

HAIG'S RETREAT IS VIVIDLY PICTURED

Storm of Shell Fire Described by Illinois Officer.

HUN SLAUGHTER WAS GREAT

First Lieutenant Pettit of Ottawa, in Letter to His Father Gives Details of Battle in Which British Fought at Great Odds.

The thrilling story of the Haig retreat in the terrific battle in Picardy is most interestingly detailed by First Lieutenant Roswell T. Pettit, M. O. R. C., of Ottawa, Ill., in a letter to his father, Dr. J. W. Pettit of the Ottawa tuberculosis colony, and published in the Chicago Tribune. For nine days the American officer was in the thickest of the fighting, and during the retreat of the British Fifth army from before St. Quentin. His account of the battle thrills with the stress of the heroic conflict, as it was detailed immediately after he had passed through the terrible experience and before his impressions had been dulled by time. His letter:

Lieutenant Pettit's Letter.

Dear Father: Now that the show is over for me for the time being, and I have time to breathe and sleep and eat and write, I'll try and tell you about the battle. Before you receive this you will have had the whole story from the papers, but I know you will be interested in knowing what I did in the affair.

Of course, the things I saw were but an infinitesimal part of a gigantic whole and it would be impossible for me to give a correct description of the battle. And as I write this, I do it with no knowledge whatever of what has been going on even a few miles from me.

I have not seen a paper in eight days; I have received no mail, and the only information I have received has been by word of mouth, and most of what we hear must be wild rumors. For example: The French have advanced 20 miles at Verdun, the Americans have taken Ostend, and are on their way to Zebrugge, and a great naval battle has been fought in the North sea.

All I know is that on this part of the front the Germans attacked us in overwhelming numbers, in places ten divisions to our one; that they suffered terrible losses, but finally broke through our lines of defense, one after another, and fighting for the most part, a rear guard action, we have retired about 15 miles in a straight line.

For a week before the battle started we had been expecting it; we were ready to move on 30 minutes' notice. I had been out with combatant as well as medical officers on tours of reconnaissance, definite methods of evacuation of the wounded had been worked out, and our plans of counter-attack had been made. After four or five days of waiting, the storm finally broke.

The Boche opened up on us at 5 a. m., March 21, with the heaviest barrage I have ever heard. "Stand to," was sounded, we turned out dressed, and had all our equipment packed in 30 minutes. Then we sat down and waited for orders to move. The barrage kept up continuously, sometimes heavier and then of less intensity, sometimes it seemed to be to the north of us and then suddenly it switched to the south.

Our balloons were up as soon as it was light and the airplanes were buzzing over our heads. The ground mist gradually cleared and the Germans put a hail of shrapnel on our camp and we all took cover, but three men were hit. Why it is a fellow always feels safer with a roof over his head, even if he knows bullets and shrapnel and pieces of shell will go through boards and corrugated iron just like paper.

Ordered to Move.

Our orders to move finally came and we marched off to the brigade assembly point several miles away. This assembly point was in a little bunch of trees about the size of Allen park and behind and separated from a larger wood in front. In the larger wood there was a battery of heavy artillery and shells were dropping in there two or three to a minute, and it was heavy stuff, too.

Sometimes they overshoot the big wood and shells were landing in the open around the little wood where my brigade had its assembly point. As we approached our little copse we could make all this out from some distance away and it wasn't a pleasant sensation to feel that we were marching straight into it.

All the battalions arrived and in that little copse there must have been at least two thousand men. What a

chance if the Germans only knew! But the shells continued to drop in front of us and on either side, but none landed among us, and after waiting there for three hours, expecting to be blown to bits any second, we finally moved forward. Just as we left the copse, from behind us, up over a ridge, came a stream of galloping horses.

"It's the cavalry," someone shouted, but soon I made out limbers and field guns.

They galloped past us, going like mad, took up a position to our right, swung into position, unlimbered, and in two minutes were blazing away. It was a thrilling sight.

Torn by Shells.

In going forward we went around the end of the larger wood in front of us, over ground that was torn to bits by the heavy shell fire that had just preceded, over another edge, across a valley, and under the crest of a hill. And here we found the tanks going over the top of the hill to take up their position. At this point we were still about a mile from the front line.

