Was There Such A Thing in the WORLD'S GREAT WAR

as

# T H E  L O S T  B A T T A L I O N

by

Battalion Sergeant-Major WALTER J. BALDWIN
First Battalion, 308th Infantry
77th Division
A. E. F.

A LIST OF THOSE WHO TOOK PART IN THAT AFFAIR KNOWN AS

"THE LOST BATTALION"

## 308 INFANTRY.

## FIRST BATTALION HDQTS.

Major Chas. W. Whittlesey, medal of honor
Corp. Walter J. Baldwin, Div. Cit. Hdqts.
Pvt. James F. Larney, Hdqts. (wounded)
" George Botelle, Co. C. Div. Cit. (wounded)
" Philip Cepeglia, Co. C. D. S. C.
" Robert Manson, Co. B
" Omer Richard, Hdqts.
" Irving L. Liner, Co. D., D. S. C.
" Albert Harlin, Co. D.
" David Tulchin, Co. C.
" Theodore Tollefson, Hdqts. (missing)
" William J. Powers, Hdqts.
Bn. Sergt. Mgr. Benjamin F. Gaedeke, Hdqts. Div. Cit. (killed)
Pvt. Joseph Friel, Co. A. D. S.C. (killed)

### Company A, 308 Infantry.

Second Lieut. Henry J. Williamson, Div. Cit.
Sergt. Herman G. Anderson
Corp. Irving Klein (wounded)
Corp. Alfred P. Nauheim
Pvt. Grover C. Johnson
" Roy E. John
" Innocenza Cella
" Anthony Hiduck (wounded)
" John Collins (wounded)
" Nie B. Mettam.
" Stephen Wondowlesky, Div. Cit.
" Rubin Hudlow (wounded)
" Henry Erickson (wounded)
" Wayne W. Martin
" Bert C. McCoy (wounded)
" Kennedy K. Kelly (killed)
" Roland P. Judd (killed)
" William Johnson (killed)
"

### Company B, 308 Infantry.

Corp. Albert Copsey, Div.Cit.
Sergt. Samuel Marcus
Sergt. Harry J. Hermsdorf.
Corp. George Duffy
Corp. Martin McMahon (wounded)
Corp. Richard W. Mathews
Pvt. Thomas Dunnigan
" Francis Feeney
" Sigurd V. Swanson
" Joseph Macali (wounded)
" Thomas Harris
" Bart Amatetti
" Clyde C. A. Hintz
" Walter Hanson
" John T. Flynn.
" James A. Keegan
" Philip Kornelly (wounded)

Company B, 308 Infantry, cont.

Pvt. Matin O. Lokken, Div. Cit.
" Wm. Ziegenbalg
" Lawrence Pomeroy
" Harry Bickmore
" Walter S. Peterson (wounded)
" Agel Geanekos
" Clarence Peters
" James Hearty (wounded)
" David H. Baker (wounded)
" Emery Bronson (wounded)
" Henry J. Cadieux (wounded)
" Louis Morris (wounded)
" Bonaventura Pistoria (wounded)
" Charles H. Chavelle (wounded)
" John Holt (wounded)
" Barney Greenfield
" John Reiger (wounded)
" Orlander Sketson (missing)
" Raymond Hammond
" Leonard Glenn
" Peter Evans (wounded)
" Stanislaus Albis (wounded)
" Stanley P. Bradshaw (wounded)
Second Lieut. Harry M. Rogers (killed) D. S. C.
Sergt. Lawrence Osborne (killed)
Pvt. Hyman Gallob (killed)
" Grant S. Norton (killed)
" William C. Halligan (killed) Div. Cit.
" Arthur A. Beske (killed)
" Carlton V. Knott (killed)
" Arthur H. Jones (killed)
" Joseph B. Drydal (killed)
" Earl F. Jepson (killed)
" Sylvester Hoven (killed)
" William M. Holliday (killed)
" Carl Hilderbrand (killed)
" Frank Karpinsky (wounded)

Company C, 308 Infantry.

Capt. Leo. A. Stromee (wounded)
Second Lieut. Leo. W. Trainor (wounded)
Sergt. Lionel Bendheim, (wounded)
Sergt. Raymond Blackburn
Sergt. John Colasacco
Sergt. William Jacob
Sergt. Fred T. Main
Sergt. Bert B. Morrow
Corpl. Joseph K. Baldwin
Corpl. Joseph Bennarowicz
Corp. Thomas Brennen (wounded)
Corp. Jacob Held
Corp. Jack Tucker
Pvt. Stanilsaw Kosikowski, D. S. C.

Company C, 308 Infantry. (cont.)

Pvt. Clifford T. Brown, D. S. C.
" Louis Baskin
" Arthur E. Benson
" Henry Cassidy (wounded)
" Percy Charlesworth (wounded)
" Cavin Coppiclo
" James T. Condon
" Edward T. Curley (wounded)
" John Crosby (wounded)
" Lee H. Downs
" Joseph J. Fortunato
" Charles L. Frink (wounded)
" Joseph Giganti
" Albert Morris
" John Murphy
" Morris Richter
" Harry Semenuk
" John L. Voorheis
" George Kiem
" Joseph King
" Lewis O'Brein
" Frank J. Kostinen
" Otto R. Hatcher
" Walter J. Krantz
" Archie F. Larkin
" Erik Larson
" Frank N. Lauder
" Leo J. Jacoby
" Raymond Johnson (wounded)
" Chester Lysen
" Stephen Marchlewski
" Cecil Lowman
" George Mayhew
" Joseph L. McGowan
" Robert L. Mears
" Olin McPeron
" William Mission
" Wyatt L. Holden
" Dominick Indiana
" Emil Kaufman
" William Monk
" Fred Olson
" Charles Pinkstone (wounded)
" Stacy M. Hicks
" Max Lesnick
" Charles Oxman
" Lester Griswold (wounded)
" Hohn McCabe
" William W. Armstrong
" Louis N. Hazen (wounded)
" Niles F. Cunningham
" Constantine Vittulli (wounded)
" Charles Wallenstein
" Benedetto Sgro
" Martin Tuite, Div. Cit.
" Joseph H. Puniskis
" Fred A. Mendell (wounded)

Company C, 308 Infantry (cont.)

Pvt. Lars Olsen
" Andrew Payne (wounded)
" Roy L. Marion
" Lucien St. Cartier (killed)
" John Hinchman (killed)
" David Gladd (killed)
" Eugene McGrath (killed)
" Samuel Feuerlicht (killed)
" John Damcott (killed)
" Joseph Castrogiovanna (killed)
" John Reynolds (killed)
Second Lieut. Gordon L. Schenck. Div. Cit. (killed)
Pvt. Catino Carnebucci (killed)
To the Second Platoon of this company the French Republic awarded the Croix de Guerre.

Company E, 308 Infantry

First Lieut. J. V. Leak (wounded and missing, Oct. 4, 1918.)
Second Lieut. Victor A. Harrington (wounded and missing Oct. 4, 1918.)
Pvt. Sidney Rose (wounded)
" Joseph R. Pennington (wounded)
" Patrick Maney (wounded)
" George H. Chiswell (wounded)
" Frank Habeck (wounded)
" Arnold M. Morem (wounded)
" Jacob Kaspirovitch (wounded)
" Walter L. Domrose (missing)
Sergt. Frederick W. Baldwin
Corpl. Peter C. Judis
Pvt. Robert M. Pardue
" Harold Brennen
" Raymond Flynn
" Vitto Ratto
" John L. Del Sasso
" Joseph Yitkus
Corpl. Ernest S. Merry (killed)
Pvt. Olaf W. Swanson (killed)
" Henry Miller (killed) Div. Cit.

Company G 308 Infantry

Second Lieut. Fred Buhler (wounded)
Second Lieut. Sherman W. Eager Div. Cit.
Sergt. Amos Todisco (wounded)
" Jeremiah Healey ( wounded)
" Harry Freeman ( wounded)
" Mark C. Hagerman
CorP. James Dolan (wounded) Div. Cit.
" Joseph Kennedy
Mech. John Solmidt (wounded)
BuglerGeorge M. Englander (wounded)
Pvt. Truman P. Fairbanks (wounded)
" Robert Gafanowitz (wounded)
" Frank Pollinger (wounded) Div. Cit.
" William Holzer (wounded)

Company G 308 Infantry (cont.)

Pvt. Ernest J. Ridion (wounded)
" Michael Mele (wounded)
" Peter A. Fitzgerald (wounded)
" William Regan
" Patrick O'Connor (killed) Div. Cit.
" Guiseppe Santini
" Jesse J. McCauley
" Ludvig Blomseth
" Arthur R. Lovell
" Oscar Potter (wounded)
" Arthur Erikson
" Dennis A. Gallagher (wounded)
" James E. Slingerland
" Eugene Selg
" John Conneally
" James R. Woods
" William Schultz
" Frederick L. Wilbur (wounded)
" Nathaniel Miller (wounded)
" Frederick Elliott (wounded)
" Glenn H. Heaver (wounded)
" Ernest Wornek (wounded) Div. Cit.
" Frank Delgrasso (wounded)
" Myron D. Perrigo (wounded)
" Oscar Wallen (wounded)
" Antonio Trigani
" Rito Mares
" Gust. Dahlgren (wounded)
" Benjamin Pagliaro
" Osra Deadderick
" Joseph Schanz
Corp. Haakon A. Rossum (wounded) Div. Cit.
Pvt. Herman Edlund
" Melvin E. Clemons
" Ray E. Laymann
Corp. Holger Peterson (killed)
Pvt. William Martin (killed)
" William A. Begley (killed
" John Boden (killed)
" Lauren G. Reid (killed)
" Paul F. Andrews (killed) Div. Cit.
" James Bruton (killed)
" Albert A. Ross (killed)
Sergt. Michael Greally (killed)

Company H 308 Infantry

First Lieut. William J. Cullen, D. S. C.
" " Maurice V. Griffin (wounded) Div. Cit.
Sergt. Patrick J. Landers
Corp. Charles B. Cornell
" Harry L. Schaffer (wounded)
" John Balden (wounded)
Sergt. Edwin C. Brown (wounded)
Corp. Olaf Nilson
Pvt. Herbert M. Drake
" William C. Burns
" William J. Lucy

Company E 308 Infantry (cont.)

Pvt. Frank T. Astes
" T Stenger
" John A. Le Kearney
" Joseph W. Cathcart
" Harry L. Damon
" Arthur J. Hecker
" Clyde Hepworth (wounde )
" John Renda (wounded)
" Henry P. Fleming
" Gabe Elkin
" Edward Swanson
" Isidore Speigel
" John Delserone (wounded)
" Blaze Stolanoff
" Melvin G. Sunby
" Elmer E. Bent
" Earl A. Flack
" Andrew Mathews
" Sydney C. Mann
" Roy Cummings
" Andrew J. Tussaas
" Enrique Perea
" Albert K. Stelchen
" Olaf Erdahl
" Harold B. Neptune (wounded)
" Edward Holbert
Corp. Wilbur C. Whiting
Pvt. Lyle J. Edwards
" Fernnau Miller
" Siguard Gaupset (wounded)
" Frank Mauro (wounded)
" Joseph Joyce (wounded)
" John B. Swartz (wounded)
" Herbert B. Gibson (wounded)
" Charles Ritter (wounded)
" Henry H. Senter (wounded)
" LLoyd A. Huntington (wounded)
" James R. Strickland (wounded)
" William E. Franeis (wounded)
" Josephus Powell (wounded)
" Oscar Willis (wounded)
" Joseph Chambers (wounded)
" Angel Orlando (wounded)
" Richard R. Coe (wounded)
" Arthur F. Joatney (wounded)
" Conrad Engen (wounded)
" Albert R. Witthans (wounded)
" Stanley Sobaszkewicz (wounded)
" Louis B. Caldwell
" Aron Robertson
" Scott R. White
" Daniel A. Krauss
" John A. Stanfield
" James T. Tesley
" Solomon C. Rhonds
" Ben L. Jeffiner
" Robert Dodd

Company H 308 Infantry (cont'd)

Pvt. Hugo T. Unterreiner
" Isidore Ostrovsky
" Joseph Reyall
" Sidney Smith, Div. Sit
" Frank G. S. Erickson
" Lowell T. Hollingshead (wounded)
" Thomas A. Clay (wounded)
" Cecil L. Duryea (wounded)
" Otto Wheeler
" Jack Rocko
" Emil A. Peterson (wounded)
" Henry C. Ruth (Killed)
" Henry Miller (killed)
" Ancel E. Fussett (killed)
" Raymond C. Clark (killed)
" William J. Lorkman (killed)
" Robert J. Little (killed)
" Henry C. Luckett (killed)
" Samuel Rosenberg (killed)
" Thomas Cavello (killed)
" Jesse J. Mendenhall (killed)
" Richard T. Hyde (killed)
" George J. Nies (killed)
" Harold H. Thomas (killed)
" Leonard G. Gitchell (killed)
" Thomas J. Lyons (killed)
" Alfred T. Erickson (killed)
Corp. Charles G. Tuma (killed)
Pvt. Lewis Zeaman (killed)
" Hiram M. Rugg (killed)
" Theodore Hanson (killed)
" Henry Chinn (killed)

Medical Detachment, 77th 1st & 2nd Battalions, 308th Infantry.

Pvt. Irving Sirota
" James M. Bragg, D. S. C.
" John Gehris

2nd Battalion Hdqrs. 308th Infantry.

Acting-Major, Capt. George A. Mowtry, Co. E. (wounded), medal of honor.
Lieut-Major Clarence C. Mossek, Hqts. Co. Div. Sit.
Sn. Sgt. Pvt. Daniel V. Fellon, Co. E. (killed) Div. Sit.
Pvt. James Price Co. E.
Sergt. Gerard Kirshner Co. A. Sn. Lieut (N. Y. C.), Div. Sit.

Battalion Runners

CorP. Arthur A. Doherty, Co. E (wounded)
Pvt. Frank D. S. Fredette, Co. F
" John Sichorn, Co. F
" Peter H. White, Co. F
" John J. McCallion, Co. F
" Ralph C. Dunham, Co. F
" Herbert Gross, Co. E
" Edward Stringer, Co. E
" Charles J. Pugh, Co. E
" Carl A. Rainwater, Co. G
" Spiro Rayony, Co. G
" Harry Thorson, Co. G. (wounded)
" Clarence Patterson, Co. G
" Reuben H. Allstedt, Co. G. (wounded)
" John R. Hamilton, Co. H
" Amnon Chupp, Co. H (wounded)
" Michael J. Lucas, Co. E

Battalion Scouts

CorP. Bernard Gillece, Co. E Div. Cit.
Pvt. Herbert Jorgenson, Co. C (wounded)

2nd Battalion Hdqrs., 308th Infantry.

Pvt. Lester T. Sands Co. H
Alfred Rodriguez Co. H Pvt.
Pvt. John Delmont, CO. H
" Irving F. Greenwald Co. E (wounded)
" Joseph Levine, Co. E
" John O'Keefe, Co. E (wounded)
" Joseph Kiernan, Co. E
" Arthur Jorgenson, Co. E
" Martin Ellbogen, Co. F (wounded)
" Arthur Solomon, Co. F
" Harrison Dayo, Co. F
" David Magnusson, Co. F (wounded)
" Anthony Anastasia, Co. F
" Walter Weiner, Co. F
" Farland F. Wade, Co. G (wounded)
" Arthur G. Nelson, Co. H (wounded)
" Alfred E. Summers, Co. H
" Henry W. Goldhorn, Co. H
" Alfred J. Petti, Co. H
" George Koebler, Co. H (wounded)
" Theodore Ingraham, Co. F
" William Bedrna, Co. F
" Michael Kelly, Co. E
" Percy Grossberg, Co. G
" Edward L. Wenzel, Co. H
" Harold Arnold, Co. F (killed)
" Homer Reysen, Co. G. (killed)
" John Ruppe, Co. H (killed)

Co. C, 306th Machine Gun Battalion

Second Lieut. Alfred A. Noon (killed)
Corpl. Frank Ranchle
Pvt. Lee C. Markleroad
" Henry C. Cornell (wounded)
" Lee A. Flower
" Charles T. Kolbe (wounded)
" Maurice H. Rohan
" McElroy
" Ritz
" Keeney
" Richardson
" Louis N. Johnson (killed)
" Gustave Becker, (killed)

Co. B 306th Machine Gun Battalion

Second Lieut. Marshall C. Peabody (killed)
Second Lieut. Maurice P. Reynes (wounded)
Sergt. George E. Hauch
" Maurice E. Johnson
" Julius Saekman
" Edwin S. Mynard, Div. Cit.
Corpl. Joseph C. Keenan
" James P. O'Connell
" Frank C. Rector, Div. Cit.
" Arthur A. Thompson
" Chauncey I. Rice
Pvt. George Eggleston
" Leslie C. Torpey
" Joseph D. Kelly (wounded)
" James E. Lonergan (wounded)
" Walter T. Oliver (wounded)
" Joseph J. Schmitz (wounded)
" Joseph Stamboni (wounded) D. S. C.
" Courtney W. Tolley
" Morris Cohen (wounded)
" Martin J. Crotley (wounded)
" Edward A. Kennedy (wounded)
" John H. Scanlon (wounded)
" Bernard J. Sweeney (wounded)
" George H. Brennan
" William J. Wright
" Garch
" Holt
Sergt. Robert J. Graham (killed)
Corpl. Martin Becker (killed)
Corpl. John F. Ryan (killed)
Corpl. Lee K. Morey (killed)
Bugler Thomas C. O'Keefe (killed)
Pvt. Louis Diesil (killed)
" Frank C. Dennick (killed)
" Nathan Clarke (killed)
" James H. Conrad (killed)

Co. C, 306th Machine Gun Battalion

Pvt. E. N. Dingledine (killed)
" Anthony Cantillo (killed)
" John R. Travers (killed)

Company K, 307th Infantry.

Capt. Nelson M. Holderman (wounded) D.S.C.
First Lieut. Thomas G. Pool (wounded) D.S.C.
Sergt. James Murphy, absent, sick in hospital, D.S.C. Div. Cit.
" Boyd S. Hatch
" Joseph P. Heher
" James A. Deahan
" James Carroll
Corpl. George Sims
" Bert. M. Green
" George Gilley
" Alonzo D. Blanchard
" Robert F. Bradford
" George F. Speich
" Paul A. Schwartz (absent; sick in hospital)
First class Pvt. Samuel A. Altiera
First class Pvt. Isadore Willinger (missing in action)
Mech. Lester Underhill
Pvt. Charles I. Adams
" Louis Berg
" Charles F. Christ
" Hans Christensen (absent; sick in hospital)
" John Connolly (wounded; im hospital)
" Thomas H. Gill
" George Hoadley
" Albert O. Kaempfer (wounded; in hospital)
" Frank J. Lyons
" Tobias Meyerowitz
" Thomas Murray
" William F. Brew (absent; sick in hospital)
" Frank Stingle (wounded; in hospital)
" Salvatore Pesetti
" Calegere Pope
" Bennie E. Tornquist (absent; sick in hospital)
" William Kelmel (absent; sick in hospital)
" Frank Hogue (absent; sick in hospital)
" Ralph Brinkent (wounded; in hospital)
" John Bang (killed)
" Micheal Lekan (killed)
" Benjamin Roberts (wounded; sick in hospital)
" Roscoe G. Church (killed)
" William P. Crouse (killed)
" Lumeme Schettine
" Leonard Beebe (wounded; in hospital)
" Pietro Tost (wounded; in hospital)
" John Faro (wounded; in hospital)
" Joseph Spallina (wounded; in hospital)
" Edward Baker (wounded; in hospital)
" Leonard Beeson (wounded; in hospital)
" John Karaluinas (wounded; in hospital)
" Clifford Thomas (wounded; in hospital)
" Victor L. Bringham (wounded; in hospital)
"

Company K, 367th Infantry.

Pvt. Floyd Berleu (absent; sick in hospital)
" Joseph Christopher (wounded; in hospital)
" Arthur E. Fein (wounded; in hospital)
" William Knabe (wounded in hospital)
" Isaac Lipscher (wounded; in hospital)
" Giles Ofstad(wounded; in hospital)
" Albert E. Martin (wounded; in hospital)
" Thornwolad Rosby (wounded; in hospital)
" Leory A. Stumbo
" Arthur Schwanbeck (wounded; in hospital)
" Ray Treadwell
" Otto Velz (wounded; in hospital)
" Guiseppe Scialdone (wounded in hospital)
" Charles F. Adams
" Abraham Krotoschinsky
" Thomas J. Mannion (absent; sick in hospital)
" Gus Andersnn (killed)
" Harvey R. Cole (killed)
" Charley Johnson (killed)
" Frank Lipasti (killed)
" Wilbert F. Rumsey (killed)
" Joseph Prusek
" Vincent Witschen (absent; sick in hospital)
" James P. Felton Wounded; in hospital)
" Alfred Hendrickson (wounded; in hospital)
" Arthur Hicks (wounded; in hospital)
" David O. Jones (
" Kenneth Murray
" Jacob C. Phelps (wounded; in hospital)
" Carl A. Anderson
" Herbert Bueskins (wounded; in hospital)
" Giovanni Bivalace (wounded; in hospital)
" Gilbert Brown (missing in action)
" James Chamberlain
" Philip Christensen (absent; sick in hospital)
" Timothy Connolly
" Albert A. Etoneuer
" Peter Gibbons
" George Huff (absent; sick in hospital
" John J. Kenttel
" Joseph Lohmeier (absent; sick in hospital)
" Patsy Long (absent; sick in hospital)
" Joseph Materna
" Robert F. Menan
" Andrew Olstrom (sick in hospital)
" John L. Pierson
" Bert L. Bowers (wounded; in hosptial)

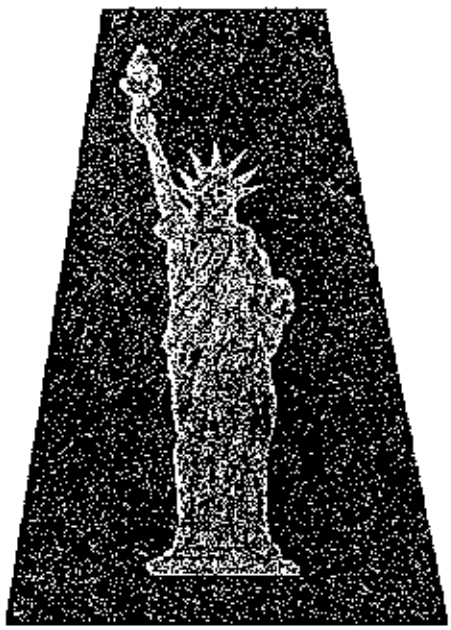
-FOREWORD-

Ever since the World's Great War, much has been said either pro or con in referring to two incidents coupled with the life of part of the 77th Division, which perhaps has never been authentically explained in referring to the world famed expression "The Lost Battalion", and the exact words of Major Whittlesey, on the memorial occasion when the German Commander demanded the surrender of his forces.

