

# THRILLING TALES OF INDIANS' GALLANTRY IN WAR

Charles Robert Ward, a Cherokee, who served as sergeant with distinction in the 358th Infantry, Ninetieth Division.



Foch, Haig and Gouraud Laud Their Courage and Resourcefulness, While Officers of Lesser Rank but With Closer Knowledge Tell of Their Loyalty, Skill in Woodcraft and Keeness to Win---Dr. Joseph K. Dixon, Authority on the American Aborigine, Putting Into Book Form Exploits That Immortalized the Modern Red Man ---More Than 17,000 Went Overseas, a Larger Proportion Than the Quota of Any Other Race---Many Served in Navy, Too

Robert Dodd, a Piute, one of the privates in Company H, Thirtieth Infantry, who was with the famous Lost Battalion.



Six of the finest types of Indians who fought in the world war. They were selected by their respective divisional commanders to serve in the famous "Pershing's Own," a war honor envied by every fighting man in the army.

By HAMILTON PELTZ.  
**T**HE Red Man in the grim ordeal by fire has redeemed his pledge. Thirty-two representative Indian chiefs, clan rulers and medicine men of eleven different tribes, on a bleak February day eight years ago, each garbed in the fantastic aboriginal regalia of his race, grasped the multiple halcyards of a great new American flag. To the weird melody of their native music they raised the national ensign to the peak of a staff erected on the loftiest eminence of New York harbor, the site of a future national memorial to their vanishing race.

Then, each and all, they subscribed to a declaration of allegiance to the Government of the United States, in which they said:

"We, the undersigned representatives of various Indian tribes of the United States, through our presence and the part we have taken in the inauguration of this memorial to our people, renew our allegiance to the glorious flag of the United States, and offer our hearts to our country's service. Though a conquered race, with our right hands extended in brotherly love and our left hands holding the pipe of peace, we hereby bury all past ill feeling and proclaim abroad to all the nations of the world our firm allegiance to this nation and to the Stars and Stripes, and declare that henceforth and forever in all walks of life and every field of endeavor we shall be as brothers."

### President Taft Was Present With a Notable Company

When that pledge was registered on the ramparts of Fort Wadsworth it was witnessed by President Taft and other distinguished public men, who took part in the picturesque ceremony. The world was at peace. The devastating gallop of the Four Horsemen had not yet swept across Europe. There was not even the menace of war. Probably in all that holiday company there was no seer, white man or red, bold enough to have guessed that within five years the North American Indian, subjugated, despised, despoiled, disfranchised, would have redeemed that vow of blood brotherhood by sending 17,300 of the young braves of his race to fight under the American flag in a war that menaced world civilization. But that is what the record shows. And of that number more than 150 were decorated for acts of conspicuous valor in action.

The best authority places the number of men, women and children of Indian blood now in America at about 320,000. Assuming the total population of the United States to be 110,000,000 and that at the time of the armistice the entire nation had mustered about 5,000,000 men under arms, it is seen that the Indians sent to the colors a considerably larger percentage of their people than did the country at large.

This is one phase of the great struggle which remains to be written—"The History of the American Indian in the World War." It is going to be written by Dr. Joseph K. Dixon, a student of Indian affairs peculiarly well fitted for his task. Dr. Dixon was the leader of the Rodman Wanamaker historical expeditions to the North American Indians, in the course of which he visited every reservation in the country. He is the author of "The Vanishing Race," and is the secretary of the National American Indian Memorial Association, of which Mr. Wanamaker is the founder and president. Between February, 1919, and February, 1920, he visited systematically all the camps and military hospitals on the Atlantic seaboard, interviewing officers and privates, studying, interrogating and photographing Indian soldiers who had returned, either sound or wounded, from overseas.

And now, as his final act of preparation

for his historical work, Dr. Dixon has just returned from an intimate four months' study of the entire Western battlefronts of Belgium and France, in which he covered more than 3,500 miles of travel and took more than 1,100 photographs. Before he started he had been supplied by General Pershing with a large map, which showed that American Indians had fought in every one of the twenty-eight main battle sectors from the North Sea to the Alps. Through the courtesy of the French Minister of War, Captain Eugene Le Roch of the French General Staff was detailed to accompany Dr. Dixon along the whole battle front.