At this place I opened up an aid post under the crest of the hill to take care of what wounded came in while we were getting into position. I looked back across the valley we had just traversed.

Shrapnel was bursting in the air, shells were whizzing overhead, and our guns behind me were belching forth the fire. The noise was deafening.

A railroad ran through the valley and an engine pulling a couple of flat cars was going by. A couple of soldiers were sitting on the rear truck swinging their feet. A shell burst on the track and only missed the last car about fifteen yards. Neither man was hit and the train went blithely on.

By this time it was getting along toward evening, the sun was sinking in the west, and finally went down a great ball of fire. At the time, I remember, I noticed its color. It was blood red and had a sinister look. Was it my imagination, or might it have been a premonition? At any rate, I shall never forget the color of the sun as it set that night at the end of the first day of probably one of the greatest battles in history. It certainly didn't look good to me.

The drumming of the guns continued, twilight gradually deepened into night, the signalers stopped their zig-zagging and took up their flash signals, a fog dropped down on us and put the lights out of business, and when we left to go forward under the cover of darkness they were busy putting out their telephone lines—signalers and runners don't have an easy time.

Shell Dump Goes Up.

Behind us a shell landed in an ammunition dump and it went up with a roar; then the rifle ammunition started going off like a great bunch of firecrackers, and great tongues of flame lit up the sky.

It is reported that the Germans had broken through our line and we were to counter-attack in the morning. We got into positions without a single casualty. I opened an aid post in an old dugout and settled down to sleep until morning. You may think it funny that one could sleep under such conditions, but I had been up since 5:30, had tramped about six or seven miles, had had a rather trying day and was dog tired.

So I settled down on the rough plank floor and was soon asleep. I must have been asleep a couple of hours when a runner came from headquarters and told us we were to move off immediately. I looked at my watch and it was 1:30 a. m. on the second day.

We went back to the railroad, followed it around to a position some six miles to the north of us, landing there about 4 in the morning and flopped down on the floor of some abandoned huts to wait further orders. Our orders came along about 9 o'clock. We marched up across the open prairie, the sun shining, and it was really hot.

Just like some of the warm days we get the last of March at home. In going forward it was necessary for us to march seventy-five yards in front of three batteries of field guns. There are six guns to a battery. They shoot an eighteen-pound shell and while we were there each gun was shooting twice to the minute. You can imagine the racket when I tell you that the discharge of one gun can be heard about four miles. In addition the Boche was trying to knock out this battery and he was dropping his six inch shells a little too close for comfort.

Nearly in a Trap.

Then I made a lovely mistake. I was to establish an aid post near battalion headquarters and went blithely on when I met a company commander and asked him where to go.

"Back there about a quarter of a mile," he replied. "This is the front center company. If you keep on in the direction you are going you are going up over that ridge and Fritz will be waiting for you with a machine gun."

"So my sergeant and orderly and myself didn't waste any time in clearing. On the way back I found a gallon can full of water, got into a corrugated iron shelter and had a wash and a shave. It certainly felt good. I don't believe I had washed for thirty-six

hours. It was warm and bright. I could look out of my shelter and see our support lines digging themselves in several hundred yards away. The cannon fire ceased, the machine guns settled down to an occasional fitful burst and it was midday of a beautiful spring day.

A couple of partridge flew over me. What did they know or care about all this noise and racket and men getting up in line and killing each other?

Along about three o'clock things began to liven up again. In the meantime headquarters had been established in a sunken road with banks about fifteen feet high on either side (later this cut was half filled with dead). My aid post was in a dugout near by and gradually things got hotter and hotter.

Our men had dug themselves in and were popping away with their rifles. The field batteries behind us were putting up a barrage, airplanes were circling overhead, both ours and the Germans'. The Germans put up a counter-barrage, the machine guns were going like mad. I was standing with the colonel on a little rise of ground above the sunken road when the Germans broke through about a mile to the north of us. They could be plainly seen pouring over the ridge in close formation.

Tanks Get into Action.