I will not attempt to enter into a controversy with those whose military or strategical education may be superior to mine, but after reading my own experiences and personal observations, while with Major Whittlesey, and the so-called "Lost Battalion", I am quite content to rest the case, feeling safe in letting the reader judge if the appellation "Lost Battalion" has been correctly applied to the entrance of the cut-off battalion into the pocket of death.

There is one thing which in some manner gained unwarranted prominence and spread through the Universe, as coming from the lips of Major Whittlesey, when he received the note of the German Commander, which is without a particle of truth. Major Whittlesey never made use of the expression "Go to hell", but the American wounded and bewildered soldier presented the historical words.

Walter J. Baldwin
Battalion Sergeant Major
1st Battalion, 308 Infantry,
77th Division.



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# THE LOST BATTALION

*a memoir by*
*Battalion Sergeant-Major Walter J. Baldwin*
*First Battalion, 308th Infantry*
*77th Division*
*A.E.F.*

Chapter I.
-The Drafted Man-

WAR! That gruesome spectre held so long in check by the skillful hand of President Woodrow Wilson, in his diplomatic relations with the imperious potentates of Germany and Austria during Europe's struggle for supremacy, had at last been forced on peace-loving America and the expectant declaration found her citizens calm, but moved with a grim determination to see it through to the bitter end. For years the disinterested spirit of apathy shown by the average American toward war or the machinery of strife, had aroused false impressions in the breasts of those across the sea whose lives from birth were honeycombed with militarism, as little short of down-right folly, so naturally America and her glaring unpreparedness had eventually become the universal by-word, for the jeers and sneers of European jealousy.

Here stood the richest and most resourceful country in the world, calmly basking in the sunlight of it's own power and greatness, with but a mere handful of defenders, whose citizens solidly entrenched behind the bulwarks of successful business, were loth to concern themselves with the rest of the world or war and its exigency. From the drift of the daily correspondence passing between Washington and the foreign powers, the torch of contempt for this passive weakness had already been applied to A merican dignity, while gradually the military heel began to trample on her neutrality, until the honor of Uncle Sam, bid fair to be finally dragged in the dust of Prussian Imperialism. Though few Americans held doubts of the ultimate result, still the hideous truth of that unpreparedness, now arose with renewed vigor to every citizen of the Nation.

To be sure we had a great navy, second to none and perhaps even superior to anything afloat in ships, guns and the well trained men who manned them, but it must be honestly admitted, our army was woefully deficient and wholly inadequate to cope with the gigantic trained forces three thousand miles away, who were locked in a death struggle. The defy to America was therefore the acid test of her ingenuity. She must show the world her ability to quickly organize and train an army, equal to any abroad within so short a space of time, that even the shrewdest military tacticians from every quarter of the globe openly declared the impossible. Technically, America was face to face in the crisis of a lost art. Her careless indifference of the past was now reacting as a boomerang, while the hearts of the sorely tried Allies were beating trustfully, as they anxiously marked time.

"But", argued the patriotic American, "America has always gloried in showing the world how to accomplish the impossible. History shows too, we were never rightly prepared until the fateful hour and when once the Yank had gained a fair start, the goal was always reached, crowned with victory." The briefness of the Spanish-American war, and the invasion of Mexico, by General Pershing in his chase of the bandit Villa was but a small sample of what could be done in an

emergency, and had gone far toward stiffening the spine of those who might lean to the European idea of American impotency. So now with the very first murmur of war, we find the country aflame with the spirit of conquest and a rush made by the flower of American youth, to be the first to enlist for the honor and pride of Old Glory. Thousands upon thousands had already entered the services and were working zealously in the numerous training camps that had sprung up and dotted the land from coast to coast. Truly the nation had awakened from its lethargy and was living up to its reputation of doing the unusual on a large scale. Out on the streets at almost any hour of the day or night, recruiting officers exhorted and heckled the crowds of young men to join the colors now, and be the first to reach the shores of France. Silently and reverently the multitude listened and watched the outstretched finger of the orator, which seemed to pierce the soul of the timid or laggard, while within the minds of those who hesitated, came a stern battle with conscience.

"I must join", was the settled thought of everyone. Some, too, made mental calculations on "What will become of home, mother and sister with the loss of my job." Others held back to see what Jack or Jim would do, or the greater necessity of straightening out personal affairs but in the heart of every mother's son, came an inborn desire to don the uniform and carry a gun for the victory of American arms. All the while those scorching words of the glib talker kept ringing accusingly in their ears. "You owe it to your home, your family, your flag and your country. Join now".

It was estimated nothing short of ten million men would suffice to show America's strength and uphold her integrity, therefore, the Washington Administration lost no time in mustering its forces with a will. To expedite this demand came the draft, where my lot was cast with the hundreds of thousands who received the Nation's call and on June 5th, 1917, I took my place in line patiently waiting my turn to register, after which I tucked my card away carefully in an inside pocket and wandered off with a sigh of relief. That innocent looking little pasteboard, bore the printed number "75", giving no inkling of its importance, nor the wonderful future and experience that was to come unto a life, that had never been the least concerned in anything military, but today, its gift of adventure would not be exchanged for all the gold in the Treasury.

On June 20th, 1917, a hand in Washington was thrust into a large bowl and a blindfolded man picked number after number from among millions, whose series would be called, incidently putting every registrant in much the same frame of mind, as the man who has hopes of holding the winning ticket in a lottery. Each edition of the daily press was now scanned eagerly by everyone who possessed a registration card. In the subways, surface cars, elevated trains, ferry boats and the highways and byways, could be seen anxious men in all walks of life earnestly bent on the same mission, seriously studying the latest news and figures of the great draft to come. A look of sober, thoughtful expectation was plainly discernable on the faces of all. Even though theirs had

not appeared, perhaps the number of a brother, relative or friend might be on that long list, upon whom fate had set its seal. Fortune had not overlooked me, for sure enough, there it was number "75", seeming to grow larger and larger each time I gazed upon it and right up with the first six hundred called.

I shall never forget the feeling of exultation which sent the blood tinkling through my veins in what seemed new-born life. I now began to realize in earnest, that I was on the road to become one of my country's vast army. Every fibre beat with the enthusiasm that arose to the occasion. Was I fit? Would I pass the severe physical examination? These and kindred thoughts filled my brain in a whirl of expectation, until the call a few short weeks later set all such fears at rest, for I had gone through the trying ordeal with flying colors and had been pronounced sound and eligible to shoulder a gun. Then came the first signs of public interest New York City took in her drafted men. A dinner was arranged in honor of all those who had been accepted, by the Local Chamber of Commerce, and was a never-to-be-forgotten gathering, where good-fellowship and happiness reigned supreme. Songs and stories accompanied the good things we ate, with plenty of choice smokes thrown in. As an added attraction, an army officer in full uniform gave a brief outline of what was before us, elaborating on the clean healthy life of the soldier and impressing upon the future rookie the importance of a great American army to the Nation and it's citizens. "When this war is over, every one of you, will fully realize what a wonderful thing it is to be a real A merican, who has done his duty", he concluded.

After what seemed a long unnecessary delay, we were again summoned to appear at the Local Board's office, on October 11th, ready to start for camp and its routine of drills. What a sight that office presented on this particular morning. A queer but inspiring picture, bearing all the marks of an immigrant landing station. Here could be found the jovial wit of some Irish lad whose brogue and brilliant sallies helped to brighten the spirits of many. The Italian-American, German-American, Greek-American, Spanish-American and the Jewish sons whose ancestry touched every quarter of the globe, were as much interested in the proceedings as the native-born New Yorker, who perhaps had never been nearer the old world than Coney Island's shore. Some carried newspaper bundles, faded blankets or battered suit-cases, but all had evidently come to some telepatic understanding, by presenting themselves in the oldest clothes that could be found, to huddle together in the common bond of new formed comradship.

The Local Board's office seemed topsy-turvy that morning, and the executives apparently were lost in the confusion, for we were checked and rechecked until the thing had become a burdensome nuisance, so when the announcement came at last to board the waiting buses that headed for the big Pennsylvania Station, a hearty cheer went up, that was only duplicated by the crowds who sent us away lightheartedly.

## Chapter II.
## -Camp Upton-

How many New Yorkers had ever taken the trouble to view the grand estates of Long Island, ride over the beautiful country whose widespread dimensions seem almost limitless, or had ever heard of the town of Yaphank, within it's domain? Yet this calm, peaceful spot which suddenly sprung into the lime-light, was destined to become famous as one of National Army's greatest training camps, that will go down in history under the name of "Upton", and whose thousands of graduated played no mean part in the World's Great War.

To be truthful, many of us had never heard of the place before, nor laid eyes on any other site used for the purpose, and it was not without some feeling of misgiving and strange ideas of this rural hamlet, that we alighted from the crowded train and looked out upon the scene spread before us from the little wooden platform. In the distance could be seen what some would portray a mining camp in the flourishing coal regions. The buildings, grounds and general layout, the rough crudeness and the strange transformation from the big city we had left, which appeared withal, to hold a certain charm that made the surroundings inviting. Prior to the arrival of recruits, a small army of civilian mechanics had for weeks been busily engaged in remodeling this desert waste into a great wooden city, capable of housing some thirty thousand men.

The spacious barracks looming in the distance, were found to be fully equipped with every modern contrivance. Up-to-date kitchens, running water, modern plumbing, shower baths, a complete sewerage system and countless electric lights. All bearing silent testimony that nothing had been omitted for the health and comfort of the soldier during his period of intensive training.

Onward we trudged along the dusty road, headed for the barracks that were in use at the time, for the classification of new-comers, passing the groups of our future comrads who eyed us with a curious inquisitive air. Now and then a voice from their ranks broke forth with the cheerful caution: "Oh boy! just wait 'til youse guys git de needle", and other good-natured banter that put each man on edge in wondering anticipation. Finally the destination is reached, and we pause, awkwardly waiting for the order that means a personal tete-a-tete, with the important individual inside. Here you were required to give a short history of your past life and ancestry, with what branch of the service you felt best suited, and at the conclusion of what seemed a senseless examination, found yourself coldly consigned to whatever line your disinterested interrogator deemed for the good of the outfit. Thus some of our big huskies, who in civil life had earned their living, moving safes or pianos, were surprised to find themselves in the ranks of the infantry, while the meek weak-voiced clerk, who had never attempted to lift anything heavier than the office pen, was assigned to the artillery, a procedure that was beyond their depth of reasoning.

The next step was a visit to the doctor's office, where another grueling examination was in order. Added to this was vaccination and that dreaded "Needle". A jab in the arm, another in the back and one for good measure under the shoulder blade, and we were allowed to saunter off to rest in the provisional camp, like branded cattle.

The long ride, bracing air and the days exercises had begun to tell and beside a slight weariness, came the call of hunger while we waited patiently our first mess in camp with anxious curiosity. It wasn't long before the bugler's call sent every man to table and we sat down to what is known as army "slum", stew, bread, prunes and coffee, which all hands ate with a relish, primed to the necessity of taking events as they came with calm cheerfulness and submission.

As the evening wore on, many began to wonder where we would sleep and when came the hour for retirement, for most of us longed secretly for a good night's rest, as none knew what the morrow would bring. With the older rookies other thoughts were working opposite to ours, for it soon became manifest they had formed different plans for our initiation. Our arrival had evidently been looked upon as a heavenly break in the monotony of rules and regulations, for we had no sooner started to undress, than the storm broke. Shoes, socks, pillows, in fact everything movable began to sail through the air in our direction like a bombardment from the enemy. Now and then from a dark recess, arose a bitter curse or howl of anguish as a well directed shoe bounced from the head of some poor fellow whose skull had been the target, which was greeted with wild shouts of derision and laughter that added to the bedlam.

At the height of this gaiety, a door suddenly opens and the very military form of a Sergeant enters, who shouts and threatens above the din, in his attempt to restore order, but only to be met with catcalls and jeers, for a sergeant to this crowd of unripe soldiers means little or nothing where unbridled youth holds sway. Over in a far corner, a big strong fellow has stretched himself lazily, full length on his bed, and with a satisfied air, is entertaining his listeners by proudly confessing he has not done a tap of work in many years, still he noticed his family had sent him away with a smile, and he also found some of them actually laughing as the train pulled out of the station.

In such wild surroundings there was scant opportunity to brood or ponder over home, or those left behind, and as the soiree gradually lost it's power, we dropped off one by one, to the land of nod, contented.

At 6.45 A.M, the shrill blast of the bugler was again heard, this time sounding reveille, bringing us back to the duties of another day, for there was much to do, in putting aside our civilian togs for the uniform, with army shoes and other necessary equipment. After breakfast, we were promptly introduced to the numberous picks and shovels that stood ready to take part in the instruction, of how to make the camp level, especially the territory around our own quarters, where many stumps of trees were still in evidence. This became our daily pastime for weeks to follow, under the direct supervision of some temporary appointed officious non-com, who lost no time nor opportunity to assert his authority.

A few more weeks of this back-aching programme, brought the bright day of permanent assignments to companies. Mine read: "Headquarters Company, 308th Infantry--Captain Charles W. Whittlesey, Commanding." This brave Captain, who was destined to play such an important role in the great struggle, that during and after his leadership, had endeared him to his men and the entire nation, was a tall spare man, whose six feet of wiry muscle was guided by a pair of keen sharp eyes, which seemed ever on the alert and now scrutinized each man critically as he advanced before him. His manner we found was usually serene and passive, but when occasion arose, he at once became the cold, blunt disciplinarian, stern to the limit in the enforcement of army rules and regulations, or in fact anything that meant the making of a perfect soldier.

About this time, we were fairly well equipped and the drilling and setting-up exercises had been installed. How to march and keep in step, how to stand, chin up, shoulders squared and stomach in. How to use the rifle and the great necessity of learning strict obedience to orders, regardless of what they were, and to fail in this demand was considered the worst breach of discipline, punishable if not by Court-Martial, surely by the loss of the weekend "Pass", which meant home and the folks over Sunday.

Then too, came Saturday, when inspection was invariably another trial that put each man on his mettle, and it was an inspiring sight to see row after row of our regiment all lined up on the great big fields, with every ounce of their belongings spread out, open to view with each man standing at attention a silent sponsor for the appearance of his personal effects, which must pass the hypercritical eye of the officers who filed by, slowly, to gain the vise for the following day's holiday. The unfortunates who were compelled to remain in camp over Sunday, found if there was no drilling that day, the privilege to attend church, or later entertain such friends that had come to visit. Then there was the " K of C", or the Y. M. C. A. huts where one could find solace in writing home to tell of the week's experiences.

But the "Pass" was the weekly reward of merit, which somehow or other had become a fixture with the men; for in this land of rumors it was impossible to say when the Division might be moving, all of which proved groundless for we were yet to experience the rigor of the bitter winters of 1917 and 1918 in our present quarters. Many Sunday nights during this period with our faces turned Uptonward again, heat in the trains was at a premium, and it was no uncommon sight to see the half frozen men tear down the advertisements overhead and make a bon-fire in the center of the car's floor.

One morning in November, I was surprised by being officially notified that I had been assigned as permanent battalion runner to the first Battalion Headquarters, where it became my duty to report daily immediately after the morning mess and work oftimes far into the night, delivering the various General Orders and messages regarding the work and programme for the following day's training.

A great part of this work-day programme had centered on the rifle range, which had been set up about two miles from camp, so now trips were made almost daily to this spot by the different battalions in the regiment, each taking its turn, and the men had begun to look forward to this practice as a welcome diversion from drills, hikes, and the rest of routine. Soon regimental and company shows began to crop up too, and as there was a large number of excellent talent found in the ranks, many an enjoyable evening was spent by those who did not have to report for some special school of instruction. These entertainments were usually in the form of vaudeville performances, bringing before us many clever dancers, comedians, acrobats and singers, some of whom had in civilian life made their mark before the theatre lovers.

Thus the early days at Upton blissfully rolled on into 1918, when the order came for six weeks of intensive training, which was indeed all of that, for rarely a moment of the day was lost, without some sort of instruction or drill being pounded into us without mercy. Besides this, a spirit of rivalry had sprung up between the companies at the rifle range. Competitive drills were looked forward to with keen interest and formed the sole topic of conversation during rest hours, for each Company was anxious to be declared the champions, for the glory of its battalion. This outburst of sporting blood was viewed by the officers as a good sign of the development of worthy soldiers, who were surely showing the result of serious attention to their tasks. Anything in the nature of a thrill is always welcome in army life. We were all conscious of the approach of a great day in the Nation's memory and as February 22nd (Washington's Birthday) approached, rumor again became busy, followed by the supporting order, that we were to parade that day through the streets of dear old New York.

Everyone felt this was to be the supreme test before the critical eye of the public and a great opportunity to show our friends back home, just how their sons or brothers had progressed, for we knew the citizenry was on the tip-toe of expectancy. There was, of course, an extra amount of preparation and drills to fit us for this momentous occasion, especially in the art of marching and general carriage while on the go. Company vied with Company, to make the best showing, as everyone felt a personal pride in his own particular outfit, with a longing to shine before the gaze of Gothams audience. Then came the day, a wonderful day it seemed to us, although a heavy snow was falling with an intense and piercing cold, enough to dampen the ardor of less hardy spirits than those whose hearts throbbed anxiously to the tune of the music, inside their heavy overcoats. But on we swept over the slippery asphalt of Fifth Avenue, with a feeling of bursting joy. The sight spread before us was worth anything within our gift. A vast panorama of swarming humanity, topped off by a lavish display of the flags of the Allies, and most prominent of all, waved the Stars and Stripes, our own precious emblem, for whose honor we were going forth, many never to return. Cheering surging masses packed windows and sidewalks from curb to stoop lines. Mounted police charged and recharged in an endeavor to keep this patriotic humanity from breaking into our lines. Now and then a shrill voice from the depths would raise and greet some column as it passed by. "Hello Abey", or "Good boy Paddy" mingled with the out-

burst of a foreign tongue when an Italian mother gave a familiar call to her proud Tony, as he came and was gone in a second.

When the parade finally came to an end, each son of old Father Knickerbocker felt gratified, encouraged in what seemed a feeling of first victory to a place in the hearts of his countrymen, then added to the big show-off came a three days' holiday from camp, with thoughts of home and friends. Holidays always seem to fly fast and we were back again in camp to the steady job of routine and what not, with nothing left but the refreshing memory of that wonderful ovation, to drill and drill from morning to night in what seemed never ending monotony. From this time on, I too, became extra busy at Battalion Headquarters as commands came thick and fast for more open order work in the drill fields.

Our Executive Staff was kept fully informed of the official last-minute news of the enemy we hoped some day to meet and their daily tactics on the firing line, caused plan after plan to be laid, with situations created to familiarize us with every move in the fierce fighting abroad, and ways and means to frustrate their mode of action. Rumors and more rumors, on which we seemed to thrive, came and went with measured regularity. Most of them died in the wild imaginations of some, who were always to be depended upon for hearsay information. It was not until early in April, 1918, that things really began to stir up with some semblance of truth, but garnished with mystery and secretiveness that enshrouded Upton. The departure of Brigadier Evan M. Johnson and his Staff for France, two weeks previously had unleashed another batch of unofficial predictions, which sprung from every corner but again with no apparent basis outside of simon-pure conjecture. But now the press correspondents always alert for anything bearing the slightest scent of sensationalism to their noses for news, began to seem aware that this time something was in the air besides hallucinations, for it had become an open secret that the Division would shortly move while the exact day and hour remained as much an enigma to them as to us.

It was not until April 5th, that the first signs of anything businesslike made its appearance in a quick manouvre that suddenly and completely shut off all communication, from either inside or outside the camp. Then came an order to empty all our bedsacks in the big barns, while the grounds were now policed as never before, adding to the wonderment that seized each man in the excitement of newborn hope. Immediately after the evening mess, more orders followed in a drastic edict from Headquarters, that sent every civilian employee hurrying to the station, with a special guard to see that none missed the train leaving Yaphank that night. All thoughts of sleep began to fade when we were instructed to pile our bunks carefully on the barrack floor, leaving us still guessing at the suddenness in the turn of affairs, just waiting for the next move, but what was it to be? Could it be possible the call for our services had come at last? Were we now really considered to have reached the stage of proficiency necessary for the big job "Over There" in line with the Allies best?

Oh! for just one minute's respite, to send a word to loved ones at home, just a last line of farewell, but alas, this was not to be, for we learned even the doors of the friendly Post-Office had been closed against us and no mail would be received. Surely no better sign was necessary than this to prepare us for the actual order to make ready, so with nervous pent-up spirits a mad rush began on the canteens, which were soon crowded beyond their capacity. Cigarettes, cigars, pipes, cans of tobacco and various other sundries that was felt would be a necessary comfort on land or sea found a ready sale.

Excitement knew no bounds, as slowly and stealthily the silent shades of night began to settle down on the restless multitude. It was to be a time in their military service that will ever remain fresh in the memory, to be referred to as "The night we departed from the Cantonment.". It was on this special night that the first excitement and demonstration had ever been staged in celebration of the movement of a large body of troops for the War Zone from Upton, and had called upon the dormant spirits in a frenzied outburst of joy, that hailed the hour to be off to the great adventure, from which many would never return, or perhaps show by their decorations the reward for deeds of valor. It was out night, in point of unrestraint. An impromptu sort of affair that had sprung up like a wisp of the wind, to grow and multiply in youthful effervescence, for the official word had come through and the boys were out to show their appreciation in good old New York style.

By seven-thirty P. M. pandemonium ruled, the sound of what was supposed to be music, accompanied by the loud drum-beats, could be heard in the direction of Upton Boulevard, a busy thoroughfare which was considered Camp Upton's Broadway. Men had assembled in all the nearby company streets to witness this great farewell procession or take their place in the ranks of noisy activity. There was nothing military about the mob, the lines having from five to ten marchers and it didn't seem to matter much who commanded, for a big buck-private had already commissioned himself and strutted along at the head, turning now and then to issue all sorts of outlandish orders to those who followed, carrying on their shoulders anything handy, from broom-sticks shovels or garden rakes in lieu of rifles. The long, broken columns would wind in and out of the barracks, singing all kinds of popular songs, going round and round with the staying power of the Indian war dancers, until far past midnight. No one seemed to mind, for now our Division had no place to sleep except the hard uninviting floor, on which many a weary body thoroughly exhausted by the orgy, finally dropped, unmindful of anything else but rest.

It is hard perhaps to sense the feelings of the past few weeks, feelings of uncertainty for us, with crowded disappointments as one hope after the other burst like bubbles in the air. Here were thousands of young energetic men, trained to the minute, who but a short time ago, were just ordinary peaceful citizens, now filled with war-lust and at the zenith of manly strength. They had gone through the roughest military training ever experienced. With winters arctic cold, housed in breezy barracks and constant life in the open had made them case-hardened, ready to accede to any demands of militarism and anxious to go anywhere that ultimately lead to the big noise "Over There".

