

My War Experiences.

Written to answer questions that
my children ask from time to time.

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A ~~true~~ account of a soldier of the World War who did his bit during the hot campaigns against the Germans in 1918. Upon his return he was greeted by friends who thought they were now gazing upon a hero. One of them asked "Tell me, how many Germans did you shoot?" He replied, "None, nor ~~was I killed by any German.~~ did any German shoot me." The only killing I did was that of seriously wounded horses, many cooties and ~~someday~~ overly-bold rats." No hero, but one who helped.

Preparation.

After having served on the Mexican Border in 1916-1917 with the Hospital Corps, 4th Pa. Inf. and subsequently enjoying a few months back home at teaching, I was called into active service in the World War on July 15, 1917 with Headquarters of the 28th Division, the National Guard of Penna. This Division trained at Camp Hancock, Augusta, Georgia. I entered the third Officer's Training Camp on January 1, 1918. Just as this training was over, the Division was ordered to France. We left Augusta on sleepers for Camp Merritt, N. J. on April 2nd. I was assigned to the Supply Co. of the 110th Infantry as 1st Sergeant (attached). It was my good fortune to get a day's leave awaiting my commission.

to go home to say farewell. This gave me a few hours to see my folks at home (Jacksonville, Pa.) and friends in Allentown.

The Trip Across.

On May 2 with pack and baggage we quietly moved down to Hoboken, ferried across the river to New York, and from Pier 58 boarded H. M. S. ^{formerly} Demosthenes. This vessel of the Aberdeen line plied between England and Australia but now was put into service to transport American troops to Europe. Sergeant Byrne and I were assigned together to a state room. This was decidedly more comfortable than the decks with hammocks where the rest of the company was ~~assigned~~ quartered. We left port at 7 a.m. May 3rd, ~~and~~ lost sight of the U.S.A. at about noon. We found ourselves in a convoy of 14 ships. ~~These were~~ all painted in weird designs to serve as camouflage.

We moved in a zigzag course for a while, then struck out in a northeasterly direction. There was nothing to ^{see} except water and sky and our companion ships, one of which was the Karpathia of Titanic fame. ^{also the command of R. C. CONNELL} We had fire and life boat drill daily. On the evening of May 4th we struck very dense fog.

We were not far from Newfoundland. The course we took was well to the north of the regular ocean lanes to avoid submarines. A cruiser was out ahead of the convoy and lined up the Company for setting up exercises on the upper deck ^{on days when conditions permitted} several times during the trip. May 8th was dark and threatening. Saw petrels (Mother Carey's chickens) riding the waves. These and a few porpoises were the only signs of life we saw for days.

The following day was extremely foggy. The deep whistle of the ships seemed ever so much as a herd of cows moaning to each other at regular intervals. One morning I looked out of the port hole and saw something spouting up water as a whale. "What is it?" Everyone asked. "Is it a whale?" This "whale" ^{strangely} ~~surely kept~~ up the exact rate of speed as the ships. Finally we asked a member of the crew what it was. The "whale" proved to be nothing but a fog buoy towed some distance behind one of the ships.

As a matter of precaution, no one was allowed on deck without a life belt. At night no lights were allowed to show. All port holes were closed tightly making ventilation in sleeping decks very

4 after a boat drill the feeling was somewhat tense concerning safety. Sergeant Wurtz broke the spell by confidently announcing "Cheer up fellows we are only three miles from land". Eyes were cast right & left to catch a glimpse of shore and eager wheres were heard. Wurtz answered "straight down" with significant gesture. bad. This together with the ancient and eternal Australian rabbit served for meals caused much seasickness. On the ninth day out, a special submarine guard was posted with orders to fire on any suspicious looking object on the waters. We were now in submarine infested waters. All from here on, were ordered to wear life belts constantly even to sleep.

On Sunday May 12, Chaplain Schaul conducted church services on the upper deck. He delivered an impressive sermon on "Mother", since ^{this} was Mother's Day. All wrote letters home on that day.

The sun rose very early these days and it was very cold, which indicated ^{that} we were far to the north. On May 13th we began to zigzag south eastward. A guard of 5 destroyers now arrived. These were very fast and small. They swept back and forth among the convoy looking for trouble. On May 15th we sighted land on our left. This probably was Scotland. Later in the day land also appeared on the right. These low green hills undoubtedly were those of Northern Ireland. Trawlers and mine sweepers now led us slowly toward harbor. Next morning we found ourselves in the harbor of Liverpool.

At six P.M. we marched triumphantly down the gang plank and lined up for roll call. After waiting in line for orders, it developed that we were to go back on board ship again for the night. We did not mind this trivial thing after having been in the army this long. At any rate, this was the last time we were destined to sleep in anything like decent quarters for many months. For many it was the very last time.

Over There, England.

We disembarked at 9:30 A.M., on May 17th. In a few minutes we found ourselves on board an English train composed of a long line of compartment cars. This was comfortable travel when compared with ~~that~~ which the French troop trains which we learned about later. I never saw prettier country than that which we passed through in England. Rich fields, low rolling hills, canals, good roads, and fine looking live stock made this day's trip seem like a sight seeing tour. At Rugby, I got off to buy some eats, as the train stopped for a few minutes. I had U.S. money, of course, I made my purchase (cookies) and when I came to paying, international difficulties arose. The stuff was worth so much in English money but how much in my money. Neither the vendor

nor I knew at once. So I held out a handful of change and ~~let~~ the vendor take what he wanted. How much more or less he took than he should, I do not know to this day. He probably is still puzzling over it also.

We passed through the outskirts of London. Toward evening we reached Folkestone near Dover. Here we slept on the floors of vacant houses. After we had quieted down for the night we heard rumblings which suggested ominous forebodings. No one had to tell us that what we heard was the guns from across the channel. The sound was like that continuous rolling thunder. We were now being introduced to the thunder ^{to} which we had to listen for almost six months, sometimes at a distance as now, but often right under it.

In the morning we left for Dover. This was another beautiful ride. We began to get hungry. We were fed emergency rations. At Dover, as we waited for our boat to take us across the strait, boat loads of sick and wounded arrived on their way to "blighty." Most of them were stretcher cases. We also saw many ships with large holes in them testifying to the effects of submarine warfare about which we had read so much ~~about~~ for three years. It also

These sights ~~also~~ grimly reminded us that we were not embarking for a picnic. We were about to cross the most dangerous bit of water in all the world and enter a land where life and death were playing hide and seek.

In France at last.

A small fast vessel, the "Onward", took us over the strait of Dover to Calais in about an hour. Upon arrival I was sent ahead with an English guide to locate our billets. We were ^{crowded} quartered into tents with sand bags about them just outside of Calais. Water and "eats" were scarce. Shortly after dark the anti-aircraft guns opened up. "Fritz" was coming in airplanes to greet us. The people of town scurried for cellars and dugouts, but to us this was something new and we did not wish miss anything. We all got out of our tents and strained our necks to see the show. We saw the flashes of the guns and of bursting shells high in the air. The Germans did not unload their bombs hereabouts that night. Their objective probably ~~was~~ English cities. Searchlights kept sweeping the sky. This show was not so bad. Our next door neighbors were a large camp of Chinese laborers used by the British.

It became evident that we were to

be made an adjunct of the British army. Our men exchanged the American ^{Eddystone} rifle for the British Enfield. After receiving my gas mask, I started out with a billeting detail to ~~find~~ ^{locate} our next location. We boarded a troop train with another company. This was the famous 40 and 8 (^{cars marked} 40 men or 8 horses). We passed through St. Omer and detrained at Lumbres. After a 5 mile march we encamped for the night near a fine stream. Sgt. Jacobs of Phila. was with me on this trip. We decided that here is a chance to get a much needed bath, ~~This was~~ our first one in France. We slept under the open sky.

With the British.

In the morning we got a lift on a ~~for~~ lorry to Denique and from there to La Calligne. Headquarters Co. and the Supply Co. were to be quartered here. Jacobs and I were the first American soldiers that the peasants of La Calligne had seen. Women wept for joy to know that the Americans were coming. This place was near the front on which the British had recently been pushed back. The natives felt that we had come to save their homes. We met some English Tommies. They represented what was left of an English regiment after the ^{recent} German drive. No one was gladder to see a force of fresh troops arriving than the Tommy. It was not

hard to see that he was desperately "down in the mouth". Their army in this region had been practically annihilated during March and April before the terrific onslaught of the Germans in their "victory" drive. Although they had misgiving about the green troops from America, they felt that fine material was arriving to rebuild the English army.

Our work in finding billets was soon completed. In fact the, our English friends had everything planned for us. The Supply Co. was ^{to be} quartered in big barn. The officers ~~were~~ billeted in the houses nearby. Our outfits arrived at 10.30 P.M. ~~left~~ led by an Irish band of bagpipes & drums. The men were fed English style with hard bread, cheese and tea. Everybody was tired and soon asleep in their French billets. Several of us made our quarters in a shanty alongside the village school house, ~~so~~ sleeping on the cement floor. This was improved the next day by a bundle of straw, at night we again heard the rumble of distant "thunder". On May 2nd we had a big "feed". We bought a chicken and had a French Madame fry it for us. There were five in the party. The chicken offered little resistance to our ^{spirited} attack. The feast was topped off with wine from the estaminet.