Dr. Dixon had been commended to the French and Belgian Governments in letters written by Secretary Hughes, Secretary Weeks and General Pershing. Cordial written assent was given both by M. Louis Barthou, French Minister of National Defence. In his letter from Paris, written on May 28 last, M. Barthou said: "I am glad by this means to render merited homage to the heroism shown by the Indian soldiers who served under the American flag alongside our own troops during the great war for freedom."

On his return to Paris and London, after his tour of the field, Dr. Dixon met personally Field Marshals Foch and Petain, and many other distinguished French and British officers. All uniformly gave testimony to the bravery and resourcefulness of the Indian soldier. Marshal Foch on June 22 wrote this sentiment:

### Marshal Foch's Praise Of Our Valorous Indians

"I cannot forget the brilliant services which the valorous Indian soldiers of the American armies have rendered to the common cause, and the energy as well as the courage which they have shown to bring about victory—decisive victory—by the attack."

Under date of June 23, Marshal Petain wrote from the French Ministry of War to Dr. Dixon:

"On returning from your journey to the battlefields of the war you were good enough to express your thanks to the officers of the General Staff of the Army who took part in organizing your trip. I am profoundly touched by the sentiments you expressed on this occasion, and I desire to tell you how happy I have been to facilitate your visit to the regions where the Indians enrolled with the American troops distinguished themselves by their courage and the qualities natural to their race."

From White Ness, Kingsgate, Thanet, under date of July 21 last, came to the Indian historian this letter from Field Marshal Lord Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in the world war:

"DEAR DR. DIXON: American Indians fought under my command near Amiens, Arras and Ypres, and I have much pleasure in according to your request to give you my opinion of them.

"Their bravery, even under heavy shell

fire, did not make them distinguishable as individuals from the troops of European blood among whom they fought—and I can give them no higher praise!

"They were also conspicuous as scouts and snipers and for their skill in the use of ground."

Dr. Dixon also is very proud of the eulogy his beloved Indians received at the hands of the celebrated French General, Gouraud. That particular contribution to his coming history was received in this way: In giving testimony before the House Committee on Military Affairs of the Sixty-sixth Congress Dr. Dixon had quoted a conversation he had with a famous officer of a famous regiment of an equally distinguished division—the Forty-second or "Rainbow Division." This is what Dr. Dixon said:

### Indians Best and Safest, Says Fighting Tom

"Major Tom Reilly, 'Fighting Tom,' as he is called, commanded the Third Battalion of New York, the fighting Irish regiment with fifty-four silver rings on its flagstaff bearing the names of engagements. Major Reilly is a soldier of renown. He told me that at Chateau Thierry, where he was wounded, he lost a third of his men and they sent him replacements from a Texas regiment—100 Indians—fifty to the Second Battalion and fifty to his own, the Third. He declared they were the best and safest replacements he had had. They were all fine shots and thoroughly dependable. He took twenty of the best of them and added them to the Intelligence Department."

Dr. Dixon then quoted Major Reilly as having said: "The Indians did the finest work of any men in the regiment, and, mark you, this is the old fighting Irish

regiment. They were expert in rifle fighting, game, strong, brave, resolute. They were superior in scouting and patrol work. In battle they were always at the front; when an Indian went down another Indian stepped coolly into his place. There were sixteen tribes and sixteen different dialects represented among the fifty men in my battalion. I had replacements on eight different occasions, so thorough was the declaration of my ranks, and these Indians were unqualifiedly the very best replacements sent to me. Many of them were killed or wounded, for they always sought the dangerous places. I hold all these Indians in the most enthusiastic regard. In the drives at the Argonne, the Meuse, St. George's, Ludres, I started out with 876 men; came back with only 400. The Indians in the front ranks were thoroughly swept away."