Under such tension and the long period of exhaustive training, many of our officers had begun to view further delay with visible apprehension lest we go stale, for the constant rumors that we may go tomorrow and others from the pessimists that we might never go at all had begun to leave their mark on the high-strung temperament of the entire Division. Only those who were dog-tired attempted to sleep that night and those who did succeed in shutting out the uproar from their earthly cares, had not long to enjoy the comfort for at three A. M. the steady tramp, tramp of the 306th Infantry, the first to start on the long journey, awoke the echoes with a thrill, followed shortly after by orders for our own, the 308th, to line up, ready to start at last for "Somewhere in France.".

## -Chapter III-
## Embarkation.

After a brisk fifteen minute march, loaded down with heavy equipment and our few personal belongings, we halted at the railway station, where long lines of special trains stood ready to carry us away. Big puffing engines now and then gave an extra snort in the anxiety of the moment to be off, but they too, must bow to the edict of military exactness and remain patient until each man had been checked and rechecked again, as he boarded the cars, until it was fully five A. M. before everything appeared satisfactory to the Command and the long low ridge of barracks of Camp Upton with its many happy memories, became but a mist in the grey early dawn. Some of the men succumbed to the demands of sleep immediately, others silently munched the sandwiches that had been prepared with dogged unconcern, while many joked light-heartedly, or puffed pipe or cigarette in deep thought, as the train increased speed, which would end at the terminal in Long Island City.

Here a big surprise awaited us, for the place was well filled with hundreds of anxious citizens, who had somehow sensed our early departure and had stationed themselves at every point of vantage to crane their necks in a longing hope of recognizing a loved one in that swarming line of khaki. Everything was working like well oiled machinery, without a hitch and we hustled aboard the waiting ferry-boats with scant formality, while each boat after it had been packed with battalion after battalion of human freight pulled out in the stream. It was then that all regimental and company flags were ordered to be kept under cover and we rounded the Battery sea wall serenely, turning our bows gracefully toward the big Hudson River, with its background of towering skyscrapers. Nearer and nearer we came to the great long abutments of the White Star Line piers, where could be seen three massive ocean greyhounds docked, but with steam up. Then came the soft jingle of our pilot's bell as he worked his way to Pier Sixty, and in another minute we were scrambling up the gangplank of the camouflaged Lapland like so many emigrants.

The arrangements for billeting troops aboard this mammouth floating city, were not alone marvelous, but a credit to the monumental job of efficiency, when one considers it took but a few moments and without the slightest confusion, to assign each man to his bunk, in the long line of tiers running fore and aft, which seemed to have no ending. The first move was to unsling our burdensome equipment and we were then at liberty to roam at will over this wonderful ark, to gaze admiringly at the huge anchors on her bows, the big sixteen inch hawsers that wound around the cleats or view aloft, the thin line of black smoke that poured forth lazily from those massive funnels, skyward. Our next round of inspection was the mess-deck, where long tables swung on chains from the deck above. We learned that here the men would assemble to receive their "chow", by filing down the aisles filling the deck from the farthest end and finish in time to let those waiting take their places. By this ingenious system, some three thousand hungry soldiers were fed within an hour and a half. Then when the last of the line had departed a hose was brought to play on tables, deck, sides and hatchways until all had been cleansed spotless. This programme was strictly enforced after every meal.

After our first noon-day mess aboard ship, the men swarmed idly about over the broad decks discussing what seemed the momentous question of the hour, which was undoubtedly the only fixed thought in the brain of all. When do we sail and where are we going? The anxiety and nervous tension over our expected departure from Camp Upton seemed mild compared to the present state of over-wrought anticipation, but the Government apparently had scant concern for our nerves or inquisitiveness, for it was not until five-thirty in the evening that the gang-plank was finally withdrawn, the gangway closed and sealed and we headed toward the channel slowly but steadily for the wide open space beyond. Little by little the majestic figure of Miss Liberty, with her torch of welcome grew fainter, until she faded entirely in the soft evening sunset. Then came the feeling that all the world held dear to us was left behind perhaps forever, as we turned tenderly to thoughts of home. These and kindred musings had put a damper on the spirits of many, for we had now begun to realize that there ~~was~~ serious things ahead, and the long days demands had left many well nigh exhausted, so by nine o'clock most of us turned to the welcome bunks determined on rest.

The dawn of the following day found us far from a speck of land. The sea was calm and the ship held an even keel, which made boat drills and guard details easily accomplished. Each man was assigned a place in some particular life-boat and at the sound of the alarm, he was to report in the shortest space of time to where that boat was stationed. These drills were held several times daily, until we had become quite familiar with what was expected of us in case of emergency. By noon on the second day at sea a faint shore line could be discerned in the distance through the rays of the bright sunlight, and before the evening mess had started, we were anchored in the calm and magnificent harbor of Halifax, Nova Scotia, where we were to await the balance of the convoy consisting of eight other ships.

At daybreak the following morning, the entire fleet cautiously left Halifax, with their thousands of reinforcements for the allied armies, who looked for our coming expectantly. It is hard to describe the thrill and the feeling of emptiness while standing on deck at night to gaze upon the dense blackness surrounding, to hear the lapping waves as they smacked the sides of the noble ship, to know that within hailing distance somewhere, were eight other crowded vessels, with thousands of our countrymen aboard, sailing along into what might be a watery abyss at any moment, by the hands of some German submarine. Strict rules and regulations had been laid down and every precautionary measure put forward, especially towards the conduct of the men at sea. Matches, flash-lights and luminous-faced watches were strictly forbidden to be shown. Below the regimental band played and songs were sung with the spirit of a big club on an outing, so the danger, if there was any, surrounding these lighthearted souls, was given little heed.

After the first few days we had gained our sea-legs and the novelty of the ships rolling was rarely commented upon. Thus day after day of the fourteen we spent on the deep briny, were uneventful except for the fact that a diet of cheese and marmalade reigned supreme.

Then came a day and the welcome hour, when slowly but surely the rocky coast of Ireland, began to loom up dead ahead like some great pyramid in the sea, and caused the hearts of our Irish Buddies to leap for joy, as they lined the rails and looked longingly landward while telling great tales of their wonderful homeland. But the good ship began to fall off the course and plowed on steadily until she dropped anchor in the harbor of Liverpool. There was a wild demonstration of thanksgiving as we began to breathe sighs of relief, that the danger of a watery grave was at least overcome and looked forward to future events with passive unconcern.

The balance of the convoy had taken their places quite close to us and the shouts of joy from all sides now and then mingled with the regimental songs of the days of Upton, were sung again with extra vim and enthusiasm. It was late that night before the cheers and shouts of those happy men died down and all hands were again quartered below deck, for what was to be their last night aboard the gallant Lapland.

It was immediately after the morning mess that we again slung our heavy packs over our shoulders, then listened to the brief warning of an officer regarding the conduct and deportment to be observed on foreign soil, and soon we were filing down the narrow gang-plank, to the welcome feeling of terra-firma beneath us once more. We limed up on the dock with eyes centered on the ship, for with the usual activity of navy regulations, our precious barrack bags could be seen coming up from the dark holds, to be later on claimed by their owners. This was a welcome sight, for in those bags were many cherished mementoes that could not find room in ones pack. The very air teemed with the hustle and bustle of arrangement. Companies were formed and marched in the direction of the British trains, whose queer compartments brought many humorous remarks.

## Chapter IV.
## -OVERTHERE-

Dame Rumor had cut loose again, and was busy spreading all kinds of wild things, as to where we were bound and there was hardly a town or city in the whole of Great Britain known to the wise-acres, that had not been mentioned as our destination. But after ten hours ride in these stuffy trains with only two stops to allow a stretch of our legs, or a drink of fresh water, and we were on the go again, until they finally released us in Dover. Along the narrow crooked streets of this town we trudged, headed for what was known as a rest camp, to put up for the night, but we never felt the need of rest so much, until this so-called haven had been left behind.

In the morning as we sauntered through Dover taking ~~taking~~ the strange sights in, we finally ended at the quay to gaze across the channel where we knew lay France. It was here the first sight of war's terrible work held us spellbound and I received my first startling impression of its fiendishness. A boatload of mangled British soldiers had just arrived and the entire pier was lined with row after row of the unfortunates. Some were stretched out on rude board benches, others lay upon blood spotted stretches, trying with every manly instinct to bear with fortitude the intense agony of frightful wounds. It was a painful object lesson to all of us who looked on with silent sympathy. Arms without number in slings, others on crutches attempting to hobble about and some whose features were entirely obscured by the thick swathing of bandages, just allowing space for the tip of their nose to catch the air. The whole scene was gruesome, sickening, awful and left a mark in my memory never to be forgotten.

Just about daybreak the following morning, we departed from these docks of misery, aboard a swift running craft that bounded over the choppy waters of the English Channel, to land us on the sandy shores of France. The scene that greeted us here was a pleasant contrast to the misery of Dover, as we gaped and marvelled at the fantasy displayed in the different colors of our Allies uniforms, forming a sort of iridescent conglomeration of foreign workmanship, as the comrades in arms calmly watched our landing. This was Calais, and a short hike through the roadways, showed the place to be piled with a congested mass of every conceivable article of war, until we paused at the camp, which we prepared to occupy.

Our first night in the place was an exciting one and was to be our baptismal font, at the hands of the Boche which came early with a serenade of air bombs that fell all around us, but fortunately failed to reach our refuge. But the sight that greeted us the next morning in the city, showed his missiles had worked havoc on a number of buildings whose shattered testimony showed a true aim. Just to the south of the main reservation lay an immense camp, entirely enclosed in a wire fence. This was set aside for the Coolie labor, probably two thousand of them who seemed to be doing all the heavy work in the ammunition dumps. Our men, when opportunity permitted, lined the fence and attempted to converse with them, or watch them dance and sing. These carefree creatures were an interesting lot, to whom bombing held no terror.

The Division had hardly settled when an order came to turn in our Springfield rifles for the British Enfields. The exchange caused all sorts of comment, that was second only to the excitement aroused when our barrack bags, containing two complete outfits for each man were taken away. The Supply Sergeants being the most incensed,for by this stroke all their exhaustive work of the beginning had been ruthlessly undone. How these camps had gained the name of rest stations was never thoroughly fathomed. In the present one, there was very little encouragement given to idleness of any sort, for early in the morning of the following day we were routed out for an eight kilo hike, that found every one disgusted. On our return an issue of gas-masks and steel helmets brought us one notch closer it seemed, to the work on hand.

It was now time for "chow", and a concerted rush was made for the mess-halls in order to be through with the day, as we were anxious for a good night's sleep. Evidently we had miscalculated our position, or had not yet thoroughly awakened to the fact that the Boche might have laid different plans, aided by the moon's generosity, for the night was a clear ideal one that enabled the German birds to give old Calais a thorough straefing, so we came to the unanimous opinion that rest in a rest camp was a misnomer, not to be depended upon. Morning added another chapter to our busy life, for before the sun had hardly peeped through the morning mist, we found ourselves being hustled aboard some freight trains and on the move once more, but this time headed for the vicinity of Hperleoques (Pau de Calais) where the Division assembled about May 6th.

I well recall the time, for about midnight we piled out of the bare box-cars and were met by some British non-coms, who guided us over a long tiresome march, until daybreak found us quartered in some old barns, in the town of Somberin. Major General George B. Duncan had assumed command of the Division at this time, having relieved Brigadier General Evan M. Johnson, who had resumed his command of the 154th infantry Brigade. We soon learned that a months intensive training was in store, under the direction of the British 39th Division.

It was here that the first eight casualities from the enemy fire was inflicted by a Boche bomb, which had dropped right in our Divisional Headquarters. His air raids were coming thick and fast now and were of almost nightly occurence, shaking the ground around us like jelly in a big bowl. No time was lost by the British in putting us through the paces and it was quite hard at first to get into the swing of their training. His bayonet drill and his combat methods we found somewhat different to what we had learned, but it was still more difficult to become used to the British ration which invariably consisted of tea, jam and cheese for breakfast, cheese, jam and tea for lunch and jam, tea and cheese for supper. Therefore the local estaminetes did a thriving business with the Yanks who with the aid of pocket dictionaries and many gestures, impressed upon the bewildered proprietor that the hungry soldiers were very eager to buy"beaucoup oeufs, pommes-de-terre and twice as much vin-rouge".

The British non-coms had begun to warm to their task and we were hard at it daily, learning all they knew of different manouvres on the drill fields. At mess and after drill hours we were regaled with thrilling tales of their part in the great battle that was going on, a comparatively few miles from us, and above all they seemed most anxious to impress us with the point that they were "fed-up"with the war. Soon, too, some of us were to see for ourselves what it meant to be up in the line, for orders had come that small groups of our officers and men were to make trips, which would last several days, right up in the front line.

I was still Battalion runner and was greatly envied by many of the boys, when they heard that I was assigned to go with Major Nelson, commander of our Battalion and the Battalion Adjutant, on the voyage of discovery. We lost no time in getting aboard the British lorries that carried us on this rather perilous journey, coming as close as possible to the line, which at this time was just beyond Arras. All during our ride the roads were being constantly shelled and on reaching the destination, we were guided to some dug-outs in a trench, which at the moment was held by a Scotch regiment. This trench was about five feet deep and scarcely wide enough for two men to pass. The floor was covered with duck-boards, to keep the feet dry as possible in bad weather, undoubtedly for the purpose of preventing what is known as "trench-feet".

I was welcomed by a jolly squad of kilted Scotsmen in the dug-out to which I had been assigned, who made me feel as comfortable as could be under the circumstances. My first act was to adjust my gas-mask to an alert position and give an extra tug at the strap under my chin that supported my tin lizzie, then after unslinging my light combat pack and standing my rifle carefully beside me, I was ready for whatever might come. Although I had heard countless stories of the big fight since leaving Upton, I was always eager for more, so while two of my new acquaintances busied themselves killing cooties and another cleaned his rifle, I lost no time in plying them every conceivable question on the conduct of the war. Nor did these genial comrades ever tire of satisfying my curiosity, by reciting exciting accounts of attacks and counter attacks in which they had participated without any attempt to stretch or overdo the situation. They laid particular stress too, upon an expected German drive which they felt was due any day, then they went to great length in telling how ready they were for it. Pointing to the camouflaged tanks standing silently behind the little knolls scattered near the trenches, with plenty of ammunition and deadly machine-guns ready for their work of carnage and a warm reception, their confidence appeared but natural.

All this time our Battalion commander and his Adjutant were studiously examining the trench system and learning the plan that was expected to hold back the Boche.

My first experience in these close cramped quarters was a sleepless one, for scarce two hundred yards in the rear of us, a noisy battery of 75's crashed incessantly, belching forth sharp tongues of roaring flame, through the inky blackness of the long night, while I silently marvelled at the unconcern of those hardy Scotchmen, who slumbered and snored peacefully in the deafening roar, until it was full daylight before the nerve-racking salvos had ceased and the earth stopped quaking, allowing my tired brain a chance to shut out the scene in a two hours nap.

After several days of steady reconnoitering, we again turned back to our outfit to be greeted warmly and attempt to answer the thousands of questions put to us, about the line and its weird but attractive surroundings. Then came weeks of more training, in which we fought sham battles under the direction of our British task-masters, to be praised, corrected and criticised, all in the same breath it seemed, until we became tired and weary of the whole thing and longed to go it alone. British training, British marmalade and British cheese day in and day out, had become more than monotonous and we ached for a real honest-to-God American sector, if one could be found, ready to receive their countrymen. Added to this the novelty of our experiences since we left home had begun to ebb and the thoughts of those we had left behind started to gnaw daily with traces of homesickness, but suddenly joy dispelled this growing gloom for the welcome news that such a sector was waiting for us, with American comrades, American ways and American smokes. What could be more soothing to these dejected doughboys?

It was a willing crowd that tumbled into those slow moving box-cars and though tired beyond expression, patiently rode across France in the side door Pullmans, with their familiar markings of "Hommes 40, Chevaux 8", while from above, just to show his spirit of good Kameradeship, the Boche bombed us in seeming glee. Though we did not know where we were going, still we were on our way and this gave a chance to the rumor mongers to get busy again, so they told us it was Italy, or the shores of some Mediterranean camp, to which we paid little or no attention for we had other thoughts at present.

To eat, live and sleep in a box-car for three days and nights, is an experience in itself that would be hard to relate and can only be appreciated by one who has been packed in with thirty-nine others on a snail-like journey, which in America would have taken no longer than ten hours at the most. Finally we derailed in a very small antiquated town, to be started off on a two days hike which wound up in Alsace-Lorrain, with our entire Division centered around Rambervillers, where it was generally understood we would occupy a quiet sector, for it had come to our ears that the Forty-second was to be relieved.

## Chapter V.
## The Baccarat Sector.

It was a most encouraging feeling after all the weary training, manoeuvring and irksome travel, to know we were at last considered fit to do our bit in the line with a regular soldier's work in war, for it befell our lot to take over a sector that was held jointly by the 61st French and the 42nd American Divisions. These French had helped wonderfully to facilitate matters, by holding the entire line until the relief was completed and the 42nd moved safely to another front. Our Division and brigade headquarters settled in the town of Baccarat, the regimental headquarters in Neuf-Maisons and the battalion headquarters set up in a pink chateau in a town called Badonviller, which was but a short distance from the front line trenches.

Everything was in readiness and our first contact with the French soldat with his months of bitter experiences proved a great help to our thirst for information, regardless of how small or unimportant it might seem. The shrewd German intelligence system had not been idle, nor caught napping and just to show they were very much awake, broke out a large banner from their observation balloon which read: "Good-bye 42nd Division, welcome 77th."

I went down to the line with the Major, who satisfied himself that company headquarters as well as the platoons, were properly located in sub-sectors and likewise ascertain if the outposts had been rightly stationed. This done, I was detailed to report to the regimental Commander, that the first battalion was in position. As night approached, it could easily be seen our men were on edge, for now everything they had assimilated of the art or finesse of war since the days of Camp Upton, was to be put to the practical crucial test of worthiness and here we were, almost face to face with the enemy, anxious to make a good showing. Signal rockets were distributed, some meaning a patrol, an attack or the timely warning of a dreaded gas attack. In fact, everyone had some particular duty to perform thoroughly, for the slightest slip-up might mean the loss of numerous lives.

Battalion headquarters had become a veritable bee-hive, which kept me busy and on the job every minute with my staff of runners, who constantly delivered messages or brought in reports. To get as much as two hours sleep at night was considered lucky.

It was June 21st, that marked our first participation in the great event and the introduction seemed weird and enthralling. To look out over the top of the trench into the sea of barb wire entanglements, or on beyond to the unfathomed depths of no-mansland, which a crescent moon had bathed in a soft mellow light, that harmonized with the intense stillness. Not a sound was to be heard on either side, not a living thing seemed to move except the hurried scurry of an occasional trench rat as it shifted its position. Was this really ~~true~~? Or was it an ominous calm before the storm? The men who were not on fixed post moved about cautiously now and then, as the deathlike night passed hour after hour uneventfully, then came the first welcome light of morning and with it, the extra wel-

come details bringing in hot coffee, bacon and hard-tack which those silent watchers ate with a relish. During the day we kept under cover as much as possible and a warning blast of the bugle was sounded whenever the Boche attempted to come over, which he did several times daily and all those who happened to be around or about, took shelter in some ruined building or billet.

The Hun was evidently trying our nerves, as the days crept on and perhaps, too, we were getting on his nerves, in expectation of something that had not yet appeared, so at four A. M. on the morning of June 24th, he decided to give us a royal welcome and a taste of what he could do, by beginning a terrific shelling which consisted chiefly of mustard and phosgene gas. During this attack he fired some three thousand shells, a great part of which hit Badonviller, while a number fell in the line. He worked what was known as a "box Barrage", dropping a line of shells in the front, with a row to the right and left of the sector and as this barrage crept along with wonderful accuracy, his infantry followed it. Right into our front line he poured those shells, then his barrage would lift some fifty yards, simultaneously his men kept time with measured pace, to drop into our front line where they did considerable damage with hand grenades, among our boys who were experiencing their first gas attack.

For three long hours he kept up an incessant shelling and through it all, we suffered the agony of being compelled to wear gas-masks. He had cut all our communication lines and the only system left us was the runners. His aeroplanes too, had not been idle the while and one more daring than the rest flew directly over battalion headquarters with its machine-gunner peppering the entrance and all around it, besides several shells had pierced the walls, bursting the partitions and ceilings as though they were mere cardboard. Day broke and the smoke had cleared somewhat, but the gas still hung heavily in the air. Our night's experience had cost us some eighty men, most of whom were gassed, not because they hadn't put their masks on soon enough, but merely because they had removed them too soon.

Again I went up in the line with the Major, to check up casualties and see what aid could be rendered. We came across our medical officer, Captain Condon, not back in his bomb-proof dugout, but right up in the outposts, shirt-sleeves rolled up to his elbows and his arms covered with the blood of our boys. We shortly after lost the services of this gallant officer, for while riding through the town of Fenneviller, through a heavy rain of shells, he deemed it safer to tie his horse and step into a hall, of what was once a French dwelling. He had hardly entered when a shell broke directly in front of the ruins and a fragment of it tore through the refuge, striking his leg and mangling it so badly he was kept from further duty for the balance of the war. Thus we lost a gallant officer whose actions were typical of the medical men, who took up his tasks when fate decreed that he should cease.

What a ghastly sight greeted us. The dead partly discolored from the deadly fumes the Boche took such delight in using. We were constantly making room for the stretcher bearers carrying those who were to receive first aid in the field hospitals. Some showed little signs of life, others begged for a cigarette or a drink, while now and then came groans of agony. This experience left a moral and taught us a man's two best friends in this war were his rifle and gas-mask.

During the following day, most of our time was consumed in repairing the trenches and burying the dead, which was a difficult task, for the Hun kept sending over high explosive shells, which constantly burst over the heads of the burying detail in the little cemetery that lay just north of the devastated village of Badonviller.

Rumor had spread of a greater attack, and that night it was thought best to move battalion headquarters from its shattered position in the pink chateau, to Pexonne, a distance of about two miles, that took us through what was formerly the town of Fenneviller, which at this time was but a mass of ruins with hardly a wall more than three feet high still standing, but these ruins made an excellent hiding place for some of the artillery who had relieved the French. The terrain of the sector was particularly suited for the training of a new division. Its hilly, woody country affording excellent opportunities for developing the inexperienced by practical manoeuvres, which were held by each battalion in turn, while another would be holding the line. The wooded spots afforded great protection for our supply trains, while from an observation post, could be seen the peaks of the Vosges mountains in the distance, whose white roads stood out and ran through the hills like ribbons.

About midnight on the third of July, word came that the Boche was expected to attack in force and a "stand-to" was ordered with every man in the Division ready from two A. M. until daybreak, with his combat pack and extra banderliers of ammunition, ready to move on a seconds notice, in support of those holding the line. July fourth was celebrated in Bertrachamps, by singing patriotic songs and the holding of meetings by those in the support position, which was a few kilometers behind the front line. My duties at this time, in addition to having charge of the runners, was to report by field telephone every morning just before daybreak, by saying: "Pexone 264" which meant that all was quiet and that no attack had come that night.