Then the tanks came up, and you should have seen them run! Just like rabbits! The tanks retired; the Boches reformed and came at it again. They told me that at certain places our men withstood fifteen successive attacks and that the Germans went down in thousands. One Welshman told me that his gun accounted for 75 in three minutes during one wave.

Machine-gun bullets were nipping around me, the shell fire was getting hotter, and even though it was a wonderful sight to watch I decided "discretion was the better part of valor," or something like that, and got down in my dugout.

I was sitting there smoking a cigarette when my orderly came down and said I was being relieved and was to go back and work with the ambulance. Fifteen hours later the man that relieved me was captured. But I am getting ahead of my story.

I went back to the advanced dressing station through the hottest shell fire I ever experienced. More than once I went down on my face when a shell burst and the pieces went whizzing over my head. I spent the night in a mined village where the advanced dressing station was located, and all night they shelled it to blazes. It was remarkable how few casualties we had.

About eleven o'clock the morning of the third day a shell blew in the side of our post, but luckily no one was hurt. We stuck to it until about four in the afternoon, when we saw our men retiring over a ridge in front of us, keeping up a continuous machine gun and rifle fire, and we beat it back to another village and opened another post.

The Begrimed Lord.

About ten o'clock on the morning of the fourth day Lord Thyme, my colonel when I was with the battalion, stumbled into the shack where I was sitting. He looked like a ghost. He had lost his hat, his face was covered with a four days' beard, the sweat had traced tracks in the dust from his forehead to his chin. His sleeve was torn and bloody and he had a gash in his arm where he had been struck by a piece of flying shell case.

"My God, doc, are you here?" he said. "You got out just in time. The battalion is all gone. The sunken road is filled with dead—mostly Huns, damn 'em. The line broke on the right; we were surrounded, and at the last we were fighting back and back. Only thirty of us got away."

So we knew the Boche had broken through to our right and our left, and it was a question of how long it would be before we, too, were surrounded, but we wanted to stick it out as long as we could.

But not more than an hour later a medical officer rushed in from one of the battalions and between gasps for breath told us the Germans were on the edge of the village, had shot him through the sleeve with a machine gun bullet (luckily that was all), and for us to beat it.

The ninth day, sitting around the fire in our mess after the best dinner we had had in days, the commanding officer handed me some papers and said, "Here is something that will interest you, Pettit. I want to say we shall be sorry to lose you."

And this is what it was: "Lieut. Roswell T. Pettit, M. O. R. C., is relieved from duty with the British army and will proceed to the A. E. F., where he will report for duty."

I leave for Paris in the morning. This has been a long tale, but the half of it hasn't been told. I hope I haven't strung it out too much.

I have just been informed that all my kit had to be burned to prevent it falling into the hands of the enemy. I shall probably want you to send me some things from home, but will see what I can get here first. Your son, ROSWELL.

How the Cats Went.

Little Frank had an amusing way of imitating the meowing of cats, so one night, when there was company at dinner, his father asked him how the cats went.

"On their feet," was the unexpected reply.

FIGHTING TOOLS OF OUR SOLDIERS

Standardized Equipment, Quality, Efficiency, Determine Advantage Over Enemy.

WORK OF ORDNANCE BRANCH

Department Has in Washington Alone 3,000 Officers With Thousands of Civilian Employees and Many Being Added.

By JAMES H. COLLINS, [From the committee on Public Information, Washington, D. C.]

Of all the large activities conducted by Uncle Sam in his war establishment, the ordnance department of the army is second largest in expenditure, being exceeded only by the quartermaster department. And as our war program develops, ordnance might easily come to be the largest single activity.

This department has the responsibility for furnishing artillery, rifles, ammunition, motor transports, and practically all the fighting tools our army needs, except aircraft, together with means for assembling and storing them in this country and delivering them on the fighting front in France. With expenditures now approaching twice what is called for by our entire shipbuilding program, the operations of ordnance are naturally of great magnitude, and its problems are complex, for in furnishing the tools of war it has to enlist enormous productive capacity by converting old industries and creating new ones, as well as go back of the munitions factories in many instances and find enormous supplies of raw materials.

During January the ordnance department was thoroughly reorganized. So it becomes interesting to observe the workings of this department as newly constituted.

