

# Gunner Depew

By **Albert N. Depew**  
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Captain Gun Turret, French Battleship Cassard  
Winner of the Croix de Guerre

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## GUNNER DEPEW, IN HOSPITAL, SEES UNUSUAL INSTANCE OF HUN FRIGHTFULNESS.

**Synopsis.**—Albert N. Depew, author of the story, tells of his service in the United States navy, during which he attained the rank of chief petty officer, first-class gunner. The world war starts soon after he receives his honorable discharge from the navy, and he leaves for France with a determination to enlist. He joins the Foreign Legion and is assigned to the dreadnaught Cassard, where his marksmanship wins him high honors. Later he is transferred to the land forces and sent to the Flanders front. He gets his first experience in a front line trench at Dixmude. He goes "over the top" and gets his first German in a bayonet fight. While on runner service, Depew is caught in a Zeppelin raid and has an exciting experience. In a fierce fight with the Germans, he is wounded and is sent to a hospital.

### CHAPTER IX—Continued.

But there was a nurse there, who took special interest in his case, and she stayed up day and night for some time and finally brought him through. The case was very well known, and everybody said she had performed a miracle. He got better slowly.

Then a few weeks later, when he was out of danger and was able to walk, and it was only a question of time before he would be released from the hospital, this nurse was transferred to another hospital. Everybody knew her and liked her, and when she went around to say good-by, all the men were sorry and gave her little presents, and wanted her to write to them. She was going to get a nurse she knew in the other hospital to turn her letters into English, so that she could write to me. I gave her a ring I had made from a piece of shell case, but I guess she had hundreds of them at that.

But this German doctor would not say good-by to her. That would not have made me sore, but it made this French girl feel very bad, and she began to cry. One of the French officers saw her and found out about the doctor, and the officer went up and spoke to the German. Then the French officer left, and the German called to the nurse and she went over to him and stopped crying.

They talked for a little while, and then she put out her hands as if she was going to leave. He put out his hands, too, and took hold of hers. And then he twisted her wrists and broke them. We heard the snap.

There were men in that ward who had not been on foot since the day they came to the hospital, and one of them was supposed to be dying, but it is an absolute fact that when we heard her scream, there was not a man left in bed.

I need not tell you what we did to the German. They did not need to shoot him, after we got through with him. They did shoot what was left of him, to make sure, though.

Now, I have heard people say that it is not the Germans we are fighting, but the Kaiser and his system. Well, it may be true that some of the Boche soldiers would not do these things if they did not have to; myself, I am not so sure.

But you take this doctor. Here he was, an educated man, who had been trained all his life to help people who



And Then He Twisted Her Wrists and Broke Them.

were in pain, and not to cause it. And he was not where he would have to obey the Kaiser or any other German. And this nurse had saved his life.

So I do not see that there is any argument about it. He broke that girl's wrists because he wanted to; that is all there is to it. Now, I say this German doctor was a dirty cur and a scoundrel. But I say that he is a fair sample of most of the Germans I have met. And it is Germans of this kind that we are fighting—not merely the Kaiser.

It is like going to college. I have never been there, but I have heard some people say it did not do a man any good to go. But I have never heard a man who went there say that.

Probably you have not been over there, and maybe you think we are not fighting the German people, but only the Kaiser and his funkies.

Well, nobody had better tell me that. Because I have been there, and I have seen this. And I know.

### CHAPTER X.

#### Hell at Gallipoli.

After I was discharged from the hospital, I was ordered to report to my ship at Brest for sea duty.

The boys aboard the Cassard gave me a hearty welcome, especially Murray, who had come back after two weeks in the trenches at Dixmude. I was glad to see them, too, for after all, they were garbies, and I always feel more at home with them than with soldiers. Then, it was pretty rough stuff at Dixmude, and after resting up at the hospital, I was keen on going to sea again.

The Cassard was in dry dock for repairs after her last voyage to the Dardanelles as convoy to the troopship Duplex. Everything was being rushed to get her out as soon as possible, and crews were working day and night. There were other ships there too—superdreadnaughts, and dreadnaughts, and battleships, and armored cruisers, all being overhauled.

We received and placed guns of never design, filled the magazines with the highest explosives known to naval use, and generally made ready for a hard job. Our magazines were filled with shells for our big 12 and 14-inch guns. A 14-inch shell can tear a hole through the heaviest armor plate at 12,000 yards, and will do more damage than you would think.

When we had coaled and had got our stores aboard, we dressed for action—or rather, undressed. The decks were clear; hatch covers bolted and davits folded down; furniture, chests, tables, chairs were sent ashore, and inflammable gear, like our rope hammocks, went overboard. You could not find a single wooden chair or table in the ward room.