Rapid progress was made in the course of training and the patrols that were sent out at night accomplished a great deal, to reconnoiter No-mans land in the darkness, always moving cautiously, ever on the alert for the slightest sound, dropping motionless as the enemy flares went up, or as the rat-tat-tat- of his machine guns sweeping space was heard. Sometimes a few of the men found it wise on discovering they were spotted, to seek the shelter of a shell-hole, where they remained motionless all the next day, until night and the cover of darkness allowed them to return. Several enemy patrols had been shot up badly on various occasions.

On Sunday afternoon, July 21st, Captain Barrett, of another regiment of our division attempted a patrol with 54 men for the purpose of taking prisoners in broad daylight. He and his little following marched boldly across No-mans land, right through the enemy's wire, which they had cut. All of this was accomplished without a mishap or shot being fired, then when about to enter the woods beyond the wire, the sudden blast of a German bugle, brought an attack from all sides. Rifle, machine-gun and hand grenade fire from at least two companies of the Boche fairly rained on them.

The fight was terrific during the short time it lasted and though outnumbered many times, our men fought like infuriated demons, combined with a steadiness and courage that was remarkable under the circumstances. The fearless Captain Barrett was killed while valiantly directing his men in this unequal onslaught and but twenty-one all told, returned, the majority of whom were badly wounded. Previous to this attempted coup, our patrols had from time to time, pierced the enemy's territory beyond the second line without apparent opposition and this attack in such numbers showed a growing contempt on our part, that proved a sad experience dearly paid for, with a lesson that taught greater respect for lives in the future.

It was an interesting sight on a clear day to watch our observation balloons soaring far up in the sky, the eyes of our regiment, who were proving an invaluable aid and a necessary asset to the system of getting first hand and minute reports by locating the enemy's artillery, ration and ammunition dumps, and any movement beyond his lines. If these movements appeared heavy to our men aloft, such as might lead to the indication of a relief of his troops in the line, a signal from them would start our artillery working instantly with a constant and liberal shelling. As the enemy undisputedly controlled the air, these men held an unenviable position and our anti air-guns were kept busy keeping the Boche air sharks as high in the heavens as possible and out of range of our faithful watchmen. A cheer of delight was always the signal that one of these Hun planes had met its Waterloo at the hands of our guns, perhaps at some enormous height, to turn over slowly at first like a wounded bird, then shoot to earth with the speed of an arrow. Such a sight I witnessed at Chapelle, where the wrecked object lay shattered and torn, as our men crowded about eagerly. The horribly mutilated bodies of the Pilot and his Observer caught in the wreckage was an awe inspiring sight not soon forgotten.

Although this sector was considered a comparatively quiet one, our machine-guns found excellent training on various nights, by putting a harrassing fire of several thousand rounds, on some particular post or stronghold of the enemy. My runner staff had gained remarkable experience too, in delivering messages under heavy fire to and from the line and never failed when the occasion arose to show the beneficial effect of their now practical knowledge.

There were other things besides the enemy, that were dreaded with slightly less regard. My battalion was in the support position, located in a little village that was buried in the forest and known as Ker-er-ver. It consisted of about seventy small shacks built of logs and limbs of trees, that had been cut down to make a clearing. We found this place literally infested with rats and vermin of every description and after two nights of harrowing experiences, along came our old enemy "Cootie", who now attacked in massed formation.

To sleep under a barrage of shot and shell was easy, but to be covered with these pests meant a sleepless night and after an hour or so of scratching and hunting, we would often turn our shirts inside out in sheer desperation and to the bewitching sound of scurrying rodents, finally dose off in sound repose. I remember quite clearly one night, that I placed my helmet on top of two boxes of hard-tack to be used as a pillow, but the rats with a rare show of cleverness ate the contents of one of the boxes from under my head, without disturbing a hair, or my slumber. While this place may have had its disadvantages, it also held a little charm for the men, which today they can appreciate at home while in a reminiscent mood, for down in a little gulley, just behind Ker-er-ver, the French had a wine-shop buried in the rocks and those of us who had a few francs, never missed a chance to get a drink of wine or a bottle of champagne.

Our stay of six weeks in the Baccarat sector, was drawing to a close and late one night in July, under the cover of darkness our relief by the 37th Division, a Western outfit, was successfully completed. We felt like veterans and a trifle important coming out of the line and took every opportunity to tell our reliefs all we knew of No-Mans Land. To be sure we were veterans, for hadn't we heard the screech of shells, been under deadly fire, seen the enemy's colored flares and gone through a gas attack?

In turning over the position to the 37th, we felt too, that they owed us a small portion of gratitude for leaving them clean quarters, for each man of us, was morally certain we were carrying away every "Cootie" in the Baccarat sector.

## Chapter VI.
## The Vesle.

Early August saw us hiking again on the way to Charmes, where the promise of another joy-ride in those ever famous French side-door abominations, was greeted with anything but a welcome anticipation. Somehow the impression had gained ground that after the strenous six weeks spent in the Baccarat sector, we were at least entitled to a rest which every man felt was clearly well earned. But, alas, how little the soldier really knows of war's demand was soon discovered on our arrival at Charmes, which proved but another link in the chain of disappointing circumstances, for here we found awaiting our coming, trains of flat cars that mounted anti-air-craft guns, a fitting reminder which banished with dismay, all ideas of a lull in proceedings or even a short respite.

So it was not long before we again took up the thread of our seeming never ending journey, this time headed west in a direct line with the front and in the unpleasant two day's ride that followed, manygreat French camps and hangars were passed. There was scant doubt in the most optomistic minds amongst us, but that we were in for it again and must be battle-bound, as indeed we were, but this time to a place that was destined to become a memorial history-making spot, and later widely known as the "hell-hole valley", the Vesle, a name well earned, for here war had set the stage for an inferno, with every devilish device and embellishment known to the art.

A sluggish stream formed part of the towns scenery and had been dignified by being designated as the River Vesle. This body of water I felt assured would never have earned the cognomen back home, for investigation disclosed the fact that it was but thirty feet wide at it's broadest expanse, and its greatest depth but ten, still it had furnished a grand barrier for German ingenuity. Beneath its innocent surface there lurked every conceivable form of obstruction, for the Hun had left it stocked generously with spike-like contrivances of steel, around which was interwoven thick barbed wire that made any attempt to swim or ford it a foolhardy act, bordering on the impossible.

The sector to which we were now assigned was almost parallel with this river, from Mont Notre Dame, Saint Thibaut and along through Ville Savoye in the direction of Fismes, to the rear of which lay the villages of Mount Saint Martin and Chery-Chartreuve. Previous to our arrival, the divisions that had participated in the great Chateau-Thierry drive, had been relieved by the Sixty-second French and Fourth American divisions. Without much delay we were piled aboard the Chenions (French motor trucks) driven by French territorials who proved themselves an interesting lot as they jabbered away between themselves before we started. Their dark skins and good black teeth giving them an almost hideous and repulsive appearance, but to which we soon became accustomed. On and on, Dumped the swaying Camions, over ruts, stones and shell-torn roads, through the once magnificent Chateau-Thierry, which now held naught of the calm and beauty of peace, but in sad contrast disclosed what was left ofstately battered

buildings, whose disfigured walls were but silent monuments and mute evidence of the terrific struggle and terrible havoc wrought in a few short weeks before. All along the roads still lay where they had fallen in death's agony, the mangled carcasses of animals, combined with equipment of every conceivable description scattered along our route in wild disorder. The little cemetery that we passed showed too, the fresh clay of many newly dug graves, fore-runners of the days to come, that held for us nothing short of a grim struggle ahead with a tireless enemy. Then again the surroundings opened brighter spots, in the visible signs of the hasty retreat the Boche had made and seemed the only oasis in this land of devastation and sorrow, that buoyed our spirits with a cheerful spasm.

At Fere-en-Tardenois, where we finally camped, the odor that arose from the dead, both man and beast, was nauseating and almost unbearable and added woefully to the general surroundings. Just to the south lay the railroad, with broken and twisted rails and what remained of a German ammunition dump, where shells were still carefully stacked, with different markings neatly arranged. What a loss to the Hun and prize for the Yank! Here the incessant booming of the heavies could be distinctly heard and the humid August nights, cursed by the plague of the cooties and the ear-splitting shelling, became sleepless ones except to the thoroughly exhausted.

Despite this however, daybreak would see us out again on the field, manoeuvring and and training under a scorching sun and it was about noon on the third day, during one of these sessions, that orders suddenly came from Division Headquarters which had been set up at Chateau Bruyere on the main road between Fere-en-Tardenois and Mareuil-en-Dole, that we were to assemble at once and make ready to go into action on a moments notice. It took but a few minutes to get the scattered companies together, as they were hard at it practicing open order work beyond the river Ourcq. With companies formed we were rushed back to camp where a hastily prepared mess awaited us.

This over and the entire camp policed, everything was in readiness for the move. With rifles cleaned and bayonets polished our ammunition was now checked up and a restless spirit became apparent, until toward dusk we were sent on our way, as orders had come for us to take a support position along the Cherry-Chartreuve road. In single files and with extra instructions to make the least noise possible, and a strict order to get under cover and remain motionless should a Boche plane come over, we wound our way through a dense patch of woods, past the camouflaged positions of our artillery, until just about dark an open field was reached that had to be crossed in order to get to our objective. Here we halted for a few moments, for Fritz's heavies were breaking with marvelous accuracy right in the field hardly yards apart. It was a hazardous undertaking and the feeling that comes as you await your turn to gamble with life through this hail of

shrieking shells is hard to describe, but as man after man ahead of you makes the trip successfully, you seem to regain a renewed feeling of assurance that you too, will be lucky. So with a final word to my staff of runners to follow the man ahead of him at a distance of ten yards, I went off across the open field with the rest.

With the screech of each German shell the line would hesitate for an instant, just to make sure where it was going to land, then on and on again, until finally the entire battalion was assembled in the road. But the Hun was hammering this road good and hard and hurried orders came for every man to dig himself in along the banks that faced the line. With battalion headquarters in the center, and A and D companies to the right, while B and C kept to the left of us, the gas guards were posted and our kitchens set in place, we anxiously awaited further orders.

We had just about finished our digging-in task, when a sturdy little mule drawing a small limber, pulled up boldly in front of battalion headquarters with some signal equipment. I had the runners help to unload it almost before the driver was off the animals back, for everyone was anxious to see him off again to the supply dump, seeing that he made too good a target in the light of the full moon that had bathed the surroundings in a clear mellow screen. Hardly half of the burden had been removed, when suddenly the blinding flash and screech of a well aimed shell, struck not many yards away from the nervous mule, directly in front of him. I didnt remember much that happened for the next few seconds, but I was quite positive my eardrums had been shattered, still I was thankful to be alive as I wiggled and wormed my way out of the up-churned earth of the bank, into which I had been thrown, fully five feet away and learned with delight that none of us, not even friend mule, had been touched by the flying fragments, so we renewed our job of unloading with hasty vigor, all the more anxious to be rid of the driver and his little outfit.

At three A. M., the next morning, our faithful gas sentinel awoke us and for fully an hour the Boche tore up the ground around us with his mustard-gas shells. For some unknown reason fifty men of B company were badly burned from this poison, but fortunately not one internally, so the unfortunates stripped to the waist, waited patiently their turn in the little ambulance that was making many perilous trips up and down the road to take them back for treatment, for their bodies were scarlet and badly blistered.

After a few nights in this position, several of the officers were sent up the line, which at this time was in Villa Savoy, to get a general idea of the lay of the positions and terrain for we were due to relieve the battalion then holding the front line. While the officers were holding a conference in front of a large cave, a whizz-bang coming with the accuracy and speed of an arrow, just grazed their heads and struck against the mouth of the shelter with a crash. Anticipating more would follow, four of the officers fell flat on their stomachs, while the other three made for the opening, only to run directly in the path of the next missile and instant death.

It was with heavy hearts, the little band of the survivors of the reconnoitering party returned, to relate the sad experience which spread throughout the ranks like wild fire, casting a momentary spell of gloom over the outfit. Captain Belvedere Brooks who commanded Company D, was one of the unfortunates to meet his doom that night; but now as a cold-blooded proposition at best and the routine life of a soldier affords little or no time for mourning, no things in general carry on with the same methodical precision, regardless of casualties or conditions, where the call of carnage reigns supreme.

The Headquarters Company was made up of five platoons - namely, runners, signal-men, one pound cannon crews, stokes and trench-mortar platoons. The signal-men were assigned to the different battalions, as well as the one pound cannon men, stokes and trench-mortar contingent, while the first platoon furnished the runners, stenographers and clerks for division and regimental headquarters, so with all the men in the company assigned to some detail, we found Captain Whitesley at this time was really a Captain without a company, detailed on special duty at regimental headquarters, where he was known as the "paper man" or one who had charge of different regimental orders at the battalion P. C. (Post of Command) up in the line.

Our attention was now turned to Villa Savoy, which lay about three kilometers ahead of our present position, along the Cherry-Chartreuve road, and in view of expected orders to relieve the battalion in line, I was instructed to keep a runner in readiness to every company, so that no time would be lost and the relief made without a hitch. This order finally came about two A. M. with instructions to have the relief completed and the battalion in line before daybreak, so we lost no time in starting the journey in single file, every man ready for anything that might happen and trusting to luck. First we came upon a dense patch of woods, then out again to an open stretch of field of possibly two thousand yards, passing the ruins of two great hangars that were still drawing the fire of German shells, and as the flares of the Boche would light up the surroundings, hurried whispers to lie motionless passed up and down our thin line, until later word came from the head of the column to continue. The flames from a burning ammunition dump, added to the brightness of the surroundings which hampered us some, until the cold grey dawn forced its way through the thick waning smoke and haze of the night's harassing artillery activity, leaving us to slide into the funk holes with a sigh of relief for we had accomplished our mission successfully without a casualty.

What a privilege to relax from the nervous tension, to know that at least this much of the job was completed, and it is surprising this feeling of satisfaction coupled with safety should exist in face of the knowledge that we were at the moment opposing the 17th, 25th and 216th divisions of the German reader army, combined with the Fourth Prussian Guards, undeniably quite a formidable army, for one lone Yank division to cope, and whose orders were to drive these huns from their lofty position on the heights, across the Vesle.

I was sharing my funk-hole with two of my runners, close to the hole in the ground from which battalion headquarters would function. Two of the companies took a position in the valley along the railroad track, while two more dug in on the side of the hill to the left of Villa Savoy, and we were all set for the task of dislodging the enemy.

From his position in the hills he had the advantage of a commanding view of the entire valley, which he kept liberally saturated with gas all during our stay. His airmen too, controlled the situation much to our discomfort, for when one of them took a position over us and their observation men gave his artillery our location, it was only a matter of seconds before the whizz-bangs and high explosive shells were crashing close to us, too close in fact for comfort. To exist at all, it was found necessary to live like an animal, crawling on all fours from place to place, momentarily expecting, any second might be your last, for to stand up was courting certain death. This shelling, machine-gun and gas-fire kept up incessantly and several times it was found necessary to send re-inforcements to our front line companies, who were being shot up badly, but not without giving a good account of themselves, by inflicting a number of casualties among the enemy patrols and out-posts.

In every battle, slight or heavy, there is always one episode, some distinguishing mark, that fastens it to memory, therefore one still vivid in my mind, came when another battalion was relieving us and we were to take a support position. The night was pitch black - an ideal one for the purpose - and the front had been comparatively quiet for a few hours, when just as the new battalion began to filter in and we were climbing out of our funk holes, a sudden and terrific electrical storm broke over our heads, lighting up the valley and the entire side of the hill on which we were located, showing in bold relief through the shades of night, the figures of every man as he moved. The Hun was quick to take advantage of the situation and the opportunity it afforded, to give us a severe shelling and for the next forty minutes he fairly peppered us with every kind of ammunition he possessed. It was a confusing and critical position, for the two battalions, as they lay flat and motionless on their stomachs, while rain came down in torrents drenching us to the skin, still our morale was perfect through it all, for at the command of one of the officers for the first battalion to forward, every man stood up in this hail of bullets and followed the man ahead of him unflinchingly, across the open field, upon which the enemy was showering heavy shells, until we reached our support position along the Cherry-Chartreuve road.

Captain George Harvey commanding Company A, which was one of the companies dug in along the railroad track, was now having his hands full holding back the Boche attacks and told his men that due to the number of enemy snipers, those who kept moving would remain alive the longest. Summing up our work in these surroundings, there was not a man who doubted that the title of the "Hell-hole of the Vesle" had been rightfully placed upon the spot. About August 30th, our artillery suddenly placed a barrage on the town of Bezoches, which lasted until September 4th, with few shots missing their mark. This harassing fire drove the Germans out of town and left scarcely a wall standing from the result.

But our stay here was far from pleasant as we were constantly subject from the air and there is nothing perhaps more disconcerting to the man in the line, than this. In dodging rifle and machine-gun bullets, one has a fighting chance, but with warfare from the heavens, the man below must trust to luck, for he is never certain when, where or how, these air destroyers will land.

During these hot August days of the heaviest kind of fighting, the most pressing need seemed water. An uncontrollable thirst had gripped the parched throats of all and though we knew it meant almost certain death to crawl to that broken pipe in Villa Savoy, which the Hun had covered with machine-guns, many dare-devil lads were willing to attempt overcoming all obstacles in their desire to get it. Those in position down near the bank of the river, drank from it eagerly, wholly regardless of the fact that the dead bodies of American and German soldiers presented a gruesome sight as they slowly floated by.

After weeks of this constant fighting, suffering and sacrifice the reward came in knowing our task had been successful, evidenced by the fact that the Boche heavies were now not so frequently heard, and from the heights where he had held sway so long, only smaller guns threw a few scattered shots now and then with his machine-gunners still hard at it, but experience had taught that this was his usual plan when withdrawing. Leaving a few machine-guns and artillery, enough to form a rear guard sufficiently timed to dig himself in to where he had decided to make a stand.

But we were ordered to keep after him and with a feeling of satisfaction in knowing we had dislodged the foe from so commanding a position on the heights, we advanced and fell upon his rear guards mercilessly pushing them on through the littered streets of Villa Savoy with its ruins and devastation on all sides. On, on across the Vesle to the railroad track, where battalion headquarters were established at Chateau du Diable, then to dig in along the Rouen Rheims road for the night. The river and tracks as we passed bore more evidence of the terrific struggle that had been going on for weeks, for the ground was strewn with dead and it was with difficulty we advanced to our new positions, without stepping on the bodies of those who had made it possible Using every effort to stem the tide against him, the Hun brought his gas shells into play and that night in the Rouen Rheims road, was spent with gas masks on, until at daybreak we were at him again, under the command of Major General Robert Alexander, who had just been assigned to the division.

In the distance ahead could be discerned smoke from the towns of Prunes, Perles and Blenzy. Proof enough the Boche was destroying and ruining everything in his path. Rear guard action of his machine-gunners was often encountered, but we succeeded in driving four divisions of them back to the Aisne, where they halted to make another desperate stand on the narrow strip between the Aisne Canal and the river, suffering frightful losses and leaving many prisoners in our hands.

During our advance at nightfall, we would dig in wherever the terrain afforded sufficient protection such as could be found along the sunken roads, or a dense patch of woods, but be shelled re-constantly as his heavies by this time had all been placed in position. In the meantime our engineers were working like beavers, trying to keep enough bridges across the Vesle, so that our artillery, ration and supply wagons could keep up with our advance.

Not content with a deadly artillery fire, machine gun action, gas-shells and gassing from the air, man-traps which he left in his wake caused the necessity for a Bulletin from division headquarters to be issued as a warning.

HEADQUARTERS 77th DIVISION.

AMERICAN E. F.

BULLETIN #16. August, 1918.

The following is published for the information and guidance of all concerned:-

I. GERMAN BOOBY-TRAPS LEFT IN ABANDONED TERRAIN.

It is reported by one of our Army Corps that evidence of infernal machines and devices has been found in the country abandoned by the enemy during his recent retreat.

Boxes of grenades connected to detonators by telephone wires were located. At one point a German ammunition dump exploded without apparent cause some time after the enemy had evacuated the region.

It will be remembered that in his preceding retreats the enemy made constant use of such devices. Anything which is attached by wire, string or any other means must be approached with great caution. No one should enter dugouts until they have been carefully searched by engineers.

Characteristic devices used by the enemy during his retreat between Artois and the Aisne included:

1. In dugouts: Strings attached to grates, apparently used to camouflage the entrance, were mistaken as mines; strings tied to books or other objects laid on tables; detonators placed in charcoal or wooden boxes; fuses connected with explosive charge fastened in stoves, or fire-places; protruding nails, when stepped on, explode mines; shovels, picks, etc., apparently stuck at random in a heap of earth, when removed will explode a mine; doors, stove-lids, rooms in cars, when opened or removed, will set off a mine; the loose board of a step or stairway, when trod upon, sets off an explosion.

2. Along the roads: The slight depression caused by the passage of vehicles will explode the interstices in a mine gallery under the road where 1st or 2d. sm. shells are buried.

3. In barbed wire entanglements: The wire carefully handled, or in the press will explode a mine.

4. Houses: Intact houses, remaining among others which have been destroyed, should be approached or entered with the utmost precaution.

5. Stables: Mines are often found under bricks or tiles covered over with hay or manure. The hay, fodder, etc. should be removed with the utmost caution.

6. Poisoned food: Abandoned food should be carefully inspected and investigated.

It is reported also by the French 1st Army that a poisoner warned against dugouts in which the enemy may have placed suffocating gas.

The following precautions which were applied with success at the time of the German withdrawal in 1917 are taken from the French XIth Army Bulletin of August 7, 1918:

A dugout will be occupied only after scrupulous examination carried out preferably by specially trained and equipped parties. They must be provided with the proper tools, explosives with detonating devices, electric lamps and other necessary equipment.

The reconnoitering party will at first examine the telephone wires coming from outside, which must be cut.

The entrance will be examined for exterior indications of recent work, such as fresh masonry, new camouflage, etc.

The dugout or the gallery will be entered only by a path which has been examined step by step, and, if necessary, beam by beam. This examination will be carried out with the aid of an electric lamp; suspicious parts will be removed.

Apparently abandoned objects, such as weapons, tools and ammunitions, will be scrutinized and nothing will be removed without making certain that it is not connected with a wire rope or string, or a telephone wire. The furniture will be handled in the same way; the beds, boxes, stoves, stove pipes, etc. will be examined and taken outside.

Examine the frames of doors and windows; the doors will only be opened very slightly in order to examine the other side before entering the dugout. Under round tables will be looked for by means of wires fixed in the ground.

Listen, if possible, by telephone, along the walls in order to discover clock-work devices; if wires connected suspiciously appear impossible of explanation cut or pull them if an unexpected explosion ensues, the digger

will be evacuated and the wire cross from outside by means of a wire at least 50 meters long, taking shelter behind an improvised shield.

