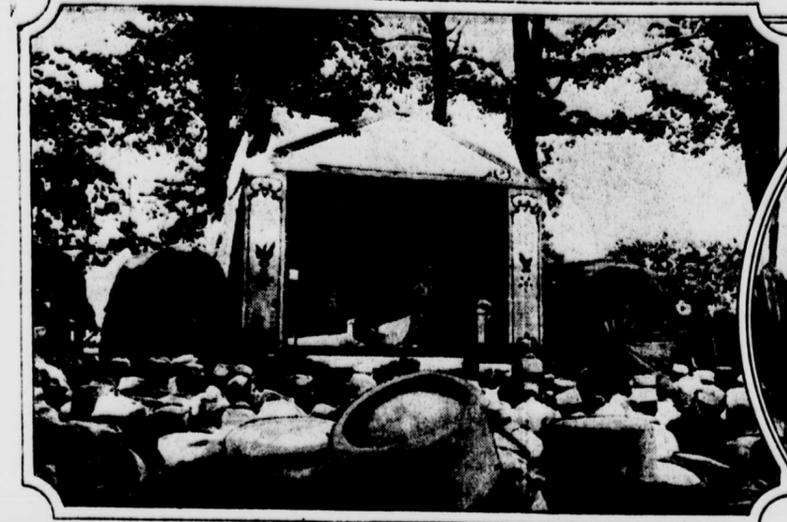


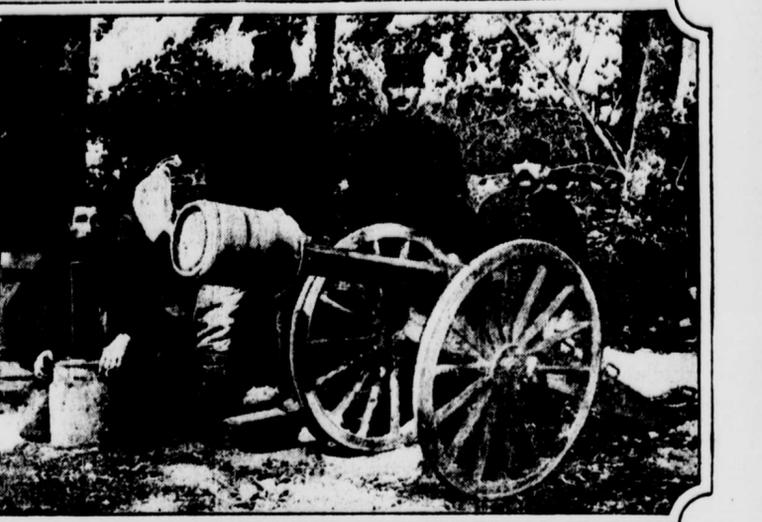
"COROT THE AMERICAN," THE MAN BETWEEN THE LINES



A theatre on the fighting line. Soldiers back from the advanced trenches are here entertained by some of the best talent in France.



A German overground mine unexploded in front of the French trenches.



An overground mine ready to be fired over the German lines. A piston attached to the mine fits into the gunbarrel.

Far in Advance of the Army He Fences With Death and Waits Grimly for the End He Knows Must Come

Picked men keep watch in the advanced trenches. On none is the strain of war greater, none face greater perils. Just what they undergo may be understood from the following account of a tour of duty of an American serving in the French army. It was written by another American—the correspondent who received the honor of having the War Cross bestowed on him.

By WILLIAM T. MARTIN.

HE is known among his companions in the trenches as "Corot the American." He is one of the meagre scattering now left of the original men of his regiment, veterans of the first line and among these he is respected as a brave man. Like the others he bears on his face the hard stamp of long months of fighting with death.

He is a New Yorker by birth, aged 25 and a university graduate. He has a quiet, studious nature, and when off duty back of the trenches he usually spends his time in reading and sketching.

Of French parentage, he left a thrifty business back home at the call of mobilization, arrived in France for the first time and swore allegiance to the Republic. It was done through an interpreter, for he was unable to speak more than a few words of the language. He was taken into the regular army as a Frenchman.

