

ONE SPILLED STEW NET RESULT GAINED BY BOCHE SHELLING

Correspondent Describes
a "Quiet Night" in Sector
Northwest of Toul

SENTRIES RIGHT ON JOB

Second General Order is First Law
of Life With Hun Just
Over Way

DAYLIGHT LACKS EXCITEMENT

Occasional Gun Boom or Hum of
Plane Motor Sole Diversion,
But After Dark—

[Editorial Note.—Mr. Junius B. Wood, correspondent of the Chicago Daily News with the A.E.F., recently spent a week in the sector held by the American Army northwest of Toul. He lived the life of a doughboy, slept a little and saw a lot. He spent his days in and near the front line and some of his nights in No Man's Land. Here is the first installment of his story (told by days), depicting life at the front as it actually is. The second and concluding installment will be published in the next issue of THE STARS AND STRIPES.]

By JUNIUS B. WOOD
Correspondent of the "Chicago Daily News" with the A.E.F.

Sunday.—An ascending crescendo whistle, flashing the warning of an approaching shell, was drowned in a deafening crash a couple of hundred yards away. Striking so close, the glare in the darkness and the sound of the explosion were simultaneous.

The Germans had started shelling a battery just at the rear down which a soldier and I were approaching battalion headquarters. For that reason traveling in pairs had been ordered on the possibility that if one were hit, the other could get help.

An artillery officer had a field telephone at his ear as we entered headquarters. He was shouting orders against the railroad rails supporting the roof of the low ceilinged room.

"Tell our batteries to give them a retaliatory bombardment," said the major commanding the battalion, and in less than half a minute a salvo of all eight guns let us know that the Germans were getting a taste of the same medicine and were seeking dugouts.

"Just starting my night inspection of the sector," said the major, pulling on his rubber boots, strapping a revolver around his waist, and hanging two gas masks around his neck.

"The battery reports Fritz has stopped firing," said the artillery officer, hanging up the receiver.

Mocha for Men Up Front

As we stepped outside the ruined town, with its gaunt, battered, roofless walls, silent in the clear, frosty moonlight, started a strange setting. An automatic rifle started spitting spitefully at two hundred yards. A few hundred yards beyond as the first sentry challenged the major, who stepped forward to whisper the pass word. It was close to midnight as we edged down the narrow communicating trench, passing carrying parties, each pair of soldiers with a stick over their shoulders from which were swinging cans. They were going to the kitchens in the rear, to return with coffee to be served to the men in the trenches. For a stretch of more than a hundred yards we waded through water above our knees, a German shell having filled in a drainage trench. Everywhere we scraped the sticky sides of the trench. Dirt oozed through the revetments, whether of twigs, wire netting or sandbags.

"Halt!" The tense whisper stopped us at almost every turn in the front trenches. The major would step forward and whisper the password.

"That's right, stop everybody," he cautioned several. "I don't want the Boches slipping in here some night and surprising you."

There were three men at each post, two inside the niche of the trench parapet, one watching steadily the haze of No Man's Land beyond the barbed wire, one crouching with his rifle at his side, the third patrolling the trench.

What a Quiet Night Is

"Everything quiet tonight?" the major always asked.

"Yes sir," the soldier invariably replied although an automatic rifle might be popping at the next post and the batteries on the hillside exchanging compliments over his head. The American soldier's idea of quiet is not being shot at at that particular moment.

"Have a patrol out now examining the German wire," reported a captain we met sloshing through the mud of one trench.

"Any others out?" asked the major. "Mine is the only one. If company's patrol just reported, I believe they found a German sniper's hideout."

"Any sniping tonight?" asked the major.

"There was a little off to the left early tonight. It has stopped in the last hour. Our men must have got him," said the captain.

We had a variation of our own in this nightly routine. We reached one swampy stretch where it was impossible to dig trenches and the path became narrow duckboards protected only by flimsy gabions of twigs. Suddenly and without warning, our artillery started to roar on the hillside back of us, laying a barrage in front of the German trenches.

