

GUNNER DEPEW

By

ALBERT N. DEPEW

Ex-Gunner and Chief Petty Officer, U.S. Navy
Member of the Foreign Legion of France
Captain Gun Turret, French Battleship Cassard
Winner of the Croix de Guerre

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CHAPTER XVIII—Continued.

As we went ashore, the bombardment began, and we were not only under fire of spit, if you could call it that, but also of rocks and bottles and sticks and most anything that could be thrown.

All the time, "lest you forget," we had no shoes, and no clothing—only what had once been our underwear. It is all right to be a Coney Island scowder and pose around in your bathing suit in the drifts, because you are in good condition, and last but not least because you do not have to do it for yourself.

We marched us into a field where there was nothing much but guns and ammunition and snow, and set us up in something like skirmish formation. We stood there for some time, and then we saw a lot of Hun with the new look rifle coming toward us, yelling like they did in battle, and we thought sure we were being used for practice targets. It is a good thing they halted and stopped yelling when they did, or we would have started for them to fight it out, for we were not the kind that likes to be hit with a rifle bullet.

We were not the kind that likes to be hit with a rifle bullet, and we would have been glad for a chance to get a few of them before they got us. But they did halt, and then surrounded us, and drilled us away through swamps and woods and shallow water or slush. The women followed, too, and there were plenty of bricks and spit left. Women as well as men are the same in the world, they say. I wonder? You can just picture the women of, say, Rockland, Me., following a crowd of German prisoners that way, can't you? Not! But of course the women of Rockland are pretty crude—no kultur at all—and Gott never commissioned President Wilson to take the lid off the stable pot for him.

They drilled us along the docks, and it looked as though the whole German navy was tied up at Swinemunde. We saw many of the ships we had heard about, among them being the famous Vulcan, the mother-ship for submarines. There were many sails for rigging the docks, and they gave the women a hand with their days' work. They had more better with a brick, but they had more ammunition when it came to spitting. One of them tripped a young boy by the name of Kelly, and as you would never doubt, Kelly picked up a rock and crashed the sailor with it. He was then bayoneted twice in the left leg. We began singing then, our popular favorite, "Pack up your troubles," etc., and when they heard us, how the swine started!

Then they drilled us past the German soldiers' quarters. The men were at rifle practice, and I guess all of us thought how handy we would be as targets. But when we got near them, they quit practicing and crowded around us yelling: "Raus! Zurück!"

Finally we got to the top of the hill, and were halted near the barracks while an officer read the martial law of Germany to us. At least we thought maybe that was it.

Finally they let us into the barracks, and the first thing we saw was a great pile of hay. That looked good to us, and we made a rush and dived into it. But the Hunns told us to take the hay and throw it in the middle of the road. They had to use force before we would do it. Finally we gave in, however, and started to carry it. Some of the young boys were crying, and I do not blame them much.

But one of the boys tried to hide some of the hay behind a box and was caught doing it, and two sentries clouted him from one end of the barracks to the other. His nose was broken and his face mached to blood. But there was nothing we could do, so we just wandered up and down the barracks, about as we did between decks on the Moewe, trying to keep warm.

While this marathon was going on, we heard a whistle blown very loudly, and when we looked out we saw a wagon piled up with old iron. Then we were told to form single file, walk out to the wagon and each get a can for himself. Each man had to take the first can he laid his hands on, and many of us got rusty ones with holes in them. So that about half an hour later, when we received our barley coffee, and all we had to drink was the cans, lots of the men had to drink theirs almost in one gulp or lose half of it.

The barracks were very dirty and smelled horribly, and the men were still not even half clothed. We all looked filthy, and smelled that way, and where the sentries had rubbed off, we were very pale. And all of us were starved looking.

About eleven o'clock that morning the whistle blew again, and we came out and were given an aluminum spoon and a dish apple. Then we cheered up and saw corned beef and cabbage for ourselves. An hour later we were given a can of barley coffee, and all we had to drink was the cans, lots of the men had to drink theirs almost in one gulp or lose half of it.

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It was awful to see the men when we got back to the barracks. Some of the boys from the Georgic, not much over twelve years old, were almost crazy, but even the older men were crying many of them. It was nothing but torture all the time. They opened all the windows and doors in the barracks, and then we could not heat the heat with our bodies. When we started to move around, to keep warm, they had a few shots at us. I do not know who they hit anyone or not, but we had got so that we did not pay any attention to things like that. But it stopped us, and we had to stand still. The Hunns thought we would take the rifles from the sentries and use them, too.

I never saw a yellower bunch of people in my life. I do not mean people. I wish I could publish what I really mean.

