EDITORIAL PAGE
REVIEWS OF THE WAR
THEATRICAL NEWS

The Sunday Star.

FRATERNITIES
DEPARTMENTAL NEWS
DOINGS OF MUTT AND JEFF

Part 2—8 Pages

WASHINGTON, D. C., SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 14, 1917.

Blown Across Battlefield by Bursting Shells at Vimy

Sergt. John O'Conner Tells How Machine Guns Swept Down Germans Four Times as They Appeared Over the Top of Barricade.

(A wonderful insight into the tenacious fighting qualities and the irrepressible good humor of the British Tommy is afforded in this thrilling story written by a wounded sergeant.)

By SERGT. JOHN O'CONNER.

Believe me or not, the quiet of the ward comes like a shock after the din of the battlefield. The doctor could explain it scientifically, no doubt. I'm only stating the fact. For weeks I'd heard nothing but guns, and guns, and guns. Then came darkness—that was when I was struck—and then I sort of wakened into—this! It's a bit trying sometimes.

Just after Vimy Ridge, all my adventures seemed to come together, like the proverbial chapter of accidents.

Up to that time I'd seen a good deal of the ordinary, every-day scrapping, trench-raiding, machine-gun onslaughts, sniping, and so on; a turn at all and any of them; but through them all I came without a scratch, and even weathered the first storm of Vimy itself. So that I was beginning to consider myself one of the lucky blighters. Pride goes before a fall. That's a true saying.

My fall came beyond Vimy. That was a terrible time we had there. The Germans seemed exasperated to the pitch of insanity at our triumph in topping the ridge, and they were out to knock us back again if shells and shrapnel and machine-gun bullets could do it. But we'd fixed our teeth in, and were not going to give way for all the Fritzies who ever breathed.

Battle of Shell Holes.

No, sir.

It was a battle of shell holes pure and simple; you never saw the like. Every pock-mark on the earth around was a fort, and we were into them and out of them like rabbits on a sand-dune.

It was great!

But not always did we leave them of our own accord, and that was how my chapter of accidents began.

Here's an adventure for you, if you like.

A bevy of us were lying snug in a shallow crater. The German shells were coming pretty thick and fast, but we knew that the Hun gunners were firing blindly—our aeroplanes had seen to that—so we were settling down nicely to await the signal for the next spring forward, when all of a sudden came a most appalling bang.

And the next thing I knew was that I was looking up at the smoking sky from another part of the ridge altogether. What had happened?

Simply this:

Big Shell Had Burst.

A big shell had burst right in front of the hole we were in, and the concussion was so great that I had been lifted bodily and deposited in another shell hole several yards away. About the breadth of this ward I'd been flung, and not a bit the worse for it, except that I felt shaken up a bit. My chums had stuck to the original hole all right. How they took my quick departure, I don't know. I was soon too busy to worry. The order had come for the race forward.

That was some race. We were out and away amid such a shower of flakes and bullets as ever bothered an attacking squad. How any of us escaped at all seems a perfect marvel now, but most of us got through, and, just as if a curtain had lifted, we found ourselves right atop of a perfect nest of machine-gunners and Hun infantry. They'd been preparing to attack us, evidently, and that blast from the machine-guns was by way of clearing the path for them.

The Round-Up.

It all finished as the rest had finished—in a glorious round-up.

How many prisoners we got I don't know, but I do know that, as we were taking them back, they started the same old yarn about being starved and hungry. I call it "the same old yarn," because in their case at least their appearance belied their words. They were all, or nearly all, quite fat and sleek looking, although naturally dirty and tired, but they did not appear to be starved by any means. The tale had been sprung to gain sympathy, I suppose. He's a pretty obvious shammer, is Fritz, when he's down and out.

There was one exception to the snivelling lot, though. He was an officer of the real Prussian type, I reckon, from his self-sufficient style. Behaved as if really, to be captured by the British was a downright absurdity, and that, at any rate, Hindenburg would be over in a few minutes and take him back.

He was a supercilious humbug, and no mistake. No end of a gasbag, either.

No Signs of "Hinley."

As he was being piloted farther and farther to the rear, and no signs of "Hindey" coming to the rescue, he got more and more annoyed, and our grins utterly exasperated him.

"It took a lot of ships to bring you Britishers here," he burst out at last, as we were closing him into the cage, "but a very small one will take you back."

