

GUNNER DEPEW

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Member of the Foreign Legion of France
Captain Gun Turret, French Battleship Cassard
Winner of the Croix de Guerre

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FOREWORD.

"Gunner Depew" is not a work of fiction, but it is more thrilling than any fiction you ever read. It is the true story of the experiences of an American boy who had a fighting career that is unique in the annals of the great war. It is a story crowded with fighting and adventure — big with human courage and endurance. It is the first war narrative that tells the true story of conditions in the German prison camps. It is a story that every American should and will read to the end.

CHAPTER I.

In the American Navy.

My father was a seaman, so, naturally, all my life I heard a great deal about ships and the sea. Even when I was a little boy, in Walston, Pa., I thought about them a whole lot and would be a sailor—especially a sailor in the U. S. navy.

You might say I was brought up on the water.

When I was twelve years old I went on the cabin boy on the whaler *Therifus*, out of Boston. She was a old square-rigged sailing ship, built many years for work than for speed. We were out four months on my first voyage, and got knocked around a lot, especially in a storm on the Newfoundland Banks, where we lost our instruments, and had a hard time navigating the ship. Whaling crews work on *stages* and during the two years I was on the *Therifus* my shares amounted to thirteen hundred dollars.

Then I shipped as first-class helmsman on the British tramp *Southern-down*, a twin-screw steamer out of Liverpool. Many people are surprised that a fourteen-year-old boy should be helmsman on an ocean-going craft, but all over the world you will see young lads doing their trick at the wheel. I was on the *Southern-down* two years and in that time visited most of the important ports of Europe. There is nothing like a tramp steamer if you want to see the world. The *Southern-down* is the vessel that, in the fall of 1917, sighted a German *Z*-boat rigged up like a sailing ship.

Although I liked visiting the foreign ports, I got tired of the *Southern-down* after a while and at the end of a voyage which landed me in New York I decided to get into the United States navy. After laying around for a week or two I enlisted and was assigned to duty as a second-class fireman.

People have said they thought I was pretty small to be a fireman; they have the idea that firemen must be big men. Well, I am 5 feet 7 1/2 inches in height, and when I was sixteen I was just as tall as I am now and weighed 135 pounds. I was a whole lot huskier then, too, for that was before my introduction to kultur in German prison camps, and life there is not exactly *flourishing*—not exactly. I do not know why it is, but if you will notice the many firemen—the lads with the red stripes around their left shoulders—you will find that almost all of them are small men. But they are a husky lot.

Now, in the navy, they always have a newcomer until he shows that he can take care of himself, and I got mine very soon after I went into Uncle Sam's service. I was washing my clothes in a bucket on the forecastle deck, and every garby (sailor) who came along would give me or the bucket a kick, and spill one or the both of us. Each time I would move to some other place, but I always seemed to be in somebody's way. Finally I saw a marine coming. I was nowhere near him, but he hauled out of his course to come up to me and gave the bucket a boot that sent it twenty feet away, at the same time *knocking* me a clout on the ear that just about knocked me down. Now, I did not exactly know what a marine was, and this fellow had so many stripes on his steves that I thought he must be some sort of officer, so I just stood by. There was a gold stripe (commissioned officer) on the bridge and I knew that if anything was wrong he would cut in, so I kept looking up at him, but he stayed where he was, looking on, and never saying a word. And all the time the marine kept slapping me about and telling me to get the hell out of there.

Finally I said to myself, "I'll get this guy if it's the brig for a month." So I planted him one in the kidneys and another in the mouth, and he went down up against the rail. But he came back at me strong, and we were at it for some time.

But when it was over the gold stripe

came down from the bridge and shook hands with me!

After this they did not haze me much. This was the beginning of a certain reputation that I had in the navy for fist-work. Later on I had a reputation for swimming, too. That first day they began calling me "Chink," though I don't know why, and it has been my nickname in the navy ever since.

It is a curious thing, and I never could understand it, but garbies and marines never mix. The marines are good men and great fighters, aboard and ashore, but we garbies never have a word for them, nor they for us. On shore leave abroad we pal up with foreign garbies, even, but hardly ever with a marine. Of course they are with us strong in case we have a scrap with a liberty party of some foreign ship—they cannot keep out of a fight any more than we can—but after it is over they are on their way at once and we on ours.

