

# Y. M. C. A. WOMAN UNDER FIRE OF GERMAN GUNS

Boston Young Woman Has an Unusual Experience.

## IN TRENCH WITH SOLDIERS

In Midst of Fierce Bombardment for Four Hours—Keeps Her Nerve During Storm of Noise and Bursting Metal—Boche Flings About Everything He Has into Village—Orderly Saves Colonel's Life.

By MAXIMILIAN FOSTER.

An experience not often shared by women in this war was that of Miss Mary O. Clark of Boston, Mass., now a Y. M. C. A. canteen worker in France. For no less than four hours Miss Clark was in the midst of a fierce bombardment by the Boche guns, part of the time lying with a detachment of American soldiers in an open trench. In the same attack later two Red Triangle workers, Dr. John Brownlee Voorhees of Hartford, Conn., and E. W. Ballew of Lexington, Ill., were hit by shell splinters and severely injured.

The village where Miss Clark's canteen is situated is in an advanced position close to the front line trenches. Until the day in question, a Sunday, the Huns had not paid much attention to this particular part of France behind the lines. However, in this particular part of the war zone, the Toul sector, there is no telling where his morning's hate will break forth. In this case, apparently, he was only bidding his time to wipe this particular village off the map.

The day dawned brilliant with sunshine. Shortly after 8 a. m. Miss Clark was getting ready for breakfast when the first shell sailed in over the roof tops, and landed in a dump-heap not more than 50 yards or so from her open window. The first crash did not startle the Y. M. C. A. worker. She looked out just in time to see the dump-heap fly skyward, descending presently in showers of brick, dirt, farmyard and other debris.

A second shell followed immediately, upon which pandemonium broke loose in the hamlet. The detachment of American troops billeted there came pouring out of doorways and windows, all intent on seeing what was going on; and with them came a few scattering French peasants, the remnant of the village's former population.

Time to Move.

As the shells by this time were falling thickly among the roofs and alleys near by, Miss Clark decided it was time to seek some less exposed position. Accordingly she locked her trunk, and picking up what small valuables she had with her, she made her way into the street.

A French peasant was just passing. Miss Clark recalled that the woman was wasting no time, but as she saw Miss Clark she paused long enough to inquire: "Are you afraid, Miss?" Miss Clark hasn't decided yet whether she was at that exact instant; however, she shook her head, when the French woman, bidding her to follow, made off down the village street.

Halfway to the end of the street the Y. M. C. A. worker encountered the colonel in command of the billeted troops. He and the regimental chaplain were looking out of their quarters, watching the bursting shells. However, as there was a lull now, they invited Miss Clark to join them at breakfast.

The party was hardly seated when again uproar broke loose. At the same time regimental messengers brought the news that already there were several casualties in the town. Things began to happen then, one after another. A shell pitching over the roof tops laid waste a near-by house, and was followed immediately by another still nearer. "You'll have to move out of here," the colonel told Miss Clark. Down the street, just beyond the town limits, was a refuge trench laid out for just this emergency, and the colonel directed Miss Clark toward it. Once she was headed in the right way, the colonel and the chaplain went off to see what was taking place elsewhere.

Takes Chance With Soldiers.

It was evidently much. Miss Clark, when she reached the trench, found it already occupied. A section of troops, acting under orders, was standing there on the alert; and after a gasp at the sight of a woman, an American woman into the bargain, there in the midst of that shell fire, they made haste to help Miss Clark into the trench. They even tried to tuck her into a sheltered corner in one

of the zig-zags, the man there giving up his place. Miss Clark, however, would not let him move; and taking her chance with the soldiers, she stood up among them.

Shells were again falling everywhere. Presently a runner brought in the news that the regimental chaplain had been killed, and that the colonel's orderly had been slain also while standing beside the colonel. A later runner brought the report that the orderly had saved the colonel's life by leaping in front of his commander when the shell burst.

The fire now was a mixture of shrapnel and high explosive shells. Walls were falling everywhere, and when one

of the big ones landed there was an eruption of brick, stone and thing that filled the surrounding landscape.

"What did you do?" Miss Clark was asked.

"Do? Why, when the soldiers ducked, I ducked too. There was nothing else to do."

Woman Keeps Her Nerve.