On May 25th I took a detail of men to Blequin, ten kilometers away. I came back by lorry. The next day I was sent to Senlecque to join Lieut. Dubs' third battalion supply detachment. We were located at Luttingham for several weeks. We slept three to a pup tent under a tree. We took over English horses, wagons, carts, and limbers. On the 27th I took half the detachment to the rifle range. We were required to get used to the English rifle by firing the range. It now looked as though indeed we were in the English army. Our rations were those of the English. I asked the English supply officer one day what the bread allowance per day was in dividing up rations. He replied "A pound per day per man, perhaps."

The first bag of mail arrived May 31st. I greedily looked for letters addressed to me. I found six. These I read and reread for several days. They were a month old but new all the same.

I was laid up with an attack of grippe for a few days. The hard cold ground on which I lay made life most miserable, and after I thought I was better an attack of jaundice set me back. At this time we were ordered to move. We left Luttingham on Sunday June 9th. We moved our wagon train southward in successive stages three days. On the

third night we bivouacked in a large forest near Hesdin. On Thursday we entrained loading horses, wagons, and baggage on 40 + 8's (horse cars). We travelled for 24 hours southward and then eastward. We got a skyline view of Paris in passing. Eiffel tower was the prominent object. This was a most uncomfortable trip for me. We were crowded in the box cars ~~and~~ I was still sick. I lay in the corner most of the time, trying to rest. I was often stepped on in the crowd of men. They could not help it and I was too tired and weak to protest.

At Meaux we detrained and set out for our destination. This proved to be a long way off. Our wagon train moved steadily on and on into the darkness. Ten o'clock, eleven, twelve and still on we went. At one o'clock we found ourselves on a road which grew constantly narrower and rougher and finally landed us in a hay field. The guide had made a mistake. It was pitch dark. To move back would have been demoralizing to the worn out men and animals. So we unhitched, gave the horses some of the stacked hay and flopped down on the piles of hay for sleep. In the morning we found ourselves a mile away from the town of our destination, St. Mesmes.

With the French. The sudden shift from the British front

to the French front, we now found out, was due to a German drive toward Paris. We were thrown in between Chateau Thierry and Paris. The drive had now largely spent itself at the Marne around Chateau Thierry. Many wounded and gassed Americans were coming back from the 1st & 2nd Divisions. We ~~again~~ turned in most of our English equipment, including the Enfield rifle, and were again given American rifles. Our service with the British was ended. We now turned to cooperate with the French.

Our next important move was in a long semi-circle generally eastward, passed through Rebais and on the left side of Montmirail. We received our first pay in France. For some it also was the last. We were paid in Francs. Several hundred of these looked like big money. The French shops in the villages did land office business for a few days.

Within Range.

On the 1st of July, we arrived at Artouges. This was a very clean and pleasant village, but it was within ^{easy} range of German shells. We were immediately warned to keep under ^{cover} in daytime and show no light, not even a match, at night. That this warning was not to be taken lightly, was proven a few minutes after we arrived, when

a German plane arrived and staged a spectacular show. He was flying very high. Just outside of the town a French sausage balloon was serenely hanging in the sky. The two observers came down by parachute at once but none too soon. A minute after they alighted, Fritz swooped down toward the bag and let go with his machine gun loaded with incendiary bullets. The next instant a big flame shot upward from the burning hydrogen. The burning silk came down and that was the end of this balloon, but Fritz was not through. Although anti-aircraft shells were bursting all around him, he rose and flew directly on toward the next balloon about a mile away. He saw this one meet the same fate as the first one. On the German flew to the third sausage and dispatched it in the same manner. Then he ~~returned~~^{victoriously} towards his own lines, with sky all around him full of puffs of smoke from bursting shells. We now knew definitely that we were on the edge of a war. An occasional shell whined and exploded nearby, but none struck the village for the first few days. I slept in a hay field the first night but then moved into a deserted shanty and slept on

the cement floor.

The Fourth of July.

It was rather quiet for a few days. The companies went forward in details to dig defensive trenches. Then came the 4th of July. There was little ^{doing} during the day to remind us of our national holiday. Fireworks were few excepting artillery fire. French refugees were sadly making their way back from the front areas. They were a most forlorn folk. Old men, women, and children were trudging sadly along. Some had hand carts and wagons piled up with what few belongings they could take. A few had old decrepit horses or oxen drawing loads beyond capacity. It was almost heart-breaking to see their sad faces.

I went to sleep at about 10.30 in the midst of unusual shell fire. Suddenly, I woke up, hearing the "first call" on the bugle which was immediately followed by "assembly". ^{This was the call to arms.} It was pitch dark. The time was about 1.30 A.M. Sergeants whistles blasted and the sharp command of "fall in" was heard everywhere. A heavy barrage was coming over. Our artillery was replying vigorously. Blinding flashes like lightning made it all the harder to find the equipment which we had to grab in haste. I got out as soon as I could and aroused my Supply Detachment. The ^{infantry} Companies

were soon lined up and the command "Squad right," "Double time" given and they were on their way to the defense line. A German attack was certainly expected. Our men hitched up their teams in quick time and I recalled loaded the baggage to make a move either forward or back as the situation developed. We moved out of Artouges to a woods to the left and waited for orders. A few hours had passed before we were ordered back to our former position in the village. The infantry returned at about noon. The German "attack" was only a raid but the French General took no chances and was prepared for the long expected drive. This drive came later.

When we came back, all belongings left behind in the hot haste of the night had already been salvaged by French who had remained in the village. We took up our routine again for a few days. I sent some money from my pay to a bank in Paris through the Y.M.C.A. man. This fund served me in good stead when on leave after the Armistice.

Ready

It was now evident that another big drive was planned by the Germans. Up to now, their attacks in 1918 were all highly successful. They

had made big bulges, first in the English lines, and then in the French. The new onslaught was to bring them final victory, they thought. Meanwhile, the French, with ^{the} newly arrived Americans, were feverishly getting defenses ready and harassing the enemy with artillery fire. Long range ^{railroad} guns of big caliber were brought up at night and used as fast as permissible without overheating until the approach of dawn, when they were moved miles back to safety. Within ^{these} ~~as far as~~ the French shelled important roads and towns twenty miles behind the German lines.

On July 8, our brigade (the 55th) moved into what is known as the reserve line. Our men ^{in small groups} had gone up mostly at night for a week to dig trenches. Here we were to hold the enemy, in case they broke thru the first and secondary lines.

It was late in the evening when we moved in. The infantry companies went to their trenches. We of the Supply Company moved our ration and ammunition carts under an open shed near the top of a hill a short distance behind the infantry, whose trenches were beyond the crest of the hill.

Waiting.

Some of our men slept under the shed with ^{the} horses. Several of us decided it would be better

to sleep in the field nearby under the stars as we often had done before. No sooner had we rolled in our blankets than we heard vigorous jabbering in French just behind us. It ~~only~~^{only} took ~~one~~^{one} seconds to find ~~out~~ what it was about. A flash! A trembling of the earth, coupled with a deafening "Boom". It felt as though the old earth was trying to shake us off. We had made our bed under the muzzles of a battery of 6 inch guns. We had failed to take notice of this ~~in the~~^{between} darkness and camouflage. We gathered ourselves together and lay down again, hoping that would be all. To our dismay they repeated the process about every twenty minutes. At first we jumped every time the guns went off, but gradually our nerves tired of this and we snatched a little sleep between salvos.

In the morning we looked for the gunmakers. They were quiet now and well concealed. We had slept about fifty yards in front of them. They were fired at a high angle at distant objectives.

For several days we kept busy digging in and placing our kitchens and supplies at most convenient places. We were now located near Coulommes, south of the Marne River and east of Chateau-Thierry. The 3rd Division (Regulars) ~~were~~^{was} on our left. One evening we heard continuous crackling of what

sounded like rapid musketry firing. Scouts were sent over in the direction of the sound to ascertain the cause. A German shell had struck an ammunition dump in the 3rd Div. area and set it on fire.

The landscape from our hill was beautiful. The tops of the hills were wooded. The sides and valleys were ~~patched~~^{spotted} with green fields and yellow ripe wheat which was ripe for harvest but no one was there to do it. These fields were full of scarlet poppies which grew as weeds among the grain. The soldier poet McCrae was inspired by fields like ^{these} when he wrote "In Flanders Fields." The ^{down} Sormelie River followed the valley toward the Marne. Conde lay along this stream about a kilometer to our right.

On the afternoon of July 14 Sergeant Byerly and I went over to Conde to see what we could find. The town ^{was} mostly deserted. We saw a few old women with worried faces. To our great delight we found two young ladies who had refused to follow the line of refugees away from the danger zone. Little did they know what was in store for them. Twenty four hours later their village was in the midst of a fearful battle and in ruins. ~~These~~ girls knew no English and we knew practically no French. ~~making~~ ^{We could not}, therefore, start much of an argument. Beyond the town we found a field of growing potatoes. We dug out some

plants and tubers, the largest of which were about the size of a small walnut. We kept on digging until we had filled our helmets. Now who was going to fry them. Our mouths were watering for delicious new potatoes. We took them ^{found} ^{with stones} to the stream and washed and scraped them. The skins came off easily. We walked back to the village and sought out an old lady and persuaded her (by gestures and frances) to fry them for us. This she did. They were delicious. We paid her and gave her some of the potatoes. They tasted better than anything we had had for months. What a relief from army grub!