There are lots of things like that in the navy that you cannot figure out the reason for, and I think it is because sailors change their ways so little. They do a great many things in the navy because the navy always has done them.

I kept strictly on the job as a fireman, but I wanted to get into the gun turrets. It was slow work for a long time. I had to serve as second-class fireman for four months, first-class for eight months and in the engine room as water-tender for a year.

Then, after serving on the U. S. S. *Des Moines* as a gun-loader, I was transferred to the *Iowa* and finally worked up to a gun-pointer. After a time I got my C. P. O. rating—chief petty officer, first-class gunner.

The various navies differ in many ways, but most of the differences would not be noticed by any one but a sailor. Every sailor has a great deal of respect for the Swedes and Norwegians and Danes; they are born sailors and are very daring, but, of course, their navies are small. The Germans were always known as clean



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sailors; that is, as in our navy and the British, their vessels were ship-shape all the time, and were run as sweet as a clock.

There is no use comparing the various navies as to which is best; some are better at one thing and some at another. The British navy, of course, is the largest, and nobody will deny that at most things they are top-notch—least of all themselves; they admit it. But there is one place where the navy of the United States has it all over every other navy on the seven seas, and that is gunnery. The American navy has the best gunners in the world. And do not let anybody tell you different.

CHAPTER II.

The War Breaks.

After serving four years and three months in the U. S. navy, I received an honorable discharge on April 14, 1914. I held the rank of chief petty officer, first-class gunner. It is not uncommon for garbies to lie around a while between enlistments—they like a vacation as much as anyone—and it was my intention to loaf for a few months before joining the navy again.

After the war started, of course, I had heard more or less about the German atrocities in Belgium, and while I was greatly interested, I was doubtful at first as to the truth of the reports, for I knew how news gets changed in passing from mouth to mouth, and I never was much of a hand to believe things until I saw them, anyway. Another thing that caused me to be interested in the war was the fact that my mother was born in Alsace. Her maiden name, *Dier-vieux*, is well known in Alsace. I had often visited my grandmother in St. Nazaire, France, and knew the country. So with France at war, it was not strange that I should be even more interested than many other garbies.

As I have said, I did not take much stock in the first reports of the Hun's exhibition of kultur, because Fritz is known as a clean sailor, and I figured that no real sailor would ever get

mixed up in such dirty work as they said there was in Belgium. I figured the soldiers were like the sailors. But I found out I was wrong about both.

One thing that opened my eyes a bit was the trouble my mother had in getting out of Hanover, where she was when the war started, and back to France. She always wore a little American flag and this both saved and endangered her. Without it, the Germans would have interned her as a Frenchwoman, and with it, she was sneered at and insulted time and again before she finally managed to get over the border. She died about two months after she reached St. Nazaire.

Moreover, I heard the fate of my older brother, who had made his home in France with my grandmother. He had gone to the front at the outbreak of the war with the infantry from St. Nazaire and had been killed two or three weeks afterwards. This made it a sort of personal matter.

But what put the finishing touches to me were the stories a wounded Canadian lieutenant told me some months later in New York. He had been there and he knew. You could not help believing him; you can always tell it when a man has been there and knows.

There was not much racket around New York, so I made up my mind all of a sudden to go over and get some for myself. Believe me, I got enough racket before I was through. Most of the really important things I have done have happened like that: I did them on the jump, you might say. Many other Americans wanted a look, too; there were five thousand Americans in the Canadian army at one time they say.

I would not claim that I went over there to save democracy, or anything like that. I never did like Germans, and I never met a Frenchman who was not kind to me, and what I heard about the way the Huns treated the Belgians made me sick. I used to get out of bed to go to an all-night picture show, I thought about it so much. But there was not much excitement about New York, and I figured the U. S. would not get into it for a while, anyway, so I just wanted to go over and see what it was like. That is why lots of us went, I think.

There were five of us who went to Boston to ship for the other side: Sam Murray, Ed Brown, Tim Flynn, Mitchell and myself. Murray was an ex-garby—two hitches (enlistments), gun-pointer rating, and about thirty-five years old. Brown was a Pennsylvania man about twenty-six years old, who had served two enlistments in the U. S. army and had quit with the rank of sergeant. Flynn and Mitchell were both ex-navy men. Mitchell was a noted boxer. Of the five of us, I am the only one who went in, got through and came out. Flynn and Mitchell did not go in; Murray and Brown never came back.

