

# 108TH ARTILLERY MOVES TO THE FRONT

### Soldier Chronicles in Matter-of-Fact Fashion—The Adventures of Our Boys, Member of the Old Second, N. G. P., in France

By ERIC SANVILLE  
Battery F, 108th F. A.

**II. The Smell of Powder**

About midnight the train carrying Battery F, of which the writer was a member, passed through Chateau-Thierry and the men crowded to the doors to see their first shell holes and view the ground made famous by the dough-boys of their own division. The train did not stop, going on to Mezy, a little town on the banks of the Marne, ten kilometers out of Chateau-Thierry. Here for the first time the men could hear the rattle of the guns and see the brilliant lights of star shells and signal rockets over the tops of the distant hills.

The first job was the unloading of the guns and horses. Before starting Lieutenant K. D. Rockwell, of Rochester, acting captain, called the men and warned them not to pick up anything lying around lest it be a handgrenade or unexploded bomb or other German toy left in the retreat.

Nothing daunted, Horseshoe George Halbig and a few other adventurous spirits, who do not assist in unloading, started out to find a good hole—that is a dead one, who strongly proclaimed his presence in a nearby wood by his delicate perfume. It was not long, however, before their absence was discovered and Sergeant John McCullough was sent out with a few men to round up the adventures. The detail likewise failed to reappear so First Sergeant Teffy went after them. As he approached the wood the stench got worse. "McCullough," he called, "Get those men out of here quick—there's gas here!" "Gas, hell," answered Micky. "It's dead Dutchies." "Never mind, it's gas—come on, it's gas," was the reply. So all returned to the cars. When day dawned it was found to be dead Germans thrown in shell holes, slightly covered with dirt and arms and legs still sticking out, then a fearful sight, but soon to be counted as quite common.

The sun was well up by the time mess, consisting of coffee and "corned Willie," had been served and the march to the front started. How magical that word, "the front," seemed to all! At last the dreams of the men were to be realized, but in the quiet morning sunshine it appeared as far away as ever, although the night before it had seemed very close.

The Marne, flowing quietly and peacefully, was crossed, a temporary wooden bridge having been built to replace the battered stone structure and what had appeared a beautiful little village reached. Its beauty was gone, though, only the mere shell remained; houses were tumbled about, one side of a church was all that was left standing of a formerly magnificent edifice. For the first time the men realized the definitiveness of war and a look of seriousness dispelled, for a while, their former light-heartedness and carelessness.

This soon passed and all were enjoying the sights along the road, which wound among the hills above the Marne. Here was a former machine-gun nest—there a broken-down gun carriage or a fallen airplane in the field, while the edge of the road was littered with helmets, gas masks, guns and other equipment of all makes and nationalities.

Just about this time I gave a little amusement to the rest, for my horse, a clumsy big white mare, sat down in the

middle of the road, with me on her back, and refused to move for a few minutes. The French horses they gave us may have been good for plowing and farm work, but they certainly were no good for riding, at least those issued to us were too big and clumsy.

Bugler Rau was heard to remark after a stormy session with his slouchy horse, "Look here! If I ever find out which is your rear, I'll bust you over the head with this here club."

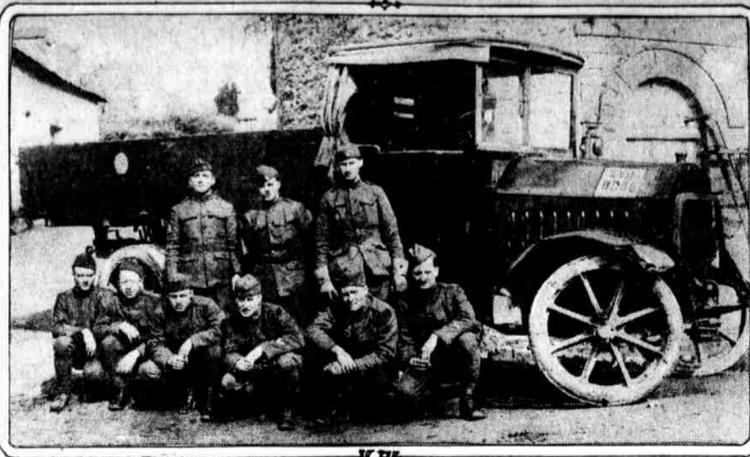
The march continued all morning—frequently halted by traffic blocks and to rest the horses. Near noon numerous white spots appeared in the sky toward the front. Some one said "airplanes," so Corporal Clyde Fisher immediately wanted to set up the machine gun he had charge of in a nearby field, as he believes in preparedness. The white spots increased in number and soon black ones appeared. He was later informed that they were bursts of shrapnel from Allied anti-aircraft guns.

The march then continued without interest until the town of Clergues was passed and a halt for the night made at the edge of the Meunier woods just outside of the town. The cook wagon pulled under shelter of the trees and the men started exploring parties. Wood was sent back that a German was found with a bayonet thrust clear through his pinning him to a tree, the dough-boys making the thrust had evidently lost time trying to recover the bayonet. A burying squad was immediately sent to take care of the body.

The woods were full of trenches, machine gun pits and dugouts—the latter were holes in the ground, but good protection against shellfire. From about the Germans had been caught in a surprise attack, for there were mess kits, half filled, blankets still laid out where some had been sleeping and numerous other little things. As this was the first chance of the men to see things, each new find brought cheers and examinations, one fellow being very proud to exhibit a severed hand he picked up.