Testimony like this from Major Reilly and other officers of the Forty-second Division prompted Dr. Dixon to write to General Gouraud for confirmation. He did so, and this is a translation of the reply received from the French commander:

"It is very agreeable to me to send you the evidence which you have asked of me concerning the Indians who fought in the great war. Many companies of Indians were in the American divisions, the Second, the Thirty-sixth and the Forty-second, which were under my command in the field during the battles of July, September, October and November, 1918. These Indian soldiers fought bravely and gave proof of their remarkable qualities of adaptability in taking advantage of battlefield conditions."

Here is another chapter from the annals of the 165th New York Infantry, as Dr. Dixon tells it. He is quoting from a letter

written by Sergeant Thomas E. Fitzsimmons, commanding the Stokes mortar platoon, headquarters company, 165th Infantry, Forty-second Division. Fitzsimmons is describing the exploit which won for him his Distinguished Service Cross and the part taken in it by five Indians of the Stokes mortar platoon, Walter Keyes, Jacob Leader and Frank Young Eagle, Pawnee; James Wynashi, a Kaw Indian, and Harry Richards, who was wounded in the fighting in the Argonne.

### Exploit of Five Indians Described by 165th Sergeant

"These Indians came to us," said the Sergeant, "as replacements from the Thirty-sixth Division; they volunteered to join us, as the Thirty-sixth had not been in action and they were anxious to get into the fight. In the Argonne offensive they stood like stone walls under machine gun and artillery fire and always obeyed without questioning. All of them were expert rifle shots; they were resourceful and especially good in seeking a trail in the woods at night. As to personal habits, I always found them gentlemen, accepting hardship and sacrifice without flinching. Moreover, they were proud they had volunteered to serve America."

"During this Argonne offensive the 165th had driven back the Germans and they were reforming for a counter attack in massed formation, with fixed bayonets. Colonel Donovan, commanding the regiment, ordered the Stokes mortar platoon into action. The Boche were only 200 yards away in an open field, in broad daylight. With the Stokes mortar, every man of the crew has to stand up. The Boche retreated to the trenches and the artillery opened up. Then the German infantry, in massed formation and with fixed bayonets, came on for a counter attack.

"Colonel Donovan ordered the Indians to place the Stokes mortar guns in position, and, getting the range after the first shell was fired (you will recall that there are eight of these mortar shells in the air before the first one lands), it was said by those who witnessed it that all you could see was machine guns, Boche helmets, arms and legs flying in the air. The Boche was completely routed, and this was the last line of resistance the Germans had to fall back upon."

"For this achievement," added Dr. Dixon, completing the story, "Sergeant Fitzsimmons won his Distinguished Service Cross, and after the battle Colonel Donovan called the members of the Stokes mortar platoon before his headquarters and commended the crew for its work. He told them they had saved the regiment."

Dr. Dixon will feature in his forthcoming book the exploits which won medals of valor for two Indians. Private Joseph Oklahombi, a Choctaw, on the Argonne-Meuse front, was cited in orders for dashing 200 yards under a violent barrage through wire entanglements and on to machine gun nests. He turned a captured gun on the enemy and remained in the position for four days in spite of a con-

stant barrage of large projectiles and gas shells. He is credited with having had 171 prisoners surrender to him. The Choctaw received the Croix de Guerre.

Major Victor M. Locke, Jr., of Antlers, Okla., who is the principal chief of the Choctaw tribe, and a member of the State Legislature, is three-eighths of Indian blood. He also has a creditable war record. Major Locke, in a letter written to Dr. Dixon, said, speaking of Oklahombi:

"I find he is a close rival of Alvin York of Tennessee. If he did what this citation recites, then there are due him all the honors conferrable by the United States Government. He has only the Croix de Guerre of France. This man is a full blooded Choctaw, uneducated, and since his return from France he has been relieved of some of his land, so I am told, without proper compensation therefor."