When the ship is cleared for action, a shell bursting inside cannot find much to set fire to, and if one bursts on deck, there is nothing to burn but the wooden deck, and that is covered with steel plates.

Finally, we had roll call—all men present. Then we set sail for the Dardanelles as escort to the Duplex, which had on board territorial and provincial French troops—Gascons, Parisians, Normans, Indo-Chinese, Spahis, Turcos—all kinds. When we messed, we had to squat down on the steel mess deck and eat from metal plates.

There had been a notice posted before we left that the Zeppelins had begun sea raids, and we kept a live eye out for them. The news proved to be a fake, though, and we did not see a single cigar while we were out.

We made the trip to the Dardanelles without sighting an enemy craft, keeping in close touch with the Duplex, and busy every minute preparing for action.

I was made gun captain and given charge of the starboard bow turret, mounting two 14-inch guns. I had my men at gun practice daily, and by the time we neared the Dardanelles, after five days, they were in pretty fair shape.

It was about 5 a. m. when we drew near Cape Helles and took stations for action. The Duplex was in front of us. The batteries on the cape opened up on us, and in a few minutes later those at Kum Kaleh joined in.

As the Duplex made for "V" beach and prepared to land her troops, we swung broadside on, raking their batteries as we did so, and received a shell, which entered through a gun port in the after turret and exploded. Some bags of powder stored there (where they should never have been) were fired and the roof of the turret was just lifted off. It landed on deck, tilted up against the side of the turret.

On deck the rain of fire was simply terrific. Steel fell in all directions. It was smash, crash, slam-bang all the time, and I do not mind saying I never thought we would come out of it.

Some of the heavy armor plate up forward was shot away and after that the old Cassard looked more like a monitor than anything else to me. As

we drew nearer the shore they began using shrapnel on us and in no time at all our funnels were shot full of holes and a sieve was watertight compared to them.

Naturally we were not just taking all this punishment without any comeback. Our guns were at it fast and from the way the fire slackened in certain places we knew we were making it effective. My guns did for two enemy pieces that I know of, and perhaps several others.

The French garbies were a good deal more excited in action than I thought they would be. They were dodging around below decks, trying to miss the shrapnel that came aboard, shouting, swearing, singing—but fighting hard, at that. They stood the gaff just as well as any other garbies would, only in their own sweet way—which is noisy enough, believe me.

One of our seamen was hit 130 times by fragments of shrapnel, so you can see what they were up against in the dodging line. A gun turret in action is not exactly the best place on earth for a nervous man nor one who likes his comfort. There is an awful lot of heat and noise and smell and work, all the time in a fighting gun turret. But during an engagement I would rather be in a gun turret every time than between decks. At that, if anything does happen in a turret—it is good night sure for all, and no rain checks needed.

One of our junior lieutenants was struck by a fragment of shell as he was at his station behind the wheelhouse and a piece of his skull was driven into his brain. He was carried into my gun turret, but he would not let them take him to sick bay to have his wound dressed. There he sat, asking every now and then how the fight was going and then sort of dozing off for a while.

After half an hour of action we put about and started away, still firing. As a parting slap on the back the Turks tore off one of our big-gun turrets, and then away we went, back to Brest with a casualty list of only 15. We did not have much trouble guessing that it was dry dock for us again.

We got back to Brest after a quiet voyage, patching ourselves up where we could on the way, and again there was the rush work, day and night, to get into shape and do it over again. They turned us out in 12 days and back we went to the Turks and their Hun assistants.

We were lucky getting inshore, only receiving a nasty smash astern, when the Turks got our range and landed two peaches before we got out. We nearly tore our rudder off getting away. But we had to come back right away, because we had carried quite a number of heavy guns from Brest and were given the job of running them ashore. It was day and night work and a great job for fun, because, while you never knew when you would get it, you had good reason to feel you would get lammed by a cute little shell or a dainty bit of shrapnel before the job was over.

Aboard ship it was deck work, of course, and it was not much better there than ashore with the guns, because the enemy trenches were near the shore and they amused themselves trying to pick us off whenever we showed on deck. I guess we were a regular shooting gallery for them, and some of our men thought they did not need all the practice they were getting, for quite a few of us acted as bull's eyes.

But we did not mind the bullets so much. They make a clean wound or put you away entirely; shrapnel tears you up and can play all kinds of tricks with various parts of your body without killing you. As for shells—well, minicement is the word. The Narrows were thick with mines and there had been a great deal of damage done there, so after a while the British detailed their Yarmouth trawlers to go in and sweep up. They had to go up unprotected, of course, and they started off one night all serene.

Everything went well until they turned at the Narrows and started back. Then, before you could tell it, five or six searchlights were playing on one of the trawlers and shells were splashing the water all over her. Both banks were simply banging away point blank at them and I never thought they would get back.

