



# OVER THE TOP

AN AMERICAN SOLDIER WHO WENT

## ARTHUR GUY EMPEY

MACHINE GUNNER, SERVING IN FRANCE

### CHAPTER I.

From Mufti to Khaki.

It was in an office in Jersey City. I was sitting at my desk talking to a Lieutenant of the Jersey National Guard. On the wall was a big war map decorated with variously colored little flags showing the position of the opposing armies on the western front in France. In front of me on the desk lay a New York paper with big glaring headlines:

**LUSITANIA SUNK! AMERICAN LIVES LOST!**

The windows were open and a feeling of spring pervaded the air. Through the open windows came the strains of a hurdy-gurdy playing in the street—"I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier."

"Lusitania Sunk! American Lives Lost!"—"I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier." To us these did not seem to jibe.

The lieutenant in silence opened one of the lower drawers of his desk and took from it an American flag which he solemnly draped over the war map on the wall. Then, turning to me with a grim face, said:

"How about it, sergeant? You had better get out the muster roll of the Mounted Scouts, as I think they will be needed in the course of a few days."

We bustled ourselves till late in the evening writing out emergency telegrams for the men to report when the call should come from Washington. Then we went home.

I crossed over to New York, and as I went up Fulton street to take the subway to Brooklyn, the lights in the tall buildings of New York seemed to be burning brighter than usual, as if they, too, had read "Lusitania Sunk! American Lives Lost!" They seemed to be glowing with anger and righteous indignation, and their rays wiggled the message, "Heey!"

Months passed, the telegrams lying handy, but covered with dust. Then, one momentous morning the lieutenant with a sigh of disgust removed the flag from the war map and returned



Guy Empey.

No his desk. I immediately followed this action by throwing the telegrams into the wastebasket. Then we looked at each other in silence. He was squirming in his chair and I felt depressed and uneasy.

The telephone rang and I answered it. It was a business call for me, requesting my services for an out-of-town assignment. Business was not very good, so this was very welcome. After listening to the proposition I seemed to be swayed by a peculiarly strong force within me, and answered, "I am sorry that I cannot accept your offer, but I am leaving for England next week," and hung up the receiver. The lieutenant swung around in his chair, and stared at me in blank astonishment. A sinking sensation came over me, but I defiantly answered his look with, "Well, it's so. I'm going." And I went.

The trip across was uneventful. I landed at Tilbury, England, then got into a string of matchbox cars and proceeded to London, arriving there about 10 p. m. I took a room in a hotel near St. Pancras station for "five and sixpence extra." The room was minus the fire, but the "extra" seemed to keep me warm. That night there was a Zeppelin raid, but I didn't see much of it, because the slit in the curtains was too small and I had no desire to make it larger. Next morning the telephone bell rang, and someone asked, "Are you there?" I was, hardly. Anyway, I learned that the Zeps had returned to their fatherland, so I went out into the street expecting to see scenes of awful devastation and a cow-

ering populace, but everything was normal. People were calmly proceeding to their work. Crossing the street, I accosted a Bobbie with:

"Can you direct me to the place of damage?"

He asked me, "What damage?"

In surprise, I answered, "Why, the damage caused by the Zeps."

With a wink he replied:

"There was no damage; we missed them again."

After several fruitless inquiries of the passersby, I decided to go on my own in search of ruined buildings and scenes of destruction. I boarded a bus which carried me through Tottenham Court road. Recruiting posters were everywhere. The one that impressed me most was a life-size picture of Lord Kitchener with his finger pointing directly at me, under the caption of "Your King and Country Need You." No matter which way I turned, the accusing finger followed me. I was an American, in mufti, and had a little American flag in the lapel of my coat. I had no king, and my country had seen fit not to need me, but still that pointing finger made me feel small and ill at ease. I got off the bus to try to dissipate this feeling by mixing with the throng of the sidewalks.

Presently I came to a recruiting office. Inside, sitting at a desk was a lonely Tommy Atkins. I decided to interview him in regard to joining the British army. I opened the door. He looked up and greeted me with "I s'y, myte, want to tyke on?"

I looked at him and answered, "Well, whatever that is, I'll take a chance at it."

Without the aid of an interpreter, I found out that Tommy wanted to know if I cared to join the British army. He asked me: "Did you ever hear of the Royal Fusiliers?" Well, in London, you know, Yanks are supposed to know everything, so I was not going to appear ignorant and answered, "Sure."