Finally mess was served and afterward the men started to pitch shelter tents. A hurried consultation of officers followed and all tents were ordered down and the men told to remain in the shelter of the woods until after dark. "Flaps," the army name for sleeping places, would be made in the open field and each man would dig himself in; also smoking was forbidden. These regulations seemed pretty severe, but when the knowledge was circulated that the woods were frequently bombed at night, the men thought better of them; in fact, these orders became virtually permanent for all positions near the front. The night proved uneventful, though exciting, for the firing seemed very close and it was interesting to watch the rockets.

In the morning it was announced that the extra equipment could be left in a pile for salvage. It was wonderful the way that pile grew. The men had started out with shelter tent poles, pins, condiment and bacon cans, extra trousers, shirts and other of the countless things that the government issues that are never used at the front. Of



A captured German truck

course, all the material in the pile was immediately picked up by the salvage corps, so the government lost nothing, while the men got rid of a lot of extra weight.

About 2 o'clock the battalion composed of E and F Batteries started forward again. The rest of the regiments had gone on during the day previous—along roads crowded with traffic, there were long lines of trucks carrying up supplies, while empties were hustling back for more. Few civilians were seen; an old man and woman, bowed and wrinkled with age, were sitting in the doorway of what had once been their home, now a shambles. The pair had stayed there in their little place all during the war, through the two German invasions, and now were too worn-out to even rejoice at their delivery. Even yet they were not out of danger, for the little town was frequently bombed and also within the gas danger area, for here the M. r.'s warned all advancing to wear their gas masks at the alert position.

The road then passed through the village of Cohan, and just beyond dipped down into a valley beside a small stream. Here the march was halted to await darkness. This was, at last, on the front, far on the previous day the road had been shelled and some dough-boys killed.

The village of Cohan was constantly bombed, and just outside a field hospital, established in a church, there were two huge bombs, duds, which the enemy had playfully dropped, but which fortunately had failed to explode. Although the red cross of the hospital was in plain evidence, it always seemed to attract rather than deter the boche aviators.

Mess was served under the protection of the trees, and then a great surprise awaited the men, for two bags of mail were brought up, the first received for weeks. Every one received at least one letter, some many; truly it was a wonderful send-off for the first night into battle, and greatly lessened the strain on the nerves which had kept all at a high tension during that day.

Sergeant McCullough said he felt as though he were eating on air, for a cable arrived telling of the birth of a daughter and that all was well; he had married just after being called out. For Charles Snyder, of Harrisburg, however, the news was unkind, for a letter told of the death of his grand-

father, who had brought him up since early childhood.

Just as the sun started to set the battalion again took up the march. News was brought back that the First and Second Battalions had reached their positions safely the night before and were at Courville and Mount-sur-Courville, while regimental headquarters had been established in an old house at Aisy-le-Ponsart. At the time this information was given out it might as well have been Greek, for none knew where the towns mentioned were located. They were soon to find out, however.

The regimental corral, where the horses are kept and to which supplies are brought, was established at Cohan, so only the guns, caissons and material for action went forward over the camouflaged road along the edge of a peaceful valley, so quiet at sundown that war seemed remote.

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

**Boy Hit by Stone May Die**  
Mt. Carmel, Pa., May 13.—Teased by boys, Roger Scherim, an old man of Centralia, threw a stone to scare away his tormentors and accidentally hit John McDonnell, Centralia, aged thirteen, who was playing baseball in a lot close by. The boy sustained a fractured skull and

## WEDS BEFORE SEEING HER HUSBAND'S FACE

### Giri Regrets Marrying Man With Bandaged Jaw After Brief Courtship

New York, May 13.—A romance with dark and serious details was set forth in the West Side Court yesterday, when Mary Polius, seventeen years old, had her husband, Kerious Polius, arraigned on a charge of disorderly conduct. He was discharged after Mrs. Polius had admitted that she could remember more clearly the circumstances of her courtship and its alleged assault for which her husband was arraigned.

It appears that the night the armistice was signed Mrs. Polius, whose maiden name was at that time operative, went to see a motion picture based upon the somewhat novel theme of love. She became so engrossed in the play that she began conversing with the person nearest her seat. It was Mr.

Polius, who had just received a dislocated jaw in an automobile accident and had come to the motion picture theatre for the express purpose of forgetting his face.

The conversation, lightly entered into, switched from flattery to love, and the following morning, he it known to all concerned, Mrs. Polius became a bride. Days passed, as is customary in all narratives, and finally the jaw was so robust as to permit the ceremony of unveiling it. Mrs. Polius looked with wavering glance upon her husband's jaw minus the portieres and gave forth a cry. After which, according to Mr. Polius, love leaped through the transom.

### Killed by Live Wire

James C. Bannon, thirty-five years old, 3928 Wallace street, was killed yesterday when he touched an electric wire in the Pennsylvania Railroad power house, near the West Philadelphia station.

## R. R. CRASH BREAKS BRIDGE

### Sellersville Station Accident Interferes With Traffic on Reading

A dozen loaded freight cars were piled high in the air or thrown down an embankment, the roadbed of the Bethlehem division of the Reading trolley and tracks displaced, and the heavy concrete structure of a railway bridge damaged and displaced as a result of an accident at the Sellersville station at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon, which interfered with traffic in the northern suburban section for several hours. None of the trainmen were injured.

This was the third wreck on the Bethlehem division this year. The engine of a high-speed freight train was passing Sellersville station, when the truck on the fourth or fifth car back of the engine broke. With a crash that could be heard in Perkasie, several miles distant, the cars were piled up. Sections of the bridge spanning the tracks of an electric line were thrown out of position.

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If householders wait, as many used to, until actual necessity makes a clamor for coal, labor and transportation will not be equal to the demand, and some will suffer inconvenience.

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