

ONLY TWENTY FEET BETWEEN TRENCHES AT PONT-A-MOUSSON

Spies Hide Among Dead Bodies During the Day and at Night They Creep Towards the Camps of the Enemy.

By Herbert Corey. (Copyright, 1915, by Herbert Corey.)

With the French Army May 29—A dead line has been drawn about Pont-a-Mousson. To get inside that dead line one must either be a soldier of France, or be possessed of papers of an incredible nature. Once inside the dead line one may wander at will. One has to speak, the freedom of Pont-a-Mousson. Freedom to be killed.

There are places at Pont-a-Mousson where the French trenches and the German trenches approach within six metres of each other. That is, roughly, twenty feet. At intervals during the day those who live in the front trenches toss hand grenades into the other front trenches. Between times they stand with their arms against the dirt walls, listening for the sappers of the other army digging mines that shall—the sappers hope—blow the listeners to kingdom come. Now and then the trenchers themselves out of one set of trenches and into the other. They fight then as men die in the days of the Crusades, with axes and knives and heavy clubs. It is possible to kill a man with an entrenching tool, if the edges of the little spade have been ground to a razor sharpness. There are other times when calm reigns and these men shout jokes across that six metres of wire beset ground.

"Tomorrow we will kill you Boche," the plump chief cheerily. Thick German laughter comes from the unseen men in the pits twenty feet away. "By tomorrow, Frenchman, we will all be dead," was the retort of one Bavarian humorist.

Not all the trenches so nearly approach each other. The lay of the land determines their location. Sometimes they are two, three, four hundred metres apart. The artillerymen prefer this. It gives them a chance to drop a shell into the other fellow's trench without endangering their own. The batteries are hidden back of each line. Scattered about are the dressing stations, where the wounded are taken to have their hurts cared for. Farther back are the hospitals. Still farther back are the resting places, where those men who are to be killed tomorrow wait for their time to go forward to the trenches. The graves are everywhere.

Shooting Over Two Hills. At one point there two parallel hills. The German batteries are hidden behind one hill and the French batteries behind the other hill. The name is to play Andy-over with the shells. From behind one hill each side tries to drop bombs on the fellow behind the other hill. No one can live in the pits between the hills. It is No Man's Land. The chauffeur who told me the story is a Pharisee among chauffeurs. He is not as other men. He is an American collector of money and whose family has more. He has a little, pointed blond beard and cold blue eyes and is reserved in his manner. Some day, if he lives, he will make an excellent district attorney. One cannot imagine him yielding to a sympathetic sentiment. There must be a human spot in him somewhere, however. He came over here because he wanted adventure. His life had been tame.

"Every night I had dressed for dinner," he said in a surprising moment of expansion. He became a chauffeur in one of the corps attached to the French army. He drove his chief to Pont-a-Mousson, where for days—weeks—the French and Germans had been killing each other. Even his chief had trouble getting inside the dead line. Sentries were everywhere, and each sentry had to be satisfied as to his chief's papers. Once inside, however, the atmosphere became warmer. While his chief was busy the adventure hunting chauffeur wandered about at will. No one asked him questions. Every one seemed careless; even gay.

All Expect Death. They all expect to be killed. It is his explanation, "and so they have given up worrying." The long main street of Pont-a-Mousson runs straight up a hill. Every inch of one side of it is under rifle fire from one of the German outposts. On the other side of the street the riflemen cannot see the passers. At that German outpost are two or more hill places, the whose gunners have a deadly accuracy of aim. No one bothers about the riflemen. The gay little French soldiers cross and re-cross the street under constant fire. Now and then a sentry is killed. But what does that chance matter to one who desires to cross the street? They even walk upon the exposed side of the street, under facades that are shattered by the constant shells.