After listening for one half-hour to Tommy's tale of their exploits on the firing line, I decided to join. Tommy took me to the recruiting headquarters, where I met a typical English captain. He asked my nationality. I immediately pulled out my American passport and showed it to him. It was signed by Lansing. After looking at the passport, he informed me that he was sorry but could not enlist me, as it would be a breach of neutrality. I insisted that I was not neutral, because to me it seemed that a real American could not be neutral when big things were in progress, but the captain would not enlist me.

With disgust in my heart I went out in the street. I had gone about a block when a recruiting sergeant who had followed me out of the office tapped me on the shoulder with his swagger stick and said: "Sy, I can get you in the army. We have a 'leftenant' down at the other office who can do anything. He has just come out of the O. T. C. (Officers' Training Corps) and does not know what neutrality is." I decided to take a chance, and accepted his invitation for an introduction to the lieutenant. I entered the office and went up to him, opened up my passport and said:

"Before going further I wish to state that I am an American, not too proud to fight, and want to join your army." He looked at me in a nonchalant manner, and answered, "That's all right; we take anything over here."

I looked at him kind of hard and replied, "So I notice," but it went over his head.

He got out an enlistment blank, and placing his finger on a blank line said, "Sign here."

I answered, "Not on your tintype."

"I beg your pardon?"

Then I explained to him that I would not sign it without first reading it. I read it over and signed for duration of war. Some of the recruits were lucky. They signed for seven years only!

Then he asked me my birthplace. I answered, "Ogden, Utah."

He said, "Oh, yes, just outside of New York?"

With a smile, I replied, "Well, it's up the state a little."

Then I was taken before the doctor and passed as physically fit, and was issued a uniform. When I reported back to the lieutenant, he suggested that, being an American, I go on recruiting service and try to shame some of the slackers into joining the army."

"All you have to do," he said, "is to go out on the street, and when you see a young fellow in mufti who looks physically fit, just stop him and give him this kind of a talk: 'Aren't you ashamed of yourself, a Britisher, physically fit, and in mufti when your king and country need you? Don't you know that your country is at war and that the place for every young Briton is on the firing line? Here I am, an American, in khaki, who came four thousand miles to fight for your king and country, and you, as yet, have not

enlisted. Why don't you join? Now is the time.'

"This argument ought to get many recruits. Empey, so go out and see what you can do."

He then gave me a small rosette of red, white and blue ribbon, with three little streamers hanging down. This was the recruiting insignia and was to be worn on the left side of the cap.

Armed with a swagger stick and my patriotic rosette, I went out into Tottenham Court road in quest of cannon fodder.

Two or three poorly dressed civilians passed me, and although they appeared physically fit, I said to myself, "They don't want to join the army; perhaps they have someone dependent on them for support," so I did not accost them.

Coming down the street I saw a young dandy, top hat and all, with a fashionably dressed girl walking beside him. I muttered, "You are my meat," and when he came abreast of me I stepped directly in his path and stopped him with my swagger stick, saying:

"You would look fine in khaki; why not change that top hat for a steel helmet? Aren't you ashamed of yourself, a husky young chap like you in mufti when men are needed in the trenches? Here I am, an American,



Swearing in a Recruit.

came four thousand miles from Ogden, Utah, just outside of New York, to fight for your king and country. Don't be a slacker, buck up and get into uniform; come over to the recruiting office and I'll have you enlisted."

He yawned and answered, "I don't care if you came forty thousand miles, no one asked you to," and he walked on. The girl gave me a sneering look; I was speechless.

I recruited for three weeks and nearly got one recruit.

This perhaps was not the greatest stunt in the world, but it got back at the officer who had told me, "Yes, we take anything over here." I had been spending a good lot of my recruiting time in the saloon bar of the Wheat Sheaf pub (there was a very attractive blonde barmaid, who helped kill time—I was not so serious in those days as I was a little later when I reached the front)—well, it was the sixth day and my recruiting report was blank. I was getting low in the pocket—barmaids haven't much use for anyone who cannot buy drinks—so I looked around for recruiting material. You know a man on recruiting service gets a "bob" or shilling for every recruit he entices into joining the army, the recruit is supposed to get this, but he would not be a recruit if he were wise to this fact, would he?

Down at the end of the bar was a young fellow in mufti who was very patriotic—he had about four "Old Six" ales aboard. He asked me if he could join, showed me his left hand, two fingers were missing, but I said that did not matter as "we take anything over here." The left hand is the rifle hand as the piece is carried at the slope on the left shoulder. Nearly everything in England is "by the left," even general traffic keeps to the port side.