We had stoves in the barracks, but no coal or wood to burn. There were many boxes piled up there, but they belonged to the Germans. We would have burned them if we could, but the Germans made us carry them across the road. They weighed about 150 pounds apiece, and we were so weak that it was all two men could do to lug them. And we had to carry them; they would not let us roll them.

We were so cold and hungry that even that exercise did not warm us.

About 2:30 the whistle blew again, and the Hunns picked out a few men and took them down the road. We could not figure out why, but they came back about three o'clock, all of them with bread in their arms. They were chewing away on it when they had a chance. Whenever the sentries were not looking they would bite at it like a fish going after a worm. Each man carried five loaves.

When they got in the barracks the sentries made them put the bread down on the floor, and then, with their bayonets, the sentries cut each loaf once down the center lengthwise and four times across, which meant ten men to a loaf about the size of an ordinary ten-cent loaf in this country. They gave each of us a piece a little larger than a safety-match box.

The bread was hard and dark, and I really think they made it from trees. It had just exactly the same smell that the dirt around trees has.

We filed past the sentries single file to get our ration of this mud, and there was no chance of getting in line twice, for we had to keep on filing until once down the center lengthwise and four times across, which meant ten men to a loaf about the size of an ordinary ten-cent loaf in this country. They gave each of us a piece a little larger than a safety-match box.

This cabbage soup was a great idea. We called it shadow soup, because the boys claimed they were ill by hanging a cabbage over a barrel of water and letting the shadow fall on the water. We pretended, too, that if you found any cabbage in it, you could take your dish back for a second helping. But I never saw anybody get more than one dishful. All it was, was just spoiled water.

We tried to go to sleep that night, but there were so many sentries posted in the barracks that we were not sick were wounded—that I do not think a man of us really slept. After a while I asked a sentry if I could go outside for a minute, but for some reason he would not let me. I had different ideas about it, so I stood around near that door, and when he turned his back out I went and around the corner of the barracks.

But one of the sentries there saw me and blew his whistle, and a guard of eight came up from somewhere and grabbed me. I tried to explain, but it was no use, because every time I said a word it meant another swat over the ear, so finally I went and around the corner of the barracks.

Then they drilled me through the windows, and laughed and jeered at us, but by this time we were so used to it that we did not mind much. Only now and then some fellow would get all he could stand, and either talk back or make a pass at somebody. Then he would get his—either a bayonet through the arm or leg, or a crash on the head with a gun butt.

After an eighteen hour ride, without food or drink, we arrived at Neustrelitz. It was raining as we pulled in. As we went up the grade to the town we could see lights about a mile away, and we figured that that was the camp. The rain stopped and we remained in the cars for some time. Then, after a while, we knew our new guards were coming; long before we could see them, we could hear the racket they made. Somehow a German cannot do anything shipshape and neat, but always has to have a lot of noise, and running around, and general confusion. Four-footed swine are more orderly in their habits than the Hunns.

When they came up, we were roused from the cars and drilled up the road to the camp. When we got near the German barracks we were halted and counted again, and made to stand there for at least an hour after they had finished counting us, shivering like leaves. At last they placed us in the barracks, and those who could, went to sleep.

There were about forty barracks in the Limey group at Neustrelitz and two large Zeppelin sheds. The barracks were just about like those at Swinemunde—at least, they were no better. Along the sides of the rooms were long shelves or benches, and every three feet were boards set in grooves. The shelves were what we had to sleep on, and the boards in the grooves divided them up so that only a certain number of men could use each bench.

The following morning we nearly dropped dead when the Hunns pulled in a large wagon full of clothing. We thought we never would have anything to wear but our underclothes. They issued to each man a pair of trousers, thin model, a thin coat about like the seersucker coats some people wear in the summer, an overcoat about as warm as if it had been made of clear-glass paper, a skull cap and a pair of shoes, which were a day's labor to carry around. Not one of us received socks, shirts or underwear.

The toe was cut from the right shoe of the pair I received, and as my wounds were in the right thigh and my leg had stiffened up considerably and got very sore, I got pretty nervous, because there was nothing but slush underfoot, and I was afraid I might lose my leg. So I thought that if I went to the commander and made a kick I might get a good shoe. I hesitated about it at first, but finally made up my mind and went to see him. I told him that it was slushy outside, and that the water ran through the hole in my shoe and made it bad for my whole leg, which was wounded. He examined the shoe, and looked at the open toe for some time, and I thought he was going to put up an argument, but would give in finally. He asked me what I wanted. I brought him to my feet. I yelped just all right. So they blew their whistles and the sentries in the barracks awakened two of the boys, who came and carried me in.