We only grinned again for answer, but as I looked at the huge colony of dismal brethren he had just joined, I said to myself: "All right, Mister Prussian, it'll take a jolly sight more ships to cart back the bunch of you blighters we've got in this push, anyway."

So much for the sarcastic Prussian. I hope the same thought struck him as struck me. He'd have a bit of calculating to do when he started, and by night he'd have had some more, for they continued to come in during the day, and before darkness there was a nice tally, I can tell you.

It was some time after this that I got my blighty, during the fiercest fight, too, I was ever in. But before I tell you about that, let me give you some idea of what parts of the top of old Vimy plateau were like

Taking a Rest for a While.

We had occasion, some of us, to take a rest for a while up there, and naturally we looked around for some decent, soft sort of spot on which to stretch ourselves. We might as well have looked for greensward on a beach of pebbles. For that's what the place was like—only the pebbles were iron!

You may scarcely credit this, but at one part where I sat I could have gathered within the radius of my two arms as many bits of shrapnel and bullets as would have filled an ordinary sack. I'm not exaggerating. The place was littered broad and deep with them, and I could not help wondering what sort of war cloud it was which had burst there and left so many leaden drops.

Our rest there—if rest you can call it, for there were still patterings of the storm, as it were, from the heavens—was of short duration, and soon we were making for the spot where, as I say, the fiercest fight I was ever in took place. As we advanced, the "shrap" and the bullets began to fly thick and fast again, and the chances seemed that very few of us would ever get near the line of trenches, which were our objective.

We managed, nevertheless, and before long the bayonet and the bomb were hard at it along a considerable length of the ground.

Plenty of "Elbow Room."

At the spot we entered the Huns were at first overwhelmed by our onslaught, and were scampering right and left along their communication ways, thus giving us plenty of elbow room to establish ourselves and prepare for the inevitable counter-attack. We had not to wait for that, either. Hardly had we got a barricade erected at a convenient junction than we could hear the Germans coming down upon us. In a moment the awful tussle had begun.

The barricade, as I call it, was really a rampart of earth which we had tumbled down and scraped together at the entrance to one of the main communication ways. It was loose enough stuff, but it was broad and deep, and completely choked the trench. And there we were at one side, the Germans at the other, and the job before each of us was to bomb, blast, or bayonet the other into perdition.

No Quarters Asked or Given.

A lot depended on the issue, so I can tell you there was no quarter asked or given on either side. It was a fight to the death.

The miniature battle began with our bombs; the Germans replied with their "potato peetles" a grenade, or bomb, attached to a wooden handle. It is a most formidable weapon, for the handle gives the thrower a fine "purchase" and enables him to make it spin a great distance. And what it strikes when it does fall goes quickly to kingdom come! For a long time this infernal duel went on, and then, just as we expected, the Huns topped the barricade and tried to rush us.

That was what we wanted. In a trice a machine gun, which we had kept in readiness, was whipped up. There was a splatter of bullets, a most infernal screaming, and the horrified Germans fell backward among their cursing comrades in the rear. Down went our machine gun, and once again began that frightful bomb duel.

Horrified Huns Fall Back.

How long this fearful tussle lasted I don't know. It seemed centuries to us. We were paying dearly for our "hold", too, but we dared not give in. The Germans must have been desperately anxious to win back that section, for not long after their first repulse there came a sort of lull, followed by a double, triple, dose of the "potato beetles" and then, once more, a savage scramble over the top, and a wild charge upon us. But our gunner was ready. Another withering shower, and back fell the Huns, yelling in agony and rage.

Four separate charges did they make. But we were always ready. Each time they came they were met with bombs and bullets, and each time they were crushed back. Hours, I suppose, must have passed in this terrific struggle, but we held on, and latterly we triumphed. The Huns, despairing of ousting us, finally withdrew. The section was ours!

Brazil to Utilize Seized Vessels.

RIO DE JANEIRO, October 13.—The Brazilian government purposes to utilize seized German steamers for organization of international ship lines. The vessels will fly the Brazilian flag and will be used in the interest of Brazil and the allies. The crews of the vessels will be made up of Brazilians. The realization of this project now depends solely on an understanding between Brazil and the allies, which Brazil considers essential.

RED CROSS WORK CURE FOR ENNUI

Headquarters of D. C. Chapter Offers Many Chances for Worthy Activity.