"There is only one rule," said the man who told me the story. "We were not permitted to stand in groups. The German cannoneers do not bother to shoot at one man. But if two or three stand out in the open they are worth a charge of shrapnel." He left the "Pont" and wandered about on the open hill nearby. Shot at now and then, of course. At least, he kept hearing the whistling about him. He didn't know where they came from. There were no Germans to be seen. By and by, to his surprise, he came upon a French sentry. It was quite deserted; not a man in sight. The long guns stood in the little wrinkle of the hill, with baskets shaded shell at their breeches. He explained that it was only a night. By day the tired gunners get their rest.

"I got away from there," said he. "I got away to be seen as a spy. Spies are judged too quickly." Spies Hide Among the Dead. For there are spies everywhere inside the dead line. Hardly a day passes that one or more are caught. He doesn't know precisely the routine of the events that follow, but he suspects that the nearest officers pass on the case and the available squad executes sentence. Two had been shot the morning of the day he reached the Pont—fifteen minutes after. "They hide themselves during the day," he explained, "among the dead bodies on the open and in the ruined trenches. Then at night they creep around."

His chief had directed him to report to the field hospital, and after he had satisfied some part of his curiosity he did so. There he found an American he knew—a member of his college frat. They sat in the rear door of the field hospital—the door that overlooked the garden. They smoked cigarettes and chatted. Most interesting talk, he said. Heard for the first time that Billy Thaw hadn't been killed. He had been buried over the German lines. Instead, he had made six successful trips. He had been given the Cross of the Legion, or something. The garden was full of little white stalks, said he. "Full as it could be. Each stalk marked a grave."

His friend told him that more than 1,000 men are buried in the garden of that little field hospital. It had been a convent once. Slightly women had walked upon its paths, meditating upon the mysteries which have been solved by the men who lie in it today. Even yet the outlines of the old-time flower beds may be following in the garden in which 1,000 men are buried.

"Not as long as from here across the street," said he. "Not nearly that wide." He came to the morgue—that grim chamber in which the day's dead are sheltered. Just a rough shack of pine boards, perhaps fifteen feet wide by thirty feet long. Buried under ground, for protection against the shells. Lighted by two doors and a small window. Most of the time the doors stand open. Why not? There was no one there who wanted to go in. God knows, they unloaded the wagons at the door at one end and backed the wagons up to the door. They were for time. The drivers loaded them at the other.

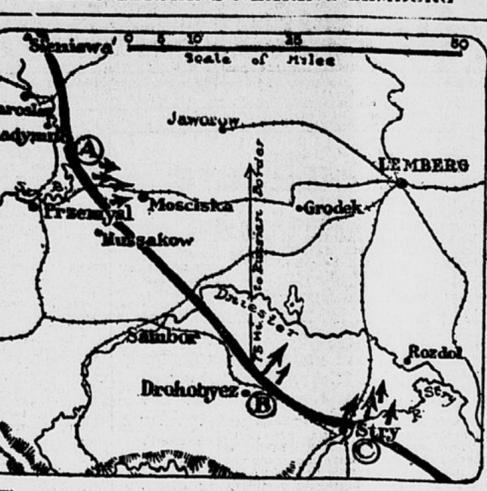
"Just like loads of wood," said he. Flat wagons. Just a platform on wheels. Each carried ten or fifteen laid across the width of the wagon, and five lengthwise upon them. The driver would throw a body over his back like a sack of grain and carry it in and throw it down. It wasn't his fault. He had to hurry.

Inside the other workers took off the identification tags and searched the pockets for the things that some heartbroken woman might later cherish with tears through sleepless nights—knives, perhaps, and tobacco pipes and always letters. They read, dirty, tattered letters, that had been read and kissed by these men who were so careless—almost gay—inside the dead line. Then these men who had been gay were hurried into their caskets.

"They don't screw the caskets up any more," said he. "They haven't time. They just nail the boxes together." So they go out to one of the cemeteries that cover every sheltered hill about the Pont, or are buried across the road. Always the workers are in a desperate hurry. So many more men who once were gay are coming. Burials in a Hurry. They load and throw the boxes, said he. If the first box doesn't happen to lie just straight—if it cants over against an upright, so that it rests on one edge—the men do not bother to straighten it. They haven't time. The next box thrown on will knock against it so that it settles down flat.