Let us try to look at the proposition through the soldier's eyes, and see it whole if we can. It may be well to begin at the A B C of the subject and ask ourselves: What is a soldier? The answer to this question might be: A soldier is a man whose occupation is fighting. What does a soldier fight with? He fights with tools. How do a soldier's tools compare with tools used by other craftsmen? They show practically the same characteristics as those in any peaceful modern industry.

In the first place, they have been wonderfully amplified in recent years by the use of power, and increased in compactness and complexity. Practically every labor-saving contrivance invented for peaceful calling has been applied to present-day war. The machine excavator that lays our water and sewer pipe quickly in peace times can be taken into the field to dig trenches, and a battle front requires construction work, power plants, telephone and telegraph systems and railroad transportation far beyond peace requirements for equal population, and these requirements must be met under the pressure of war's emergencies.

Soldier Like Factory Workman.

Present-day war involves the organization of great communities back of the fighting front, so that the soldier may follow his actual trade of fighting with the greatest efficiency. And when he actually reaches the fighting front with his real fighting equipment he is comparable to craftsmen in other trades in that his fighting tools are more or less standardized and that success or failure turns upon the quality of his tools and improvements in design and efficiency which give him a definite advantage over the enemy for the time being.

The soldier on the fighting front is not unlike a workman in a factory. Modern industrial production, under competitive conditions, seeks advantage by standardization of equipment, large scale production and ceaseless activity in the improvement of tools so that a little increase in output here or a little increase in cost there will enable a given workman or factory to outstrip competitors. The tools of war are standardized. Every army uses rifles, machine guns, fieldpieces, heavy artillery, aircraft. Popular imagination continually looks to some novel and unheard-of invention as a means of settling the war. Actually, modern war is made with tools as standard as those of a shoe factory or steel works, and most of the inventive ability centered on these tools is directed toward minor technical improvements which will place better apparatus in the hands of the men on the fighting front and give them an advantage perhaps only temporary over their competitors, the enemy. The enemy, of course, is just as quick as an industrial competitor in catching up with all advances in the art, and is also an active inventor and improver himself.

It was along this great general trend of modern war, the making of better fighting tools, that the recent reorganization in the ordnance department was carried out. When war was declared we had an establishment of military men whose business it was to design tools of war. They not only knew how these tools were used by the soldier but kept track of improvements in fighting tools in every modern army, and the almost daily changes in the way fighting tools are used. That was their job, and a highly technical profession. They corresponded in every

respect to the technical men in any peaceful industry, making researches and tests and utilizing all the refinements of invention and design to keep pace with competitors in war equipment, and secure every advantage possible.

Have Capable Experts.

In peaceful industries the public is satisfied to judge by the quality of the final product. When the history of the present war is written, it will probably be found that this was the proper measure of our fighting industry, the results secured on the battle front. The American military officer trained to design the equipment of an army, and the weight of expert opinion both from military men of other nations and capable business men in this country who are working with the war department is to the effect that we have as good a system of development as exists.

In ordinary times our requirements for fighting tools are so small that they can be supplied as an incident to peaceful industry. The American military expert was able to center upon the design of rifles, guns and ammunition, turning his blue prints and specifications over to manufacturers who were waiting to bid upon contracts. When the design was finished he simply advertised for bids and secured deliveries through the penalty clause in government contracts, and saw that quality was maintained by careful inspection of material delivered.

For several months after war was declared the ordnance department found its whole scheme of organization fairly satisfactory, and for a reason which will be apparent to everyone when it is stated.

Regardless of the magnitude of our war task and the urgency which has not been lost sight of our new army and our war preparations had to be arranged on an orderly program of growth. Soldiers for the army had to be drafted and trained. This was work which would consume months of time no matter how well the plans were laid. And while the men were being mobilized and instructed, the ordnance department could arrange for their fighting tools. There was even time to spend on thorough tests to determine which type of rifle, machine gun, etc., would give the best results on the fighting front. The peace-time plan of organization was therefore adhered to, but with full provision for growth as the new army was trained and sent to France. It was possible to let the requirements for each bureau, increase the organization by drawing in more technical men from civil life for each specific task, and provide new bureaus to deal with new tasks. A bureau of supplies became necessary, for instance, and was started last May, with two men in a single room, who proceeded to map out that bureau's functions for 18 months, taking into account the delivery of supplies from factories, and their distribution to every army camp in the United States, as required by the army's developments in this country, and finally taking care of its requirements when it reached the western front.