A Terrible Night.

At about sunset a French plane came low over the hill in back of us and dropped a message for the French General. The content of it was that the Germans were massing troops in large numbers for the long expected attack.

It had been so quiet for several days that the very quietness was ominous. Very few shells came over from the enemy. I had dug a small hole about 2 by 6 ft. and a foot and a half deep at the edge of the woods. This was my sleeping place, and I felt protected against anything except a direct hit. I had stretched my shelter tent half over it to protect

me against possible rain. The woods were full of similar holes occupied by others. The horses and mules of our supply Detachment were tied up to trees nearby.

I went to sleep as usual as darkness came. I slept for a few hours when shell after shell burst I was awokened by a terrible din. No mistaking, the Germans were putting over on us a fearful barrage. Shell after shell burst about us. The continuous roar amid the loud bursts nearby told that the bombardment was going on all along the line. In the darkness one could not tell how near ~~the~~ a shell crashed. It seemed as though many of them struck just outside of my fox hole, judging by quaking earth and deafening report. We could hear the whistle and whine of those ^{that} went over us. To describe one's feelings ^{fully} at ~~this~~ ^{such} time is impossible. I felt entirely helpless and could only trust ~~in~~ the Supreme and pray "O Lord God, be with us." Judging by the unceasing bursting of shells it seemed impossible for any one to live thru it until daybreak. The night seemed everlasting. ^{This was the heaviest barrage ever put over by the Germans}

Saved by a Mule

Amidst the uproar, I heard heavy tramping of feet and the rattling of a light chain. A horse must be loose. What of it? But the sound came so close that I feared he might step into my

bed and on me. I crawled out of my hole and in the flashes I saw one our good grey mules walking around bewildered, wondering what it was all about. I walked over to him, ~~and~~ talked to him and tied him to a nearby sapling. The moments of darkness between flashes were terrifying. I walked over to my nearest neighbors, a squad from Co. M, who had made quite an elaborate dug out, to see how they were faring. They were all awake and tense as I was. Finding them safe made me feel a little easier and I went back to ^{my} fox hole. Whether I slept a little, I do not know, but soon dawn came. I looked up to my shelter tent which I had stretched over my hole, and saw a hole thru it just above my head. That hole had not been there the night before. I began to investigate and to my surprise, I found a hole thru a part of my blankets and in the ground. I dug a little and found a piece of a high explosive shell, perfectly fresh, about the size of my thumb. This ^{must} have arrived while I was out tying up the mule. Thanks to the mule—or what!

Marne Defensive.

The morning of July 15th found the last great German offensive in full swing. Our men were in the trenches awaiting the onslaught. Directly in front

of us, the enemy did not succeed in coming through to the reserve line which we held, but down the Surmelin valley to the right of Conde we could see them trying to cross the valley to pierce the line held by the 109th Infantry. The Germans did not break through, altho they had crossed the Marne in places and had carried the first and second lines held by the French.

We found out later in the day that our two companies B + C who had been sandwiched between French units, ^{along the Marne (front line)}, were nearly annihilated when the French withdrew without notifying our men. Companies B + C did noble work in preventing the enemy from crossing the river in front of them, but to their dismay they soon found themselves surrounded by Germans who had crossed at points from which the French had retreated. Our allies' custom during an attack was to abandon the front lines and depend on a counter-attack to recover the lost ground. This worked out badly for our men who knew no retreat. Most of the ^{men} of the two companies were killed, wounded or captured.

After the terrible barrage of shells during the night I expected to find few alive of our men. The ground was dotted with shell holes, but our casualties were surprisingly few. One large shell

had obliterated a trench in which a sq.
from the machine gun Co. was stationed,
killing and burying Sergeant Dourier and
seven men. During the day a high explosive
shell killed Sgt. Carrick. He was the first one
of my pals from the Third Officers' Training camp to
make the supreme sacrifice. Later we heard
that Lt. Coburn, another good friend of mine,
was killed while trying to hold back the German
advance.

Shells kept on coming intermittently.
Jesse Johnston and I dug a better hole to sleep in.
We used an old French lance to ~~hold~~^{support} the earth
over us. A battery of French mortars (six inch)
moved in along the hill to the right of us. They kept
up almost continuous bombardment until
~~one~~ of the guns burst killing one of the
French gunners, { Here we saw a real air battle. A dozen allied
planes engaged a similar force of Germans.
An allied plane was seen to come down
far behind the German lines. Later we found it
that it was that of General Roosevelt.

On the Offensive,

About the second day it became apparent
the Germans had failed in breaking thru. On
the 18th they withdrew across the Marne. In
the evening of this day we moved out of this
sector traveling westward, ^{to the} south of Chateau Thierry
in big circle to Charly. We were to support the new
American-French offensive near Soissons. We arrived
at Charly toward evening the next day and put
up for the night in a barricaded wood. Water was
scarce. We found a farm nearby with a water lot

in the barn yard, very common in France. We took our ^{thirsty} horses there to drink the dirty water. One horse, seeing the water, broke away and ran topspeed into hole, which proved to be a deep pool of mud. He began to sink. The more he struggled the more he sank. He was soon exhausted and drowned, despite our efforts to pull him out.

The men were exhausted from the long hike, and rather than require several of them to stand watch, where they needed rest so badly, I ^{did} the guarding myself.

The next morning ~~early~~ we moved on. Now we went eastward and passed thru ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{region} where some of the fiercest fighting had taken place when the Germans drove toward Paris in June. Woods were nothing but splintered stumps, and the ground ^{was} all torn up. We passed thru ~~Vaux~~. There was very little left this village but a few walls of houses. ~~They~~ Next, ^{we} came to Chateaum Thirry from ^{which} the Germans had now retreated. This fine town along the Marne ^{had} certainly ~~had~~ seen better days. Here we saw many dead Germans, some partly buried. Frequently, a hand or a foot stuck out of the shallow grave of dirt thrown hastily over their bodies.

The concrete bridge over the river was wrecked and engineers ^{had} hastily ~~had~~ built a

pontoon bridge across the stream. We crossed this southward and moved eastward until evening when we came to St. Eugene very near the place where we had been a few days before, holding back the German advance now we were on the advance.

We arrived at St. Eugene in a pouring rain at nightfall. We had received no rations or feed for the horses. The beasts were nearly worn out and famished. Our men went over to an oat field and pulled up armfuls of the green oats to feed them. To keep dry that night was impossible. We were very hungry.

Moving up.

Early the next morning we started toward the Marne. We were still wet and hungry. A pile of boxes and cartons in a clump of bushes looked interesting. We investigated and found a pile of bread, "dog biscuits" (hard crackers), butter and canned beef. We asked no questions as to whose it was, but broke open the boxes and helped ourselves to all we could carry and ate it as we moved along. Our food problem for the moment was solved.

We crossed on a pontoon and started upon steep and extremely muddy roads toward the Foret de Fere. We stopped in a thick forest and received rations and feed for horses. During the night our infantry companies relieved the French in the first lines. This was our regiment's first real action. Immediate

attack upon the enemy was ordered north of Courmont. Advances were made, but soon our men, confronted by a heavily fortified wood on top of a long hill known as ^{P.} Trumpette Woods, could move no farther. We lost heavily from machine guns. On the third day a determined assault by our men carried the woods.

We of the supply Co. were to follow as closely as possible. The woodland road was almost impassable. The wagons & carts sank to the hub. We often had to lift and push to help the exhausted horses move the vehicles. I was now in sole charge of the 3rd Battalion supply train ~~as sergeant~~. No officers were with us. One night in the Fere forest, I received a note to bring the supply train up to the La Motte farm. I had no idea where this was, and to move thru the mud and darkness would have been next to impossible. I decided to wait for further orders. Sergt. ~~James~~ Wurtz with his train moved up in the morning only to receive terrific shelling making the place untenable. So he came back with his outfit. Each night we took up food and ammunition as far as we were allowed to go. ^{Now there it} ~~had to be~~ wired.

The morning a young infantry man came running back shouting that snipers are still in these woods and showed a bleeding thumb on his right hand. We hardly believed him, but I lined up the supply men ~~and~~ with rifles & pistols we searched

the woods in a skirmish line and found no snipers. This kid was tagged at 1st aid station S.I.W. (self inflicted wound).

The third evening here I took food up to Courmont where I met a company of the 42nd Div. They were my old buddies at the Mexican border. I had coached them in football, and they had lost but one game that season. We were very glad to see each other, but shelling was so heavy that the reunion was short.

Bombs. After leaving stormed Grimpette Woods our infantry came back for brief rest in a wooded ravine at Le Charnel. We hurried hot food to them. This was the first real meal most of them had for three days.