They did get back, though, but some of them had hardly enough men left to work ship. But that is like the Limeys. They will get back from anywhere while there is one man alive.

A chap aboard one of the trawlers said a shell went through the wheelhouse between the quartermaster and himself and all the Q. M. said was, "Gaw blimey; that tickled."

"But I know their shooting was very bad," said the other chap to me. "Those Turks must have thought the fun was behind them."

Coming back from the Dardanelles a gold stripe sent for me and asked me whether I thought there were

other ex-navy gunners in the States that would serve with the French. I told them the country was full of good gunners and he wanted me to write to all I knew and get them to come over. He did not mean by this, and neither do I, that there were not good gunners in the French navy, because there were—lots of them. But you can never have too many handy boys with the guns and he was very anxious for me to get all I could. I had no way of reaching the ex-garbies I did know, so I had to pass up this opportunity to recruit by mail.

While we were in Brest I got permission to go aboard a submarine and a petty officer showed me around. This was the first time I was in the interior of a sub and I told the officer that I would like to take a spin in the tub myself. He introduced me to the commander, but the petty officer said he did not think they would let me stay aboard. I showed the commander my passport and talked to him for a while, and he said he would take me on their practice cruise two days later if the Old Man gave me written permission.

So I hot-footed it back to the Cassard and while I did not promise that I would get any American gunners for him in exchange for the written permission, he was free to think that if he wanted to. It seems as though he did take it that way, for he gave me a note to the sub commander and sent him another note by messenger. I wanted Murray to go too, but the Old Man said one was enough.

So, two days later, I went aboard in the morning and had breakfast with the sub crew and a good breakfast it was, too. After breakfast they



Gunner Depew in French Sailer Uniform.

took stations and the commander went up on the structure amidships, which was just under the conning tower, and I squatted down on the deck beneath the structure.

Then the gas engines started up and made an awful racket and shook the old tub from stem to stern. I could tell that we had cut loose from the dock and were moving. After a while they shut off the gas engines and started the motors and we began to submerge. When we were all the way under I looked through the periscope and saw a Dutch merchantman. We stayed under about half an hour and then came back to the surface. One of the garbies was telling me later on that this same sub had gone out of control a few weeks before and kept diving and diving until she struck bottom. I do not know how many fathoms down it was, but it was farther than any commander would take a sub if he could help it. This garby said they could hear the plates cracking and it was a wonder that they did not crumple up from the pressure, but she weathered it, pressure button and all, and in a quarter of an hour was on the surface. While on the surface they sighted smoke, submerged again, and soon, over the horizon came eight battleships, escorted by Zepps and destroyers.

They tested their tubes before they got in range. Finally they let go. The first shot missed, but after that they got into it good and the garby said all you could hear was the knocking of the detonated gun cotton.

About five minutes later they sighted five destroyers, two on each bow, and one dead ahead. The sub steered in at right angle zigzags and the destroyers stayed with their convoy. The sub launched two torpedoes at less than a mile before diving, to get away from the destroyers and the garby said at least one of them was hit. These ships must have been some of the lucky ones that came down from the North sea. The garby said he thought they were off the Dutch coast at the time, but he was not sure.

But this cruise that I was on was only a practice cruise and we did not meet with any excitement in the short time that we were out.

In the next installment Gunner Depew tells of the wonderful work of the British and French navies in the Gallipoli campaign. Don't miss it.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Must Remain Awake.

"Opportunity knocks at every man's door," said Uncle Eben; "but if you just sits down an' listens, you liable to drap off to sleep an' not notice it."

## Our Part in Feeding the Nation

(Special Information Service, United States Department of Agriculture.)  
TOWN MEN HELP TO GATHER AMERICA'S FOOD



"Doctor, Lawyer, Merchant Chief" Describes Some of the Town Teams That Aided Farmers.

## SOLVE HARVEST LABOR PROBLEM

Story of How Kansas Farmers Fought and Overcame Difficulties This Year.

### CITIES AND TOWNS HELPED

Faced by Big Shortage of Farm Hands and War Calling More Men Federal, State and City Forces Unite in Saving Grain.

Kansas farmers this year faced a harvest labor problem as serious as any in the country, it is believed by officials of the United States department of agriculture. The story of how Kansas fought its difficulties and overcame them demonstrates the high spirit of patriotism in the country districts, the willingness of the cities and towns to help out in emergencies, and points the way for other states to meet similar problems next year.

Seven million acres of wheat called for harvest help. The army and war industries were taking increasing numbers of men from the state. Railroad fares had been raised, impeding the movement of workers. A shortage of from 90,000 to 100,000 men during the harvest season was indicated by a labor survey made early in the year by the county agents in co-operation with the schools.