This bureau of supplies today has about 5,000 workers, and more are being added daily according to orderly growth of work, and by the end of this year there will be fully 10,000.

War Engineers in Charge.

The ordnance department is now arranged in a way that makes it an efficient, self-contained agency for the performance of its particular work on the largest scale, and with the most careful attention to all details for the period of the war. At the head of the department today is the chief of ordnance, which position is still held by Maj. Gen. William Crozier. General Crozier, however, is at present in France, applying his ability and experience to the study of the general characteristics in the field. Brig. Gen. Charles B. Wheeler, as acting chief of staff, is in charge in this country. General Wheeler is a West Pointer, thoroughly familiar with the requirements of the army, and is assisted by three other regular army officers, each at the head of a bureau carrying part of the detail work.

The engineering bureau, under Col. John H. Rice, conducts researches and experiments, deals with inventions and designs, determines types of military equipment, conducts tests and draws up specifications.

The control bureau, under Col. Tracy C. Dickson, attends to estimates and schedules of requirements, co-ordinates and supervises the various operating divisions, deals with methods, organization, industrial relations, transportation and the adjustment of complaints and disputes.

The general administration bureau, under Col. William S. Pierce, looks after arsenal administration, finance, property, legal and advisory details, the personnel of the army, both military and civilian, attends to the department's mail, records, publications, library and information generally.

In addition, the chief of ordnance is in touch with the general military situation through the war council and general staff of the army, and military attaches of foreign governments stationed in Washington for advisory service.

The ordnance department now has in Washington alone approximately 3,000 commissioned officers with thousands of civilian employees, and this organization will steadily increase in size as the war program develops. When it is remembered that much of the work was accomplished in peace times by a chief and a very small force in one office, some idea of the magnitude of the new war organization is realized.

Prior to the war, on April 6, 1917, there were 79 ordnance officers; about 90 in Washington.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

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LESSON FOR MAY 12

JESUS FACES THE CROSS.

LESSON TEXT—Mark 10:23-42.

GOLDEN TEXT—He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross—Philippians 2:8.

DEVOTIONAL READING—Isaiah 42:1-9.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS—Matthew 20:20-28; Luke 22:25-27.

PRIMARY AND JUNIOR MEMORY VERSE—Be of good cheer, rise; He calleth thee.—Mark 10:9.

JUNIOR AND INTERMEDIATE TOPIC—Jesus teaches how to be great.

1. Jesus Foretells His Passion and Resurrection (vv. 32-34). This is the third time he makes this prediction. The circumstances are most tragic.

1. Jesus going to Jerusalem (v. 32). He was going with the full consciousness of the awful tragedy of the cross before him—the treachery of Judas, the fiery persecutions of the priests and scribes—the unjust judgment.

2. The disciples following after (v. 32).

They were in dread bewilderment. His utterances and demeanor filled their minds with perplexity, and their hearts with awe. In this state of confusion, Jesus called them to him and patiently instructed them.

3. "What needs should happen unto him" (vv. 33, 34).

(1) "Delivered unto chief priests and scribes."

(2) They shall condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles.

(3) "They shall mock, scourge, spit upon, and kill him."

(4) "The third day he shall rise again."

II. The Ambitious Request of James and John (vv. 35-45).

1. The request (vv. 35-37). It was for a place of prominence in the kingdom. According to Matthew, their mother was the Intercessor. Many mothers have been used by children to carry out that which they were themselves ashamed to do. It is very desirable for mothers to get places for their children near to Jesus, but unfortunately many are seeking the pinnacles of the world and forgetting the nearness to Christ.

2. Jesus' reply (vv. 38-45).

(1) To Peter and John (vv. 38-40). He speaks directly to the men, declaring that they know not what they ask. The Lord many times has to reprove and rebuke us for our blind requests. He showed them that the way to this position of glory was through suffering. The cup which they were to drink was all that was embraced in the agony on the cross. He conceals the positions which they craved were obtainable, but in a very different way from what they apprehended. The way to places in glory in the Kingdom of Christ is through the path of lowly, self-forgetful service.