Now, after months he will never forget, he is stationed at the most dangerous of positions facing the soldiers of the first line. It is a narrow, deep, long, winding ditch running out from his own trenches toward the Germans. As he stands out his watches there, keenly alert and listening, with his comrades in back and the enemy in front, it is the grimming arm of a half a dozen men a few feet away to kill him, has been so for weeks, and for weeks he has missed death by inches as the deadly missiles dash and tear around him.

For weeks fighting at this point has been hard and stiff. There has been little trench running, overground battles, but the incessant bombardment of each other's trenches to prevent the soldiers from torturing themselves too severely is sapping the life of the troops. The soldiers say it could hardly be worse.

It cannot be long now, Corot thinks, before something will strike his ditch. His chief hope is to be slightly wounded, for this he knows is the best that can happen to him. As he takes up his watch, he wonders whether this time it will come. He has so wondered each time for countless days back.

His ditch is one of several dug here and there, deserted when they are discovered or blown up. There is no excitement over it such as is occasionally found over the first line in back. Thick, clay mud, knee deep, gives him to a single spot. He has on rubber boots and is unmindful of the wet, but he feels the strain of the six hours watch keenly, as he cringes in constant expectancy and listens.

It is his duty to listen for sound in the trench right ahead—for conversation, orders, or the slight ripple of noise that sometimes runs along a trench when troops are brought up behind an attack. He has exceptional hearing, the French have discovered, and that is why he was selected for the post.

On one occasion, he remembers, shortly after this ditch was dug, he carried back an order he had heard a German officer give. The Germans were preparing to come over without the customary artillery bombardment of the French trenches. His own men were warned, orders went back to the batteries and in a few minutes the French guns were wiping out life in the enemy's trenches. The attack was killed.

Grenades to-day have been breaking nearer the ditch than at other times. They are bursting all around him and he hopes there will soon be orders to dig a new ditch, for he is accustomed to do this, but the other soldiers dig out or he their head off in chunks. Corot takes an occasional sip of the red wine from his canteen doled out with the other rations every day. He gives most of this away, for he does not drink it like the other soldiers. He is not accustomed to it, and his associates say "it puts hair on the chest," it seems to take something from his power of resistance. He feels he needs all his courage.

As he eats, the Germans throw more grenades over. They fall very near and explode with venomous, hot, tearing reports and he can hear the tearing of the earth. Once there is an exceptionally sharp, stinging crash and he stops eating as he suddenly crouches low. For the instant it seems as if it has exploded near him in the trench and he thinks that probably the time has arrived. But a shower of rock and earth falls about, on his helmet and shoulders, and in another

instant he knows he is not hurt. He picks the pieces from his dish and continues to eat.

This evening Corot feels something like a lack of courage that he will not admit even to himself. He again thinks of his relief and hopes soon to hear him coming through the trench. At the next watch, he thinks, he will feel better. He has lost much sleep because of the recent heavy bombardments—one cannot sleep through it all.

The sun sinks in the direction of the German trenches. It is one of the

him the appearance of an aged man almost, but he is very young and he is smiling.

"Ah, good evening, old comrade," he says more with the lips than in the barely audible whisper.

The two shake hands and speak into each other's ears. The relief asks

stops as he notices several soldiers some distance down the trench looking up at the sky. Looking in the same direction, almost overhead, but somewhat toward the German lines, he sees a long string of little smoke puffs.

As he stares several more puffs break, and some time later he hears faint

whether there is any news and Corot tells him of the grenades. After a few more whispers Corot bids his companion good-bye and good luck and moves stealthily back through the trench. It is becoming dusk.

The man he has just left at the end of the trench lives on day by day in a lonely, catlike manner. He smiles most of the time and some of his comrades say he is slightly foolish. Long ago, when he first came to the trenches, his chief wish was to be suddenly killed without knowing it.

Now he believes it will happen. It has become an obsession with him and he no longer fears death or seeks to avoid it. His time will soon come, he thinks, and he refuses to take his daily life seriously. Observations of this sort are common among the soldiers of the trenches.

Before entering his ditch Corot

depressions. More puffs and more detonations.

He scans along the puff in the direction of the freshly made hole of smoke for aircraft. The French are firing at German aircraft. Because of the weather it is the first time they have been up for over a week.