All the time the sentries were yelling, "Gott strafe England!" and "schweinhund!" until you would have thought they were in a battle. What their idea was I do not know.

The boys had a little water in a can, and one of them tore off part of the sleeve of his undershirt. So they washed the gash and bandaged it. But one, I was glad when I could see again. I was so tired and worn out that I went to sleep at once, and did not wake up until they were giving us our barley coffee next morning.

Our meals were just about the same as at Swinemunde—the bread was just as muddy, the barley coffee just as rank, and the soup just as cabbageless. The second morning after we had had our barley coffee, one of the sentries came to our barracks, which was number 7-B, and gave each of us an envelope and a sheet of writing paper. Then he told us to write to anybody we wanted to, after which he called on the door in big letters: KRIEGSGEFANGENLAGER.

And told us it was the return address. We were all surprised, and asked each other where we were, because we had thought we were in Neustrelitz. After a while, we learned that it means

German Prison Camps. A few days after I had been lashed to the barbed wire fence some of the German officers came to the barracks, and one of them spoke very good English said: "All of the neutrals who were on unarmed ships step out." Only a few stepped out.

Then he called for all the neutrals, and the Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Brazilians and Spaniards stepped out. But when I did, he said, "No, no Americans. Americans are not neutral. America supplies our enemies with food and ammunition." He raised his fist, and I thought he was going to hit me, but instead he gave me a shove that caused me to fall and get a little cut on the head. Then the sentries pushed me over with the British and the French.

After that they took the Norwegians, Swedes and Danes to separate barracks, and gave them clothes and blankets and the same rations as the German soldiers. When I saw this, I made a kick and said I was a neutral, too, and ought to get the same treatment as the Scandinavians. They took me to the officers again, kicked me about and swore at me, and the only answer I got was that America would suffer for all she had done for the allies. I was sent back to the barracks again.

The next day at about one o'clock they took us from the barracks and drilled us through the swamps. The men began to fall one by one, some crying or swearing, but most of them going along without a word. Those who went down were smashed in the head with rifle butts or belts.

Finally we arrived at a little railroad station, and had to stand in the snow for over an hour while the engine ran up and down the tracks looking for cars. When we finally got to the cars we were frozen stiff. I had hardly walk, and some of the boys simply could not move without intense pain.

They loaded twelve men into each compartment, and detailed a guard of six men to each car. The windows in the cars were all smashed, and everything about the cars was dirty.

Finally the train stopped at a town named Alt-Damm, and there was a mob of women and children around, cursing us with bricks and spit. They stoned us through the windows, and laughed and jeered at us, but by this time we were so used to it that we did not mind much. Only now and then some fellow would get all he could stand, and either talk back or make a pass at somebody. Then he would get his—either a bayonet through the arm or leg, or a crash on the head with a gun butt.

After an eighteen hour ride, without food or drink, we arrived at Neustrelitz. It was raining as we pulled in. As we went up the grade to the town we could see lights about a mile away, and we figured that that was the camp. The rain stopped and we remained in the cars for some time. Then, after a while, we knew our new guards were coming; long before we could see them, we could hear the racket they made. Somehow a German cannot do anything shipshape and neat, but always has to have a lot of noise, and running around, and general confusion. Four-footed swine are more orderly in their habits than the Hunns.

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The following morning we nearly dropped dead when the Hunns pulled in a large wagon full of clothing. We thought we never would have anything to wear but our underclothes. They issued to each man a pair of trousers, thin model, a thin coat about like the seersucker coats some people wear in the summer, an overcoat about as warm as if it had been made of clear-glass paper, a skull cap and a pair of shoes, which were a day's labor to carry around. Not one of us received socks, shirts or underwear.

"Well, my advice to you is to get a knife, cut a hole in the heel and let the water out." All the other swine in the room laughed very loud at this, and I guess this Fritz thought he was a great comedian. But somehow or other, it did not strike me so funny that I just had to laugh, and I was able, after quite a struggle, to keep from even snickering. It was a harder struggle than that to keep from doing something else, though.

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News of the Badger State

Madison—The industrial commission awarded \$3,600 compensation to Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Bakke against The International Harvester Corporation, in whose employ their son, slightly less than 18, was killed June 21, while engaged as electrician's helper. The child labor law provides that no one under 18 may be employed in electrical work, but the boy misrepresented his age. The commission ruled, however, that responsibility as to age of employes rests with the employer. The regular award is four times the sum contributed by a minor to the support of his parents, in the Bakke case, \$300, but due to the child labor law violation the sum was trebled.