If necessary, devices which have been recommitered will be demolished by means of explosives.

If the dug-out shows no visible sign of an intruder, a careful examination is nevertheless to be made in order to make sure that no demolition device is concealed within.

Generally speaking, known devices which have been demolished, as well as suspected places, will be indicated by means of a placard or a very visible sign. Close the entrance to dug-outs which are regarded as suspicious.

It was during this advance and shortly after the general warning had been issued, that Brigadier General Evan M. Johnson entered what appeared a harmless looking cave the Germans has abandoned but shortly before, and was so badly gassed from leaking shells, it was found necessary to remove him from the lines.

Although our men were dog-tired, footsore, unkempt and badly in need of a delousing, they bore up wonderfully however, in high jubilant spirits over their great success in dislodging Fritz from his well-equipped stronghold, and with the added satisfaction of completing a good job by forcing him all the way back to the Aisne. Quite naturally, then, a widespread murmur of expected rest, with even a possible relief, had become a fixed conviction in most everyone's mind, which we nevertheless soon discovered to be but a mirage of war's disordered fancies, in learning that extensive plans were already under way to give the enemy a final driving that would push him still further on.

Though things seemed to come our way, the present situation was by no means serene, for there was hardly noticeable the slightest cessation of hostilities, as the routed foe never let up one minute in his usual amount of shelling, patrol, and occasional gas-attacks, which kept all hands on the jump for several days longer. About this time, too came another move in our ranks, that was to be of great importance during the hours of trial to come, for we were to get our initial closeup of Captain Charles W. Whitlessly, that intrepid leader under fire, for this cool, nerveless man had been put in command of the first battalion and I learned also, to my inexpressible delight of my own promotion to the rank of Corporal dating from September first.

Our officers were now studiously engaged in pouring over maps and charts of the ground to be covered and plans of adoption. Captain Whitlessly had moved battalion headquarters from the sunken spot we occupied to a large hole in the center of a plateau, just in front of the road and on the night of September thirteenth, (which by the way happened to be Friday) we were all set for the big thing whatever it might be. On the face of every man showed a calm rigid determination, and to get the job over with as soon as possible, was the only thought just then. Like dogs on leash we waited the command of the master whose apparent hesitancy only added to the mystery that held us back, then suddenly this pent-up nerve racking position received a shock that for the moment was hardly believable, in an order to make ready at once, for a relief by the Eighth Italian Division, under command of General Garibaldi, a grandson of (Italy's) famous liberator, who would take over the sector that night. It was a great temptation to shout our delight at the welcome news, after a month of almost constant fighting, during which we had suffered heavy casualties, with many of our brave bunkies, who had been with us from Camp Upton to the Aisne, now silently sleeping the ground over which the Hun had fled, a silent reminder of glorious sacrifice and daring. These and kindred thoughts were the only ones just now that acted as a damper to the joy of the battle-town Yanks, but the Boche was wide awake and endeavored to make our departure a memorial occasion by splashing his bevies along the roads, to crack offlines a trifle too close for comfort, still our line never faltered in winding its way to the back area hills and through deep ravines, until at last we came to the once beautiful town of Fismes, now a mass of ruins.

It was a harrowing sight that presented itself to us. As far as the eye could see, fine streets that in peaceful times had been lined with spreading boughs, chateaus that once sheltered proud prosperous citizens and stately public buildings, landmarks of interest to the flourishing populace, but now a crumpled mass of brick and mortar, rent and torn in the chaos of death, destruction and woeful devastation over which a mantle of sorrow seemed to linger. Here all that remained of the thriving railroad station, was a few twisted rails contorted beyond all semblance of usefulness and some splintered timbers that acted as a monument to mark the spot.

We had little time for more than passive meditation of war's vindictiveness, for we must cross the bridge yonder, which would put us beyond these scenes and it now began to appear highly improbable that the entire column could get over in safety for Fritz's heavies were creeping mighty close as he found the range and broke regularly, but Captain Whitlessley, we soon found, was not the man to be deterred easily by obstacles and he ordered the column to keep plugging along toward the objective, with a calmness that took us by surprise.

After a hike of several kilometers through this rain of fire, we finally unslung our packs in a patch of woods and settled down for a much needed rest. Our old friend, Dame Rumor, who had been preparing another seance, had joined the ranks again and whispered the cheerful tidings, that we were surely due for a trip to a rest area. The man who argued or thought otherwise, was to be pitied and classed as either gassed or shell-shocked, but as usual the old girl was wrong again, for the nights of the sixteenth and seventeenth, saw some of us in buses, while the others hiked to the southern edge of the Forest d'Argonne.

## CHAPTER VII
## The Argonne

Moving stealthily under the cover of darkness, we at last reached the town of Florent, where strict orders were that no American soldiers were to be seen on the roads or streets in the daytime, [illegible] virtually held as prisoners in our billets, going out only under the darkness of night and [illegible] along whenever possible, never knowing the day or hour when the call for our services might come.

The shelling in the line and the troublesome Boche aeroplanes buzzing like bees, kept everyone on keen edge with an expectant something that none could fathom, but to our surprise, we learned that an American soldier had never before been seen in this sector, for even our officers who were assigned to go up in the front line to reconnoiter, wore the sky-blue overcoat and helmet of the French soldier. For several days the roads leading to the Argonne, were practically choked with artillery, supply and ammunition wagons of varied description. Every sane and precautionary means to conceal the movements and preparation for the gigantic operation under course of construction was zealously carried out. Roads were skilfully camouflaged and our aeroplanes were now having restless nights and days keeping the Hun beyond our lines.

Only the French occupied the outposts at this time, and the main body of their troops were being steadily withdrawn nightly, but even with all this elaborate method of secrecy, the enemy seemed to sense that an ominous something was in air, for on three successive nights his patrols made vicious attacks on the French outposts, in the hope of gathering information. German artillery which had been comparatively quiet on this front for some time, now began shelling the cross-roads which betrayed the nervous tension under which they labored. We were supplied with many additional rounds of bandaliers of ammunition and our artillery were hastily making plans to put over a barrage that had never before been equalled or perhaps thought of.

About three o'clock in the morning on the twentieth of the month, our chaplain, the Rev. J.J. Halligan, celebrated a mass in the little R. C. Church in Florent, for those who wished to seek spiritual consolation, and due to the fact that a brilliant moon lit up highway and byway with a glorious sheen of silvery splendor, it was found necessary for travellers, to keep well within the shadow of the friendly buildings, as each man picked his way cautiously to the little edifice that stood in the center of the village. The tiny chapel proved wholly inadequate to house the worshippers, the mass in [illegible], packing the stuffy place to the doors, and by the light of one flickering candle, which was undoubtedly the only light that had [illegible] to shine [illegible] in the whole town that morning, those who attended were [illegible] a solemn preparation to invoke the aid of the Almighty for the success of American arms.

A day later we said goodby to Florent and [illegible] up in a French camp that consisted wholly of [illegible] built from the timber that had been hewn down to make a clearing and which was known as Croix Gentin. We now began to [illegible] a [illegible] of the route that had been made in our [illegible], although the enemy and conditions differed from those days of the Vesle battles, for on the twenty-second day, four thousand replacements were necessary to fill up the gaps in our depleted forces that had al-

must have shot to pieces. The new "rookies" to learn to be like seasoned old soldiers, trailing boldly from behind and the wise yet to experience their first taste of duty in the line. Laughing as they had the zest burning thirst for such that we had experienced in our early days of the Great War, all everyone of the "Vets" set busy answering all sorts of questions good naturedly, regarding gas-masks, helmets, German machine-gun fire and anything and everything the rookies craved to know.

The principal features of this terrain was hard to specify, for the varied scenery consisted almost entirely of what one at war would consider an ideal spot for the very purpose. A densely wooded tract containing a vast labyrinth of tangled underbrush, surrounded by hills, ravines, trenches and swamps, with but few roads. Outside of these our topographic education dwindled to insignificance, but not so with the Boche, who had reigned here supreme for the past four years and knew every inch of the ground and tree-tops, so the French were not to be scoffed at, nor treated with indifference in setting up the opinion that to attempt to clear this spot, was little short of suicide.

It was rightfully surmized the place was infested with machine-guns and dotted with numberless observation posts in the tall trees; it became known, too, that the enemy's line was held for a depth of twenty-two kilometers and seven in width, by the divisions of the second Landwehr, seventy-sixth, forty-first, forty-fifth reserves and the fifteenth Bavarian divisions of the German army, a rather formidable array to assign a lone division of Yanks with orders to clean up the forest. All during the day of September twenty-fifth, our camp Croix Gentin, was like a beehive and battalion headquarters kept my runners very much on the go with orders and messages. The officers held numberous conferences time and again, going over maps and plans with minute precision. Immediately after the evening mess each man was supplied with what was known as "iron-rations", consisting of two cans of "corned Willie" and two cans of hardtack which was to be eaten only on orders from the company commander.

Ten O'clock that night saw the companies all formed and ready to move. At ten-thirty, just as we were ready to march out of camp, Captain Whittlesley, our acting battalion commander, received an order making him a Major and he had hardly finished substituting the gold-leaf insigne of his new rank, for the Captain's bars on his shoulders, when with battalion headquarters leading, we moved quietly on to join the reserve of the regiment. It was slow going for every cross-road was being heavily shelled, but as usual Major Whittlesley never faltered only stopping now and then to give a hurried order for the dispatch of a runner to some company commander, or to check up to see that the line was still intact. On and on we went to the tune of bursting shells or burst of machine-gun fire through Varennes, then out into the sparsely held French trenches, where about midnight the French outposts were relieved by our men.

Battalion headquarters for the next few hours was in a good sized burrow, which by a scant twenty steps leading down with ample room to accommodate the entire staff, which totalled about thirty men in all.

Major Whitlessley, acting as though nothing unusual was on his mind, moved about in exceptionally good spirits as he chatted with several officers who had come to confer with him, and about one A.M. we found him eating with apparent relish a can of corn and some hardtack, which to us was a silent signal for mess-time in the dugout, so most of us fell to with a will and filled up on bullybeef with hardtack on the side.

There was an ominous something that hung over us and the tension began to grow taut and most of us smoked cigarette after cigarette as we waited anxiously for something to happen, but with the exception of an occasional few stray shells from the Boche, that screeched and tore over our heads, everything seemed apparently calm.

On the morning of September twenty-sixth, just as the hands of our watches pointed to the hour of two-thirty, every gun on our entire front opened up and belched forth with a mighty blast, as though operated by the finger of one man pressing an electric button. The roar was deafening, the ground trembled and seemed to convey and the walls of our dugout threatened to cave in at any moment. Thousands of American and French shells tore over our heads on their mission of destruction for three long hours. With the twenty-eighth division on our right and the First French division to the left, we had between us and the French the 368th Infantry of the 92nd Division (colored), acting as a liaison group between the two units.

At five A. M. the barrage was still going full blast mercilessly tearing a clearing in the Boche front and we had abandoned the dugouts for the trenches, waiting patiently for that signal from Major Whitlessley to go "Over the Top".

## CHAPTER V111.

### The Attack.

The day had just started to dawn, a bleak foggy morning crowned with the suffocating smoke that enveloped the surroundings, casting a heavy pall on all that remained of the thousands of shells that went screaming over our heads during the horrifying night in a fearful chorus. It was hardly possible to see more than five feet distant and the leisurely drifting clouds seemed content to linger. Combat packs were adjusted, gas-masks made ready and the shiny spikes of the bayonets attached to the rifles appeared to be the only bright spots to the obscured vision. So in the vernacular of the "Doughboy", we were "All set".

Major Whitlessley, finally passed out the orders and at five-thirty A. M., just as the rolling barrage of 75's which we were to follow up to a distance of five-hundred meters, went off with a loud bang, the Major buried his toe in the side of the trench for a firm footing and vaulted over, briskly followed by every man of us.

What a sight confronted us! The four years of careful painstaking work of the German expert wire-men had been blasted and ripped to pieces by the previous nights work of our heavies. Trees still standing were stripped naked of bark, while great mounds told where the earth had been literally up-heaved by massive shells. With Jack Hirschkowitz, who proved to be an ace among my runners, I lit a fresh cigarette as we forged ahead. Major Jim Roosevelt (a cousin of the famous ex-president) grasped the hand of Major Whitlessley for a moment in a hearty shake and good luck wishes.

We had advanced some distance through the wild tangle of underbrush and twisted wire, when the air suddenly began to clear, accompanied by the distinct hum of at least fifty of the Allies' aeroplanes overhead that were guardedly covering our advance. The general tunes could not be called harmonious, but they buoyed the spirit, to feel friends controlled the air, for not a Boche plane had dared to attempt an engagement. On and on we went, hopping, skipping and pushing thru the mass of wreckage on every side, until we reached the first ruined trenches of the enemy, with our bombs ready in hand to meet any emergency. Our barrage we found had completed the job with positive thoroughness for no resistence had been met until our first objective had been reached, which happened to be a trench where still standing was found crude wooden sign on which was painted("Kein Durchgang".)

So far we had been lucky, for we had passed the crisis of the advance and had successfully gained our mission without a casualty. As soon as we were settled, Major Whitlessley handed me a message that was to be sent back to the regimental P. C. through my system of runner posts which I had established. This system was to have three men on a post, taking one of them when I came I was to send the next post, usually fifty to one hundred yards apart and then fall back to report the report to the P.C. Whitlessley & Hirschkowitz coming our way, could follow us without interruption.

We were hardly settled in the deserted trench more than half an hour, before the expert Hun snipers began their busy task of spraying us with bullets, which whistled and sang about our ears like so many birds, making the position anything but comfortable. The Major had ordered Lieutenant Patterson, a newly assigned officer, with but little experience in the gang tactics used when out to trap a sniper, to form a squad and take prisoner the one or ones who were making the most trouble. Sergeant Walsh, of Company A who had done excellent work on similar missions, seeing the predicament of the young Lieutenant, requested permission to accompany the raiders and joined the party with the same fearless confidence that had stood him so well in other successes.

It seemed hardly five minutes had elapsed when they returned, bring ing with them a badly frightened German, whose true aim was a credit to his training, but his capture dwindled into insignificense when it was discovered both Lieutenant Patterson and Sergeant Walsh had paid the supreme penalty in bagging the prey. Walsh was a fine soldier and a companionable sort of fellow who would be sadly missed by his company. To me he was a Buddy, toward whom I had formed a great friendship and but two days before this sad event, we had sat in the kitchen munching doughnuts and chatting expectantly of the big attack, finally parting and wishing each other good luck.

Now I find myself in charge of his personal effects, which I am required to turn over to the personnel officer, when that gentleman can be reached and by the looks of things, I am rather skeptical of the possibility to obey the instructions.

According to the original order of this attack, we were not expected to be in the line very long and for that reason we were told to discard our overcoats and raincoats which were evidently looked upon as an unnecessary encumbrance to the business of the day. Our Boche prisoner was not allowed to be questioned, but relegated to the rear, along the line of runner posts, to be thoroughly interviewed by the intelligence officers. Just about this time, new and perplexing information reached us that caused a mild feeling of anxiety all around. The 368th Infantry (colored) out combat liaison group on the left flank, had failed to meet requirements for some unknown reason, leaving that part of the flank entirely exposed, so it was deemed expedient to spread our front in order to link up with the French.

The outposts having been assigned, we settled down for the night, for an early start again at daybreak, in what was to be a fresh advance and a harder job we soon ascertained as the Boche had caught his second wind after the heavy jolts of the previous day and came with renewed vigor, forcing us to use considerably more rifle and machine-gun fire, as we actually crashed through his strengthened defences and kept steadily at it until nightfall, then with a long pull and a strong pull we took his huge engineering and railroad dump, known as Barricade Pavilion.

Here was a sight to cheer the gods. Tools of every description and bountiful supplies of wire, shovels, picks, steel, railway freight cars and indescribable other treasure, so invaluable in war, that it was quite obvious why the Hun had so valiantly but fruitlessly attempted to shield it from capture, but due to the overwhelming aggressiveness of his foe became a well earned Yankee prize.

But the check-up that night proved the appalling price we had paid in a heavy casualty list, that showed beyond doubt the determination and stubbornness of the Boche resistance in every inch gained. Though we were as happy as could be expected, still the night brought us face to face with another adversary, whose remorseless onslaughts could not be subdued with shot or shell as the damp and chill of the open ground, settled into the very marrow of our bones, killing the ardor of victory with nothing pined for in greater anguish, than those discarded overcoats and the kitchens with their hot coffee, even though it was black and uninviting at times.

Still that same courage and calm resignation of the men which had often been put to the test under various conditions never faltered an instant and the discomfort felt was laid to the fortunes of war, to be made light of, or dispelled with the usual undaunted spirit, when iron and nerve was all that seemed left. Willing sacrifice had become so wedged and part of our make up that fate had long ago been drummed out of our hearts as the arch-traitor who had treacherously joined forces, with new and ever changing elements to burden the life of the doughboy with a series of hardships, which combined constant shelling, loss of sleep night after night, followed by constant never ending fatigue and the misery of the unshakable companionship of the detested cooties who seemed in league with the very devil.

However, there were others outside our ranks, whose voices sent forth loud curses and lamentations over the obstacles they were encountering for in the rear, the artillery was experiencing great difficulty in keeping up with our advance due to the fact that the roads were few and what was left of them cracked and shell-torn, making a barrier nigh impassable and a herculean task to the sweating crew. Persistence, time and patience, part of the ritual of militarism, finally came in victorious, so the next day we were off again to push on steadily inch by inch with the realization of obstinance in every yard taken, showing all too plainly the enemy had thrown in some of his reserves, in a last effort to stave off the vicious attacks of those he once derided in abject scorn as juvenile fighters and boyish soldiers, unworthy of the name.

If this could be reckoned as a trial of Yankee ability, it was now also the acid test of the ingenuity of trained German arms, which the world had grown to fear; harassed, hunted, driven from pillar to post, never allowed to rest, this vaunted war-tribe had been forced to show his best, which at present was not quite good enough to hope to cope with American enthusiasm and youthful doggedness. On we came blindly it appeared at times, to the narrow railroad track, which cut a path right through the heart of the forest, but here we were forced to move cautiously, picking each footstep, for the Boche machine-gun fire had grown so intense, the entire battalion was often compelled to lie flat on their stomachs and hug the ground, as a perfect hail of menacing bullets swept over our heads in all directions.

It was a time to test the courage and callousness of the most experienced soldier and again I found myself casting upward, glances of admiring wonder, at the tall, erect form of our intrepid leader, Major Whitlessley, for while his outfit groveled in the dust to escape the hail of shot, that dotted the air like snow-flakes, he calmly walked up and down the track like one with a charmed life, apparently more concerned in locating and focusing his eyes on the death-dealing nests of the enemy, that was retarding his progress.

When night fell, we dug in once more, then turned to the hard-tack and bully-beef, which the welcome ration detail had brought up with a great relish. It had been an exhausting day and one that had taxed our energy to the limit, so those who found the opportunity promptly gave way to the demands of sleep, while others not so fortunate were detailed to replenish the supply of ammunition. The runner staff took what rest could be had in relays, for I had drawn on the companies for more (me), as those of my own assignment were all used up on the relay posts as we advanced.

Dawn broke, registering the 29th of the month and found us at it again, with Abri du Crochet, now the objective. The ground we were to follow was found to be thoroughly infested with the enemy, making it necessary to leave with the three runners on each post, three riflemen also, to guard them, for it must not be forgotten, our left flank was still unprotected and on numerous occasions, the venturesome Hun would filter in and attempt a surprise attack which invariably failed in its purpose.

Determination seemed in the very air, as the opposing forces met every obstacle presented with a grim unbending courage. But we kept at it like men in a football scrimmage, to do or die and were amply rewarded toward the close of day, by setting foot in Abri du Crochet with a feeling of thanksgiving. So well we might, for those that were left to view this veritable city in itself, which had undoubtedly been used as a German rest-camp, were in for an uncommon surprise.

There were countless huts to be found, made from the hewn timber of the forest. A typical German beer-garden, with tables and benches of rustic design scattered about; a modest theatre that could seat approximately three hundred people and dug-outs of solid re-inforced concrete. Down some twenty-five steps, we gazed spell-bound at the scenes of evident luxury and came to the conclusion we were in the former quarters of Boche officers. The inner walls were plastered and artistically decorated. Clear, running water came from faucets, combined with bathrooms, snug beds, rugs and framed pictures on the walls, gave an air of wholesomeness about the underground palaces that caused many to ponder on the fine time Fritz had here, for the past four years and it was readily understood with what regret he was compelled to relinquish his hold.

The whole thing seemed so ludicrous to the hapless Yanks, worn out in body and mind with nights of sleepless agony, that we hoped with every power within us, that this haven and garden of Eden would call upon us for a protracted stay, with more than the ground for a bed and the starry roof of the heavens for a shelter, for the need of rest was indelibly impressed on the countenance of every man.

To the hundreds of thousand of gallant American lads who have participated in the remorseless call of war's exigency, there has come no doubt at times, a feeling that they were being made the "goat" of official aspirations. A sort of natural remonstrance, with what appeared to them on the surface, as unnecessary zeal, in some move that might perhaps be left until the morrow.

We had reached goal after goal, with the toughest kind of hardship, attempting every task set upon us in a spirit of fortitude, and to be suddenly thrust upon a paradise such as Abri du Crochet afforded, was almost the undoing of thoughts of future strife. Here every man of us would feel content to stay indefinitely, to recuperate and bask in the sunlight of this God-given oasis, with nothing more perhaps to worry over than the call to defend it. But procrastination, we found, was not reckoned with on this sector at least, for bright and early the next morning while daybreak was peeping through the clouds, saw the usual barrage going over and the human machinery following it, to be met on every side with heavy resistence.

This time the Boche seemed to have a good line on us and was tearing things up badly, but we fortunately withstood his barrage and our combat patrols were sent ahead to determine the location of his machine-gun nests. During the advance we had come to a road that was thickly covered with these pests and found crossing it a difficult undertaking, but it was finally accomplished with a few casualties and we came upon a German cemetery that was neatly arranged and bordered by a rough fence. Passing on to about three thousand yards from the spot, we set about digging in once more, while awaiting the arrival of the ration detail, but as night came and this welcome body failed to make its appearance, the Major dispatched a runner to go back and find the cause. The runner returned shortly afterwards, reporting that in going around the cemetery, we had passed a large force of German machine gunners, that were hidden in it.

A large combat patrol was immediately organized with rifle grenades in the hope of clearing the menace and allow the ration detail to come up, but our patrol accomplished little and it was then Major Whitlessley dispatched his Adjutant-Lieutenant Arthur McKeogh and two runners, Jack Hirschkowitz and Jack Munson with a message to regimental headquarters to report our position and the situation. These three men fought off several Germans and after laying all night hidden in the underbrush, finally worked their way out at daybreak and gained the regimental commander, who promptly sent additional troops and a ration detail [redacted] which arrived the following day.