(2) To the ten (vv. 41-45).

The ten were displeased with Peter and John, but doubtless they were not free from the same selfish ambitions. Christ showed them that to give is greater than to receive; that to serve is greater than to be served. The standard of his kingdom is to forget self and serve others, even to give one's life. Christ is the supreme example to be imitated by all who would follow him.

III. Jesus Cures Bartimeus of Blindness (vv. 46-52).

Though the weight of the cross was upon him, he had time for gracious deeds. Blind Bartimeus receives his sight.

1. Bartimeus' request (vv. 46, 47). He cried to Jesus for mercy. The fact that he addressed him as the Son of David, shows that he recognized his Messiahship. Though he was blind, his faith enabled him to take hold of Jesus. As soon as he heard that Jesus was passing by he cried to him for help. Jesus not only can hear our cries, but he can even tell when a soul yearns after him, and will respond to that yearning.

2. Rebuked by the multitude (v. 48). This rebuke provoked a more earnest cry from Bartimeus. He believed that Jesus could and would help him, and knew that it was now or never with him. The fact that God has brought salvation within our reach should convince us that it is time for us to cry for help. Therefore, we should not allow the opposition of men to keep us from Christ.

3. The blessing granted (vv. 49-52). Though Jesus knew his desire, he wished him to definitely commit himself. God is pleased when we come to him with our definite needs.

When his eyes were opened, he saw many interesting things, but the supreme object was Christ, for he followed him. Note experience of Bartimeus:

(1) A blind beggar (v. 46).

(2) His cry for mercy (v. 47).

(3) Persistence in his cry (v. 48).

(4) Responded to the call of Jesus (vv. 49, 50).

(5) Made specific request (v. 51).

(6) Received his sight immediately (v. 52).

(7) He followed Jesus (v. 52).

How quickly one can pass from sore need to jubilant discipleship.

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Leipzig Tavern in Which Poet Located Scene in "Faust," Was Well-known Gathering Place.

Auerbach's cellar was a tavern at Leipzig which disappeared in 1912. It owed its chief fame to Goethe, who in this place located the scene in "Faust" wherein Mephistopheles, standing upon a wine cask, takes his flight into space with Doctor Faust, to the stupefaction of the guests drinking at the tables. The old building to which the cellar belonged was built by Doctor Stromer d'Auerbach at about 1529. The worthy doctor there storing the wine intended for his own use. Later, as the wine was good, he conceived the idea of selling it. In this way was established the tavern to which his name has been attached ever since. From the earliest years of the seventeenth century legend has placed in this cellar the famous adventure of Faust and Mephistopheles. Goethe, studying at Leipzig university from 1765 to 1768, frequented that cellar almost nightly and there talked with his friends of art, literature and politics, and thus he heard of that legend which he turned to such excellent account, at the same time so very greatly enriching the literature of his country.

Don't Worry About Pimples.

On rising and retiring gently smear the face with Cuticura Ointment. Wash off the Ointment in five minutes with Cuticura Soap and hot water. For free samples address, "Cuticura, Dept. X, Boston." At druggists and by mail, Soap 25, Ointment 25 and 50.—Adv.

Says Fish Have Brains.

Stephen Decatur Bridges of Verona, near Bangor, who is known as the salmon and alewife king of the Penobscot, is as positive not only that fish have brains, but that fish reason and form dislikes and likes and tell their opinions to each other.

Bridges explains the disappearance of salmon from the Penobscot in two ways—either "salmon tell other salmon how dirty its waters are and how it is not fit for any respectable salmon to live in," or "the fish resent it because of the hatchery in East Orland they are taken from the water and stripped of their eggs."

"The fish resent that because it is against nature," Mr. Bridges asserts. "They decide they are not being treated right and stay away."—Boston Herald.

Almost Persuaded.

The promoter had talked eloquently of his scheme. When he paused for breath, Mr. Dubwaite said: "I wish to pay you a compliment."

"Why, sir?"