

**SONS IN SERVICE**

The following letter was written by Henry H. Everett, of Kenilworth, son of Dr. H. H. Everett. We publish the letter because of its unusual interest:

November 23, 1918

My Dear Father:  
I suppose you know by this time about the A. E. F. having a Fathers' Day, the 24th of November, as well as a Mothers' Day which is the 11th of May. We are to be allowed to tell where we are and what fronts we have been on, so you see that we are allowed to make a real letter of it. I will try and do my best to write you a real interesting letter that you will be proud to receive and make it possible to get a little inside dope on this mess that we have just cleaned up in the famous Yank style.

I will try and give you some idea of my experiences since the twelfth of September, when the St. Mihiel drive started. Of course there are many little things that I would like to write to you about that have been of real importance but I will have to wait. However, I will try and touch on the big things and tell a few personal experiences that I went through.

We went into our base in the woods as close as I can remember on the 6th of the month and started to make preparations for what we were told, was to be one of the biggest drives of the war. The place that we were to place our guns was in front of what is known as Mount Sec, a place that the French tried to take in 1915. They tried it by a frontal attack and lost 30,000 men in 18 minutes. The French gave us four months to take it and we took it in one hour and 40 minutes. The 11th of the month I volunteered to go up and help get the emplacements ready. I went up one night and worked for five nights and days without closing my eyes except for intervals of fifteen or twenty minutes at a time. During the night we would do all of our outside work such as digging the gun emplacements and putting up the camouflage and during the day we would do the inside work. The night of the 11th we had just finished getting our ammunition into place and it was close to eleven o'clock, and the doughboys were filing along the road and tanks were coming up—in fact all of the finishing touches were being put on ready for the drive that was to start the next morning.

The American Infantry never goes into the trenches until the night before they are to go over the top. I was standing at the door of the dugout waiting for 12 bells as it was then that we were to start the barrage, when the 16th infantry came along and one of the fellows from the Battery remarked how I had often said that I was going over the top with the Infantry before the war was over. He said, "Here's our chance now, all the work is done and the Infantry is just on their way up to the trenches." So off we started. We went out into the road and fell in with the first regiment that happened to pass us which was the third Battalion of the 16th so we proceeded as far as the trenches with them when I met a Sergeant who asked me what squad I belonged to and I told him what I intended to do so he took me through the trenches for half a mile and told me that I was to be a grenadier of which detail he had charge. He took me in a dugout and gave me my equipment which consisted of the following: helmet, rifle, bayonet, grenade apron with 12 grenades, gas mask, two bandoliers of ammunition and an ammunition belt which altogether gave me 320 rounds of ammunition. I had no haversack as they are surplus stuff to carry while going over. He put me in a place in the trench where I was to stay until he returned. By the time I got my outfit and he had given me some idea of the work that I was to do it was somewhere around 3:30 and at four thirty we were to go over so I had about an hour to think of what might happen to me and where I would be in twenty-four hours from that time. At 4:15 he came back and asked how I felt and said that very shortly we would be on our way. I will admit I felt as if I had the chills from the sweat that was running down my back, it wasn't from fear but from the excitement. I was trying to tell him how I felt when the order was passed down to "fix bayonets and then I felt all the worse. I knew that in about fifteen minutes I would be out in no man's land and that I would be seeing everything imaginable. Just while I was deep in thought, that I have forgotten, I heard the Sergeant holler "up and at 'em," by this time the barrage was at its height and all of a sudden it let up and we had the field clear ahead of us to go after them. We opened out in a scrimmage line and started at a trot across the field in

