

"Over the Top"

By An American Soldier
Who Went

ARTHUR GUY EMPEY

Machine Gunner during in France

CHAPTER XIII.

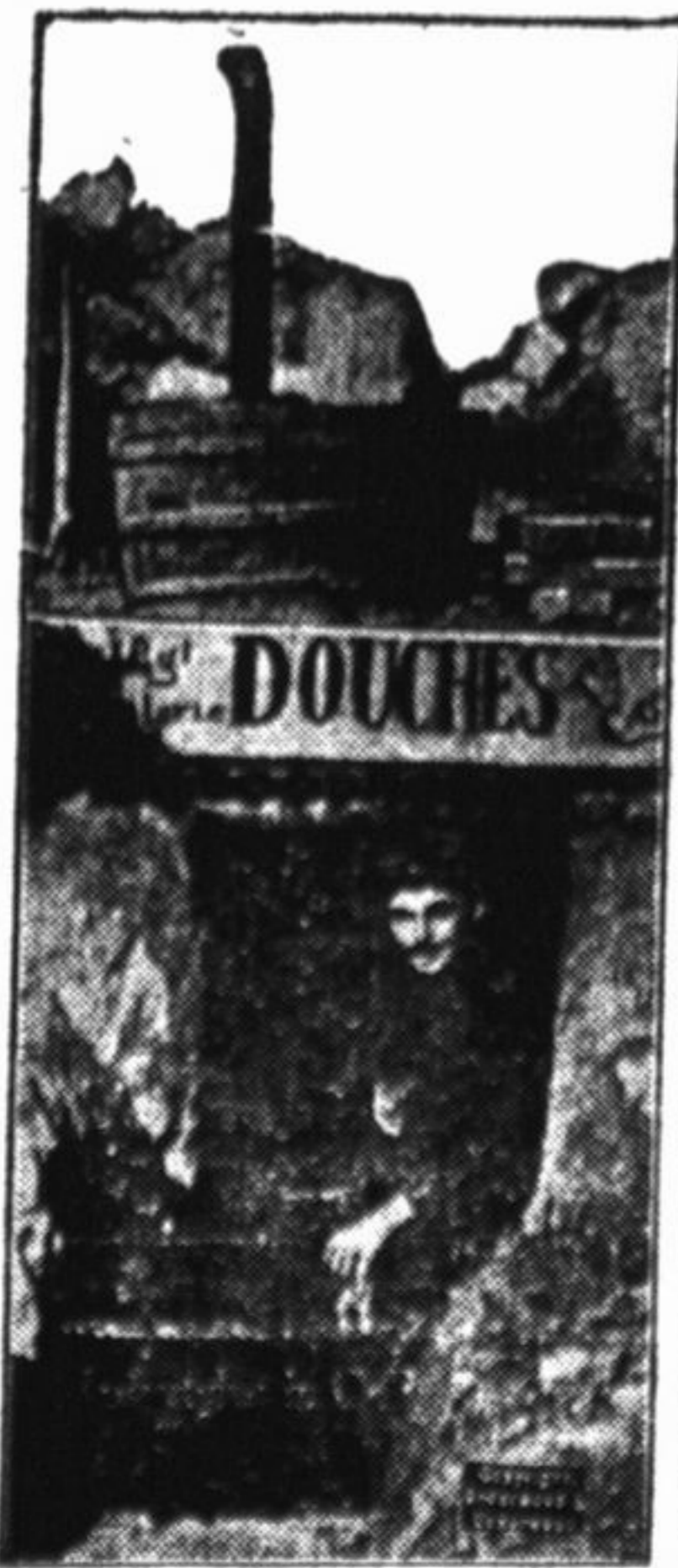
My First Official Bath.

Right behind our rest billet was a large creek about ten feet deep and twenty feet across, and it was a habit of the company to avail themselves of an opportunity to take a swim and at the same time thoroughly wash themselves and their underwear when on their own. We were having a spell of hot weather, and these baths to us were a luxury. The Tommies would splash around in the water and then come out and sit in the sun and have what they termed a "shirt hunt." At first we tried to drown the "cooties," but they also seemed to enjoy the bath.