IS HIVE OF INDUSTRY

No woman suffers from ennui these days, but if you find one who is restless and tired of her surroundings, one who finds that things do not go right, advise her to visit the headquarters of the District of Columbia Red Cross, in the Herbert Wadsworth house, 1801 Massachusetts avenue. After an hour in looking at the busy American women at work there she will go away resolved to be a worker, and she will have a brighter outlook, which will put her in good humor, and, what is better, will keep her so, and she in turn will want to help some one else.

From 9 o'clock in the morning until after 5 o'clock in the evening, which is closing hour, there is to be found some one at work, and it is usually the secretary, and, perhaps ,two or three others who have found a "last thing" to do before going home. On the first floor are the secretary of the District chapter, Mrs. Theodora North McLaughlin; the director of woman's work, Mrs. Theodore W. Richards; the stenographer and a woman at the "information" desk. Here also is the assistant to Mrs. Richards, Mrs. Farnsworth. These women give out the work to the various auxiliaries, and account for it upon its return.

Mrs. Richards buys all the dry goods, and sometimes she spends at one buying as much as $10,000 for equipment for hospitals.

Much Material Sent Out.

In one of the lower rooms Capt. Maxon and Mr. French are to be seen every day busy with boxes, hammer, saw and nails. All boxes are lined with waterproof paper before being filled. All garments are refolded after coming back from the many auxiliaries, and a standard measure is used, as this conserves space in the packing boxes. From this room have gone out several full equipments for base hospitals.

Mrs. W. O. Hulme has charge of the patterns, and is always in her office, on the east side of the first floor. In the next room is the desk of the motor service. Mrs. Borden Harriman is commander-in-chief, but her associates are "always on the job," so well trained that any one is able to command if necessary.

What Goes On on Second Floor.

The second floor of the building is given over to the workers on garments or comfort bags and to a wonderful exhibit.

In one room, formerly the drawing room, are long tables at which the members of the surgical dressings committee, go over all things in their line, and see that they are without defect before being packed in the ever-waiting boxes. At the head of this committee is Mrs. Albert Gleaves [illegible] as assistant. [illegible] work here has a certificate of efficiency from a Red Cross instructor, and she has also taken the oath of allegiance, as has every other member of the various committees in this house.

This committee has the honor of having furnished sixteen battleships with a full equipment of surgical dressings in ten days, and won the compliments of the national organization, and stands third in the list of competitors. Illinois ranked first and Ohio second.

In the dining room of the Wadsworth house may be found at any time competent cutters, from the committee of which Mrs. Frank F. Fletcher is chairman. The thicker garments, such as outing flannel pajamas, are cut at the factory, but all others are cut and assembled at the District headquarters.

All Wonderfully Planned.

Everything is wonderfully planned, and the work runs like machinery, so well trained is each woman in her particular line.

Mrs. N. E. Mason has charge of the assembling. Mrs. William Carleton Watts gives out the garments. Mrs. Seaton Schroeder is captain of Company "B" and during her absence the past summer Mrs. Ridgely Hunt has been representing her every day.

In the upper spacious hall, are long lines of sewing machines, and some of these are busy all day, as the many auxiliaries follow each other in quick succession, holding meetings. Patriotic organizations, benevolent societies, churches and many other bands have special hours here. Among them are the Daughters of the American Revolution, the wives of United States senators, the Order of the Eastern Star and Pythian Sisters. There are many women in groups from churches, and, indeed, so churchy that there is no more time to give them, and all who apply are asked to work with auxiliaries already formed, as others cannot be accommodated in the building. Therefore, many are now meeting in halls and doing effective work.

From the room where the comfort kits are filled there have gone to the boys who have said they needed them in camp, with the Ambulance Corps, the Engineer Corps and others going abroad, nearly seven thousand, and one woman has been responsible for the contents of all. As there is no especial fund for these fillings many persons seeing the need of the little comforters have given money with which to purchase the supplies. Just now there is another activity, not, however, carried on at the District workshop, but in the homes of a few women who have offered to help, so trench candles are now being given to the men who are leaving for the front. These little things, made from six columns of a newspaper and kept in hot paraffin for one hour, will burn for two hours, and over them the men may warm soup, heat coffee, see to read or warm their hands; so they are sent forth to give comfort.

Givers of Ambulances.