These rations were cordially welcomed, as we had eaten what little we had with us the previous day, not having figured on being cut off from our base of supplies and although we were wet through, from the drizzling rain and the trees that were still dripping, we were reasonably content in the task of bailing the water out of our funk-holes. Day after day and night after night, conditions were becoming worse as we constantly advanced over the rough ground. Always it appeared against increasing Boche numbers than on days previous, but the morale of the men was inspiring, with but one aim to drive the enemy before them.

Just ahead of us through the forest, for the past two days, appeared a heavy column of smoke, which arose from something that our artillery had destroyed with a direct hit. It was a welcome sight that silently proclaimed the men of the artillery were surely overcoming all obstacles, and keeping right up with the infantry as we forged ahead.

The cemetery was now cleared of the enemy and with a fresh supply of ammunition we went on again.

October 1st came and found our wire-cutters right up with the advance troops, experiencing considerably more labor than they had found in the past and during the day we unearthed the smouldering mystery that had claimed everyones attention, by coming upon an immense dugout, large enough to house a great number of men. A direct hit had caused the big roof to collapse and massive timbers were still smouldering. A number of German dead were strewn about and the whole section bore evidence of the aim and chaos caused by Yankee gunners.

Finally, we established a new line, with a feeling of exultation, conscious that we had so far overcome every endeavor of the Hun to stem the sweeping tide that was slowly but surely approaching his doom.

## CHAPTER IX.
## THE LOST BATTALION

On the morning of October 2nd, the first faint glow of the rising sun slowly arose, above the misty hills, to anounce the coming of another day, and the fiendish work before us. It was the signal too, of a fresh start in the never ending forward push, but this time against greater numbers of the enemy, entrenched in stronger positions, than we had ever met before. A heavy barrage began to break with discomforting accuracy, so close, that in a very short time, a large number of casualties formed a discouraging list, that eventually forced us to a complete standstill.

Major Whitlessley decided to hold our present position for the time being, and sent back a message along the runner system, explaining that a barrage from our side would greatly facilitate matters and the necessity of immediate action thereon, lest our advance be further curtailed. In a short time, the reply came, stating that 12.50 P.M, we were to follow the barrage that would be laid down at 12.30 sharp, and to continue on, until we took the Charlevaux Mill Road, and hold it, REGARDLESS OF LOSSES.

I was standing close to the Major when he assembled his company commanders, to advise them of the order, while he impressed upon each of them in greater detail, the importance and absolute necessity of carrying out the mandate to the letter. Sure enough, on the stroke of 12.30, came a crash and deafening roar that rocked the very earth, which trembled as though in fear and we knew this was the noisy signal to sling on our equipment and make ready to follow the stern edict, no matter what the cost.

We were still to taste a little more of the irony of fate it seemed, for hardly had we stepped out, when a ration detail hove in sight, and forthwith proceeded to dump their cans of corned willy and hardtack on the ground, just a little too late to receive the customary welcome, for the order to advance had already been given and there was scant time to do anything else. Some of those fortunate enough to pass the edibles, made the most of it by snatching handfuls as they swung along, while the majority were left to console themselves as best they could, by concentrating on the gigantic problem just beyond that bursting barrage.

It was soon found the barrage was doing magnificent work and helping our progress immensely, with only the intermittent spluttering of the enemy's machine guns, that at times was irritating and caused us to hesitate, but only for a few brief seconds, then on again, to plunge through the tangled mass of wilderness, interwoven with a thick network of barbed wire, which somewhat retarded our movements and made the work of the wire-cutters, not alone a dexterous occupation, but an exceedingly hazardous one.

The slogan now, was "keep as close as possible to the ground and evade the machine-gun fire" for we fully realized the seriousness of the situation, which was brought home now and then, by the agonized cries of some of our buddies, proving one or more of these lammable bullets had found a mark in our ranks. Impulsively, the boys would halt perhaps for a second to turn in the direction of the unfortunate ones, often watching them fall out of line and attempt to crawl back, if possessed of sufficient strength, hopeful of reaching medical aid.

It was no easy matter to witness this and pass one of your own, with seeming unconcern, powerless to offer succor or even sympathy, but then those explicit orders which meant keep moving, left nothing else but to return the fire in an attempt to wipe out the hidden nests with added zest.

I well remember one poor fellow whom I stopped, as he dragged his way backward, holding his hand over a gaping wound in his chest, to ask if he thought he could make the first aid station. He turned a hopeless look at me and had begun to whisper a reply, when with a sickening groan, he rolled over in agony, for another Hun bullet had pierced his heel, as though it was made of paper. It was indeed hard to leave him to his fate and torture, and to those who saw it, came a bitter determination to make Fritz pay dearly.

We began to find that keeping liaison with the flanking battalions in the denseness of the forest was almost an utter impossibility, for to advance meant changing the course every few yards, due to the labyrinth of brush and wire. It was nothing but fight, bomb and shoot, every minute, until we came to the crest of a steep hill that rose above a deep ravine, through which trickled a clear stream of crystal water. Directly ahead, could be seen another lofty incline, mounting from the same ravine and along whose crest ran the much coveted Charlevaux Mill Road, our main objective.

Major Whitlessley called a halt in order to devise the best means of crossing the little bridge that spanned the stream, for every inch of it was in perfect range and covered by German machine-gunners, and the problem was how to get over with the least possible casualties. But to linger long where we stood meant losses too, so with hopes for the best, we started down the sloping sides and hustled across the span, five yards behind the one in front, crouching low, still with all our precautions, Fritz's deadly aim was getting almost every eighth man.

It was just turning dusk, when what was left of Companies A, B, C, E, G and H, of the 308th Infantry, with sections of Companies C and D of the 306th machine-gun battalion, started to dig their funk-holes on the side of the hill, just below the road we hoped to capture. Our casualties in the days advance numbered eighty, out of a combined strength of approximately seven hundred, so we busied ourselves with reorganization as directed by the Major.

The first and second battalion headquarters formed the center, with companies A below and B, C, and H, to the left, while E and G occupied the right, with the machine-gunners protecting our flanks. In that order, we finally settled down for the night, to freshen up for the morning, fully prepared to carry on the mission and hold the objective, regardless of anything. The first message sent back via the human relay, gave our position and stated the objective had been reached. Then came the assigning of the outposts, while those not on detail soon fell off in sound sleep, even though the Boche flares went up regularly, and their tell-tale light flickered through the leaves like fireflies on a summer evening. It was our first night in the pocket and the last peaceful one for many days.

Daybreak came, and one of our men on outpost duty had bagged a prisoner. He was a surprised German who had readily surrendered and was

promptly marched to Major Whitlessley who questioned him at some length. His story was far from encouraging, disclosing the fact that there was a large number of Boche in the immediate vicinity and added that he was one of a fresh contingent of troops that had been brought up during the night. Coming on top of this cheerless information was the discovery that the 307th Infantry on the right and the French on the left had failed to come up on the line with us, thereby leaving both of our flanks entirely exposed and open to the enemy's fire.

For sometime, Major Whitlessley studied the situation in thoughtful silence, then suddenly directed me to have a runner report to him at once The outpost men with his prisoner was directed to escort the German back along the runner route to the regimental P. C. and also report the peril to our flanks. Fifteen minutes had hardly passed when both returned again, reporting to the Major that our runner-post nearest the pocket had undoubtedly been shot up, for there was no sign of them. He also added having seen a number of Boche milling around in the bush to the rear. Here was unmistakable evidence that the enemy had not been idle during the night and had filtered in with considerable numbers and entrenched in the valley and on the hill in back of us. There was no doubt at all, that there were plenty in front, so then they must surely be well formed on our flanks.

It was far from a pleasant sensation that now gripped every man, who had been going strong and enduring all the fortunes of war stoically, ever since they had become seasoned fighting men, but to find themselves at last completely hemmed in on all sides with only remote chances of getting relief, makes it difficult to describe the feelings of disgust of the entire outfit as the news quickly spread. No one appeared to know what would be the next move, or who should execute it. We were like the pieces on a checker board in a bad corner surrounded by kings, and it was with just these impressions that I found my eyes seeking those of the Majors, endeavoring to note the slightest gleam of hope in them.

This I felt sure, was his greatest hour of adversity. Would he be able to retain that outer demeanor of calmness, at a time when panic was knocking for admittance, and while the burden of responsibility seemed resting hebvily on his shoulders? If his nerve was sorely tried, he had not begun to show it, although it was patent that he was calling upon every ounce of the stored energy of a stout heart and active brain, in an endeavor to unravel the skein of disappointing circumstances, with the nonchalance of a thorough sport, betraying not the slightest cause for mistrust, or a break in his usual taciturn leadership.

The Major's first act, after the situation had set his ingenuity to work, was to have private Tollefson, the man in charge of the carrier pigeons, report to him with one of his winged messengers, and lost no time in writing a message to Division Headquarters, which he inserted in the little tube hanging from the nervous bird's leg, while we watched the start of its flight, that meant life or death to many, as it soared higher and higher to be lost to the vision in the thick, stifling smoke clouds, hanging like a pall. Dawn had scarcely cut a rift in the starlit heavens, before the Major directed Lieutenant Wilhelm, in command of Company E, to take his men and join Company D, and F, who had met powerful resistance coming up on the west of the ravine, being forced to halt about a thousand yards to our rear on the left. The Lieutenant's orders were to attack with them, in order to bring these companies for-

ward to our line. He was also instructed to send some of his men to break their way through to the rear, so that rations could come through, for all we possessed was the scanty handfuls, the lucky ones had been able to grab, as they passed the ration detail the previous day.

Just about this time, Company K of the 307th Infantry, who had advanced a little ahead of their outfit during the night, came up on our right with about eighty men, in command of Captain Holderman. It is needless to state they were quite welcome and received an immediate assignment to a position on the right flank. The Hun artillery had begun to entertain us with shells, but fortunately their fire had very little effect on our immediate position, which was due in part to the fact, that we had dug in on the side of the hill, while most of their missles landed in the valley behind us, throwing great geysers of mud and water in the air, when they fell into the stream.

Hardly an hour had passed before the enemy artillery added a trench mortar to their work, which from their position several yards from us were able to drop shells mighty close to the foot of the hill, landing with a sickening heavy thud and roar, tearing the earth asunder and sending stones and mud flying in all directions, whose jagged fragments would whistle and fall in our midst.

It was during this shelling that eighteen men, all that remained of Company E, reported back, saying they had been unable to carry out the order to join Companies D and F, as they had encountered the enemy in overwhelming force, and that Lieutenant Wilhelm, with a few men, had managed to get through, but had ordered the rest to return to the balance of the battalion.

That the situation was becoming very grave was evidenced by the fact that it had become necessary for Major Whitlessley to go among the men and in a sense, reorganize the whole position, so that we would be prepared from an attack from either of the four sides at any time. First he posted machine-gunners on the flanks, allowing them a sweeping fire through the ravine, then a patrol was sent out, comsisting of five men who would scout the valley and report what they found, but that was the last we ever saw of them.

As the day wore on, the voices of the enemy could be distinctly heard coming from every angle, seeming to draw closer and closer, through the heavy brush in the valley and on our flanks. Now and then, our machine gunners, tired of their boldness, would open a hail of bullets at them, which invariably was answered by the echoing shrieks of terror and pain, as the Boche wounded showed our men had hit the mark with telling effect, and the subsequent excitement in the voices of Fritz grew louder, until the German commands in sharp snappy accents could be discerned quite plainly in our lines, while we intuitively made ready for an attack from that quarter. Just across from the top of one of the hills, towered a cliff, some twenty feet high, making it almost impossible to observe movements from our position. Dusk had settled and the Boche commands were coming louder and their voices clearer, then suddenly a shower of hand-grenades came crashing down upon us, hitting many of our boys, but we held our fire, until they became careless and within range.

A German command rang out in brisk authoritative brusqueness, evidently an order to renew the dose of grenades and as they stood erect,

poised for the onslaught, our men opened fire, catching them in position. Loud cries, groans and general excitement told us our waiting had not been in vain, and with quick scurrying movements in the brush, came the telltale signs that they were hastily dragging their wounded beyond reach.

Our machine-gunners were not of much use just now, as they were busily engaged in making ready to repel any possible attack from the valley, but the left flank was surely getting a bad drubbing, for a runner came with a request for more men immediately, and of the few that could be spared, only half reached the point of service, the rest being either killed or wounded by Hun machine-guns, which had joined in the attack, lasting an hour.

Night, that special ally of mercy, crept in once more and was spent by us in burying the dead and dressing the wounded, accompanied by the heavy thud of mortars or the ghastly flares of the enemy. It was the end of our first day in this Hades, which saw our strength reduced to a little more than five hundred men, so we were anxious to see that the dead and wounded were stripped of their ammunition, for everyone knew the intrinsic value of each cartridge that was fit for use.

The appeals of our wounded for water was heart-rending, and some of the boys unable to stand it longer, threw caution to the winds, as they crawled hand over hand, on their stomachs, down the treacherous hill and slipped into the valley toward that sparkling spring, they knew had been broken in its course, in order to fill a few canteens out of the mud holes.

Two medical men went from funkhole to funkhole, lending aid as best they could, while the Major, flitted hereand there, with comforting words and the promise that the outlook looked bright for an early relief. Outside of a longing for food and drink which I had determinedly endeavored to subdue, a new craving seemed to grip me like wild hysteria in a craving for a cigarette, but all I possessed was a half filled bag of Durham and a few crumpled papers, that were far too damp for the purpose, so I consoled myself with the knowledge that even if they were in perfect condition, I would hardly dare strike a match that would be a target in the inky darkness.

Thoughts of comfort had no place here, for one had only to gaze about at the suffering and death to be found on every hand, wondering whose turn would be next and thank his God, that he still retained life and limb unscathed, in this tomb of constant strife. Slowly as though reluctant, the veil of night drew away, to give place to the waiting dawn of another day, a day that would mingle hope with despair, a coming menace to life and limb, and through the cold grey mist, lifting gradually skyward, could be seen the crouched forms of our Buddies, huddled and cramped in the little funk-holes, always peering ahead or to the side, expecting the unknown and endeavoring to pierce the brier of the thick brush, with eyes that shone with the intenseness and keen vision of savage beasts at bay.

The slightest move, the snap of a bush or sound of a Hun voice would be answered by the sharp crack of rifles, or the sput, sput, sput of our machine-guns, followed by the usual yells of the wounded Boche as they fell.

The Major had again put aside pure militarism and was busying himself in the more humane occupation, of passing in and out amongst the wounded, with extra words of cheer and encouragement. The sight of so many disabled was maddening, but be it said to the credit of the sufferers, they bore up manfully with the fortitude of heroes, as they lay bleeding and frightfully maimed, enduring the most excruciating agony with small chance for aid, still thankful for the slightest attention shown them, which mainly consisted of an amateurish attempt at bandaging, for coagulation of the blood to close the gaping wounds, was depended upon to be more successful.

Then came again, the greater demands upon our overwrought nerves in those steady half whispered cries for water, a request that pierced one's heart, when it was realized by all, that a trip to that mudhole in the valley now meant death, for the spot was covered by the enemy machine guns, still some unable to longer stand the appeals, took the risk and never returned to the mission of mercy.

Patrols had been sent out in all directions, in the faint hope of finding some loophole in this chasm of death, to report the urgent need of food, medical supplies and ammunition, all of which ebbed lower and lower every minute. These patrols never returned either, and we fully understood the futility of expecting help through this course, for we were completely sealed by a solid circular wall of shot and shell, from all communication with the outside world.

In desperation, a carrier pigeon was next tried, with the same fruitless result, so there seemed nothing else left but the fight that still remained within us, on and on, to the bitter end, against odds we could but guess.

My funk-hole was shared by Private Jim Larney, in charge of Battalion Aeroplane signal panels, and Battalion Sergeant Major Ben Gaedeke. A number of badly wounded machine-gunners lay close beside us, with one of their officers, Lieutenant Peabody, who joked and smiled at his men, in an attempt to lighten their suffering, now and then promising them we were going to give the Boche "merry hell", then calling to their notice the rat-tat-tat of our guns whenever a salvo was turned in the direction of the Hun; From the voice and wan attempts at gaiety of this noble officer, one would hardly surmize he, too, was compelled to lie there, helpless, with a frightful shattered leg, that bled copiously.

The trench mortars had begun to pound us again and the heavy thuds of their deadly charges crept closer each minute, increasing in volume as Fritz warmed to his work. German voices were heard again, too, this time carrying commands we felt were the death knell to all things living in this place of misery. On every side, these voices now arose, but appeared to be more numerous on the flanks and rear.

Along towards the afternoon, they put over a machine-gun barrage, which lasted an hour, raking the hill with a damnable fire that made us huddle closer to the ground, marking the proximity of the shots by the breaking of the twigs covering our faces, which were clipped off as the bullets whizzed by. The Germans sent many of our boys West, that afternoon, and among them the brave Lieutenant Peabody, he with the light heart under most trying conditions, for the poor fellow had become so weakened from loss of blood, that he was unable to shelter himself in the

brush and a merciful bullet from the enemy ended his heroic career.

Like a thunder storm, the barrage slowly subsided and we cautiously arose to a crouching position in full expectation of an attack, which did come in the form of a shower of hand grenades from the top of the hill. Most of us had begun to develop a nervous tension that seemed on the verge of breaking, greatly aided by the never ceasing pangs of hunger and extreme exhaustion and it was a gruesome sight to see the living turn to the ghoulish work of searching the dead, to scan the pack and pockets of a departed Buddy for a possible bite of hardtack or anything that could be eaten. I was fortunate to find a battered condiment can that still contained a few grains of ground coffee, which I chewed ravenously.

Suddenly the hum of an allied aeroplane was heard and Private Larney was ordered to display our battalion signal as it flew nearer, with the hope that the observer in the sky would locate us. Each time Larney executed this move, he did so at a great risk to his life, for it was necessary that he spread the white triangle with its black square on the ground, amid a hail of bullets, designating First Battalion Headquarters, but with tantalizing misfortune, no answering signal ever dropped to tell they understood. But they did drop many packages which undoubtedly contained food, that always fell through the guidance of an inexorable fate, into the enemy lines.

Night again blotted the scene of carnage with a new and terrific noise from American rifles and machine-guns in the rear of the hill, announcing plainly enough a great struggle was on, in an effort to drive the Boche from his position and reach us. All through the damp, chilly darkness, we lay quiet and hoping, withoutthe warmth of an overcoat or shelter of a blanket, just trying to ease weakness and brainfag, while the battle above raged on with intense determination.

We were at that stage, when the morrows execution seemed part of the days routine, finding many of us at the dawn of the fifth day, staring listlessly at that ominous hilltop, with a wild expression that proclaims insanity. Death, starvation, exposure and exhaustion had at last set their mark, while hopeless abandon had stepped in to make the last hours seem like days of torture.

Major Whitlessley, who had earned the sobriquet of the "Man with the charmed life", continued his usual tour of inspection, regardless of the fact that the air was literally alive with bullets of every description, and his actions should have been an inspiration to our shattered nerves, but we were far beyond that now.

Captain George Henrtry, second in command, was another who defied the cursed fate, and like the Major, showed a deep contempt for the Boche or anything connected with him, for he was constantly on the move, trying to brace up what was left of us. The deadly trench-mortars, as though working on studied schedule, had again commenced the days toll, and we were steadily losing men. Our ammunition was now used sparingly and only when it was absolutely necessary, for we were finding fewer bullets on the person of our newly dead comrades

The attacks on the left had become heavier and bolder, showing the enemy had begun to sense our steady growing helplessness, but Lieutenant Cullen and his men were fighting exceptionally well on this flank, withstanding every attempt of the Hun with gallant stubbornness. Late in the afternoon of this day, came the most calamitous period of all our previous experience and struggles, when it was discovered that an American barrage which was supposed to have been directed on a massed formation of the enemy just a little beyond us, with the intention of breaking up their prepared attack, was falling right into our ranks and for nearly two hours their deadly 75's tore up the ground all about us mercilessly, leaving death and confusion to add to our suffering.

We were ordered to move further to the right of the hill, where it was slightly more wooded, affording a little more protection, but before we left, the Major wrote the following message "Your barrage is falling on us; for God's sake, stop it!" The last carrier pigeon was then brought to him and the brief protest rolled and inserted in the tiny holder, and I will never forget that moment or the thoughts that came to me, as I watched the trembling thing, perched on the palm of the Major's hand, as he stood as erect as an arrow in h's funkhole. The frightened bird, whose name, by the way, was "Cher Ami", faltered for a moment, for the air was filled with flying stones, branches of trees, mud and men being blown to pieces with the force of a cyclone

This poor feathered creature, we knew was also weak from lack of food and perhaps like its human companions, longed for escape from this inferno, so at first it fluttered feebly, perhaps undecided what to do or what course to pursue, then it arose, dodging the flying debris and was lost to us in the dense smoke, while everyone breathed a God-speed for its successful flight.

We were moving slowly to our new rendezvous, with Ben Gaedeke, our Sergeant Major, not ten feet in front of me, when there came a blinding flash and terrific roar, as a shell burst just beyond me, then everything went black, while earth and rocks that had been tossed high in the air began to fall. I had not seen Ben hit and I never saw him afterward, nor could a vestige of his clothing be located. He was just blotted off the earth, by his own countrymen's shell. Another sterling character and excellent soldier had paid the supreme sacrifice.

I now caught sight of Jim Carney, about twenty-five feet away and heard him tell me he was coming over, inquiring if I was all right, but he had hardly gained my side, when another deafening crash of a 75 actually uprooted a tree and flung it high in the air, showering everything with fragments a few seconds later. It was Jim's turn this time, having been struck on the arm and leg, so I tore the sleeve of his coat to make bandages and stopped the flow of blood as best I could under the terrifying circumstances, until a sudden lull, and the American barrage ceased entirely.

Thank God, our prayers had been answered. "Cher Ami" had reached the goal, but the game little hero had lost a leg and an eye, in the performance of its heroic service, we learned later.

"Back to your funkholes " was the next order, and half carrying, half dragging Jim with me, we stumbled and fell quite often over the shell-torn hill, to find in the end our funkholes were no more, for all of them had been blown in, making it necessary to dig new ones at once.

Where the Yank 75's had left off, the Boche began again, and in addition to being vigorously shelled, staving off attacks, attempting to care for the wounded and bury our dead, the insistent pangs of hunger was fast driving us to sheer madness. Jim Larney, in a half sitting position had set to work with his good arm, digging away like a Trojan, using his bayonet to break the hard earth, while I gave what little assistance my exhausted condition had not been robbed of, by using my trench shovel, in a desperate effort to enlarge the hole that was to be our new shelter, as long as we could hope to hold out against the fiends who were decimating our ranks with frightful energy.

When this work had been finished and everyone under cover like ground hogs, I was directed by the Major to check-up, in order to ascertain how many lives those American 75's had cost us, and I was soon able to report, that at least eighty of our little force had been killed or wounded. Our total strength had diminished to a mere three hundred men now, or rather three hundred automatons, who had barely strength enough to lift a rifle and pull a trigger.