One Sunday morning the whole section was in the creek and we were having a gay time, when the sergeant major appeared on the scene. He came to the edge of the creek and ordered: "Come out of it. Get your equipment on, 'drill order,' and fall in for bath parade. Look lively, my hearties. You have only got fifteen minutes." A howl of indignation from the creek greeted this order, but out we came. Discipline is discipline. We lined up in front of our billet with rifles and bayonets (why you need rifles and bayonets to take a bath gets me), a full quota of ammunition, and our tin hats. Each man had a piece of soap and a towel. After an eight-kilo march along a dusty road, with an occasional shell whistling overhead, we arrived at a little squat frame building upon the bank of a creek. Nailed over the door of this building was a large sign which read "Divisional Baths." In a wooden shed in the rear we could hear a wheezy old engine pumping water.

We lined up in front of the baths, soaked with perspiration, and piled our rifles into stacks. A sergeant of the R. A. M. C. with a yellow band around his left arm on which was "S. P." (sanitary police) in black letters, took charge, ordering us to take off our equipment, unroll our puttees and unlace boots. Then, starting from the right of the line, he divided us into squads of fifteen. I happened to be in the first squad.

We entered a small room, where we were given five minutes to undress, then filed into the bathroom. In here



A Bathroom at the Front.

there were fifteen tubs (barrels sawed in two) half full of water. Each tub contained a piece of laundry soap. The sergeant informed us that we had just twelve minutes in which to take our baths. Soaping ourselves all over, we took turns in rubbing each other's backs, then by means of a garden hose, washed the soap off. The water was ice cold, but felt fine.

Pretty soon a bell rang and the water was turned off. Some of the slower ones were covered with soap, but this made no difference to the sergeant, who chased us into another room, where we lined up in front of a little window, resembling the box office in a theater, and received clean underwear and towels. From here we went into the room where we had first undressed. Ten minutes were allowed in which to get into our "clabber."

My pair of drawers came up to my chin and the shirt barely reached my diaphragm, but they were clean—no strangers on them, so I was satisfied. At the expiration of the time allotted we were turned out and finished our dressing on the grass.

When all of the company had bathed it was a case of march back to billets. That march was the most ungenial one I imagined, just cursing and blinding all the way. We were covered with white dust and felt greasy from sweat. The woolen underwear issued was itching like the mischief.

After eating our dinner of stew, which had been kept for us—it was

now four o'clock—we went into the creek and had another bath.

If "Holy Joe" could have heard our remarks about the divisional baths and army red tape he would have fainted at our wickedness. But Tommy is only human after all.

I just mentioned "Holy Joe" or the chaplain in an irreverent sort of way, but no offense was meant, as there were some very brave men among them.

There are so many instances of heroic deeds performed under fire in rescuing the wounded that it would take several books to chronicle them, but I have to mention one instance performed by a chaplain, Captain Hall by name, in the brigade on our left, because it particularly appealed to me.

A chaplain is not a fighting man; he is recognized as a non-combatant and carries no arms. In a charge or trench raid the soldier gets a feeling of confidence from contact with his rifle, revolver, or bomb he is carrying. He has something to protect himself with, something with which he can inflict harm on the enemy—in other words, he is able to get his own back.

But the chaplain is empty-handed, and is at the mercy of the enemy if he encounters them, so it is doubly brave for him to go over the top, under fire. I bring in wounded. Also a chaplain is not required by the king's regulations to go over in a charge, but this one did, made three trips under the hottest kind of fire, each time returning with a wounded man on his back. On the third trip he received a bullet through his left arm, but never reported the matter to the doctor until late that night—just spent his time administering to the wants of the wounded lying on stretchers.

The chaplains of the British army are a fine, manly set of men, and are greatly respected by Tommy.

CHAPTER XIV.

Picks and Shovels.

I had not slept long before the sweet voice of the sergeant informed that "No. 1 section had clicked for another blinking digging party." I smiled to myself with deep satisfaction. I had been promoted from a mere digger to a member of the Suicide club, and was exempt from all fatigues. Then came an awful shock. The sergeant looked over in my direction and said: "Don't you bomb throwers think you are wearing top hats out here. 'Cord-in' to orders you've been taken up on the strength of this section, and will have to do your bit with the pick and shovel, same as the rest of us."

I put up a howl on my way to get my shovel, but the only thing that resulted was a loss of good humor on my part.