Occasionally there were brief lulls in the firing. None of them lasted more than a few minutes, and each evidently was a trick on the part of the Hun to entice the unwary into the open. At any rate, the firing would cease for two or three minutes, when it would burst upon the town again in a sudden deluge of flame and flying steel. Anyone caught out at this instant was almost certain to suffer.

Miss Clark does not profess she wasn't frightened. That storm of noise and bursting metal would have frightened anyone. However, the soldiers all agree that the woman "Y" worker kept her nerve during all the trying ordeal. Now and then a shell would fall close to the trench in which she was standing, but fortunately none fell into the trench itself. Again and again, though, the soldiers in the trench begged Miss Clark to crawl into the comparative safety of the angle, but this she refused to do. "I'm here, I'm a woman, and I'm useless. I'll stay where I am," was the reply the soldiers say she made.

And there she stayed. However, along toward noon the bombardment abruptly ended, and after waiting to make sure it had, the soldiers urged Miss Clark to make her escape. As the cloud of smoke and dust settled, she climbed out of the trench, and made her way along the now ruined street to the regimental headquarters. There was ruin everywhere along the way. The Boche, evidently in a fury at the punishment our boys had inflicted on him a day or so before,

had flung about everything he had into the village. The main part of it, of course, was shrapnel and medium caliber shells, but mixed in with this were a number of the huge Austrian high explosive shells. Where they fell they had wreaked devastation to the surrounding walls. Stone and brick filled the street; and there were craters where the high explosives had landed.

No Place for a Woman.

At headquarters Miss Clark found the colonel. He had a gash on his cheek, a memento of the shell that had killed his orderly; and as he saw Miss Clark his relief was evident. Division headquarters, he announced, had wired over, ordering her to be removed from the town at the first opportunity. Besides the chaplain and the colonel's orderly there had been other casualties; so that it manifestly was not a place for a woman. Even though Miss Clark protested at being made to leave her charge, army orders are inexorable; and that afternoon a Y. M. C. A. car took her back to a town out of range of the German guns.

"It was pretty thrilling," said Miss Clark. "I shall never forget the sight of those huge shells landing everywhere about me, raking down the walls of the houses I had come to know. Neither can I forget the sound the shells made when they came roaring toward us, then burst. The worst part of the experience was when our boys began dropping into the trench with an account of the casualties. 'You ought to see So-and-So, his head's shot off,' they'd report; or 'They got So-and-So; I helped to scrape him up.' One or two of the victims they told about I knew personally, and it was dreadful to learn they had gone."

Miss Clark, in spite of what she went through, is not any the worse for her experience, but in spite of her appeals, the Y. M. C. A. has decided to have her work in a less exposed position.

## BULL ATTACKS SOLDIER

Man on Scout Duty at Training Camp Has Strange Experience.

J. Y. Maxwell of Elmira, on scout duty at the University of Oregon officers' training camp, brought his knowledge of bayonetting into play the other day without waiting for an instructor to call "enemy" when charged by a bull while crossing a pasture.

The five companies were advancing on a mile front to the rifle range three miles from the university for machine-gun practice at the time of the incident. Maxwell was a scout for Company D. He was taking part in a maneuver in "enemy country." Suddenly he saw the bull coming. He stepped to one side and as the animal rushed at him, struck it across the nose with his gun, breaking the stock of the weapon. The bull did not attack a second time.

## TOUGH TO BE FAT

Man Gives Up Pound a Day to Get Into Marines.

A pound of flesh a day for 15 days will be the sacrifice made to his country by Jack Charles Read of San Francisco.

Read attempted to enlist in the United States marines, but was told that he was 15 pounds overweight. He immediately declared that he would remove the 15 pounds of fatty substance within 15 days by taking a special course in dieting and exercises prescribed by his physician and would then reappear at the Marine corps recruiting station.

"Shylock didn't have a thing on the marines," declared Read. "He only wanted one pound of flesh—these fellows want fifteen. Gee, it's tough to be a fat man."

## Fashions in Humor.

A lady once suggested "Alice in Wonderland" to a steady-going matron. The volume was soon returned with thanks and with the explanation that what was wanted was something "light," not all those puzzles. Unquestionably, there are fashions in humor.

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