Usually the ceremonies at the grave are brief. No one has time even to gabble a prayer. But they are not hasty. These men. They are only very busy. Sometimes by long chance, the wife or mother or old father of the dead man comes. The man has been long in dying, so there has been time to notify those who were to mourn. Then the casket is put on the wagon on all alone," said the chauffeur, "and some one is found to say a prayer."

AUSTRO-GERMANS NEARING LEMBERG



The recent fall of Przemyśl not only straightens out the Austro-German line in Galicia, but it leaves the Russians without a single foothold on the west bank of the San and gives the Austro-German troops a strategic line of advance across open country toward Lemberg, the last great Galician stronghold in Russian hands. As may be seen by the map, the battle line, which runs almost straight southeast from the San to the Dniester, is now only thirty-five miles, on an average, from Lemberg. B marks the new battle line in the neighborhood of Drohobycz, Przemysl, B is the center of the Galician oil fields, the capture of which probably is valued more highly by the Germans than that of Przemyśl itself. The line which they held last September, after the victory of Rawa Ruska and the capture of Lemberg.

STATISTICAL FEATURES OF THE U. S. REPORT ON CROP OUTLOOK

Table with columns for State, Acreage, and Production for various crops like Spring Wheat, Winter Wheat, and Oats.

CANADA MAKES NEW CALL FOR 35,000 MORE MEN

Toronto, June 9.—Orders to recruit men for a branch of the service, which Canada has not hitherto contributed, namely, the mobile veterinary section, have been received by Lieut. W. F. Fox of the Canadian army veterinary corps, who has held the position of veterinary officer to the Fourth Canadian Mounted Rifles since its organization last fall.

BRYAN'S RESIGNATION PRECIPITATES CRISIS

In the closing hour of his administration, Bryan bade farewell to his associates in the state department, looked after some minor executive questions, received newspaper correspondents, and made a tour of the state, war and navy buildings, to call informally on his colleagues. Bryan turned over the affairs of his office to Lansing at 1 p. m.

SHAREHOLDERS TO CARRY LOAD OF BANK TAXES

The courts would be kept busy passing on the title of alleged void taxes, while the income of counties might be seriously impaired by the simple means of litigation. The secretary is responsible for any money illegally collected or payments must be first made and the illegality be determined afterwards in a suit against the county.

FARMERS HALL ASS'N. IS INCORPORATED

Bismarck, N. D., June 9.—Articles of incorporation have been issued to the Farmers' Hall association of McKinley township in Foster county. The articles state that the corporation is for the "social and financial betterment of the members." There are fifteen original stockholders and the shares are \$10 each. The capital stock is \$25,000. It is understood that the ultimate idea is to establish a trading point and that the second story of the building will be used as a hall for various kinds of gatherings in which the farmers are interested.

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Blocked Like New. WILSON

Bryan confided to his friends that he slept at night last for the first time in months. Dramatically the official relation of Bryan with the administration of the man whose nomination he assisted so materially in bringing about at the Baltimore convention of 1912, has come to an end. It caused a sensation in the national capital, scarcely paralleled in recent years. Ambassadors, ministers and diplomats from foreign lands, officials of every rank and station, heard the news as it was flashed by newspaper extras last night.

When the subject was first broached between the president and Bryan it was not known definitely, but the fact that Bryan would resign was known to small circles of officials as early as Sunday. When the principles on which the note to Germany should be based were discussed at a cabinet meeting on Friday, Bryan found that he could not reconcile his own position with that of the administration. Work on the note went forward, however, Bryan keeping his eyes on the other officials, awaiting the hour when the communication would be ready to be cable.

Relations Strained. The official relations of Bryan with the president and the other cabinet members was somewhat strained, although the closest personal friendship has been maintained. Officially the administration were unanimous today in their expressions of personal regret. Secretary Tumulty issued a statement to the effect, and the president reflected the same sentiment in his letter.