We fell in at eight o'clock, outside of our billets, a sort of masquerade party. I was disguised as a common laborer, had a pick and shovel, and about one hundred empty sandbags. The rest, about two hundred in all, were equipped likewise: picks, shovels, sandbags, rifles and ammunition.

The party moved out in column of fours, taking the road leading to the trenches. Several times we had to string out in the ditch to let long columns of limbers, artillery and supplies get past.

The marching, under these conditions, was necessarily slow. Upon arrival at the entrance to the communication trench, I looked at my illuminated wrist watch—it was eleven o'clock.

Before entering this trench, word was passed down the line, "no talking or smoking, lead off a single file, covering party first."

This covering party consisted of 30 men, armed with rifles, bayonets, bombs, and two Lewis machine guns. They were to protect us and guard against a surprise attack while digging in No Man's Land.

The communication trench was about half a mile long, a zigzagging ditch, eight feet deep and three feet wide.

Now and again German shrapnel would whistle overhead and burst in our vicinity. We would crouch against the earthen walls while the shell fragments "slapped" the ground above us. Once Fritz turned loose with a machine gun, the bullets from which "cracked" through the air and kicked up the dirt on the top, scattering sand and pebbles, which, hitting our steel helmets, sounded like hailstones.

Upon arrival in the fire trench an officer of the Royal Engineers gave us our instructions and acted as guide.

We were to dig an advanced trench two hundred yards from the Germans (the trencher at this point were six hundred yards apart).

Two winding lanes, five feet wide, had been cut through our barbed wire, for the passage of the diggers. From these lanes white tape had been laid

on the ground to the point where we were to commence work. This in order that we would not get lost in the darkness. The proposed trench was also laid out with tape.

The covering party went out first. After a short wait, two scouts came back with information that the working party was to follow and "carry on" with their work.

In extended order, two yards apart, we noiselessly crept across No Man's Land. It was nervous work; every minute we expected a machine gun to open fire on us. Stray bullets "cracked" around us, or a ricochet sang overhead.

Arriving at the taped diagram of the trench, rifles slung around our shoulders, we lost no time in getting to work. We dug as quietly as possible but every now and then the noise of a pick or shovel striking a stone would send the cold shivers down our



Trench Digging.

backs. Under our breaths we heartily cursed the offending Tommy.

At intervals a star shell would go up from the German lines and we would remain motionless until the glare of its white light died out.

When the trench had reached a depth of two feet we felt safer, because it would afford us cover in case we were discovered and fired on.

The digging had been in progress about two hours, when suddenly hell seemed to break loose in the form of machine-gun and rifle fire.

We dropped down on our bellies in the shallow trench, bullets knocking up the ground and snapping in the air. Then shrapnel butted in. The music was hot and Tommy danced.

The covering party was having a rough time of it; they had no cover; just had to take their medicine.

Word was passed down the line to beat it for our trenches. We needed no urging; grabbing our tools and stooping low, we legged it across No Man's Land. The covering party got away to a poor start but beat us in. They must have had wings because we lowered the record.

(Continued Next Week)

"THE SPIRIT OF '17"

The five-reel number with Jack Pickford in the leading role, tells an entertaining story of the United States in war time. It radiates the splendid patriotism of the moment and it gives the observer more than one thrill of satisfaction that this is not all romance, but an accurate picture of what awakened people, young and old, are doing in this hour of trial. Such a picture, reflecting the real life of today in the guise of fiction, cannot fail to make the right kind of an impression on good Americans. It is all story, but it "does its bit" at the same time.

The youth, of course, finds his opportunity to make good with Flora in the course of the narrative.

The settings and action have a Davy Glidden, portrayed by Jack Pickford, is the son of an adjutant general. His father has charge of a soldier's home in a small Western town. Davy has two loves, one for Captain Jerico Norton, an aged veteran of the home, and the other for a girl named Flora Edwards, whose father is superintendent of a mine.

Flora loves a young fellow named Randall, and Davy is in despair over the situation. strong patriotic tinge all through. The soldiers' home pictured is a real institution and the veterans do their parts with interesting enthusiasm. There is also a contingent of boy scouts in the opening part of the number.