After hearing my report, Major Whitlessley at once decided that no more men would be risked for patrol details, as previous attempts had proved but dismal failures, with none returning except George Botell, who had started on one of these disastrous journeys with his Buddy Joe Friel, just a few moments before the American barrage had begun to find us a mark. Botell came back with a badly torn scalp, to report the last he saw of Joe Friel, was when a Hun bullet had brought him down, and as he lay helpless with his body being fairly riddled with bullets, this game runner continued to fire his rifle point blank at his executioners until life had left him.

Allied planes began to fly over us again, so with Larney unable to respond, it befell my lot to see that the panels which I displayed time after time, were in proper position, an act that was always greeted with a hail of bullets that never neglected this move.

It was not until sometime later, after one of these harrassing trips, that I discovered with much surprise the sleeve of my coat had been ripped from the elbow to cuff, by a flying piece of shrapnel and the miraculous part of it was my shirt bore not the slightest trace of damage. It was then I fully realized there were others besides Major Whitlessly and Captain McMurtry, whose call had not yet arrived and I silently thanked the good Providence for my lucky fortune and deliverence.

Welcome night had settled down again upon the most eventful day and we dragged ourselves into the little funkholes to rest and dream half delirous things, watching with careless concern the ghastly light of those Boche flares that came flickering through the trees and leaves with an occasional spluttering of rifle and machine-guns that bespoke the untiring activity of the enemy.

Though the nights had never been serene, still the blessed darkness acted as a cloak of shelter and sort of revived the tired spirit and aching bones and lulled to partial forgetfulness, these never ceasing pangs of slow starvation.

Night drew away again as we knew it would, taking with it what balm and momentary shelter could be found, from the hideousness of daytime activity, and the morning of the sixth ~~day~~ on this gory hillside of Charlevaus Hill Road, disclosed nothing more than the images of men, half crazed creatures gaunt and hollow-eyed, who huddled in the holes, with little or no encouragement in sight, for the American troops in the rear had drawn no closer during the night, while the sad picture of the dead and mangled bodies of those who had been through the struggle with us, and the knowledge that but one machine-gun remained out of the nine we had started with seemed the last straw. Moans of the wounded, hungers renewed appeal, the trench-mortars reveille announcing another day's hellish pastime with rejuvinated Boche machine-gunners, starting a fresh period of cheerful slaughter was all this dreaded day offered.

Being killed or starved to death, seemed the only escape from this miserable existence and with this in mind, I began to destroy a map and some few personal papers, by tearing them into small bits in a listless action of the idler who whittles a stick.

It was a monotonous day, with the added dead and wounded, a repetition that we had grown used to and then night again, a cold damp night it was, that dug into the very marrow of our bones, causing new aches and pains until we wondered if death itself was not more merciful. Then another morning with the same humdrum things, the morning of the seventh ~~day~~ in this wilderness of murder, until along in the afternoon, several men, unable to withstand the strain any longer, took it upon themselves to go after a bag of rations they had seen fall from an aeroplane. They had only gone but a short distance when all but one ran into a machine-gun nest and were completely wiped out. The survivor was made prisoner, well fed and his wounds dressed, then the German commander had him blindfolded and with a cane containing a little white flag for his guidance, they led him through their lines to their outposts from which they sent him off in the direction of our position on the hill.

He finally reported to Major Whitlessley, and handed him the following communication from the German officer.

To The Commanding Officer of the 2nd Battalion, J. R. 308,
of the 77th American Division.

Sir:

The bearer of the present, LOWELL R. HOLLINGSHEAD, has been taken prisoner by us on October . He refused to the German Intelligence Officer, every answer to his questions and is quite an honourable fellow, doing honour to his Fatherland in the strictest sense of the word.

He has been charged against his will, believing in doing wrong to his country, in carrying forward this present letter to the Officer in charge of the 2nd Battalion, J. R. 308 of the 77th Division with the purpose to recommend this Commander to surrender with his forces as it would be quite useless to resist any more, in view of the present conditions.

The suffering of your wounded men can be heard over here in the German lines and we are appealing to your human sentiments.

A white Flag shown by one of your men will tell us that you agree with these conditions.

Please treat the LOWELL R. HOLLINGSHEAD as an honourable man. He is quite a soldier. We envy you.

The German Commanding Officer.

Major Whitlessley read the note carefully and silently, then without comment, he placed it in the hands of Captain McMurtry, who likewise read it without change of expression, passing it in turn to Captain Holderman. The three then looked at each other and simultaneously a broad grin actually spread over the features of all. Undoubtedly the appeal to us to stop contained enough grim humor that only hard headed Boche could not realize, under the present harrowing conditions in his hasty desire to play a safe game. Its very audacity smacked of simplicity, when one considers the brand of warfare they had waged. After six days of relentless diabolic Teutonism, using every conceivable means of hells torture and trickery, that had sent death and destruction in our midst, he would now have us cry quits, when he became tired of the unequal carnage.

The Major, fearing the slightest sign from us might be misinterpreted as a show of acceptance and surrender, yelled "Baldwin, take in the Panel", and I promptly scrambled out of my funk-hole scurrying over the torn and bumpy ground, dragging from its place on the ground, the signal we had prayed so hard and long, would be seen by the planes, now this ray of hope must be put in the same category as the rest of forlorn ones.

Turning to the unfortunate Hollingshead, the Major berated him unmercifully, in a loud angry voice, for having left his post without permission, ordering him to report at once to his company commander. The incident had spread like wildfire through the ranks. Men, almost too weak to stand, actually on the verge of starvation, had now mustered every ounce of remaining strength to voice their sentiments in cursing and damning the Hun, daring him in loud exclamations of choice profanity to come over and try to take us.

That was all the white the German would ever see on that hillside slaughterhouse and was the unanimous sentiment of every half dead man who still retained a breath of life.

I WAS WITHIN FIVE FEET OF MAJOR WHITLESSLEY WHEN HE RECEIVED THE NOTE FROM HOLLINGSHEAD, and positively declare, he never made use of the world famed expression, by telling the German commander to "GO TO HELL", which is simply a myth, for as there was absolutely no recognition given to the Boche communication, therefore there was no necessity to answer it.

Weak, but with still a little fight left, we at once made preparation for an attack we felt must follow the snub to German autocracy and we were not amiss in our surmize for they promptly forgot their humane desires by sending us some of their famed liquid-fire, an ingenious art of cowardly killing that shot its scorching heat right into our ranks.

But that impertinent note of the Hun was rankling in our hearts and though our bodies were weak and emaciated, there arose within every man a new fighting spirit, a spirit that made furious demons of us, so with what remained of our scant supply of ammunition, we managed to drive them off with few casualties in our ranks and the last of this devilish horde, was seen disappearing in the forest, just as the shadows of night closed in upon the scene of another day of impish doings.

Hardly had the Battle been driven to shelter and we had crawled back to our funkholes for the night, ushering over and over again, what devilish sound after, the crack of American rifles, crash of shells and the rat-tat-tat of our country-men's machine-guns, came with glorious distinctness in our ears. Could it be possible, or was this just delirium, that we had come to mark the end, and sound taps for us, to death from exhaustion and starvation? All of us were roaring in and some actually lifted look behind, straining their eyes, by peering to pierce the darkness, in the fond hope of seeing the forms of Yankee troops filtering through the brush, but the night was too black and the attempt useless.

So literally alive with vermin, weary and sore in body and mind, we settled down for another night in hell's garden; about nine o'clock, one of the men on the right flank came stumbling up to Major Whitesley's foxhole and breathlessly gasped, "The 307th Infantry has broken through and their outposts are now in contact with our right flank."

Without a word, the Major hurried back with the soldier to verify his report, but we just laid there, too dumbfounded to utter a sound, merely staring at one another in the darkness, waiting, hoping and praying that this was not another joke of fortune. Major Whitesley shortly returned with an officer whom I could not distinguish in the darkness to spread the news that the 307th had actually broken through and that the ration details would reach us by day-break, when the relief could be completed.

Not a man closed an eye that night and all of us now welcomed the dawn of day with cherished anticipation, until finally, with the first streaks in the cloudy sky, could be seen an endless chain of American soldiers, lugging bags and boxes of food over the rough roads, to establish a ration dump at the foot of the hill, where yesterday we dared not tread. The look on the faces of my comrades in misfortune, as they gazed on the great pile of bread, corned willy, molasses, canned tomatoes and butter, was a sight rarely seen and never to be forgotten.

Although he was merely human and had suffered the pangs of hunger with the same pain as the rest of us, the first thing our Major did was to personally command the distribution of food, seeing that every man had been served before he attempted to partake of a morsel himself. He instructed me to see to it, but eight or ten wounded, who lay stretched near my funkhole were fed at once, so without waiting to cut the bread, we savagely tore it apart, entire great chunks of it, like ravenous beasts, meanwhile jabbing a bayonet into the cans of corned willy and tomatoes, while another struggled furiously in an effort to open a can of molasses.

The anxiety of war, home, friends, heaven, and hell were entirely forgotten; we ate and ate as though we could never get enough. I carried a growth of hair on my face, just sixteen days old, and more molasses seemed to nestle there than what had gone down on my bread. The front of my uniform was splotched on it, but no one seemed to have a care about appearance just now, and it was in this condition that suddenly faced Major General Clarkson, the Division Commander, who I take the above he could look to Major Whitesley. Without even remembering to salute him, replied that the Major was at the foot of the hill, distributing rations and offered to go for him, when the Major General

condition, remaining at [illegible] him, himself.

When they met, they shook hands warmly and he congratulated Major Whitesley on the valiant stand he had made under such awful conditions and compliments how the Germans had been driven out during the night, and that he had ordered [illegible] maintenance in the division to come up on the Boulevard Hill Road.

What a glorious sight it was to behold no less than a dozen of those wonderful no load men, remaining first aid as it should be rendered, except every man of us if he were to be tagged as a hospital subject. Soon the ambulances could be seen speeding away with their shattered freight, to rest and attention so surely earned, as the balance of our regiment came up and the third battalion, under Captain Throckmorton, relieved us.

Major Whitesley assembled what was left of his little band on the road and one hundred and seventy-four men, all that was left of seven hundred, moved slowly down the hill at his command, across the valley of death, leaving behind the remnants of a shell-torn hill, where death and carnage had reigned supreme for six long days and nights, and those noble souls whose bodies mark the spot, will ever remain a monument made famous by the stand of the so-called "LOST BATTALION."

Section "A"
Back Within the Line

[illegible] not alone to the observant in our own ranks, but to those who dispensed it in unfriendly manner, the suddenly swift and deadly sweep of thorough examination of those who were attempting to keep a wild fruitless vermin, a veronis, totally defenseless as clothed their tiny bodies, of the many packs that came over from the enemy's terrain, to land here and there along the road, then burst on the very ground the cootie had been forced to relinquish.

Now and then some of those lucky ones who had been left behind on relay posts or other details, came to collect the valley of sorrow in misery, until great or with furtive eyes all along the line, moving a venture cautiously over our safe deliverance and by surprise, busy to ply us with all sorts of questions, in reference to some pal or buddie who had assumed membership of those happy days at Camp Upton. The latter seemed loath to cut this uncontrollable inquisitiveness, much of its being dampened by the news that this or that one had gone west, and to recite over and over again the end of others, whose deeds of no-return and fighting spirit still remained, as they lay for hours and days in untold agony, until the arrival of the grim spectre, undermined to the end.

Gun shells coming too close would often break up these conversations but seldom stopped the onward movement, until we finally halted in front of some aforetimed German shacks, which we learned were to be our temporary quarters. A Red Cross man had stationed himself outside and as we filed by, handed each one a piece of chocolate, a silent but friendly token of sympathy, no doubt, but we craved something substantial, still his efforts were understood and our hearts gave thanks as we passed into the shacks to drop what little remained of equipment. Then everyone headed straight for the kitchens, four of which were going full blast, presumably having received notice of our coming.

It seemed inconceivable that we could not have all the eats desired and the odor of steaming hot coffee began to have an invigorating effect on every one. The menu consisted of rice, prunes, bread, syrup and the welcome black coffee that had leaped into favor, and by the looks of things the boys would never get enough from the way they devoured everything placed before them, for only a few short hours back every one of us were slowly awaiting nature's defeat at the hand of starvation. Quite an audience had returned to witness the banquet of grim and listen intently to the tales that came between mouthfuls of rice or gulps of coffee until the history of the full six days of torture had been told from every angle and vizualized to their entire satisfaction.

I finally realized that not a vacant spot was remained in my distended stomach, while new thoughts made me aware that I was in great need of a shave, so with a cup of cold water and piece of borrowed soap, I made off to the shack to commence the attempt at the torrential art. After making three circuits of all efforts covered by my helmet, I finally gave up in despair, for the sorriness that was still my countenance proved too much for the fourth trial.

At the o'clock that same afternoon we were ordered assembled on the open where our clothing was being issued. This was planned as a God-send for we were literally alive with vermin, still I was a trifle pleased and disappointed on finding I could not obtain another B.D. (olive drab) shirt

and was forced to [illegible] about [illegible] of [illegible]. He could easily be [illegible] their [illegible]ness [illegible] again [illegible], [illegible] returned to the [illegible] and [illegible].

[illegible] my thoughts [illegible] to the [illegible] to [illegible]. [illegible] or a [illegible] all [illegible] from my body, and [illegible] like myself in being not [illegible], [illegible] on [illegible] its own [illegible], were [illegible]. But if [illegible] his [illegible] out, [illegible] to be his [illegible] for [illegible].

It was now time for business again for I must report to the major in his new headquarters [illegible] in one of the [illegible]. After the interview, what was left of my seemingly tireless [illegible] were [illegible] again delivering orders to the several companies that called for foot inspection and a [illegible] of the [illegible]. Nightfall found us ready and more than anxious for what was really expected to be a real night's sleep and [illegible] of [illegible], every one had forgotten the terrors of the [illegible] and the devilishness of the [illegible], even though [illegible] the surroundings noisy.

At three A.M. a [illegible] sentinel [illegible] me [illegible] to report at once to the Battalion H.Q. How I hated to leave that bunk on the dirt floor, but I sighed, orders must be obeyed regardless of comfort as I cast an envious glance at my comfortable buddies who were good in their present state till daylight. Arriving at headquarters I was given orders to awaken all companies for the reason that the Boche were retreating in such haste that it was necessary to get after them at once and as I went from shack to shack awakening the sergeants in charge, a sort of reluctance came over me for I never had a more harsh duty to perform. To be compelled to shake man after man and inform him he must go on again in the line seemed nothing short of brutal.

Back in the line again after all we had been through without even a full day's rest appeared cruel and thoughtless but we realized the master minds in General Headquarters were running affairs and that the growls or grumblings of a buck private held little sway. Daybreak found us eating our morning meal in comparative silence, after which we received a fresh supply of ammunition and were off, but this time acting as divisional reserve. [illegible] being [illegible] had thrown into action, only of [illegible] however, along with the [illegible] Division of [illegible] troops, in a frantic effort to [illegible], but [illegible] to stop the [illegible] the fact that his [illegible]. Again [illegible] than a half of [illegible] all [illegible], [illegible]. This [illegible], we found ourselves just south of the strongly fortified [illegible] the town of [illegible]. Our [illegible] as the [illegible] in [illegible] on the [illegible] north of the town.

Our batteries opened up [illegible] extremely accurate and effective shelling [illegible] was soon [illegible] to [illegible] machine-gun nests

and artillery positions. The river line now ran between us and the Germans and it appeared enormously important to us to attempt to widen the bridgehead if we were isolated there. Headquarters of the unit for days surely called for some consideration with a view to large troops or other disposition but before our lot was mainly left to ourselves, on the night of October 14th, the entire division again formed in the face of a hellish hail of Lachrymatory shell fire, with the 82nd Airborne at Amay, while the 84th moved on Engis-Pre.

Our artillery poured an incessant rain of shells into the enemy lines and under this protection we were soon across the river and storming the heights, until noon of the 15th found the enemy town of Engis in the hands of the Americans. In an obviously disjointed manner which often did it seem, for like a reward for our endeavor and heroism, came the joyful news that on this very night the 84th Division would relieve us.

At last after weeks of bitter struggle and hardship, going through more than twenty kilometers of dense forest and swampy marshes against the severity and military training of five crack German divisions, our superiors had been shown and work had come to a weary. A personal shocker moment we had suffered almost four thousand casualties; while on our mission still we had taken four towns, a quantity of ammunition and equipment and a number of prisoners; but most of all my greatest pride was that I had been with the division which had accomplished what was thought impossible; we had cleared and captured the forest of the Ardenne.

Chapter XI

Off to the Hospital

Withdrawn from the lines! What a welcome thrill those miraculous words sent to the brain of everyone, carrying gratifying visions of baths, sleep, cots and heaps of books in the provincial land of Abri du Grochet. But it was found on our arrival that aside from the fact that we were out of the lines, life at Abri du Grochet was none too rosy at present, for a steady drizzle that had been carrying on for days had also soaked us to the skin, as well as every part of our equipment. The camp was entirely composed of pup-tents, encircled with a soggy ground that compelled every conceivable means to be resorted to in an endeavor to make the place habitable. We laid branches and twigs criss-cross to form a bed, while small fires that could not be seen at any great distance were started in an attempt to dry out.

The mess, which under ordinary circumstances was hailed as a thing of joy, now became an object of distrust for the incessant rain very often soaked a slice of bread into a mushy mass before we had time to eat it.

It was about the 17th of October that word came for me to report to Division Headquarters which at the time was functioning from an immense German concrete dug-out, a few kilos from our swampy quarters, and as I tramped through the mud and mire, wondering what it could mean, my nerves began to assert themselves. After arriving at this haven of comfort, I promptly reported to the Chief of Staff, who at once called his stenographer and directed him to make a note of everything I had to say, in reply to the questions he would put to me. Perhaps it was the look of bewilderment that betrayed my feelings and caused the Chief to explain that it was the purpose of the Division Commander to compile all the data possible, regarding Major Whitlessley's actions while with the Lost Battalion as they wished to see if Congress would award the Major a Medal of Honor, the highest mark that can be given a soldier by our Government.

I was told I had been selected with two others because we were three of the few alive who had been close to Major Whitlessley through it all and that I was expected to tell the story in my own way of just how it happened, particulary of the part the Major had played and how he handled the situation. For a moment I was completely nonplussed, while I mused over what I felt was to be the crowning effort of my life, a supreme moment that found me selected to say a few words that were deeply rooted within, to the honor and glory of a fearless noble American, such as the Major had always shown himself in the presence of death, agony and fear and my only hope now seemed to be in the unity of brain and tongue, guided by memories that were still young. My heart and soul were in the story, as I lived over again, every minute of those six harrowing days and nights like cornered rats, with death and carnage on every side and as I commenced the narrative, the tall erect form of our gallant Major seemed to lead the way to going from one horror to another.

First when we discovered we were hemmed in on all sides and of the efforts of Major Whitlessley to communicate with headquarters; of machine gun barrages of the wounded and dying, and how regardless of the fact that the hillside was literally and constantly alive with terrific shell-fire, this indefatigable leader in utter disregard of his own safety had time and again gone among the wounded, comforting them and assuring all of us

that everything would eventually turn out satisfactorily. How at each attack he too would snatch a rifle and mount the top of the dangerous hill, where he fought shoulder to shoulder with the buck privates urging them on to stay the gun attack.

Pausing for breath, I realized there was not a sound in the place but my own voice and in my enthusiasm, I had unconsciously become a spell-binder by the appearance of the clerks who were listening with thoughtful faces, still I continued going from one deed of valor to another, until when I finally finished, I honestly felt that I had said hardly enough in favor of this wonderful man and peerless officer, for whom the best seemed none too good.

It can be imagined then, my happiness to learn later that Congress had awarded him the well earned prize, a Congressional Medal of Honor. After this pleasant mission with the Chief of Staff and my story finished, I turned back again to the boggy camp, through the still drizzling rain and gathering dusk, arriving just in time for the evening meal.

The strain of the Lorrain front, the Vesle and Aisne combined with the hardship and struggles of the Argonne were undoubtedly beginning to show their effects on my constitution in a sudden reaction, for my knees began to feel wobbly and nights and rest which had been daylight dreams were now sleepless torture. Therefore I considered it was about time to report to the medical authorities, who after listening to my tale of woe, prescribed the usual dose of pills and sent me back to the pup-tent in the marsh.

But I realized neither pills nor the present life was far from the road to regained health and strength, and as the days wore on I gradually grew worse, until on the 20th of October, completely worn out in body and mind after a long hike, I was found fast asleep under a tree at Chene Tondu with the rain beating down on me by Captain Paul R. Knight, who told me it was nothing short of foolishness to attempt to hold out longer and that I should go to a hospital. Still I had no desire to change anything that would separate me from the outfit, for I feared I would not get back once I left and preferred to stay on as long as possible. The Captain undoubtedly did not agree with my ideas, for after he had talked with the medical officer, I was tagged for the hospital with the notation "Exhaustion". Then came the sad moments when I said good-bye to the boys who happened to be near and after packing up my few belongings in a little canvas bag, I was off with faltering gait through the now pouring rain on my way to the little tent that served as a first aid station.

Sick, dog-tired and drenched to the skin, I stood in line to be questioned by the Sergeant. Evidently I made a gruesome sight as I stood before him, under the rays of his flickering candle light, for though he turned a long searchinizing look at my face, this man who had known me from the days of Luton utterly failed to recognize me. When I gave him my name in answer to his question, he gazed up with a start and after shaking my hand, told me how sorry he was to see me so ill, so after getting me a hot cup of cocoa, pointed to a stretcher that was on the ground, telling me I could lay there until the next one came that way to take me further to the rear. This old stretcher I figured would at least keep me out of the wet and dampness and as I took from the pile two blankets to make a bed, it seemed as though the long wished rest would never come, for my legs were getting so weak, it was only by the greatest efforts that I was able to move about at all. Finally with one blanket serving

as a pillow and another wrapped around my wet clothes, I stretched full length to toss and turn for what was hours, until the sergeant came to tell me to prepare for the ambulance which had just arrived and would shortly start for the field hospital. I requested him to have the battalion mail orderly hold anything that might come for me from home, as I was sure that a few days rest would fit that man needed to put me in good shape again.

It was indeed a heavy heart that beat within me as I filed into the waiting bus and with seven others, we were soon speeding away over the rain soaked and pitch dark roads, leaving all my staunch friends behind to commence anew among strangers. All that night we kept constantly moving through the enveloping blackness, with hardly a sound besides the purring tires or our own hollow voices until with early dawn came the first sight of a field hospital that seemed to have no end of tents and buildings, the center of which was located at a railroad station. Some time was taken in classifying us, during which process the sick and wounded were furnished with all the hot cocoa they could drink by those wonderful women, the Red Cross nurses, whose great work in administering to the suffering, has placed them on a pinnacle of mercy throughout the world.