It became known only last night that twice before in 2 years and three months Bryan had been offered the resignation to save the president from embarrassment. Each time the president refused to accept the resignation. Through the constant newspaper bombardment of Bryan for his views on peace, his advocacy of prohibition, his speeches in chautauques, the president has stood by the secretary. Through the constant bombardment of Bryan for his views on peace, his advocacy of prohibition, his speeches in chautauques, the president has stood by the secretary.

Out All Day. Secretary Bryan virtually had considered himself as out of the administration all day. Denying himself to newspaper men twice during the day at his usual time for receiving them, the secretary thereby aroused suspicion that something unusual had occurred. After lunching with other members of the cabinet, he returned to his office accompanied by Secretary Daniels, who remained for a few minutes. Later Secretary Daniels steadily refused to discuss what had occurred at the cabinet meeting.

Secretary Bryan was at the state department until 5:30 o'clock and during the afternoon saw Mr. DeGama, the Brazilian ambassador. A few minutes before leaving the secretary dropped into the office of Counselor Lansing for a brief chat with the man who today took up his portfolio. "There is nothing to be said," Mr. Bryan remarked to a group of newspaper men as he left Counselor Lansing's office. That was a few minutes before it had been officially learned that the resignation had been submitted and accepted.

Speculation Abroad. "There is much speculation abroad," some one suggested to the secretary. "Well," Mr. Bryan responded with a smile, "you know there is a law against speculation in futures. You gentlemen want to be very careful about speculation in futures, you know." Then he joined Mrs. Bryan, who awaited him in an automobile. They rode for half an hour, returning to their home about 8 o'clock. Mr. Bryan had just prepared to go out for dinner when a reporter for the Associated Press reached the house. The secretary was attired in evening clothes and appeared in a jovial mood. "Mr. Secretary, we are informed that you have resigned."

President Wilson's letter to Secretary Bryan follows: "My Dear Mr. Bryan—I accept your resignation only because you insist upon its acceptance, and I accept it with much more deep regret; with a feeling of personal sorrow. Our two years of close association have been very delightful to me. Our judgments accorded in practically every matter of official duty and of public policy until now; your support of the work and purposes of the administration have been generous and loyal beyond praise; your devotion to the duty of your great office and your eagerness to take advantage of every opportunity for the services it has offered, have been an example to the rest of us; you have earned our affectionate admiration and friendship. "Even now we are not separated in the object we seek, but only in the method by which we seek it. "It is for these reasons my feeling about your retirement from the secretaryship of state goes so much deeper than regret. I sincerely deplore it. Our objects are the same and we ought to pursue them together. I yield to your desire only because I must. We shall continue to work for the same cause even when we do not work in the same way. With affectionate regards, sincerely yours, Woodrow Wilson."

ant relations which have existed between us during the past two years, permit me to acknowledge the profound satisfaction which it has given me to be associated with you in the important work which has come before the state department, and thank you for the courtesy extended. "With my heartiest good wishes for your personal welfare, and for the success of your administration, I am, my dear Mr. President, very truly yours, W. J. Bryan."

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The war gives no sign of an early ending.

Chasing The Rainbow-- Assessment Insurance The Deadly Parallel

Assessment Cost of \$3,000 Insurance, age 45, \$6.57 per month, or \$68.04 per year. Paid in 20 years \$1,360.80 Cash Value 0 G. N. Life, 20 years 2,406.60 Cash Value \$2,064.00 Cost per \$1,000, Assessment Insurance, 20 yrs. \$453.60 Cost per \$1,000, G. N. Life Insurance, " " " 114.20 At age 45 Royal Arcanum assessment raised 300%, or to \$204.12. At age 65 G. N. Life Policy paid up, \$3,000. We have desirable agency openings in the State of Minnesota. Our unsurpassed Standard policies will get the business.

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