a direction that led through a gap in the woods, which held a German artillery and was lined with machine guns and just as we got started the tanks started out 160 strong and such a sight I never saw and it was worth any slight wound that could be inflicted. They moved across the field in waves and as they would sight the machine gun nests they would separate and start out after them and they usually succeeded in getting them. I was in the first wave and we hit the Germans' front line and not a Jerry was to be seen but we could hear them. Their rifles were stacked on the fire steps showing that they had left in an awful hurry. We crossed their second and third lines of trenches and the same sight. Just before we got to the woods we got a gas alarm and we had to advance the next mile and a half with our gas masks on and believe me they are the most uncomfortable things in the world to try and run in. When we got to their artillery positions they were pretty well evacuated and very few of the guns had been drawn out of position and after travelling all that way and having helped captured beaucoup Huns I had only captured about a dozen myself and killed one. He was a machine gunner and just before I got to him I fell flat on my face and took a long steady aim and when he showed his face I let him have it. Using a human face for a target is not the most pleasant target practice in the world. Just after we had cleared the woods and seen a fellow have his apron hit and all the grenades set off I didn't feel exactly at home but by this time most of the excitement had worn off and I felt a lot better than I did when I first started. I had not left the woods more than a hundred feet when a large shell hit near me knocking the wind out of me, and it was several minutes before I was able to go on but by that time I was swept up with the second wave which was the 18th Infantry and was in a mopper squad, they are the fellows that go through the woods and clean out all the Huns that are left, which isn't a much better job than a grenadier so I threw all of my grenades away except three that I put in my pockets as I figured that I might need them later. I advanced as far as that town in which I had my picture taken that I have sent you, we had some trouble in taking the town as there were plenty of machine guns in the church steeples and at all the cross roads. But you know that when the Yanks want a town they usually take it, and such was the feeling when we first saw that town. I went outside of the town, about half a mile to a commissary which we took and there I stayed until I had plenty of Pumpernickle and jam that they had to leave in their flight. In some of the homes we even found fires burning in some of the stoves and in some there was still food.

That will give some idea of the speed they made when they left. The outfit I was with then had orders to stay there over night and advance the next morning as reserves. That afternoon my outfit came into the town and I was only too glad to return to them. I met them about four o'clock and at five thirty we pulled out for the start of a six night hike to the Argonne front. That would mean that for eleven nights I had not closed my eyes except for a few minutes during the day that we would lay up over but there always was enough work to keep us busy most of the time. We hiked that night until about 11 o'clock when we stopped for a short rest in the middle of some woods that the Germans had owned only a few hours before we had arrived. There was a ditch running along the side of the road. Gordy Green was about two carriages to the rear and he called up to me to come back. Even in the dark I could see the dugouts that were in the woods just off the road. When I got back to where he was I noticed that he was about twenty feet in the woods lighting matches every now and then so in I started. The ditch was about three feet across and I saw what I thought was a log and just as I started to step on it Gordy hollered to look out for the Jerry. My foot had just touched it and it felt soft and Gordy came up and lighted a match and looked down into the face of a Jerry who wasn't a day over 16 years old. He had been a machine gun helper and was still holding an extra barrel in his hands, he had been stabbed in the side and on top of the head. He hadn't been dead very long as the blood was still coming out of his wounds. There were several others laying around in there but in a few minutes we were on our way once more. From that time on there was nothing real exciting in our tour of France by moonlight. On the morning of the seventh we arrived at what was to be our base for the Argonne drive. We immediately started in the same routine of fixing the trenches and dugouts that we went thru on the other front. The first time I went up was the night