The story was written by Judge Willis Brown, adapted by Julia Crawford Ivers and directed by William S. Taylor. Other members of the cast are G. H. Geldert, L. N. Wells, Katherine McDonald, James Farley and Ashton Dearholt.

This picture will be shown at the Dicke Theatre on Tuesday, May 14.

First Appendicitis Operation.

There was a time when appendicitis was quite a fashionable disease. In some parts of Europe it was known as the "American disease." The first operation for appendicitis was performed at St. Luke's hospital, Denver, Colo., in January, 1886. A young woman residing in Davenport, Ia., had the distinction of being the first person to have the troublesome vermiform appendix removed. The operation, necessarily, was in the nature of an experiment, and the patient was so informed, but she pluckily declared her willingness to submit to the knife as a last resort. It was not until about two years later that another operation of this kind was performed. Since then thousands of such operations have been performed in every hospital in the world.

CURTISS Theatre

SATURDAY, May 11th

Matinee and Night

Matinee all seats 10c.

Children under 14, 11c; Adults 20c, including tax.

WM. S. HART

IN HIS WONDERFUL SUCCESS

"BLUE BLAZES ROWDEN"

A big Artcraft production; and a

Max Sennet 2-reel Feature Comedy

And FAMILY VAUDEVILLE

Consisting of a variety of entertainment of Singing, Comedy Stunts and Novelties

Two Shows: 7:30 & 9 o'clock.

CURTISS Theatre Attractions

for TUESDAY, MAY 14th

Seats 9 & 13c War tax extra

Especially selected for this showing

Baby Marie Osborne in her recent "The Patriot"

A wonder story of laughter and joy with plenty of Patriotism. See how the Baby Bernhardt organizes an army of kids and capture a spy. Baby Osborne's best play. You and the entire family cannot possibly afford to miss it; and

Clever Billy West in a Special 2 reel Comedy

And a new PATHE SCENIC

Making this the best entertainment ever offered at the Curtiss on a Tuesday. We have booked all of the Baby Marie Osborne pictures and will show them at the Curtiss.

Curtiss Theatre Attraction

for WEDNESDAY, May 15th

Seats 9 and 13c

A THOS. H. INCE PRODUCTION

DOROTHY DALTON

IN

"LOVE LETTERS"

A great story of Love and Mystery. Miss Dalton's amazing dramatic powers were never so forcefully displayed. It is the best picture Dalton has ever made and you cannot afford to miss it. A living, breathing, soul-stirring play that you will remember for many a day.

We show the Paramount and Artcraft pictures, which are advertised in The Saturday Evening Post, and all other high class Movies. We are open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.

CURTISS THEATRE

THIS THURSDAY MAY 16th

Seats 9 and 13c

GOLDWYN DAY at the Curtiss

Madge Kennedy

IN

"THE DANGER GAME"

The world's most beautiful burglar; the film star who has captured the Nation—Madge Kennedy. Every effort and element in the making of a perfect Photoplay has been employed by Goldwyn to enhance the attractiveness of Madge Kennedy in "The Danger Game." A very clever cast supports the star, the chief favorite being Tom Moore.

Madge Kennedy says: "Men were born to protect Women, and they ought to be allowed to work at it. See for yourself in The Danger Game at the Curtiss—the amusement place of big Photoplay Productions.

THE LIBERTY LOAN & THE NEWSPAPERS

The relation of the newspapers of the country to the Liberty Loan and other governmental efforts is expressed in the telegram of Secretary McAdoo to the editors assembled in New York last week in attendance on the meeting of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association. "Will you be good enough to express to the members of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association, now in session, my sincere and warm appreciation of the great service they

have rendered to their country by their consistent, unselfish, and patient support of the successive Liberty Loans, which have been offered by the Treasury Department.

"These loans could not have succeeded without the support of the newspapers, and it gives me great pleasure to make this acknowledgment. An enlightened public opinion is the chief asset of a democracy. By keeping the people of America informed on public events and transmitting word of the financial and other needs of the Government, the American

newspapers have performed a public and incalculable service to the Nation. I know that the service will be continued and that the newspapers will do their full share in assisting America to win this war for democracy and justice."

Worth While Quotation.
"It is not the work, but the worry, that makes the world grow old."

Daily Thought.
One no longer hears the old-time talk about "surplus women."