From the Wadsworth went the Ambulance Corps, under the care of Maj. Ryan Devereux. There was a staff car, ambulances and several motor cycles. Ambulances were given by the Department of Agriculture, women of the United States Senate, employes of the House of Representatives, Miss A. J. Clapp, Mrs. M. M. Andrews, Miss Catherine Judd, Protestant Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, friends of Washington Cathedral, for Mrs. Albert Gleaves, Fairfax County Chapter, Va.; Bishop and Mrs. Randolph McKim. A kitchen trailer was donated by the Department of Agriculture. Motor cycles were given by Fairfax county, Va.; employes of the House of Representatives, John Clapp and Miss A. J. Clapp.

Refreshments for Troops.

Another of the activities of the District of Columbia Chapter is the refreshment corps, of which Mrs. Larz Anderson has been the chairman until she went abroad recently with motor truck, kitchen trailer and a company of fifty women to serve the men at the front with a splendidly equipped canteen.

Mrs. Gulick has taken the place of Mrs. Anderson in Washington, and never does a troop train pass through this city that the corps is not there with hot coffee and sandwiches for every man. All are served by the willing and gracious blue-and-white clad women, wearing white aprons, with the Red Cross upon their breast.

Work of Motor Corps.

The motor corps deserves more than passing mention, for they, too, have enlisted. Their natty gray uniforms are respected wherever they are seen, and their cars are seen in the line of duty every day, not only on the streets of the city, but often on lonely roads, many miles away, going to outlying camps, where they have been called to get a sick or injured man to take to the hospital. Two by two they always go, sometimes in a fine automobile, often driving an ambulance or a motor truck, for they are adepts in their work, and not only drive a car, but can repair damages after accidents, carry patients on litters, with which every ambulance is equipped, and render first aid. All ambulances have first aid kits as part of their equipment.

Mrs. Harriman's captains are: A, Miss Mary Hartley; B, Miss Alice A. Shepherd; C, Miss Margaret Fahnestock; D, Mrs. M. R. Blumenberg, and E, Mrs. T. A. Connolly.

The chairman of the Woman's Volunteer Aid, co-ordinating all of this work, is Miss Mabel T. Boardman. The commander, Mrs. Hugh L. Scott; honorary chairman, Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, and honorary vice chairmen, Mrs. Newton Baker and Mrs. Josephus Daniels.

MANY ACTIVITIES TAKEN UP BY WOMEN OF RED CROSS.

Motor service uniform.

Supply service uniform.

Clerical service uniform.

Little Stories of the Great War

By HERBERT COREY.

PARIS, August 16.—At the American front the drinking water is filtered. Big field filters are hung on the village pumps, and the boys are forced to drink filtered water whether they like it or not. It may not be as rich and sustaining as the water in common use along the front, but the army health is improved by it. However, the village residents have not grasped the idea.

"Wonderful!" said one of them at headquarters, regarding the field filter. "Wonderful!"

"Why?"

"To think," said the enthusiastic villager, "that you brave Americans bring everything with you—even to your water."

Criticism which has been directed toward the American drivers of ambulances is not altogether deserved. Many of them are trying hard to get out of the non-combatant units and join the fighting branch of the service. The difficulty is that there is no training school for officers on this side, and will not be, for there are no officers to spare for this work. Most of the ambulance drivers—most of the "serious" ones, at least—feel that they could qualify for commissions if they were given the chance. Somewhat naturally, they object to volunteering as privates.

A college athlete of military age and of a well-to-do eastern family came over recently. Dressed in the uniform of an ambulance driver he presented himself to an American officer of high rank. He had letters to present. The officer looked at him unsmiling.

"Why did you come over?" he asked.

"I wanted to do my bit," was the reply.

The officer regarded him for an appreciable time before replying.

"Don't you think," said he, "that you could do it better with a rifle?"

"I won't go back to the trenches," said a Canadian on leave the other day. "I've had enough. Seventeen months without leave. I've overstayed my leave three days now, and I won't go back until they catch me. I'd rather be in jail than at the front."

The other men at his table listened in silence.

"I won't go back, I tell you," he repeated. "This war is getting worse and worse. There never was such fighting as we've just gone through. Don't let anybody tell you the Boche is quitting. He's fighting harder than he ever did."

The others looked at each other silently. One of them nodded in affirmation.

"It's just murder, I tell you," the Canadian broke out again, hitting the table with his fist. "Murder! A man hasn't got a Chinaman's chance out there."