The woods were damp and wet, but all were tired and went to sleep early. This rest was disturbed in a most awful manner. At midnight a big German plane came over and drop 4 bombs in midst of our sleeping men killing and wounding more than one hundred. I lay within about 30 ft. of the place where the first one exploded. Some-one yelled "Gas." I put on my mask. It was pitch dark. None of my pals around were injured. I fell asleep and woke up at dawn with the mask still on.

The havoc of the bombs was terrible. Pieces of clothing, blankets, and tents were hanging high up in the trees. Great holes were torn

in the earth. One bomb failed to explode. It stuck in the ground about five feet deep. The wounded were removed during the night, and dead buried in the morning.

On to the Vesle River.

The next evening we moved out of the ill-fated woods to Courmont where a few days before our men had fought so fiercely and lost so heavily. Most of the next day was spent in identifying and burying the dead. The hill leading to the Bois des Grimpettes was dotted with bodies, most of them from the 110th, attesting to the fearful fighting.

Toward evening we moved forward through Cierges and Sergy. The Germans retreated rapidly, burning ammunition dumps etc. after them. After leaving Sergy we encountered a heavy thunderstorm. It was hard to tell thunder and lightning from gun fire. As we approached Coulommes we found the town subjected to intense shelling from the Germans. Our lines halted until the shelling abated. The men fell out of line to rest and find shelter from the downpour. Shelter was scarce. The ground everywhere was mud. I started to rest leaning against a wagon. As I was about asleep my knees gave way under me and I dropped down into the mud. I decided that spot was as good as any other and slept there. I woke up at dawn drenched

to the skin.

The men were assembled to fall in. We moved through coulores to a field nearby. Here the men were told to dry their clothing as the sun came out. We may have been the forerunners of the "nudists" that morning. At any rate, it was fortunate that the enemy did not attack us just then. Perhaps they were in the same predicament.

Toward evening we moved on several kilometers and bivouaced for the night on the reverse slope of a hill. We dug in taking no chances. On the next day we passed through Coban and Dravegray. At Coban we passed the grave marked very carefully "H. Quentin Roosevelt." He was the son of Ex-President Theodore Roosevelt. He had seen an air battle about July 17 far behind the German lines in which an allied plane fell down like a dead leaf from a tree. Later the Germans reported that they had shot down young Roosevelt.

Our battalion was ordered into a small low copse-like wood. Here we remained for almost a week. At first it was very quiet. ~~too~~
I slept under an ammunition liuber, a fine place to be in case of shells. We received replacements (men to fill in our depleted ranks) and started to drill in open field. This was too much

for the Germans, who with their observation balloons far off could not help but see us. What a shelling they gave us! Good fortune was with us. Most of the shells fell where little damage was done. Our losses were slight. At night enemy planes dropped flares trying to locate us.

The French brought ^{up} a sausage balloon and located just in back of us. One day the Germans did their best to dispose of it. Shell after shell exploded near it. The observers came down ⁱⁿ their parachutes. The balloon was pulled down. The enemy had not succeeded.

The Germans had taken their position along the Vesle River where they meant to stay. Our regiment moved northward to Courville about three kilometers south of the Vesle. Our supply train took shelter in a fine woods; good enough for a picnic grove if it were not for ^{the} war. From here we supplied the doughboys with food etc. while they took their position in the lines. There was no general fighting at this, the lines on both sides merely holding.

At Courville.

At first we were left alone by Fritz, but after about a week an occasional shell came over. Several horses were killed or so badly wounded that I was obliged to shoot them to put them out of their misery. We slept in fox holes which had ^{been} made by others who were

there before us. Were, I first contracted cooties (body lice) and these became my closest enemies until after the armistice.

There was considerable bombing at night. You could hear the throbbing drone of German planes, but it was impossible to tell whether they were directly above or not. Occasionally you could see the streak of a tracer bullet like a small meteor, as the pilots were signalling to each other, together with the rat-tat-tat of their machine guns. Night air raiding was terrifying to the man on the ground, particularly to one with poor nerves. One night a shell shocked doughboy crawled into my fox hole with me while the air seemed full of planes. He proved most undesirable company. He would pray, cry, and curse almost in the same breath. ~~I threatened to~~. Pleading to keep quiet did ~~not~~ good. I threatened to throw him out. This helped some until the planes had passed.

The Poor Horses.

At the end of a comparatively uneventful week, one evening while eating our mess, a shell burst just above the tree tops. ~~and~~ then another. We knew they now had us spotted. All our men, save a few for guarding purposes, sought dug outs in the village of Courville aside of our woods. I went into a deep cellar under a church ^{with} about a dozen others. Here we

32 stayed for the night. Toward morning the earth began to shake. A heavy bombardment was laid on our village and surroundings. Most of the men were asleep. Gas started to flow into our cellar. I went around and woke every one and made them put on their masks. It was now too soon because ~~some~~^{some} were already coughing from inhalation of the deadly stuff. I felt the effects of it for quite a while myself. As morning came the shelling ceased. We went over to see how our horses had fared in the woods. It was a sorry sight. We had lost no men but several horses lay dead literally torn to pieces. Among those horses alive, there were all degrees of wounded. Some with broken legs, some with the bowels hanging out, others with flesh wounds. Now there was no officer with us and I was sergeant in charge. The sad lot fell upon me to put several hopelessly wounded animals out of their misery. So I shot them with a French carbine. That morning was spent burying dead horses.

~~In~~ ^{After Woods} In the afternoon we were ordered out of this deadly woods back to another woods near Arcis-le-Ponsart. We were on a high hill from which we could see far in all directions. Toward the south lay beautiful, now peaceful, farming country and toward the north could be seen

the fires of hell. The smoke along the valley ahead indicated the front lines. Occasionally over the landscape one could see an eruption of gray smoke and dust where a shell burst. Here we were unmolested by shell fire. I slept under a large tree. The weather at this time was perfect. At night we took rations and ammunition up to the lines. This was always an uncertain adventure. The enemy methodically shelled the roads at night. At a road fork in Arcis-le-Ponsart ~~the road~~ a shell was dropped nightly at the same spot. This shows how accurately the Germans had spotted important road intersections. Our engineers filled the hole ~~in~~ ^{for} the morning only to have another one there the next. The trip to the lines and back seemed dreadfully long when it appeared as though Fritz had your every move spotted and harassed you with shells.

Stallion in the Well To replace our animals of which we were woefully short, we receive a number little Spanish mules and old worn out French horses. Some of these were hardly worth their feed. The mules were light and not broken to our kind of work. The French horses so old and decrepit that had a hard time moving along without burden. A heavy wagon was almost out of question. One old stallion could hardly keep on his feet going up and down the hill to the spring for water. Into this spring had been sunk a large barrel making a deep

trough ^{reservoir} out of fit. One day this old horse slipped as he turned around after drinking and fell into the barrel with his tail end. He presented a most amusing sight with his head and fore legs out of the barrel struggling but unable to get ^{the rest of his body} out. We secured a rope around his body and a half dozen men pulled him out.

Abbe' D'Igny.

Several kilometers to our right was located an old abbey. Here the army had established a de-louser. When our turn came to undergo the purging process we marched over and lined single file, took off our cootie infested clothes and gave them to a soldier, who put them into a large steam sterilizer while we took a shower bath. After the bath, we moved ~~on~~ back to ^{the} sterilizer where we were given our clothing steaming hot. Many of us had a hard time getting our wet and shrunken uniforms on. They were badly in need of pressing, but who cared. We were temporarily rid of the pestiferous cootie.

My commission.

On the evening of Sept. 3rd I was notified to report to Division Headquarters to be sworn in as 2nd Lieutenant. I had almost forgotten that I had qualified for a commission ^{months ago} back in Georgia. I went to Regimental Hqs. for transportation to Div. Hqs. I was told to report there

next morning and, together with others in the same position as I was, we were to be taken for a ride to rear. When we assembled next morning I saw ~~a number~~ of my old comrades of the Officers Training Camp, but many did not show up. I asked about Strawbridge, Coburn, Carrick, Young and others not present. They were never to receive their commission, having been killed before this "happy" day.

We were loaded on a big army truck and taken over rough roads southward away from the noise. After ~~we arrived~~ at Div. Hqs. little time was lost before we were sworn in. We signed our papers. I noticed my commission was dated June 1, 1918, and now it was the 4th of September. It had taken a long time to catch up with us. We were now entitled to wear a little gold bar on the shoulder; otherwise it made little difference at the front. Officers and men are very close and little distinction is made while steel + lead are in the air and life and death are hand in hand.

The same truck brought us back to our regiment. My company commander, Lt. Braddock, offered to sell me a blanket roll which ^{had} belonged to Lt. Jackson. Jackson had recently been killed. The roll contained a suit, shoes, blankets and a Sam Browne belt. I bought it for 100 francs. ^{obviously whether things would fit or not.} Whether things would fit or not.