Another of Dr. Dixon's pet heroes is Corporal Walter S. Sevilla, a Chippewa Indian, of the Seventh Engineers, Fifth Division, upon whose breast Marshal Petain himself pinned the Croix de Guerre. Sevilla swam the Meuse, carrying a cable for a pontoon, under heavy machine gun fire. Later in the day he was severely wounded while repeating the same feat in the swimming of the broad and swiftly flowing Est Canal, which parallels the Meuse, near Breuille. He then crossed an open field raked by enemy fire, and succeeded in returning with information of critical importance.

"I had a talk with General Allen, now commanding the American army of occupation in the Coblenz sector," said Dr. Dixon. "During the war he commanded the Ninetieth Division, which was composed chiefly of troops from Texas and Oklahoma. There were in that division many Indians and one entire regiment—the 358th Infantry—was wholly made up of Indian recruits. General Allen told me the 358th was the 'pride of his division.' In its ranks, he said, there never were any stragglers. 'They never went after anything they did not get,' he told me, 'and what they got they always held.'"

### Scarce One-fifth of Indians of 358th Survive

"I found the 358th at Camp Devos, after their return from over there," Dr. Dixon continued. "That regiment, composed exclusively of Indians, had gone out from Oklahoma and Texas 1,440 strong. It came back with 260 Indians surviving. The remainder sleep at Chateau-Thierry, St. Mihiel, Fismes and in the Argonne Forest."

"I asked the personnel Adjutant of the 358th Infantry, Captain John N. Simpson: 'If it were necessary to go back to France, and fight, would you take any Indians with you?'"

"His instant reply was: 'I would not take anybody else. They are not afraid of hell itself. They had a fine sense of direction and thus they could anticipate the direction of the enemy. If we had had more Indians we would have killed more Germans. They did not believe in taking prisoners.'"

"Sergeant Charles Robert Ward of Company K, Third Battalion, 358th Infantry, was one of the winners of the Distinguished Service Cross. I photographed him standing at attention wearing his trench helmet, which showed two gaping bullet holes, fore and aft. Sergeant Ward, who is a dead shot, was sent out to pick off three snipers who from their perches in trees were doing deadly execution among our machine gunners. While he lay flat on his face engaged in a duel with the Boche marksmen he got a bullet plumb through the forward part of his 'tin hat.' Passing on along his prostrate form, the sharpshooter's missile hit Ward's blouse straight down the back seam without wounding him. At that instant, the In-

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### WHAT FAMOUS COMMANDERS THINK OF THE INDIAN AS A FIGHTING SOLDIER

**O**F many outstanding features of the late war none is more extraordinary than the brilliant participation therein of the North American Indian. The vivid narrative published herewith makes this very clear. The red man was in no whit inferior to his white brother in courage, resourcefulness and the high qualities of a soldier. What he did in the great conflict is now being assembled in a form which will endure. It is a stirring record, and one in which all America may feel a justifiable pride. What the great commanders thought of the American Indian is told in the following tributes:

I cannot forget the brilliant services which the valorous Indian soldiers of the American armies have rendered to the common cause and the energy as well as the courage which they have shown to bring about victory—decisive victory—by the attack.—Ferdinand Foch, Marshal of France.

Their bravery, even under heavy shell fire, did not make them distinguishable as individuals from troops of European blood among whom they fought—and I can give them no higher praise! They were also conspicuous as scouts and snipers and for their skill in the use of ground.—Field Marshal Lord Haig.

These Indian soldiers under my command fought bravely and gave proof of their remarkable qualities of adaptability in taking advantage of battlefield conditions.—Gen. Gouraud.

The 358th Infantry (all Indians) was the pride of my division. There never were any stragglers. They never went after anything they did not get, and what they got they always held.—Major-Gen. Allen.

The Indians did the finest work of any men in the regiment, and, mark you, this is the old fighting Irish regiment. They were expert in rifle fighting; game, strong, brave, resolute. They were superior in scouting and patrol work. In battle they were always in the front.—Major Tom Reilly, Third Battalion, 165th Infantry (old Sixty-ninth, New York).