In time I was assigned to a squad-tent to await the arrival of a hospital train which we learned would take us to a base hospital and as I again settled down for another period of quietness, I had the opportunity of turning my eyes and sympathies on those about, destined for the same place as myself. The sights that met my gaze on every hand was enough to make ones blood run cold, for to glance through the lanes of sick, wounded and dying, brought back the reminder that but a few short months before, these unfortunates were strong, strapping young fellows, happy in roseate manhood but now reduced to mere skeletons, frail weaklings so shattered and maimed as to make them helpless perhaps for the balance of their lives.

Strange as it may seem, these sights did not act as a disheartening moral to those who had hopes of being returned to the line, but on the other hand imbued them with the wish to get well as soon as possible, in order to again cast their lot with those still hammering away at the enemy to crush the Hun and end war's devilishness as soon as possible. There were many things idleness now gave me time to think of. Thoughts of home, and my comrades in line seemed to blend in picturing my present lonesomeness dejectedly, so I threw myself on the cot in the tent that night, clothes and all, and soon forgot everything until the scurrying about in the morning brought me out of the first good night's sleep I had enjoyed in months. As I was able to move about, I was told to go to the mess-hall for breakfast and made my way slowly toward the Red Cross tent, in hopes of getting some cocoa for I had a feeling my stomach could sustain nothing heavier, and the doughboys friend I knew would cater to my needs.

As I stood sipping my big cup of cocoa I began to study the cheerful faces of the Red Cross angels of mercy. What wonderful specimens of American womanhood they were to be sure. Some of gentle birth and breeding, scholarly and womanly with the adage of feminine sympathy that made their very presence soothing. The girls of our land, ours to be proud of, who had left homes and family with every comfort, to abide with their men, in the filth and desolation of war-ridden Europe, sometimes standing for hours in mud to their ankles, cheerfully making cocoa or coffee for their soldier boys. What return did they receive I thought? Not to say, oft times not so much as thanks from some gruff ignorant fellow, who un-

gratefully figure it was going to the engine, but more often a sympathetic glance at the dead look of determination from each that met their own, could be their return which could easily be seen had one the heart.

It was late that afternoon that I was put aboard a hospital train and rolled at speed of utter exhaustion deposited its miserable occupant, until just about dusk we drew out of the station, bound somewhere but no one seemed to care.

The field hospital was duly noted in the distance when an attendant came through the cars with the evening mess of canned corned beef and black coffee but like many others, I too turned nothing but the coffee. We soon tired of the monotony of looking out of the windows and many curled up on the floor or seats in an effort to sleep for it was pure conjecture how long we would be on the move. A restless night and more black coffee, when the sight of a great base hospital came to view, as we neared the station and learned from the men standing about on the platform that we had arrived at what was known as base hospital #58 at Beaune-Bulney, near Nevers. Along towards afternoon, after passing through the administration buildings, I was finally assigned to a ward where to my great astonishment were real beds with sheets and without doubt, a genuine pillow. I stood looking at my resting place somewhat bewildered, with the same feeling an outcast might be expected to experience in being suddenly thrust into luxury. Was I dreaming some fairyland scene that was to be spoiled by awakening, or could this be really true, I kept wondering, until the voice of the sergeant in charge told me to take off my clothes as he handed me a pair of pajamas.

It was a new thrill that swept my weary frame, as I stretched out on that couch of ease, for it was more than six months ago since I had slept in a bed or had my clothes off more than twice in all that time, so one can realize that this present turn of affairs meant to me, and forgive my failure to truly realize that the sudden change from hardship to luxury was a fact.

Morning came in this haven of refreshing sleep and as I heaved a sigh of relief and took in the surroundings, the form of a doughboy, an attache of the hospital, was standing by my bedside with a tray that held hot coffee, prunes, rice and bread. "Gee" I whispered under my breath "this is some service", and the added pleasurable thoughts of nothing to do the entire day but stay in this cosy bed was indeed encouraging. It hardly seemed to be my luck when numerous other great disappointments were recalled, and I began to hope some army regulation would not spring up to spoil it all.

A short time after breakfast, the Sergeant in charge of the ward came along with a doctor, who began by asking the nature of my illness. It just dawned upon me then, that up to this time, no one had ever seemed interested enough in me, or my ailments to inquire whether I had been gassed, wounded or shell-shocked and further, not a soul seemed to care a rap, so here was my opportunity to explain in minute detail how I had drank water from streams that often contained bodies of many dead floating on the surface, and under many other indescribably conditions, until my stomach finally rebelled, by refusing to hold anything at all, adding to this the strenuous work of the active days in the line, which had weakened me so that my legs joined in unison with my stomach, and could not carry my body longer.

The doctor took my temperature and after some notations on a chart, at the foot of my bed, prescribed some tablets with the joyful promise that I would soon be as well as ever. The ward contained some fifty invalids and a peculiar coincidence was that no two men were from the same state or division. As each man held a decided opinion on what division had accomplished the most toward winning the war, it can be surmized how heated and argumentive the atmosphere and surroundings became when some fellow decided to boost his own particular outfit. Regardless of what his division or its qualities had done in making history, the egotistical person was promptly informed his division had never been known to do more than dig deep dugouts, or clean the roads, nor had they ever even heard a shot fired.

Usually the loudest talker ever rode the rest and thereby was able to put in a good word for his own connections which he would explain with great enthusiasm had done most of the fighting and had driven millions upon millions of Germans before them with little or no effort. It was these continued squabbles that often out-talked pain and misery, helping dreary hours to flit by unnoticed between pills and mealtimes.

After two days of rest, I was up and about, quite well enought to travel to the mess-hall and partake of the varied dishes of salmon, which was sometimes served in the can, sometimes out of it. Other times with onions, then again sometimes without. Now and then the delectable dish was hot and perhaps the next time cold, but regardless of whether it was breakfast, dinner or supper, friend salmon never deserted his post, and was finally dubbed "Goldfish".

I well remember after a week's stay in the hospital of getting hold of a copy of the "Stars and Stripes", the A. E. F. official publication, and of reading with anguish how the Government had just contracted to purchase some two million cases of canned "salmon", but not wishing to disclose this heartrending news to the boys of whom I had grown fond, I just silently wondered if they were going to keep us in France, until all the marketable "goldfish" in the world had been consumed.

However, my strength seemed to gradually improve, until I at last requested the Sergeant to get me a pair of shoes, for strange to say, the sun had come out brightly and I longed to be out in it. Soon I varied this with walks through the wards in hopes of seeing a face I knew and talk over the good old days back in France or of experiences in this land of devastation and sorrow but found no one. It seemed strange, indeed, to go from bed to bed and talk to representatives of amost every state in the Union. To note the Southern dialects and drawl, or the western twangs in another row, with as much ease as a big telegraph office back home in New York communicates north, east, south and west, with the same instantaneous responses. Here a chap from California, over there one from Georgia, further on another who claims Oklahoma or Alaska and so on until I could have had a fine lesson in our geography had time allowed me to interview all.

It was now the second of November and rumors began to pour in that a great drive had started on the first of the month, also that the boys in line were literally driving the Hun before them in a determined effort to crush his offensive and break his morale.

These rumors soon became stern realities, when trainload after trainload of wounded began to reach us about the fourth and fifth day, and as I was about fed up on the detestable "goldfish", I told the Sergeant how anxious I was to get back with my outfit again with the request that he arrange for my examination by the doctor. This seemed easier than I thought, for the following day I was pronounced O.K. and again fit for service, with my discharge from the hospital. A slip was given me addressed to the supply sergeant, which entitled me to a new uniform.

So after being re-rigged, I joined some hundred or more men and went to the station to await the train that would bring us to Nevers, where soldiers from all hospitals were sent to be reclassified and if possible assigned to their own divisions. It proved but a short ride and by nine o'clock that same night we were piling out of the train ready to be marched to the re-classification camp where after lining up for a late mess, we were assigned to bunks and given blankets to cover us during the night.

This place was rightfully named a madhouse. There were thousands of soldiers from almost as many divisions and units, in charge of sergeants from other units, who were making heroic, but fruitless attempts to establish some kind of order and quiet and to line-up this unruly mob for mess, a sight that would have to be seen to be thoroughly appreciated. When the whistle blew, and the sergeants said "go", there was a rush that developed nothing short of a wild stampede with the air full of mess-kits knives, forks and tangled, cursing humanity, not omitting the howls as we were swallowed up in the melange, some shouting "here's your last chance to get a wound stripe", others "Let's go", or"When do we eat"? The real comedy came about three times daily, when everyone assembled in a great yard and the sergeants would call out the names of men and their divisions, in an effort to weed out of this unruly mob enough of them to start on their way back to their outfits.

He would bawl "Smith" and "Jones" until almost hoarse and not a soul would answer, then some high-pitched voice in the rear would yell either "Von Hindenburg" or"Von Ludendorff", which would be greeted with a chorus of fully one hundred "Here". After three days of this farce, my name was finally called and with a sigh of relief, I grabbed what equipment I had, only too eager to report at the railroad station where transportation was issued and dodge this pandemonium.

It had grown dark and as we lined-up awaiting our turn to board the train, some lad would come along asking for his divisional group, then a voice from out of the night could be heard shouting"What are you doing here? Your division hasn't left America yet", or when another unfortunate went down the line inquiring "what division is this", he would be promptly informed "It was the 33rd division of bricklayers"or anything else that came handy to their minds. After an hour or so of this harmless banter, we piled aboard a train that was bound for somewhere in France. That was about all any of us knew, or apparently could gain as to our destination.

The nights were rather chilly and many of us huddled together as close as possible on the seats or floor of our compartment, for we were possibly in for an all night ride. This mode of snatching sleep under any and all circumstances was nothing new, as the man who has been through the full course of soldering during war's activity had learned to seek his own comfort in any way or manner that circumstances afford.

About noon the next day, we came to a sudden halt in a patch of woods and after waiting patiently for a full half hour, the inquisitive ones began to scamper about the learn the cause of delay. The engineer finally explained that this was as far as we would go, owing to the fact that the tracks beyond this point had been torn up by shells and were in no fit condition for use. Furthering questioning of our informant disclosed the location of Verdun, which he explained was about six miles ahead and if we cared to, we could continue on foot, for he had heard as he passed through the various towns that night that an armistice so rumor said, had been signed at eleven o'clock that same morning. For a moment a dull silence ensued, while each man looked at his neighbor with an incredulous sort of expression. Could this be true, or was it just the delirium of suffering and reation?

The war over and we were not to go in the line again! Surely the old jinx, Dame Rumor, must be again on the rampage with one of her silly announcements. Still suppose this time she had guessed a winner, what then? I lost no time in being on the safe side, so we gathered up our equipment hastily and made off at a quick gait to our peaceful objective Verdun, in order to verify the report. Just on the outskirts of the town stood a little shack where coffe could be purchased and we lost no time in getting inside to quiz the Frenchman as to whether or not he had heard the news.

One look at his beaming countenance was enough to buoy our hopes and although he seemed in an exceptionally jovial mood and quite talkative, the little we understood of his lingo centered on his words "finis le guerre" which was sufficient.

After drinking our coffee with lighter hearts than we had experienced for many many months, we started again headed for Verdun with the feelings of children on a Christmas morn after a visit from Santa Claus. Arriving in the town, we met units of the 26th division, who all seemed in a great state of joyous exultation and eager to talk of the sighing of the greatest event of the entire conflict - the armistice.

I finally located in the ruins of what was possibly a former public buildings, and found to my delight a Y. M. C. A. headquarters, where I was more than grateful to be allowed to fill my pockets with cigarettes, then made inquiries as to the location of the railway-head, for I was more than anxious to get back to my own outfit. After beinginformed that a short hike as far as the other end of town would bring us to what was once upon a time the railroad station, I started off again, only to find to my deep disgust, no train as yet had left the rail-head and that the first American ration train would not leave until the following afternoon. It would contain no accomodation for troops we were told, but if we cared to we could ride with the freight as the train would go as far as Don Sur Meuse. Thwarted by circumstances left nothing much to do but stroll down the tracks where an empty freight carwas found into which we threw our equipment. This done we tossed a ball of hay standing nearby on the ground and tore it open, in preparation to making ourselves comfortable for the night.

The next step was back to Verdun again where we lined-up with a company that was having their evening mess, then back again to our box car refuge to turn in for the night. The following day after breakfast, was spent in roaming over the town and examining the ruins of many fine buildings and streets, until toward the end of the late afternoon, we put our

things in order once more for our trip on that longed for freight train which finally appeared about five P.M.

None of the boys who took that ride will ever fail to recall it as one of the most momentous events of their army career, for the night was biting cold and the best place I could find was on a coal car that was now loaded with potatoes. Time and again I buried my hands in the cargo in an effort to keep them warm and with my feet beating a constant tatoo against each other, I kept my body wiggling about as much as possible on the hard lumps in order to revive the blood that seemed ready to freeze. But that awful cutting wind continued to dig right through my clothes, leaving us with nothing more consoling than the knowledge that the war was over, which was news worth standing most anything to anticipate.

It was just about daybreak when the snail-like freight chugged its way laboriously into Don Sur Meuse, and we found it no easy matter to squirm down from the tops of the spuds, for every one of us was stiff and cold through to the marrow, but we managed to make our way across the frost covered ground to where a company were just finishing breakfast. The mess-sergeant whom we asked for a cup of coffee, regretted very much that he could offer nothing more than a can of half frozen tomatoes and some bread to each of us, as he had several extra for breakfast that morning, and there was nothing else left.

We ate, or rather drank the tomatoe fluid with great relish however, for the ride through wintry blasts of the night had put a keen edge on our apetites, leaving no room for fastidious tastes or demonstrations in the line of chow, so after building a fire in an attempt to thaw out, the next and only thing seemed to be the location of Headquarters of the 77th Division, which a few officers informed us was at Ravcourt, according to last reports.

But Raucourt, we learned was a long distance north, and in the present predicament there seemed nothing more feasible nor encouraging than again depending on my own legs for progress, so I lost no time in slinging on my equipment again and headed down the road alone this time, for those who had accompanied me thus far must now turn off in a different direction. My start was made determinedly enough, but not without some slight misgiving and more than once I silently meditated on the journey, its certain hardships and the length of time it would require to accomplish the end, and after two miles of this lonesome calculation, a truck hove in sight through the white dust of the road.

The driver pulled up when I hailed him, and told me he was going as far north as St. Fieremont, at the same time inviting me to climb aboard. This incident and the attendant hospitality I felt was an omen of good luck, as I settled alongside of him to note as we rumbled along over the rough and torn roads the undeniable evidence to be found all around of the dauntless drive that had been made by the Yankees but a few days before in the general chaos and disorder usually found in the wake of such procedure; the grim and silent memento of a disgarded trail.

After arriving at St. Pievemont, I decided to call it a day's trip, and put up for the night with some troops of another division, which I found quartered there.

The bright early morning following found me hitting the road again with as much zeal as ever, to reach the goal, my own outfit, if it took the rest of my life to accomplish. Mile after mile, my never faltering feet carried me on and on; while now and then a few short rides gradually closed the gap, until the joyous moment when I stepped into First Battalion headquarters in the town of Nouzon, and immediately reported for duty to Captain S. A. Fahnestock, who was then Battalion Commander. Back with my own at last with the joy of a homing pigeon, partaking in the warm reception that greeted me at headquarters from the boys, in which even some of the officers joined, especially Captain Paul R. Knight to whom fate had strangely brought me in close contact through all the great struggle even since the days of preparation at Camp Upton.

Through all these great manifestations of kindness there still lingered a vision of peace and rest in a warm bunk, but though this was about to be realized, they were soon sent kiting, when I was presented with some fifty or more letters from home and friends that had accumulated during my absence from the outfit. In my eagerness to read them all, I had forgotten everything else, so seated beside the flickering glimmer of a candle in the little room, I kept on and on, until suddenly casting a glance at my watch was surprised to find my interest had let the little hands slip round and round, until the hour of 3.30 A. M. So with a mind full of contentment, I slipped off hat and shoes and curled up alongside of my buddy, thankful beyond words my journey had ended, delighted to be back once more with those of the old gang for whom I held a brotherly affection.

In the morning, everyone seemed anxious to tell of the big drive and all that I had missed, which started many feelings of disappointment and chagrin, but I was exceptionally pleased to learn of the promotion of Major Whitlessley to that of Lieutenant Colonel and to hear also, that he was safely on his way to the States. Through all the good news would now and then come a note of pathos, in the sorrow that told of many deaths in the ranks of boys I knew so well, who had gloriously paid the supreme price of the great victory by their heroism.

## CHAPTER XII
## Homeward Bound

It was a few days later that we started on a hike to the Lez Nsletts area, where we were re-equipped, supplied with clean clothing and an attempt made to delouse the division. Our stay here was a busy one, with little or no time to loaf, for we were to start again on a ten day march to a training area, after a rest that would only last just for the night.

In preparation for this, we were given full equipment, consisting of a pack that weighed approximately sixty pounds. This with a tin Lizzie and rifle, was no light or comfortable load to carry while constantly on the go. In a day or so, we were off at a medium gait, going along steadily for about fifty minutes and resting ten, following this schedule all through the day, until at nightfall thoroughly exhausted we would halt and throw ourselves on the ground in the woods with naught but the sky and somber trees forming a sheltering roof. There were other nights though, when we would be fortunate enough to reach a town where billets or sleeping quarters could be obtained in barns or out houses. Those occasions were usually hailed with joy by the boys for it made all of us feel for the moment we were in luck.

It was during the course of these hikes that the greatest fortune of my whole career came, without a word of warning as a big surprise, for on December 1st, 1918, I was suddenly informed that I had been promoted from the rank of Corporal to that of Battalion Sergeant Major, which I considered quite a big jump. To say I was delighted would be putting it mildly, and I could hardly wait for the opportunity to get the news to those we had left behind. Friends whom I felt would join with me in this exalted hour, but day after day the onward movement continued, until on December 4th, we finally come to a halt at our destinations end in the little town of Pont-le-Ville, just a few kilometers from the town of Chateau Villain, where division headquarters were established, and there was never a more thankful set of doughboys than ours, who turned in for the night, voicing these sentiments, knowing that the following day would not be another continued performance of hike.

After a days layoff, orders began to come, that mapped out a whole program of training we must go through during the stay in this new area. Soon competitive drills started, with company and regimental shows, athletic meets, and every conceivable form of amusing diversion, that would smother any tendency toward homesickness. It was obvious since the armistice, the one thought in everyone's mind seemed to be centered on getting back to the States and home. Nightly could be found men writing sheet after sheet of lengthy letters, telling of their fond hopes of reaching the shores of America soon, for rumors to that effect had begun to fly fast and loose.

I well recall our last Christmas Eve in this exhausted country, as we sat around an open fireplace, until the wee small hours, telling stories and otherwise trying to live up to the spirit of the Season. There was Jim Larney, who recited so volubly the "Shooting of Dan McGrew", and Joe Bryant, Lauer, Flannery and others, who lent their talents to tell some yarn to while away the lonesomeness of the situation and lift the ban of gloom from what should otherwise have been a joyous night. It might appear strange that we should feel such depression

for was the war not ended and it was no longer necessary to look forward to more hardships that follow the life of a soldier in the line? The armistice was of course the best Christmas present that could be given humanity, and we now had a roof over us with good bunks to sleep in, and hot meals daily, but still we grouched and looked for more, most of all, home.

The daily grind was just a succession of inspection and drills, added to by manoeuvres through the surrounding hills, so time dragged on this way, until early in February we moved again this time to the town of Sable on the Sarth river. Here things took on a brighter aspect, as the town was quite large and the guard mount was held daily in the public square where hordes of French civilians would line the curb to watch the Americane soldat perform.

There were a great number of restaurants and estamenents in Sable, which did a thriving business, for the doughboy had grown tired of army chow, consequently at times it was difficult to find a seat at any of these places. A number of men had been granted leave of absence and furloughs to the "leave" areas, where special attention had been made to entertain them in any way that would satisfy the pangs of down heartedness, for everyone seemed to grow more homesick hourly, through the inactivity and surcease of battle.

Hardly a mealtime came that would not find groups of the boys whispering together, relating some rumor each had heard, regarding the date of our sailing orders, but these all proved false with as much anguish as those that came and went in the days at Upton when we were anxious to be in the game "Ovethere". Days even hours, now dragged tagged with the usual humdrum of routine drills and inspections.

A month of this crawled slowly on and it would be difficult to describe the feelings of the command when the welcome order at last reached us, giving detailed instructions as to our actions when we arrived at the Pontanazen barracks, outside of Brest, from which point we were to sail for home and native land. The joy of this had hardly time to be fully appreciated before we were packing our effects once more, for what we hoped would be the final move toward the sea. Then came the train ride and a hike that seemed up hill all the way, until the great camp of destination loomed in the distance, and once more, tired and weary, we were assigned to squad tents.

The next two weeks brought a continual and exhaustless round of inspections. One day it would be physical, the next equipment, then we would be sent down to the bath houses again, where another general delousing was again in order, then another inspection, still no one seemed to mind this much, for we began to realize it was all done with the object of making us eligible for that westward trip that meant home, relations and country.

One of the few days that nature had favored our stay in France with sun, proved to be our last, for bright and early on the glorious morning of April 19th, we were formed in line and marched out of camp down through the streets of Brest, with the cheers of its citizens ringing in our ears, and as we neared the docks and the calm water came in sight, a sudden thrill came to the marchers, that was slightly offset by the uneasy fear that something might happen to hold us up at the last moment.

happily nothing of the kind occured and after a process of checking and rechecking, we piled aboard the small government boats that steamed out to the harbor, to draw alongside of the big steamer "America" that was to take us on the last lap of our eventful journey homeward. Another checking and we mounted the gangplank to finally set foot on this wonderful ark, that was ready to see the dreams of months fulfilled and as we mislung our heavy equipment, a new lease of life seemed to have been taken by every man. Assignments were made to our bunks below and we were free to go on deck and watch at dusk the steamers big mud-hook made taut to the falls, as the"America" slowly turned her nose out of the harbor toward the great expanse beyond.

Many of the boys lined the rails gazing wistfully at the receding shores of France that never-to-be-forgotten land with its mingled memories of sorrow and happiness, where we had blazed a trail from Lorraine to the Argonne, of which our country and citizens may well feel proud.

The great ship seemed to join in our sentimental spirits for with every turn of her powerful screws, she picked up speed, cutting through the peaceful calm of old ocean with majestic grace, in harmony with the throbbing hearts of her khaki clad cargo to reach the greatest objective of all-- home!

It was a happy cargo that counted minutes with patient fortitude which made the voyage an uneventful one. We were coming back experienced hardened veterans, with the imprint of war's ravages, mature in body and mind to again seek the tasks of peaceful livelihood in a broader scope of enlightenment, flushed but unboastful of our part in the victory of arms, that gives another chapter to American history with the same spotless record in all her struggles for justice and humane endeavor.

Faintly through the mist came the tall arm of Miss Liberty, with the welcoming din of bells and whistles. Our own city was coming to greet her sons and our hearts were bubbling over with the spirit of Peace on earth to men of good will.

F I N I S