Before the newly commissioned lieutenants separated to go to their companies, a celebration

was planned for the evening. A truck was secured and we rode to Epernay about 20 kilometers away. When we arrived there, we found the town in darkness. This was not strange since the city was within easy reach of bombers. After some searching, we located a restaurant and ordered the best food they had for our banquet. We had steak but the portions were small. Food was scarce, but these French gave us all they had, after we gave them plenty of francs. Needless to say we also tasted the champagne for which Epernay is famous. The banquet was far from joyful. Past & future were not conducive to joy, across the Vesle. The return trip was most tiresome on the bouncing truck. We arrived back with our companies just as orders were given to move up to the attack across the Vesle River at once. I was attached to Co. L but on detached service with the Supply Co., the 3rd Battalion. The doughboys moved up and I followed with four ammunition limbers. Following the infantry was easy during the day of Sept. 5th. We went up toward the lines in slow stages, but at dusk the men were led single file across the fields from Courville across the plateau into the Vesle Valley. I chose the road across the hill by way of Bonne Maison Farm. When we got to top it was dark, and I had lost all contact with my battalion. We moved off the road along a thicket to wait for developments. The men un hitched and went to sleep. I went scouting around to see if I could

find out which way our outfit went. I found machine gun companies, artillery and everything excepting the 118th Infantry. I went over to the road and jumped on an ambulance going forward and soon arrived at Villette. There was heavy shelling all along the river and machine gun fire at intervals. I went into a cellar where I found the advanced post of Division Headquarters. I got ^{what} information I could. It was ~~now~~ about 2 A.M. and the 110th had crossed the river driving the Germans across the hills toward the Aisne River. It was very dark outside. I waited for a returning ambulance to take me back. These ambulance drivers are a busy lot during times like these. They rush up to the first aid station and in a jiffy have their load and off they go to the rear to a field hospital. It was not long before one took me back.

At dawn, I ~~had~~ took my convoy forward down the hill into Villette and drew up behind a stone wall. We could go no further. The bridge across river had been demolished and the engineers were rebuilding it. I went down to see how soon the bridge might be finished when the Germans began firing shells at short range. I lay down along the railroad tracks until the firing subsided. Machine gunners were anxiously awaiting the bridge to get their mules and carts across. They crossed before the bridge was completed. The firing across the hills

was intense and continuous. At about noon
the engineers had finished their job. I rode over
~~and~~ and made a road clear to take us up to the village
of Baslieux at the top of the hill. Here I planned
to unload my ammunition. I came back
and led them across and up a steep hill
and unloaded alongside of an ^{unoccupied} house and informed
battalion headquarters where they might find
it. They were very urgent that we get out,
since we were so close to the lines, and the
shelling was unmerciful at intervals. We
got away down the hill across bridge when
we were spotted. Shells dropped everywhere,
it seemed. We were now on a main road
going toward Fismes. The air was black
with smoke and dust from exploding shells.
We kept going with the horses at a gallop
when a wheel horse of one of the limbers
dropped. I helped the driver unhitch him
and ordered him to hurry on with three.
Shells still came and how we got away
as we did, is hard to tell. When we came to
Fismes I stopped them behind some buildings
to wait for the shelling to ~~stop~~. The driver
who had lost the horse, ^{of his own accord} hopped on an ambulance
going back in that direction to see if his
horse was really dead. When he got there the
horse was on his feet, and he brought him
back. The animal was uninjured but had

been stunned by the concussion of a bursting shell. Again we had come out of a tough spot.

Back to Rest.

As we passed thru Fismes we saw a fine town in almost utter ruins. Our Division had held this town for nearly a month with constant rain of shell on it. Hardly a roof was seen whole. The men had occupied the cellars as protection.

When we got back as far as Courville we found the rest of our regimental supply train in the same woods that we had occupied a few weeks before. The smell of the not-too-deeply-buried horses was a grim reminder of our previous stay. Lt. Dubs and I slept in an old water tank that night.

The next morning found us on the move. This time we moved away from the firework, southeastward toward Epernay. I was transferred to Co. M. in charge of a platoon.

We were loaded on camions (French motor trucks) driven by Indo-Chinese drivers. We drove most of that day and all night. Once I noticed our camion veering dangerously close to the trees and telephone poles along the road. I quickly glanced over to the driver and saw he was asleep over the wheel. I elbowed him and awakened him just in time to

+ for him
to have regain control and avoid being ditched. These poor drivers were almost worked to death moving troops this busy summer.

In the forenoon we reached a village named Contreissou. Here we disembussed and were assigned to quarters in houses & barns. What a feeling of relief it was here! We were far away from the front, so far, in fact, that we heard no rumbling of the guns. This was the first time since we landed in France that we could enjoy quietness and walk out in the open daylight without danger of being observed by the enemy. I once again checked up on ^{the} time of the year. It was September 12th and the weather was perfect. We received a large number of new men (replacements) to bring our numbers back to fighting strength. Many of these men had not been in the army long. Many of them came from the southwest Indians and half-breeds. We at once were put to work drilling to get our men into fighting units.

The Supply Train had been left behind to travel by themselves. We had no regular cooks with us. Rations were brought, and I was given the job of dividing them to the companies. Men volunteered to cook, but the question of utensils was a difficult one. The town searched for old kettles and we

found enough to get along after a fashion.
On the 13th we saw in the paper the glad news that the Americans had taken the St. Mihiel salient.

September 15th was the first Sunday we observed ^{as such} in France. This was also my birthday. We had religious services, after which I wrote some letters. This rest and happiness was not to last long. On the next day we received orders to move in the evening, with full pack.

Finis Rest At dusk about seven o'clock we fell in and marched off northward. The direction was significant because it indicated return to the lines and hell. About every hour we had short rests. At midnight a thunderstorm was seen ahead. It was hard to tell whether the thunder and lightning were real or that of the guns. We had a rest of about 20 minutes during which time many fell asleep and had to be roused when the whistle blew to move. We moved on and on thru intermittent showers. At dawn we came to a railroad just as a long American hospital train moved by toward the west. It could easily be guessed - wounded from the St. Mihiel drive. We were so tired that we almost envied them. They were out of action and hardship and perhaps on their way to the States. Some of our number would probably soon pass that way - if we were lucky enough not

to be turned under the sod. At 8 A.M. we reached a wet woods where we bivouaced for the day. We were fed and rested after the forced march of the night. We had covered about 40 kilometers with heavy pack.

In the evening we again moved out for - we know not where - but not to a picnic. This was done as a routine for 4 days & nights. At last we again joined up with our supply co. and cooks with their rolling kitchens. We passed near Clermont-en-Argonne. At last ^{we} stopped in the Argonne Forest north of Les Islettes. Here we stayed for a few days.

In the Argonne Forest

We received equipment, maps and instructions for a big drive. We drilled during the day and fought Cooties at night. It was very quiet here, and we were kept concealed in the woods so as to surprise the enemy. Occasionally an enemy plane soared high over head in the daytime to see if possible what was going on behind our lines but the dense forest shielded us perfectly. For the most part ~~we~~ had rain or damp weather which was very disagreeable but fortunately Fritz left us alone. Not a shell dropped in our area during this stay of five or six days and we were only about two miles behind the front lines.

Mimeographed instructions were issued to all officers, setting forth plans for

the impending "big show". The day when the drive was to start was designated as D, and the hour as H. These were kept secret until the time approached. I was still with Co. M., Lieut. Stover in command, and Lloyd Hayney, the other Lieutenant, with whom I lived under a pup tent.

Finally, on September 25th D was revealed to the officers as the 26th and H as 5:30. Everybody was now ^{anxious} to get started as if keyed up for a great adventure. Extra rations were issued for three days. This consisted of "bully beef" in cans, hard biscuits in small packages and a loaf of bread for every two men. These loaves were hard-crusted dark French bread. How to carry these large round loaves was soon solved by putting them on the bayonet (stuck through) and the rifles slung over the shoulder. Looked as though we were going to a picnic. This was all right until action began but by that time most the bread was eaten. We looked after the shoes of the men and issued new ones where needed and gave out plenty of extra ammunition.

Just as we were about to move out on the evening of the 25th to get to our "jumping off" place, I received orders to report to the Supply Co. where I had most of my service before, and take charge of a battalion Supply Train. My first

44 job was to move the first battalion from their position north of Neuilly ^{east of the} to their new position with the regiment west of the river. I started out at dusk with my wagons and proceeded toward Neuilly and thence to the battalion's position. It was fully dark before we got to Neuilly. All the supply work at the front had to be done at night because we would make an easy target for the enemy in the day time. Before we got to the town, a shell dropped in front of us. We proceeded and soon came to a large smoking crater in the middle of a cross road. This again attested to the accuracy in range which the Germans had on all intersections. We had to thread our way around barriers of fallen trees and wire to battalion headquarters, which was located on a high hill side just behind the front lines. Quietly & quickly we loaded ammunition and other supplies as well as officers' baggage, and started back toward Neuilly and then across the river. Here we turned right and followed a road toward a large farm. Here dozens of whippet tanks were assembling. They made a terrific racket as they clattered and lumbered along. We felt uneasy because the Germans must surely hear them.

and ~~had~~ a barrage on us, but nothing happened. Either the enemy suspected nothing or was withholding everything for the onslaught.

At the farm we saw long columns of infantry on their way to the lines, our own regiment among them. We rode on between the tanks toward the forest.