The five of us shipped on the steamship *Virginian* of the American-Hawaiian line, under American flag and registry, but chartered by the French government. I signed on as water-tender—an engine room job—but the others were on deck—that is, seamen.

We left Boston for St. Nazaire with a cargo of ammunition, bully beef, etc., and made the first trip without anything of interest happening.

As we were tying to the dock at St. Nazaire, I saw a German prisoner sitting on a pile of lumber. I thought probably he would be hungry, so I went down into the oilers' mess and got two slices of bread with a thick piece of beefsteak between them and handed it to Fritz. He would not take it. At first I thought he was afraid to, but by using several languages and signs he managed to make me understand that he was not hungry—had too much to eat, in fact.

I used to think of this fellow occasionally when I was in a German prison camp, and a piece of moldy bread the size of a safety-match box was the generous portion of food they forced on me, with three German hospitalities, once every forty-eight hours. I would not exactly have refused a beefsteak sandwich, I am afraid. But then I was not a heaven-born German. I was only a common American garby. He was full of kultur and grub; I was not full of anything.

There was a large prison camp at St. Nazaire, and at one time or another I saw all of it. Before the war it had been used as a barracks by the French army and consisted of well-made, comfortable two-story stone buildings, floored with concrete, with auxiliary barracks of logs. The German prisoners occupied the stone buildings, while the French guards were quartered in the log houses. Inside, the houses were divided into long rooms with whitewashed walls. There was a gymnasium for the prisoners, a canteen where they might buy most of the things you could buy anywhere else in the country, and a studio for the painters among the prisoners. Officers were separated from privates—which was a good thing for the privates—and were kept in houses surrounded by stockades. Officers and privates received the same treatment, however, and all were given exactly

the same rations and equipment as the regular French army before it went to the front. Their food consisted of bread, soup, and vino, as wine is called almost everywhere in the world. In the morning they received half a loaf of Vienna bread and coffee. At noon they each had a large dish of thick soup, and at three in the afternoon more bread and a bottle of vino. The soup was more like a stew—very thick with meat and vegetables. At one of the officers' barracks there was a cook who had been chef in the largest hotel in Paris before the war.

All the prisoners were well clothed. Once a week, socks, underwear, soap, towels and blankets were issued to them, and every week the barracks and equipment were fumigated. They were given the best of medical attention.

Besides all this, they were allowed to work at their trades, if they had any. All the carpenters, cobblers, tailors and painters were kept busy, and some of them picked up more change than they ever did in Germany, they told me. The musicians formed bands and played almost every night at restaurants and theaters in the town. Those who had no trade were allowed to work on the roads, parks, docks and at residences about the town.

Talk about dear old jail! You could not have driven the average prisoner away from there with a 14-inch gun. I used to think about them in Brandenburg, when our boys were rushing the sentries in the hope of being bayoneted out of their misery.

While our cargo was being unloaded I spent most of my time with my grandmother. I had heard still more about the cruelty of the Huns, and made up my mind to get into the service. Murray and Brown had already enlisted in the Foreign Legion, Brown being assigned to the infantry and Murray to the French man-of-war *Cassard*. But when I spoke of my intention, my grandmother cried so much that I promised her I would not enlist—that time, anyway—and made the return voyage in the *Virginian*. We were no sooner loaded in Boston than back to St. Nazaire we went.

Gunner Depew, on board the French dreadnaught *Cassard*, gives the *Pollux* a sample of the marksmanship for which the American gunners are famous. Then he leaves his ship and goes into the trenches. Don't miss the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Something to "Greet" About.

Persons casting about for something to worry about may take pleasure in recalling from "The Little Minister" the manner in which self-styled simple folk in Scotland regard the northern lights—"the devil's rainbow." Waster Lunny called it. "I saw it six times in July month," he said, "and it made me shut my een. You was out admiring it, domine, but I can never forget that it was seen in the year '12 just afore the great storm. I was only a laddie then, but I mind how that awful wind stripped a' the standing corn in the glen in less time than we've been here at the water's edge. It was called the dell's bosom. My father's himmost words to me was, 'It's time enouch to greet, laddie, when you see the aurora borealis.'" Waster Lunny was "greeting" o'er the drought then, but twelve hours later the Quaharity was out of its banks, washing out the corn and with a year's store of wool on its crest was dashing out to sea.