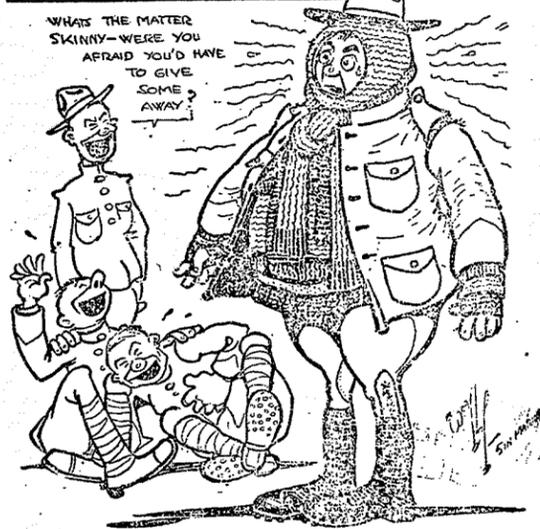
Right Through the Target

There was an answering bang and glow, Fritz's artillery on the opposite hill starting a counter barrage, apparently picking the particular spot which we were passing as his target. The first shell blew a ten foot gap through the stretch of gabionage we had just passed. The next whistled directly over our heads, lifting into the air a section of the swamp, which descended in a shower of sticks, stones, mud, and water.

The flashes on the German hill were continuous and each was followed by an approaching siren and nearby hum. One concussion knocked us off the slippery duckboard flat into the mud, making a harmonious coating from ears to toes of the previous splashes of clay we had accumulated. We finally reached the mouth of a trench, where we were safe from anything but a direct hit.

The barrage stopped as suddenly as it started.

"Be on watch that they don't critical" over gas after those sudden sea-soldiers



THE DAY BEFORE SKINNY RAFFLED OFF HIS KNITS

ments," the major warned the captain in the next dugout we reached.

"We stopped in the dugout long enough to smoke a pipe, a dissipation not permitted in the trenches after sundown. After that we prowled several more miles through the trenches before again emerging into the ruined town where battalion headquarters is located.

It was three o'clock in the morning when we arrived. Wet wood had been piled in the fireplace and had become a glowing bed of coals. The major, an old campaigner, rustled a pile of bread in a corner and started making toast. He also put on a tin full of coffee and dug up a can of jam and served luncheon.

"I have reports to write and am going to stay up myself," he said. "You lie down on my blankets in the corner and get a couple hours' sleep."

Little Doing by Daylight

Monday.—The trenches at night are filled. Shallow, muffled soldiers, underground warfare and darkness go together. In the daylight, the trenches seem deserted, there being only an occasional guard or working party repairing the damage of the previous night's shells or building new shelters. The boom of a single gun heard and reverberating on the hillsides and the hum of distant aeroplanes are the only discordant sounds.

For two hours this morning, the major and I had been tramping through the trenches. Less than three kilometers away was Mont Sec, the German observatory, fortified like Gibraltar, dominating the sector. The nearest lumbering village at its side looked down on the trenches and their hundred tangents.

Suddenly, a fusillade like firecrackers at a Chinese wedding broke loose. Men in the trenches began firing their rifles; others, running for the dugouts, emptied their revolvers; automatic rifles and trench mortars barked, and "flying pigs" shrieked into the air.

Everybody began craning his neck upward. There, less than two hundred feet above, with black crosses on its wings, circled a German aeroplane. The observer struck his head over the side and waved a hand desperately.

"Flug the shady side of the trench," the major advised. "He's taking photographs."

The observer apparently had used his last plate, for with a final wave of his hand and undisturbed by the shower of missiles, he continued homeward.

A Sentry's Close Call

Three hours later I was sitting in headquarters when there came a crash which split the oiled linen windows and shook the squat building with its railroad iron ceiling and four-foot stone roof so hard that it started a clock which hadn't run since the French family of the house fled four years ago.

"Put on your steel helmets!" shouted the major.