In the forest we came to a corduroy road (made of logs and planks). We followed this to a fork in the road where we were stopped and told we could go no further; the front line trenches were just ahead. In the dense ^{woods} along the road could be seen numerous dugouts and log huts. Here I found some of our officers and reported our delivery of supplies for 1st Battalion. The infantry was rapidly taking its place in the line when, all of a sudden flashes like lightning occurred, the earth shook and terrific explosions took place ^{almost at once}. For a moment I did not know whether we were on the receiving end of a barrage or the other. It seemed as though every tree spouted forth fire all ⁱⁿ the direction of the enemy. I knew now our barrage had begun and the big show was on. It was a dreadful din. The horses and drivers were bewildered. We quickly unloaded and made our way back to where we had started from.

It was daylight when we came back to our company in the woods, tired after an exciting night of intense activity. It was great relief to have carried out an order given at short notice over unknown roads at night. I had become used to this. Ability to read and understand the fine topographical maps and a good sense of direction helped me to do this.

The Big Drive (Argonne Offensive).

Artillery fire continued during the day. We were waiting for order to move the supply train up to follow the advance. Meanwhile, the 92nd Division (Colored) moved in the woods in back of us as our support. So many of the colored boys came to our kitchen for something to eat that our supply threatened to give out until a big colored Major came up chased them back to their own area.

News about the progress of the drive was eagerly sought. We were informed toward evening that the general advance from Verdun to the Forest was succeeding and that we were to follow up to Varennes. At night we started and followed the same road thru the forest some had been on

the night before. Our progress was very slow since there was so much traffic. Supply trains of the whole Division were on the same road. A Field Hospital had sprung^{up} along the road where ambulances and trucks brought their cargoes of wounded. The road, except on the corduroy was soft and muddy. Frequently we had to push & lift to help the horses move them. At dawn we arrived at Bourailles, the first village captured by our men the morning before. Here we got on the ~~a well built highway~~ main road. Many high Division officers were frantically trying keep traffic moving. This road had been badly battered by shells and ~~as~~ we found as we moved up the Germans had blown it up in a small gully causing a great crater possibly 50 ft. wide and 30 ft. deep. Our engineers were busy constructing a bridge over it. Meanwhile, we drove around it over soggy field. There were two ^{solid} lines of traffic from Bourailles to Varrennes moving very slowly in the broad day light. If the Germans had opened up with artillery on this road, it would have been too bad, but,

fortunately for us, their attention was kept elsewhere. Their more immediate concern was to try to stop the general American advance.

It was noon when we arrived at Varennes. It had taken us six hours to move about three kilometers. This was an important rail head for the Germans for four years. They had dug caves on the steep side of the hill able to accommodate thousands of men, safe from shell or bomb. Our infantry had taken several hundred prisoners here on the first morning of the drive. We followed ^{along} a narrow gauge railroad up a ~~narrow~~ valley and bivouaced. A picket line for the horses was made. The men dug in on the hill side sloping away from the enemy. I selected a ^{fresh} shell hole made by our own barrage a few nights before for my quarters. I put my shelter tent over it and spread my bedding roll. This was not bad until it rained, ^{when} I had trouble keeping my feet ^{warm}. The limits of protection offered by the pup tent, as it developed, we were destined stay in this position for almost two weeks.

A Hat Reception.

Lt. Braddock, who was the Regimental Supply Officer, told me to load up four mess carts with food and take them up to the next town which our men had just recently captured. It was about mid afternoon when my detail was ready with two horses in each cart and a heavy load on each. The town, Montblainville, is located on a plateau east of the forest and surrounded by what might have been beautiful fields. We followed the road which led up a rather steep incline to the town. I realized at once that this was not a very healthy place in broad daylight. I inquired about the location of the units of our Regiment. They had pushed on toward Apremont. A German airplane flew over rather low and with bursts of machine gun signaled to his artillery. I ordered my drivers to pull up close along a stone wall which supported a terrace. This ^{was} executed not a moment too soon, a shell landed in front of us. Now two, three! many! a barrage was upon

us. My men scattered to dugouts. I held on to my horse by the bridle and leaned against the wall as if to hold it up. This reception lasted for what seemed hours. The air was filled with showering fragments of earth, stone & shell and blocks with smoke and dust. Stones began to fall from the wall. This kept up for about fifteen minutes ^{really} when the barrage stopped as suddenly as it had started.

I slowly ventured from the wall to check up on the damage and found one of our horses in a cart dead and several slightly wounded and a cart badly damaged. That we escaped with as little damage as this, was almost miraculous considering the amount of hardware Fritz had sent over. The stone wall seven feet high had been our salvation. The shells came at so low an angle that they either struck before reaching us or went over to the other side of the street. As I walked down the road to gather up my men a whiz-bang crossed in front of me
(a small projectile named because of its sound)

and exploded in bank of earth on the side. The Germans were still too close for comfort. We unloaded the carts and sent them back. The food had to be carried for which details were sent.

There was no mistaking about this barrage. It was meant expressly for my mess carts. We had been seen coming up and the airplane gave the battery our location. This the first three occasions when I or my detail were the target for the German artillery during the Argonne campaign.

On the next forenoon I went up again to see Col. Martin. I walked this time and found him with his Regimental Hqs. in a dugout along a ravine half way between Montblainville and Appremont. They were feasting on rabbits which the Germans had left behind on their retreat. ^{One} ~~the~~ ^{vertically} way the German Division whom we had fought back was composed of Landwehr from Wurtemberg. Col. Martin told me that our forces were now in possession of Appremont ^{the next} town farther down the Aire Valley. Thus our provisions from now had to be taken there. Coming back I crossed an open plateau and came to a large tree under which there was a small shrine. Here I was joined by a soldier who was going the same

way. No sooner had we passed the tree and shrine when a shell whizzed over us and exploded about 75 yards beyond us. When the next one buzzed more viciously than the first and exploded much closer, we flopped down on the ground knowing that they were speaking to us. A third one came, also very close. I could hear the gun that fired it. It came from the woods southwest of us, a mile or so away. This seemed strange since our lines were several miles ahead of this point to the north. Our general direction of advance was northward. I found out afterwards that the 77th Division on our left had not been able to keep up with us in the advance. Of course, they had had going through the midst of Argonne Forest, and we had more open country along the Aire River. The 35th Div. on our right was also slightly in back of us. We were now holding a salient, a big dent forward in the American line. For several days it was impossible to advance until the others came up.

We lay still for about ten minutes until the firing had ceased and got up and left the road and travelled through a grassy field unmolested. We saw numerous corpses of both sides attesting to the fighting here a day or two ago.

At Montblainville I met a boyhood friend

of mine, Cyrus Peters. He was going up to join the 109th Hospital Corps. Had a short chat with him and later after the armistice he wrote to me telling that he came through safely. Casualties were exceedingly ^{heavy} on this drive.

The Germans evidently tried to take their own dead to the rear on their retreat. Near Charpentry I saw a wagon loaded with dead bodies. In their haste they had to leave them behind.

The Supply Co. stayed in their position in the ravine above Varennes all during this campaign. Lts. Bradlock and Dubs (^{including officers of the Co.}) had their Headquarters in a German dugout deep in the side of the hill. They seldom ventured away from here except to eat. This dugout life kept them safe from enemy shells but not from an other more subtle enemy, the influenza from which both died shortly afterwards. There was a world wide epidemic of the flu prevalent at this time. Those of us ^{were} in the open found out very little about it.

The Germans shelled us occasionally in our position. One afternoon a shell came over, killing one of the men. Several of us were standing on the narrow

gauge railroad talking as the second one came toward us and struck the higher ground directly in front of us. It threw ground all over us but none of us were hurt. When the smoke had cleared away we saw a horse and a mule lying in their dying gasps, fully as far away from the point of explosion as we were. This was another miraculous escape from death or injury.

Lt. Montgomery Dilworth of Connellsville now took turns ^{with me} night & day to deliver rations to the front lines. Dilworth and I here became fast friends and had much in common until long after the armistice. He was very kind, reliable and resourceful as well as quiet, unassuming and clean cut.

We took one of our rolling kitchens (cook stove with wagon wheels) to Mouthblin ^{on the second day} so as to be closer to the front with hot food. We located it in a shed near the point where several days before I had received such an unmerciful shelling. On the second ^{day}, the Germans again let loose on the spot. Some cooks were killed while peeling potatoes and the walls of the shed were knocked down, the debris completely covering the rolling kitchen.

For several days our regiment was located in or in front of Appenmout. Here it was comparatively easy to deliver rations at night from Montblainville. Now, however the 1st Division came in on our right relieving the 35th and pushed ahead to Flerville and beyond Exermout and it again became possible for the 28th to advance. The Division to our left was still far behind in the forest. In order to take the next town Chatel-Chebry, our Div. crossed to east side of the Aire river and advanced until opposite the town and then ^{early in the morning} ~~at night~~ recrossed the stream and captured the town.

Over the Top
with Ration Carts This manouver made it most difficult for us to get supplies to our men. On the night ^{during which} my regiment was on the ~~right~~ left side of the rivers, I crossed at Appenmout with ration carts thru the water and followed a long straight road northward. It was very dark only the white road was quite visible. It was unusually quiet that night. We kept on going forward hoping to find our men. There was not a sign of any one about. The road was altogether clear. Now I felt as though had gone far enough without knowing where we were. I halted the carts and

56 and walked into a field to our left. I spoke every now + then hoping for a reply. Finally, I came to a ^{new} trench in which the men were just getting ready for the night. I asked what outfit they belonged to and they told me the 110th but what was I doing out there; this is the front line. I now saw how thinly our front line was held and that it would have been an easy matter for us to have gone on with our rations into the German lines. Imagine the welcome we would have received there, since their supplies were running low.