The problem was up to the state farm help specialist (representing the department of agriculture and the extension division of the state agricultural college), the United States department of labor, the county agents and the farm bureaus. They received co-operation from chambers of commerce and business men's clubs. The farm help specialist visited 85 of the 105 Kansas counties and discussed the labor situation with farm and town people at county meetings. Later at eight district meetings delegates from the farm bureaus and other farmers' organizations from every county recommended wage scales for the districts and that labor be paid by the hour instead of the day. At a state meeting 45 cents an hour was decided on as a fair wage.

#### Recruiting Town Men.

Late in May the farm help specialist developed a method of recruiting town and city men for help in the fields. Work was started under a proclamation by the governor through the county and emergency agents. Working with the chambers of commerce and retail merchants' associations definite records were obtained of approximately 30,000 men in over 500 towns and cities who were willing to answer the harvest call. Headquarters at Wichita and 20 local offices were opened by the department of labor to recruit men from outside the state. In farm bureau counties the agents in nearly every case accepted the responsibility of reporting the labor needs of the county to the federal labor offices and of distributing the harvest hands after their arrival. In Cheyenne and Rawlins counties this meant that the agents had to organize a transport system that brought the harvest hands in from the main line railroads by automobile, an average distance of about 30 miles. Assistance in this work was given by the agricultural agents of railroads.

The result was that Kansas lost none of its wheat crop. All of the grain has been safely harvested and is helping to turn the scales in the battle of food resources.

Thousands of Helpers Obtained. Although complete data are not available from all counties, a definite record of 48,471 men being placed through the various co-operating agencies has been obtained. Of this number more than 18,000 were handled by the local labor offices of the department of labor and more than 3,000 were town men who went out to harvest through the federal labor offices in Kansas City and St. Joseph, Mo., and Kansas City, Atchison and Leavenworth, Kan. Sixty-nine counties that

have county agents have reported that they cleared through their offices more than 18,000 harvest hands from outside the county and that more than 7,000 town men, organized as "willight shock troops," went in squads to help in the evening.

These enumerations do not include a large number of retired farmers and other townspeople who helped in the harvest but did not register, and do not take account of thousands of boys. So great was the response of men in the emergency that less than 5 per cent of the women in Kansas were used as harvest helpers.

### GET-TOGETHER SPIRIT

The more the farmer shows the get-together spirit the greater is the advantage accruing to him, personally and from a business standpoint. New ideas, progressive methods, valuable business connections can be gained only by rubbing elbows with the world outside his own fences.

Taking an active and positive part in community events, interchange of views with successful men of affairs, getting beyond the border of his county and state and mixing with people—this is to make himself felt in his own community. All this has a broadening value, not easy to compute in hard dollars and cents, but quite easy to sum up in profitable results.

#### Frugality vs. Shiftlessness.

Before the long, wet winter months set in, when the greater part of his machinery and implements are not in use, the thrifty farmer carefully goes over them, oiling, using paint when necessary, supplying broken or missing parts and putting everything under shelter. These and other frugal characteristics differentiate him from the shiftless, haphazard farmer who leaves his implements exposed to the weather, who lets the fences around his house and barn fall down, perfectly contented to throw a hoop over his corral gate rather than put on a new hinge or repair the old one.

The former, it may be taken for granted, is a plow-deep, use-fertilizer, cultivate-thoroughly and take-advantage-of-the-market farmer—in a word, a successful farmer; while the latter is a scratch-the-ground and trust-to-luck individual whose failure he attributes to anyone but himself.

No right-minded farmer could tolerate being in the second class; and, on the other hand, every farmer coming under that category ought to aspire to the first classification—and now is the time to start.

Farm Made to Pay. For ten years a 500-acre farm in central Michigan failed to pay interest on the capital invested. One year after the owners had been induced to make certain radical changes the farm paid all expenses of operation and returned them 5 per cent on an investment of \$60,000. These changes were:

Substitution of four-horse for two-horse machinery; substitution of better stock for unprofitable cows in the dairy herd; adoption of the silo plan; allowance to the foreman, in addition to his salary, of 10 per cent of the net income from the farm.

Expenses of operating the farm, but not the interest on the capital, were deducted from the income before the foreman received his percentage. The owners yielded to the plan when they found that for every dollar the foreman got under such an arrangement they would receive nine.

#### Soak Seed for Fall Garden.

Owing to the difficulty usually experienced in getting seeds planted in the fall garden to germinate, it is well to soak them a few hours before planting. Cover the seeds lightly when planting, then soak the ground, and finish the covering with fine dry soil. The dust which will retain the moisture, enabling the seeds to germinate and to come up.

The best way to use manure on the garden land is to apply it broadcast and spread it abundantly.