The next day the same man appeared. "I'm going 'home,'" said he. These men refer to the trenches as "home." "Only, if this war lasts forty years I'll never ask for another leave. I can't stand it. It takes the heart out of you to get out of that muddy hell for a time and see decent people."

He got up to go.

"After all," he said, "I'll do it again. A man's got to do it, you know."

When the men come up to Paris on their short leaves they are wild for diversion of some sort. They have been sleeping in mud, eating, drinking, dying in mud. They have suffered abominably, for the fighting is becoming more serious each day. They want to forget what has passed and to close their eyes for ten days to what is to come.

They are astoundingly well behaved. It is not often one sees a drunken soldier. They go to the tearooms which have been opened for them, just to hear women's voices and listen to the music, and rest. They are so tired. The first thing they demand when they come to town is a Turkish bath. Only unlimited hot water gets the grime out of them. They go out on sight-seeing parties, to Versailles and Malmaison and the Louvre. They are only boys—tired, worn, nerve-shattered, incredibly innocent boys. For the most part the pleasures they ask are innocent pleasures.

"Do you want to go to a quiet and clean hotel?" they are asked when they walk out of the railway station on arrival.

That is what they do want, above everything else. They want quiet and cleanliness and rest. Most of them go to bed at 9 o'clock at night and do not get up until 9 o'clock in the morning. But sometimes they wake up in the morning without a sou.

Only the man who has gone through this experience can realize what a tragedy this is. It may mean that he must cut short the cherished leave to which he has been looking forward with such sick anticipation through so many weary months. To rob a soldier on leave is the cruelest thing in war.

One leads a reasonably simple life in Paris nowadays, whether one wishes it or not. There is but one hotel in town, where there is hot water all the time, and hot water can only be had there because the hotel is headquarters for all the foreign notabilities who are constantly arriving here on diplomatic or military missions.

In every other house in Paris one has hot water only on Saturday and Sunday because of the shortage of coal. It makes one think of the good old days of the washtub in the kitchen on Saturday night. On two days of the week no meat is served, and there are rumors of meatless weeks to come. On two days one can buy no tea and no candy. "Hard" drinks are served only at lunch or dinner, though there are rumors of brandies being served in teacups in dark corners. Women are not served with hard drinks at all in bar rooms and on cafe terraces. Because there is a shortage of copper coins one often gets a box of matches for the two sous change coming after the purchase of a cigar.

Down on the Rue Castiglione is a famous bodega where tradition has it that the late King Edward used to sip a glass—or several glasses—of port each day that he spent in Paris. The clientele may deservedly be called exclusive, when it isn't American, and the prices are extraordinary. A glance at the list of liquors kept in stock now is illuminating. It shows how the importation of luxuries has been cut down.

Once there were nine varieties of whisky kept in stock. Now there are only two, and when they go no more will be imported until conditions relax. The prices tell the rest of the story. For example, an American whisky that formerly sold at 6 francs a bottle was marked up and up until it finally touched 14 francs. Then it was stricken from the list. The bottle trade is further discouraged by the provision that three bottles at a time must be purchased, or none. At the present rate only a Rothschild can afford [illegible] tles.

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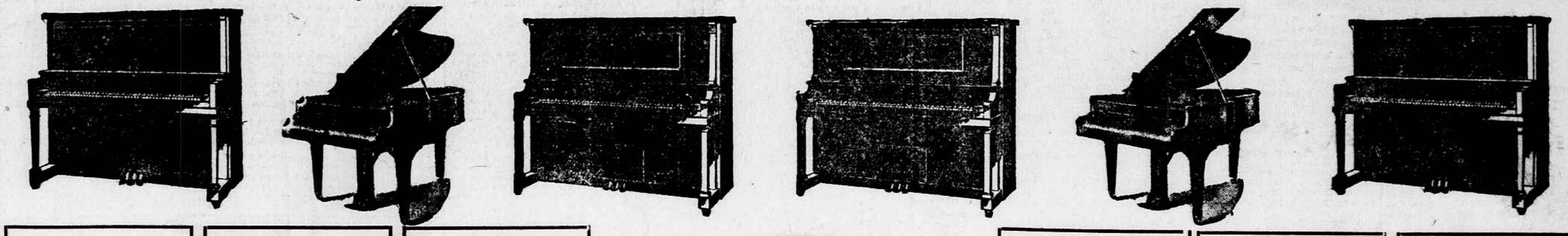

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