He looks along the puff in the direction of the freshly made hole of smoke for aircraft. The French are firing at German aircraft. Because of the weather it is the first time they have been up for over a week.

Around Him Deadly Overground Mines Blow Men to Pieces Yet for Weeks He Has Been Spared

break in their vicinity and the race is on. From afar off comes the faint pop, poop, poop of a machine gun in one of the machines leveled at its antagonist. Immediately follow other shots, apparently in reply. As the machines rush along there are quick repetitions.

Suddenly they swerve away, one to the right and the other to the left. They describe great arcs in the sky. Now they are going on a wide parallel to each other in the opposite direction. Then they draw in close again and again come together as the end of a vast circle. The far-away shooting is renewed. The French machine is still following. Comes another machine from somewhere. Corot sees it is also French, and the two follow the one. The German now turns toward his lines and the French follow.

The craft are, for a moment, still in a haze of clouds, but the distant shots can still be heard. Then unexpectedly one of the machines makes a sudden dive downward through space, rights itself, then crashes down through the air like lead. The motor keeps going while the roar and beat of its growing loader, fill the air. In the air it has seemed almost directly overhead, but the thing falls far back in the French rear with a mighty crash.

The other planes fly over the spot, circle around like giant birds of prey and fly away toward the others high in the air. There is a murmur as of subdued applause through the trenches. The German has fallen.

Corot gives a thought to the whole of how gruesome it must be, for he has seen several, then enters the ditch out. He flings himself on a scatterbag of straw over the floor, his bed.

He tries to sleep, but it is impossible. He has the feeling of a hand laid on his forehead, and he is awakened by a soldier on watch to take up his watch. It is cold now but clear and he finds his way by the light of the stars. In the ditch again he asks the soldier how the German

grenades have fallen. A pipe has cut him deeply in the neck, but he is all right, he says. He has tied his handkerchief around his neck and lets the collar of his coat up as a sort of protection. He departs, and Corot is left alone.

Things are quiet. Standing there in the mud he dozes by spells, his head falling in jerks over his breast. The sharp crack of rifles near at hand occasionally disturbs the sleep of a soldier leading the way through the air now and then, bearing the rain side to the town in the rear. Hardly disturbs him, but he starts frequently as the glare of the rocket balls overhead makes day in the ditch. Then he peeps out over the ghastly expanse of torn earth and dead things looking for life. It is with the front of his eyes.

Morning sees him off duty again. One more trick and he will go back to town for his rest of four days. He thinks of this with relief as he has done almost countless times before. This time he feels as though he has not had a complete rest since he was here, for he is still alive, unharmed and not disgraced. Because of the illness of several men of his company he has been on continuous duty six hours on and off for the last three weeks.

He goes back to his dugout and waits for the afternoon trick. Even now he will see gun back in town and he will have dinner with some American friends stationed further back. Yesterday several were up to see him and they expect him to-night.

In the almost 12 soldier has just brought up a package and it is for him. Since he has been in the trenches he has been sending him over things that are delivered to his place in the trenches.

Eagerly he opens the parcel. There are cakes, candies, some small bottles of little bottles and a stack of cigarettes and a box of N. M. York soap. He takes a cigarette and smokes it. There are also some cigars and a small tin of soap. He takes a cigarette and smokes it.

He spends the rest of the morning reading the papers by the flicker of light coming in through the narrow opening. It is a great treat, the papers of the life. It comes to him frequently.

It is dusk when he returns to his uniform pants of the mud-colored color. He prepares to go to bed, but he gets the password from the sergeant and stays back. He is a little tired, but he is not sleepy. He is a little tired, but he is not sleepy.

In the trenches back he stops frequently, pulling up with his back to the wall to let soldiers pass on their way up. He bids them good evening and suddenly finds himself looking on them as foreign beings as a great and sudden hate of the place he is staying wells up within him.

ARE BLOCH'S WAR PROPHECIES COMING TRUE?

JEAN BLOCH told nearly twenty years ago just what the present war in Europe would be. The picture he drew was so true that some men are disposed to accept as coming fact the social upheaval after the war that he foresaw. Bloch feared that after the costly conflict the nations of Europe would find themselves bankrupt, and with most out of or he their head off in chunks.

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