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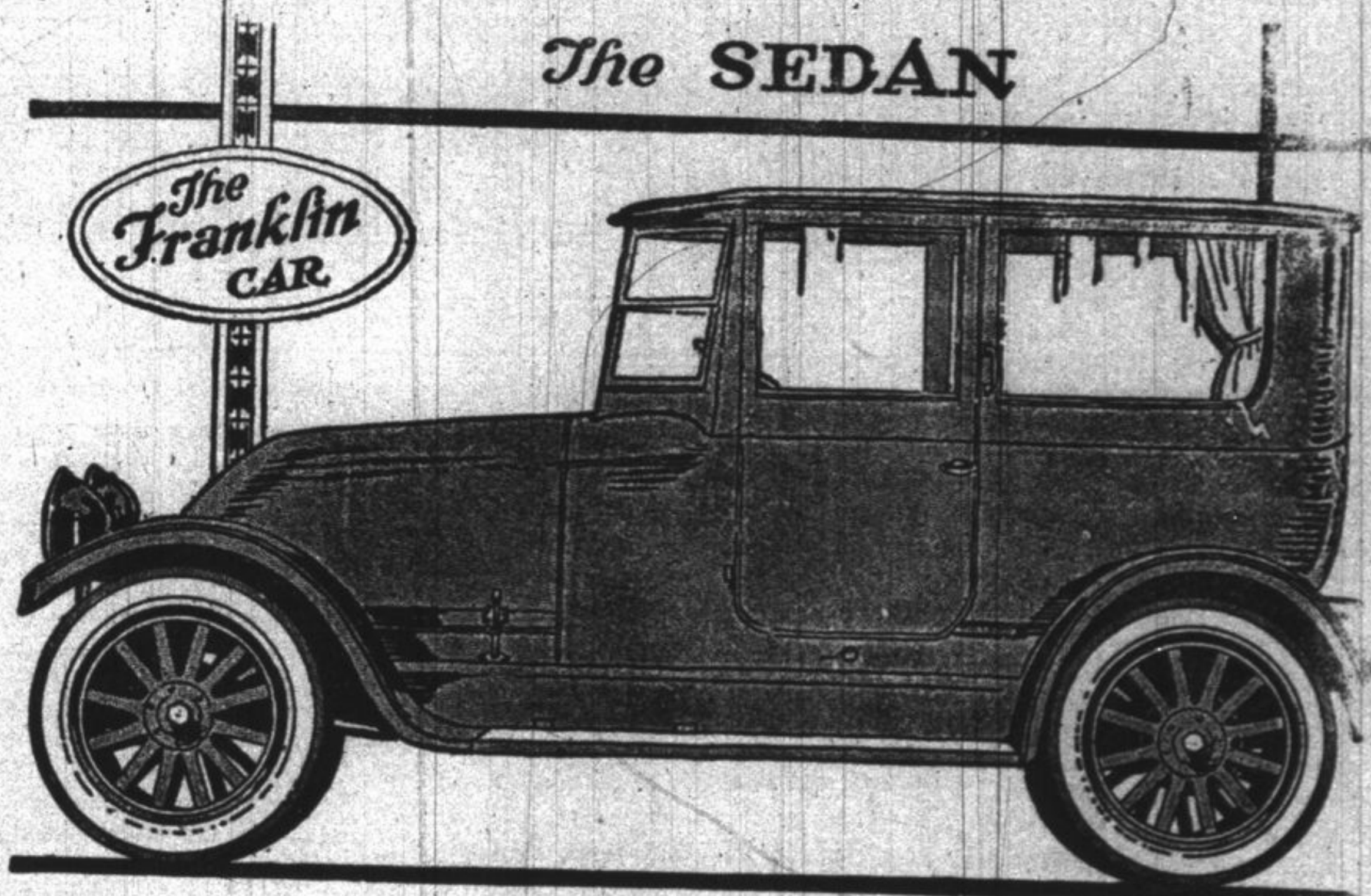


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before the drive was to start. I figured that it would be a lot safer up there than back at the base, and it turned out that way as the Huns shelled our base that night with aeroplanes and killed three of our men and wounded 12 beside the fellows that were killed from the other outfits that were using the woods as their base. There was nothing that was real interesting, as far as I can write, that happened until we moved up to our first new position the day after the drive started. We advanced about three kilos thru a field and then we hit the woods. Going thru the woods we would find cases where there were barbed wire on both sides of the roads and deep pits about ten to fifteen feet deep, dug in the center of the road and we would have to cut our way thru the entanglements and drive around. It took us some time to pass thru the woods and our new position was to be on the other side, in an open field. There were more dead Huns in that patch of woods than any other spot of France of the same size. I immediately went in search of souvenirs as the woods were one mass of trenches. I led the way for about five or six of the fellows and as I made the second turn in a trench I ran into the Huns that were sitting on the fire step of the trench and kind of laying on each other, at first I thought they were alive so I shot at two of them and the only effect the bullets had on them was to knock them down. We passed them and ran into so many that after five minutes of such walking we returned to the battery. We only stayed there over that night and then we moved again and took our place where we were to be when I got mine. The second night they called for volunteers to go up and take care of some Roam-

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## The SEDAN



Telephone 49 for Demonstration

# GEORGE H. KOON

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