I brought the carts around and soon found main body of the regiment in small dugouts at "The Forge". I had to crawl on hands and knees to get into headquarters. Here I found Gen. Nolan of 55th Brigade just as he was talking over the field telephone to an artillery commander telling him in strong language that he was sick and tired of having his men fight the Germans by day and then have them shot up by our own artillery by night. Evidently our artillery fire was falling within our own lines. This was not the only time ^{that} happened. I delivered my rations and made my way back

to the kitchen.

Barrage at the Crater

Next night was Dilworth's turn and the following ^{night} mine again. It was a wet; drizzle & rain alternating. Took three carts loaded with food one for each of the three battalions. At Appremont I stopped at Brigadier Headquarters in a cellar under a battered down church and from Maj. Rhoads, whom I well knew from Camp Hancock, I learned that our regiment now had taken Chatel Chehery several kilometers ahead on the left side of the Aire River. He showed me on his map the road leading there. He failed to tell me that the road was not open all the way. He did not know.

We went on our way following the road out of Appremont, passed a stone quarry and ~~then~~ on over the open road with ^{the} broad river flood plain on our right and hills on our left. At last we came to a small ravine where to our dismay we were stopped by a large crater. The Germans had blown up the road making it impossible to get horses & carts any further. Our carts had made plenty of noise on the

way creaking and thumping over stones.

I told the sergeants to find their battalions and have the food carried the rest of the way. Just then a shell whined and exploded in the ravine below us. I at once realized that the enemy artillery ^{had} ~~this~~ spot marked and an observer had probably heard us coming up but waited until we had arrived at the crater before giving the signal to fire. I quickly ordered the drivers to move back along the road for 100 yards and wait there. Before this was executed fully a barrage of shells was upon us. Blinding flashes of exploding shells, buzzing splinters, the air full of dirt thrown up, and smoke made the darkness a fury of hell. Prompt execution of my orders to pull away saved the horses and carts. The barrage stopped. We checked up on our men. A sergeant had been badly wounded, ~~and~~ one man lay apparently dead, and several others slightly injured. We loaded the injured ~~including~~ and dead on a cart, ^{which we unloaded} and sent them back to a dressing station in Appenourt.

Now to find the regiment in

59 or about the town ahead. I took a sergeant with me and set out to find them. It started to rain and the darkness now was so thick you could almost feel it. We groped our way along and came to a road fork which I could not recall ~~had~~ having seen on the map. One led northward and the other northwestward. There was practically no firing now and we were puzzled as to which way to go. After my experience a few nights before, having almost gone over through our own lines to the Germans, I did not relish taking a chance. So we waited at the roadside for some sign of life. Soon ~~we~~ heard some low conversation above us to our left in the woods. We listened to hear what language was spoken. At first we could not tell whether it was English or German. We did not have to wait long before we heard it was mostly profane and we ^{could} understand it, so they were Americans.

Châtel-Chéhéry The sergeant and I then took the road to the left and soon came to outskirts of the town. Just then a heavy shower of rain let loose. It was hard to see anything

excepting during an occasional flash of lightning which for an instant gave us a view ahead. We aimed to keep in the middle of the road. I walked up against a large dark object and almost fell over it. This proved to be a dead horse. Finally we groped our way toward a ray of light emanating from the door of a house. Here we found some of the officers of our regiment and soon procured a detail of men to go back and bring up the rations.

We made our way back to the carts and turned over the "chow" which had been hot when we started out in the evening but cold now to the carrying detail. It was midnight now and we started back to the kitchen at Montblainville with the mess carts. On the way I stopped at Col. Edward Martin's headquarters in the dugout behind Appremont to report the events of the evening and delivery of the rations, feeling as though I had done a hard job successfully getting the food through. Col. Martin thought that was fine and immediately ordered me to get another hot meal ready and get it up to them before daybreak. I explained to him that practically all the food we had on hand was used up until the next day's issue came up. He then told me to get some things ready if it was only hot coffee and take it to them. He promised to have a detail

of men from his headquarters ready for me at five o'clock to carry it to the lines.

I had received a tough assignment. When I got back to the kitchen all the cooks of course, had long sought their dugouts for the night's sleep. It was now about three o'clock and I had to search in the dark for dugouts to locate a cook to make the coffee.

Finally I located one and after much trouble got him awake and on the job. It was about 5 o'clock when the coffee was ready and we loaded it on a cart together with what little bread I could find and started forward with one driver.

We came to Col. Martin's Hqs. and asked the guard for our ^{carrying} detail which the Colonel had promised to have ready for me. None was to be found and Colonel was asleep and when the guard asked him about it he had forgotten all about it. He sent the guard to gather up some men. I waited for half an hour and the guard came back saying that he couldn't find any men excepting sick & wounded.

Dawn was approaching and I knew I could wait no longer. So I started with no one but my driver, hoping to pick up some men on the way. We drove thru Appermont and on to the quarry. It was broad daylight

by now and road before us was in full view of the enemy. I found several men of our regiment here and put them to work helping to carry from here. They took a large can each and I took a smaller one and the bread, and so we went two kilometers to Chatel Cheberg. There was little shelling now and we passed the crater where we were punished the night before without interruption and delivered our meager breakfast to our outfit. Little as it was it was welcome, for they had hard & dangerous work that morning driving the Germans from the surrounding hills. Their work here forced the Germans to evacuate the Argonne Forest.

On the way back to the kitchen I saw elements of the 82nd Division on their way up. This was a sign that we were to be relieved. This was Oct. 9th. We had been continuously engaged in battle for two weeks and very little of the infantry was left. When I came back to the supply Co., my first thought was to get some rest which I had neglected ~~altogether~~ for two days and nights. I ate something and crawled into my rain soaked bed in the shell hole and slept until the next morning.

Relief.

~~We now~~ Oct. 10th received orders to move the supply train up to Montblainville and meet ~~up with~~ the remnants of our regiment. We moved up thru a muddy

woodland road. On the way we saw some of the big guns in their emplacements left behind by Fritz on his retreat. These were some of those that had barked at us some days before. We found our infantry but my! what a weary, wornout, and decimated regiment. Some of the companies ~~not only~~ consisted of a squad or two only.

When we begin the Argonne attack several weeks before we had at 2500 men in the regiment; now the numbers had dwindled down to about 300 fighting men. We fed them well. It was their first ^{real} meal they had in all those weeks.

The next day we started to ^{the} rear to be reorganized and sent to another front. I started off with the heavy baggage wagons thru Varennes and Neuilly. Here we found the roads fairly congested with traffic going up. If the German guns + airplane had opened up on us here the carnage would have been indescribable. In the early afternoon we came to a place where some colored troops working on the roads had their kitchens. We stopped here to feed and water our horses and try to get some food for ourselves. These colored boys certainly fed us royally with well prepared food. Their cooks knew how to feed their men.

We moved on and next came to a ~~field~~ hospital. Here we stopped to see if we could find some of our friends who had been wounded. We found a few of them but when we walked thru the graveyard

64. in back of the hospital we found many crossed with the names of men from our regiment. We watched them bury a number of dead Americans and Germans as well. A short funeral service was read over the bodies of friend and foe alike as they were lowered in their graves. They were enemies no longer. They all had given their lives for their country. For them the war was over but not for us. We left somewhat heavy hearted, feeling that sooner or later some of us would go the same way in the conflict.

We went on turning eastward toward St. Mihiel. We had heavy rains on the way. On the second day of our journey we crossed the beautiful Meuse River and came into the old St. Mihiel trench lines where the French had held the Germans for four years. It was a dreary spectacle. The earth was all torn up. Fields were full of barbed wire and the trees were mere wrecked stumps. The town Seicheprey was nothing but a few shattered walls with dug outs underneath. We located in a small town north of Toul. Here we received many replacements to refill our ranks.

While here Capt. Braddock + Lt. Dubs our commanding officers of the Supply Co. took sick with the "flu" and ~~one~~ died on the same day. This left me in command of the Company until 1st Lieut Dilworth was assigned to the

job. From now on we two worked together all the time until long after the armistice. It was pleasant to work with him. We inspected the entire 109th regiment together, a job assigned to us by the brigade commander and for which we were highly commended. We were to ascertain whether they had sufficient clothing and equipment for a new campaign which was being planned. It took us a number of days to get around over a large area to all their units. He made a typewritten inventory.

A quiet front. After this work was completed the Regiment was ordered to front beyond Hédicourt facing toward Metz, a German fortified city. We moved northward, passed near Montsec and located our supply train in a beautiful woods called the Bois de Creuse. Here we found excellent stables for the horses and fine well built bungalows for the men. The Germans had built all this and lived very comfortably for four years until the Americans came. This was located in the St. Mihiel salient. Three of us Dilworth, Woodward Taylor (a new assignment to the supply co.) and I took a bungalow with a nicely furnished living room for our office and a good sized bedroom with three iron cots for our sleeping quarters. War was never like this before. Here we stayed until long after the armistice. The best part ^{of it} was that we were rarely

66 shelled and few shells came close at any time. It was a well wooded area, and we could move about and handle our supplies without being observed by the enemy.