I took the applicant over to headquarters, where he was hurriedly examined. Recruiting surgeons were busy in those days and did not have much time for thorough physical examinations. My recruit was passed as "fit" by the doctor and turned over to a corporal to make note of his scars. I was mystified. Suddenly the corporal burst out with, "Bime me, two of his fingers are gone." Turning to me he said, "You certainly have your nerve with you, not 'alf you ain't, to bring this beggar in."

The doctor came over and exploded, "What do you mean by bringing in a man in this condition?"

Looking out of the corner of my eye I noticed that the officer who had recruited me had joined the group, and I could not help answering, "Well, sir, I was told that you took anything over here."

I think they called it "Yankee impudence," anyhow it ended my recruiting.

(Continued Next Week)

### ATTENTION!! COAL USERS

To Prevent Another Coal Famine Next Year, Begin Storing Now.

Before the winter's fires are cold, the U. S. Fuel Administration is urging the storage of fuel for next winter. Every effort that can be made to

# Curtiss Hippodrome Theatre

This SATURDAY, March 16th Matinee and Night  
BIG HOLIDAY SHOW FEATURE VAUDEVILLE and MOVIES



Pretty Ella Hall in "The Charmer"  
And a Max Sennet 2-reel Comedy

Fun, fast and furious and a Vaudeville of merit.

JUDSON & BARNES

Black and white face instrumental imitations supreme and comedy delightful.

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Singing, yodeling and dancing; a classy act, put over by classy people.

Not a moment of this big two and a half hour show that is not interesting, mirthful, musical and worth your while. See it at the Curtiss today.

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BEAUTIFUL

MARY MILES MINTER

the sweetest little bit of joy you've ever seen in her recent success

"PERIWINKLE"

A heart interest story of the sea coast and the life savers. Don't miss seeing this, the world's daintiest and most lovable Movie star in her big success Periwinkle; and

Clever Billy West in The Goat

See the big Double Star bill at the Curtiss this Tuesday. Seats 10-15c, including tax.



## Curtiss Hippodrome Theatre

THIS THURSDAY MARCH 21st No Matinee

We announce the presentation of the Big State Right production—George Bronson Howard's

# "COME THROUGH"

The Supreme feature Photoplay that has thrilled New York.

Here are a few Things that you ask for:

You ask for Supremacy—this play is chuck full of it. You have demanded Thrills—here they are.

You wanted swift action, something new and remarkable, —Come Through is packed with it.

You will always ask for Jewell productions after you have seen "Come Through" at the Curtiss this Thursday.

The New York Tribune says of "Come Through:"

"Is George Bronson Howard at his best. One is appaled by so much cleverness. Audience kept on edge of seats for two hours. Remarkable, Thrilling, Entertaining, wonderful. The best New York has had for years. A charming love story entwined throughout.

Please note the vast variety of stars and feature plays offered to you each week at the CURTISS. We show only selected feature plays.



"COME THROUGH" is the biggest melodrama this town will see this season. It's the photodrama that set all N. Y. talking. Produced by the Universal Film Mfg. Co. Written by George Bronson Howard. You'll hugely enjoy it — You'll talk about it. Read what the N. Y. Dailies said about—

"Come through"

prevent a repetition of the coal shortage of this year will be made. State Administrator John E. Williams and his staff have already taken up next year's problem, and they will devote most of their time to it throughout the spring and summer.

The State Council of Defense will join in the campaign. Through every official source all coal users in the state will be urged to begin buying and storing coal now for next year. Every private user in particular is urged to put in his next winter's coal at the earliest possible date, and get out of the market.

The purpose behind the efforts of

both the Fuel Administration and the State Council is to keep the coal mines working throughout the summer. Only a comparatively small amount of coal can be stored at the mines. The only places where it can be stored in quantities to prevent the possibility of another famine next winter is on the premises of the individual users and the retail dealers.

Also transportation facilities are much better in summer than in winter. More cars are available. There is no danger of bad weather blockades. The traffic congestion of the winter months is not a summer problem. There is plenty of coal in Illinois

for Illinois users. Enough, and more than enough, can be mined, if the mines are kept working all the time. But it cannot be mined unless it is taken away from the mines. And it cannot be taken away from the mines unless there are purchasers.

Next year's traffic problems will in all probability be as great as those of this year. The only way to prevent a coal shortage is to begin piling it up now, while the piling is good, and continue to do so throughout the summer.