Moan by "Earthlight."

When the crescent of the new moon appears in the west the phenomenon called "the old moon in the young one's arms" is often observed. Partly embraced by the horns of the crescent is seen the whole round orb of the moon. The cause of this appearance is that the "earthlight" upon that part of the moon not reached by the sunshine is sufficiently brilliant to render it faintly visible to our eyes.

Harnesses Sun's Rays.

An experimenter in the Royal College of Science in Toronto claims that he has found a way to harness the sun's heat to industrial tasks of almost any nature. For instance, by his experiments with mirror combinations he has focused reflected rays so as to melt a bar of lead at a temperature below freezing to a depth of one and a half inches in 48 seconds.

Intended No Harm.

Lucy was playing up on the lawn with her little puppy when the dog next door came up wagging his tail in a most friendly way. The little pup stuck his tail between his legs and started for the house. Lucy caught him, saying: "Don't be afraid, pup; he won't hurt you; he just come over to introduce himself."

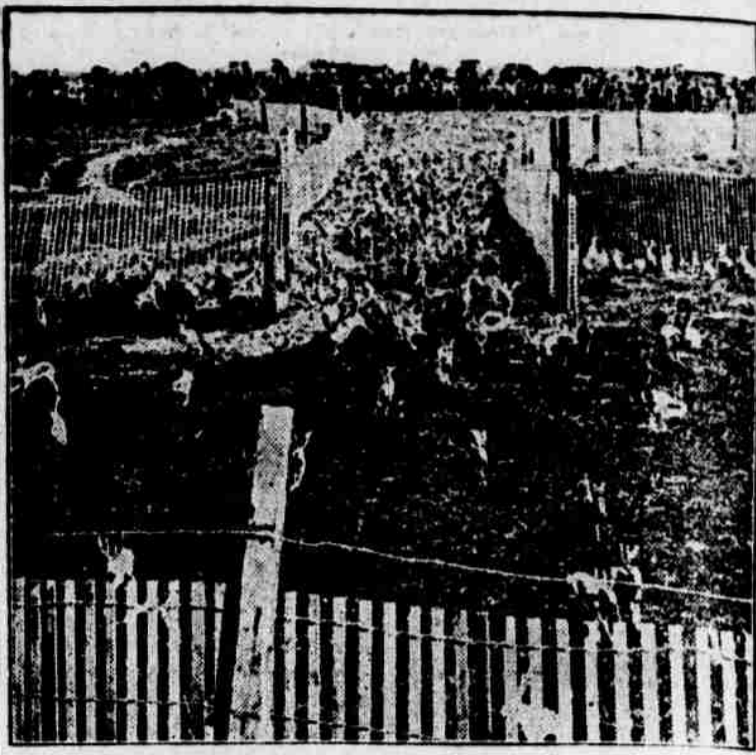
Necessity.

A national exhibition was recently held in Berlin to popularize the use of paper clothing.

Helping the Meat and Milk Supply

(Special Information Service, United States Department of Agriculture.)

WILD RABBITS FOR MEAT AND FUR.



The Organized Rabbit Drive Protects Crops and Conserves Meat.

WILD RABBIT IS VALUABLE ASSET

Each Year Fully 200,000,000 of Little Animals Are Killed in United States.

FUR IS IN STRONG DEMAND

Value of Pelts Will Be Further Increased This Year on Account of Embargo Placed on Importation of All Skins.

The game commission of Pennsylvania estimated that in 1917, during the open season of 45 days, fully 3,500,000 rabbits were killed and utilized for food in that state. Making due allowance for overestimates in only one state, it is safe to say that each year fully 200,000,000 wild rabbits are killed in the United States. Many of them are jack rabbits, the majority of which have been utilized in the past. If all the rabbits killed were consumed, they would represent between 200,000 and 300,000 tons of valuable food, according to specialists of the United States department of agriculture.

The skins of these wild rabbits are a valuable asset, as they can be used for hatters' fur and glue. The war has caused a great shortage of hatters' fur from other countries. Last winter the price of native rabbit skins rose steadily from 20 or 25 cents to 70 and even 90 cents a pound at the close of the season. It takes 6 to 8 dry skins of the cottontail rabbit to make a pound. This makes the present value of the pelt of the smaller rabbit 10 to 12 cents and that of the jack rabbit 18 to 20 cents. These values will be further increased because of the embargo that has been placed on the importation of furs.

