hard to go under such circumstances. It was impossible to assemble the company as close up as this. I called all my Non-Coms together, shook each by the hand, and said farewell to them and through them to the men.

As I rode away, they lined up for a parting salute. When I looked at those splendid, clean-cut, courageous men, realized all we had been through together, and thought of their loyalty and untiring efforts for our company and for me, a terrible feeling came to me. Something within seemed to rebel. It was an



THE NON-COMS REMAINING AT THE FINISH

Taken the last day; the Captain in the center

effort to go on and leave those men for good and all.

Sailing up New York Harbor, I stood on the forward deck of the largest ship afloat, the Leviathan. The old Statue of Liberty, at last, was a reality right in front of us. Steamers and tugs everywhere were making a noisy demonstration. People were waving from buildings and docks: a picture we all had dreamed of a thousand times. It was a wonderful and exciting scene. After a whole year away at war, I was again gazing at my own, my native land. My very heart and soul were stirred beyond words. Yet my heart went out to those lads over the seas, away up there fighting, perhaps dying. Those splendid, brave, gallant boys, the finest God ever made — the boys of My Company.

THE END

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