There was very little activity here. Our infantry occupied a defensive sector and did little but hold the lines and make a raid once in a while. We placed our rolling kitchens close to the companies, and all we had to do was to take the supplies up to them. In the evenings it was still necessary to show no light to prevent the enemy planes from locating us. One evening we hauled a raiding party to front lines in supply wagons. The raid was not a big success since the Germans were ready for our party, consequently we lost more prisoners than we took, and sustained numerous other casualties.

A New Drive Planned.

A narrow gauge railroad was laid along the main road toward front. Supplies and ammunition were brought in large quantities. A new Division moved on our left. These preparations clearly indicated big doings approaching. We received orders to attack shortly in the direction of Metz, the mighty fortified city. On the 10th of November our orders came to attack on the morning of the 11th.

After dark a German plane dropped bright flares in our neighborhood.

We waited with dread for the unloading of his dreadful bombs but ~~now~~ ^{now} came. We had heard rumors of an unpending armistice. Probably Fritz paid us a friendly call ~~before~~ knowing that the slaughter was about to end. We however had no such assurance but instead were ordered to attack in the morning. We went to sleep with the same dread of impending hardship and falling comrades as before all previous attacks.

Armistice.

Early the morning of the eleventh Dilworth and I went over to Regimental Hqs. for orders. It was about daybreak when we got there and the Adjutant announced that he had received an order declaring an armistice and hoped that this order would stick since several days before a rumor of an armistice proved unfounded. However, now he had the documentary evidence that all hostilities were to cease at 11 o'clock. But meanwhile all attack orders were to be carried out until that time. Consequently the 109th Inf. had already gone over the top to attack and at 9 A.M. the 110th was to leap frog them and continue the onslaught. Some how the 110th never succeeded in the leapfrogging

as the 11th ^{hour} approached cannonading increased rather than subsided. During

the last ten minutes the 75's were going off with feverish rapidity. It sounded like the barrage on the opening of the Argonne drive. They evidently were using their ammunition on hand. On the minute of eleven o'clock all was quiet so quiet that it seemed as though death had overtaken everything. Somebody spoke. Yes, we were still alive. It did not seem real - this silence - after five months of continuous din.

The wounded still kept on coming during the day. The dead had to be buried - the poor unfortunates who had gone through it until the last few hours of the conflict and then had to get theirs. Such a fate!

After,

In the afternoon we found out from the Germans, who came over with watches and any trinkets they had to get food with them, that famine and revolution had broken out behind them. On the next day many Russian prisoners who had been set free by the Germans came across and had to be fed. Before many days some of our own men who had been captured came back with tales of disaster behind the German lines.

On the evening of the eleventh we could hardly convince ourselves that now

we may light matches and candles right in the open. Many rockets and flares lit up the sky in the evening. We were happy and yet we were not altogether natural, feeling that it was only an armistice and any time some one might start firing again. That evening Lt. Taylor suggested that we play bridge. He was the only that could play. So he taught us, including Lt. Dilworth, Lt. Sullivan (Vet. corps) and myself. This game furnished pastime many an evening after this.

About a week after the armistice we turned in all our horses & mules. They had been badly worn. Now we received fine newly arrived American stock. What a contrast with the mediocre, ^{+ nondescript} animals we had before! We had heavy draught, light draught, and fine riding horses now. We should have had them long ago. Orders were given to clean up wagons, harness and all equipment. This was hard too do because of the rains & mud.

Time began to drag and we wished they would take us home at once, but the transporting organization and machinery had to be reversed. Everything was geared to move forward only. The Division did not get home until April.

On Leave.

Early in December Dilworth & I were granted a ~~two day~~ leave to go to Nice on the Mediterranean. This was a glorious anticipation as well as realization. We ^{were} to travel by truck, to Paris by train and stayed over night at the Hotel du Louvre. This was heavenly - to undress and sleep between sheets in a real and warm bed. We set our shoes & puttees out side of the door to have the mud of Lorraine removed. In the morning we thought we looked slick with shined foot gear, but at breakfast we saw many officers of the Paris army (~~those~~ who fought ^{the} war far behind the lines) who were flawless in dress from head to foot, and we felt more like boys from the country.

We boarded a P. L. M. (Paris, Lyons & Mediterranean) train. We stopped off at Marseilles and saw a show in which Gaby de Lys & Harry Pilcer were the main actors. We spent the night at a hotel and in the morning went on to Nice. On the train which was much crowded, we met a French Princess (she looked like a fine old grandmother) who allowed us to sit in her state room, seeing that we were very tired. She told us that next week Pres. Wilson was scheduled to stay at her sister's mansion in Paris (Princess Murat). Now we had something to talk about when we got back to our outfit. "We had hob-nobbed with Royalty" as Lt. Burch put it.

We spent about five days at Nice. Nice was nice, Palms, flowers, and fruits were abundant. The first morning we had breakfast served in bed. We tried to make up for lost time in sleep. Outside of the hotel a serenader played sang. When he struck "Santa Lucia" with all his might I had to get up and toss a franc to him.

We visited Monaco and its museum, Monte Carlo, Mentone, and the Italian border. I, incidentally, had some dental work done which proved to be a bad job and I had to have done all over later.

Army of Occupation.

After we came back to the Bois de Creue we found our regiment had moved forward as a part of the Army of Occupation to Conflans and Brie which been occupied by the Germans. This is an iron region in the northeastern part of France near Luxembourg. Here our men had to clean out the villages. The Germans had kept horses on the first floor of houses while ^{the} men slept upstairs. Horse manure was hauled out by the wagon load from these houses. The men grumbled at the dirty job of cleaning the enemies mess.

Santa Claus. I had to supervise the distribution of rations to the soldiers located in small groups at about 10 different villages. Along came Christmas,

72 and special heavy rations were issued with smokes and sweets. The ration car did not arrive until late in the day; consequently I had to work far into the night to deliver food for Xmas to scattered ^{the} detachments. It started to snow in the evening and my role as Santa Claus would have been perfect if I had had a sleigh instead of a small truck. It was close to midnight before I was through and ready for Merry Christmas. Christmas ~~day~~ was bleak, wet, and cheerless. There was little to remind one of the usual happiness of this day. We had ^{what was said to be} a goose for dinner at the officers mess, but it must have been an undernourished gosling because the portions were so small that the tongue almost failed to catch the taste of it.

Moving Back.

"When are we going home" was the question constantly in the soldiers' mind. Early in January 1919, we ^{were} relieved from the Army of Occupation and travelled back overland southward thru Conflans, Mars-la-Tour, Poult to Allain near Colombey-les-Belles.

Here we were crowded into small villages sleeping in barns, hay lofts, sheepfolds, pigpens, and woodsheds. It became very cold for several weeks with considerable snow. Some of the men suffered considerably from cold with their two

thin blankets. I attended a 10 day horse school at Commercy after which I was put in charge a rebellious supply detachment at Crepy. They were filled with rum and refused to clean up wagons and harnesses for a horse show and general inspection. I sent the ring leaders away on detached service after which the rest went to work with the hope of going home soon. I was a judge along ^{with} Gommij Dilworth, ^{Relief} at the 109th Reg. Horse Show. One evening late in ^{Aug.} I was called to Headquarters and was given an order, sending me to the University of Montpellier for four months. I could have shouted for joy. What a relief to get out of this mud and dirt and unpleasant driving of reluctant men to go to sunny Southern France to school. Now the war was really over for me.

Early the next morning I left with bag & baggage for Paris, spent five days there having dental work done, and then took the P. L. & M. for Montpellier and the finest vacation I ever had or ever will have. During the four months at the University I took advantage of opportunities to travel over southern France (Avignon, Nimes, Arles, Aigues Mortes, Sete, Beziers, Perpignan, Pyrenees Spanish Border, Toulouse, Marseilles). I roomed with Lieut. Dein in a beautiful house with M. & Mme. Parrot

on a hill overlooking the Mediterranean. I managed to get rid of all traces the effects of mustard gas. My cough disappeared. I cleaned up in general and again took on the ways of civilized living. I attended classes in French, International Law and Botany; I was athletic officer of American School Detachment and coached track.

Home.

The school closed on June 30th, Dain and I were ordered to report to St. Nazaire to embark for home, but we had ten days to get there. So we toured on the way. We visited Chamonix, climbed Mont Blanc part way, went to Paris, saw the inter-allied games (like the Olympics), then to Mont St. Michel, St. Malo, Nantes, Orleans, ^{ours,} and then to St. Nazaire. From here we were sent to Brest for a boat. We had to wait there until we were assigned to a ~~boat~~^{ship}. I waited over three weeks before I was assigned to the Northern Pacific. This fast boat brought us to New York in less than six days.

During the sixteen months in France as a U. S. soldier I saw France at its worst - when the war was almost lost, & did my bit which was far from sensational, and I saw France after the war far away from the battle front. I have no regrets for my experiences but I am thankful to be back unharmed in the happy U. S.A.