Save the Skins.

If proper measures are taken to insure the collection of skins the shortage of hatters' fur can be largely met by the wild supply. If all households that use rabbits for food and every marketman who dresses rabbits can be induced to save and dry the skins the present home production of hatters' fur can be more than doubled next season. The prices pay well for the slight labor needed to prepare them for market. Men can make excellent wages skinning the jack rabbits that are destroyed as pests in our Western states, and that have hitherto been wasted. At only 10 cents each the skins of the 200,000,000 rabbits killed in the United States have a value of \$20,000,000.

The organized drive, in which every rabbit caught may be utilized as food, is being encouraged wherever practicable as a means of conserving meat and protecting crops from their depredations.

While the fur of our wild rabbits does not make the finest hats, and the manufacturers of these are dependent on nutria, muskrat, and beaver clippings, the use of these finer hats will probably decline and they will be replaced by those made of rabbit fur. There is a strong demand for all the rabbit skins that can be collected in America.

Kansas Firm's Contribution.

Last winter a firm in Kansas dressed and shipped 157,000 jack rabbits, or 275 tons of meat. The skins were all saved and marketed, making an important item in the profits. A large extension of the business is planned for the coming season, and it is expected that many similar enterprises will be developed in various parts of the West. These activities will insure a much larger saving of jack rabbit skins than in the past.

CAN THE BUNNY

Bunny clubs have been started among women in Oklahoma to can the rabbits caught in the organized drives in sections of the state where great damage is done by the pests. One club in Buffalo puts up Buffalo bunny sausage which carries out the outside of the cans the following:

- Can the bunny
 - Save the money
 - Help to win the war
 - With bread and meat
 - And lots to eat
 - The end will not be far.
- Slice him up
 - Spice him up
 - Grind him very fine
 - Fry him brown
 - Pack him down
 - Good for any time.

Trap for Rabbits.

Set a 12 by 6-inch "tee" sewer tile with the long end downward, and bury it so that the six-inch opening at the side is below the surface of the ground. Connect two lengths of six-inch sewer pipe horizontally with the side opening. Second-grade or even broken tile will do. Cover the joints with soil so as to exclude light. Provide a tight removable cover, such as an old narrow disk, for the top of the large tile. The projecting end of the small tile is then surrounded with rocks, brush or wood, so as to make the hole look inviting to rabbits and encourage them to frequent the den. Rabbits, of course, are free to go in or out of these dens, which should be constructed in promising spots on the farm and in the orchard. A trained dog will locate inhabited dens. The outlet is closed with a disk of wood on a stake, or the dog guards the opening. The cover is lifted and the rabbits captured by hand.

These traps are especially suitable for open lands and prairies, where rabbits cannot find natural hiding places. They are permanent and cost nothing for repairs from year to year. If it is desired to poison rabbits, the bait may be placed inside these traps, out of the way of domestic animals of birds. This trap also furnishes an excellent means of obtaining rabbits for the table, or even for market.

Fall Feeding for Sheep.

Stubble and stalk fields may well form the principal means of sustenance for the breeding flock in the fall if they are used before the rains injure their feeding value. Fence strips in plowed fields may also give good grazing for a few days. Clover and grass pastures may well be left until the stubble and stalk fields have been used. For regions where the winters are open, a heavy stand of well-cured bluegrass will help very much in carrying the flock through the winter in good condition. Green ryegrass pastures in the late fall give considerable succulence and furnish exercise for the flock. In the South velvet beans will be found of great help in carrying the flock into January.

Plenty of Muskrats.

A sufficient number of muskrats to meet demands for their fur are trapped from marshes and swamps that are, for the most part, unprotected, millions of skins being taken each year. So long as the natural breeding places remain undisturbed and reasonable closed seasons are maintained there is little likelihood of the numbers of the animals being depleted, according to biologists of the United States department of agriculture. With adequate protection in the breeding season and with the present habitat available, from 10,000,000 to 12,000,000 pelts can be taken in North America annually without depletion of the supply.

It is a good plan to wean the lambs gradually; this will eliminate having to milk the ewes and the lambs will do much better.