Everybody rushed to the little door to see what had happened. Fifty yards away was a sentry, stubbornly sticking to his post, and gazing at a jagged hole almost at his feet in the center of the madam road.

"What did that shell do?" demanded the major.

"Blew me into the sentry box and made that hole, sir," replied the soldier.

"Here comes—" started an artillery officer, but before he could finish another shrill whistle through the air and being stones from a remnant of a building across the road told that another shell had landed. A dozen soldiers who had been basking in the sun dashed inside the ruin so fast that they met the shell striking the opposite wall and then dashed out again. Fortunately, the shell did not explode, but landed in a threatening sou'east, in a side wall.

The German aviator's photographs

Next week, in the concluding installment of his story, Mr. Wood will tell of night patrolling in No Man's Land.

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AS WE KNOW THEM

THE CHAPLAIN

He doesn't wear a Sunday suit nor yet a Sunday face; He wears khaki the same as we, and goes from place to place A-visitin' the hospitals and cheerin' up each lad That for any sort o' reason is laid up and feelin' bad.

He doesn't pull no highbrow stuff, or talk of Kingdom Come, But any "cits' clothes" parson he can sure make out a bun; He doesn't mind mild cussin', and he'll smoke a cigarette, And doesn't say you'll go to hell for swiggin' somethin' wet.

Still, if you ask him for it, he will tell you 'bout the Lord, The First and bravest Christian, Who would never sheathe the sword Until all wrongs were righted; how He set His people free Although the Romans nailed Him to the Cross o' Calvary.

He doesn't force his preachin' down a helpless feller's trap, But if a feller wants it, he has 'got it right on tap; He'll send the folks a letter if your arm's too sore to write, And if you feel like prayin' he'll sit up with you all night.

He'll do the things your folks would do if they were only here; He'll jolly you and brace you up and tell you not to fear 'Rout gettin' by the sentry, add Saint Peter, 'way up there if you only do your duty. On the level, he's a bear!

M. P. IS REASSIGNED HIS HOME TOWN JOB

American Traffic Cops Just as Good Here as They Were Back Home

"Hey you!" shouted Military Policeman—call him O'Connor—and when the offending truck driver had brought his vehicle to a stop continued, "Say, what do you think this is, a Florida straight-away? Haven't you read that new order that no American vehicles are to travel faster than 12 miles an hour in this city?"

"Yes," said M.P. O'Connor, resuming the conversation after dismissing the chauffeur with a reprimand. "Yes, here I am sergeant of the guard. And in Paris, too. Say, I wonder what the boys on the force would say back in Pittsburg? Funny, isn't it. Here I give up my badge and come over here to take a crack at the Kaiser and they make me a cop again. On the traffic squad at that." He chuckled and repeated "I wonder what they would say back home."

Sergeant O'Connor is one of the *gendarmes americains* of Paris. There are others scattered over France in every town and village where there are American troops.

"This business of being a policeman over here is a lot different from what it is in the States," continued Sergeant O'Connor. "It is easier for one thing. Of course we don't have anything to do with anybody but American soldiers and American motor cars. We keep a man at this corner to keep the traffic clear so they can get to the warehouse up the rue there."

"We have instructions to arrest all intoxicated soldiers, pick up all men but after taps without a pass, and see that the officers and men are directed where they want to go. I'll tell you, though, the soldiers are as orderly a bunch as I ever saw anywhere. Would you believe it? We go many a day here without making an arrest. Mostly we're just information bureaux. Most of the boys don't drink anything at all, and mighty few of them take more than they should. A fellow who gets drunk usually gets 60 or 90 days' confinement back in the companies now, and that keeps down the fellows who would get drunk anyhow, whether they're soldiers or not."

The record of arrests by military police throughout France is surprisingly low. It substantiates the opinion of Sergeant O'Connor and is just one more proof of the efficiency of that part of the American Army already in France.

American troops, ever since their arrival, as a matter of fact, have been practically self-governed.

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