Madison—The experiment in training of carrier pigeons for the army signal corps, carried on for five months by Prof. L. J. Cole, University of Wisconsin, under direction of the war department, has been completed. The signal corps sergeant, who assisted Prof. Cole, has taken the government pigeons to Fort Monroe. The training involved flights from various conditions, at various times of day or night, and always under careful timing and recording to obtain maximum results of the various methods undertaken.

La Crosse—One hundred and twenty-six indictments, for offense against practically all of the war measures passed by congress, were reported by the federal grand jury before Judge Sanborn, District Attorney, at La Crosse, Wis., on Dec. 10. The indictments include public any of the indictments until warrants are served, but indicated that the true bills charge violation of the espionage act. After reporting, the jury was not discharged, but was excused, subject to call. It was indicated they might be reconvened for other matters.

Sheboygan—The James H. Mead club, Sheboygan's finest recreation hall, has been thrown open to working girls. Since its organization two years ago the club has been exclusively for members. Classes in dancing, gymnastics, singing, reading and dramatics will be formed. Any girl is eligible on payment of 5 cents. Club fees are waived. Classes are held on different evenings, to enable girls to enroll in more than one class.

Oshkosh—Plans are to be made here for entertaining and welcoming all Oshkosh soldiers returning from the war. As some will come home singly and in small groups, it has been decided to have welcoming receptions at regular intervals, entertaining those arriving home in the intervals between receptions. In that way no one will be slighted and the honors will be bestowed upon all alike.

Beloit—The Jewish congregation of Beloit has purchased the property formerly used by the Bethlehem Norwegian Lutheran church and will have it for their synagogue. The new Jewish congregation includes twenty-two families. They have been contributing liberally for a long time to a church building fund and find it possible now to support a church.

Kenosha—Official telegrams from the war department announce that Lieut. Howard M. Morrissey, former well known Kenosha dentist, has been killed in action on the western front. He had been serving with the dental corps and was killed on Nov. 1. He was widely known among the alumnae of Marquette university in Milwaukee.

Eau Claire—James A. Smith, ranked among Wisconsin's foremost fire insurance men and conspicuous in the business life of Eau Claire for thirty years died here, aged 57 years. He was stricken by heart failure as he was entering his office. He is survived by his sister and an adopted daughter. He was a thirty-second degree Mason and an Elk.

La Crosse—Shot by a playmate, William Thompson, 8-year-old son of Alex Thompson of Virgo, is in a critical condition. A charge of shot lodged in his eye. The boy was playing "soldier" when he received his injury.

La Crosse—On the verge of leaving for France, Miss Ella Tibbitts of North Bend, a nurse, postponed her trip to attend Miss Rose McCauley, a nurse, who was stricken with influenza. The latter recovered, but Miss Tibbitts contracted the disease and died.

Marinette—Joseph Behnke of this city is reported severely wounded. Oct. 20, in France. He went overseas with Co E Three Hundred Fifty-third infantry, in the Eighty-ninth division.

Madison—Bernice Michelson, telephone operator, spread the alarm of fire throughout the city of Washington, by calling a fire alarm, for a member of his firm in which she was working. The post office and several business houses were destroyed at a loss of \$25,000.

Rhineland—For thirty years this city had a Chinese laundry. Yee Yoo has closed his establishment and disappeared. He informed a patron he had made enough money to supply him with small change for the rest of his life.

Janesville—Fire, believed to have started in the condensing machine in Dr. M. A. Cunningham's office in the Carle block, caused a loss of about \$100,000.

Madison—That the legislature may be asked to give free university tuition to the S. A. T. C. students for the remainder of the year was the suggestion made by officials.

Portage—Robert Whitlaw, aged 99 years, and a resident of Wisconsin since 1848, died here.

Madison—Adj. Gen. Orlando Holway held a conference here with former Wisconsin National Guard officers recently returned from France on the reorganization of the National Guard after the discharge of the soldiers.

Chippewa Falls—Judge John M. Becker, Green county probate court, convicted on a charge of violating the anti-trust laws, a patron he had made enough money to supply him with small change for the rest of his life.

Beloit—Mr. and Mrs. Moses Retter celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary here on Nov. 27. Mr. Retter is a retired clothing merchant, his wife was Miss Emma Corson. They were married at Monroe.



THE FISH SHOW.

"We can show them something worth looking at," said Mrs. Midnight Blue Fish.

"Whom do you mean?" asked Mr. Goldfish.

"People," said Mrs. Midnight Blue Fish.

"And what can we show them worth looking at?" asked Mr. Goldfish who wanted to find out everything.

"Well, the idea," said Mrs. Midnight Blue Fish. "Never have I known such a modest ask. We can show people ourselves. We can swim about and they can look at us. For this is a fish show you know. We're going to live in these aquariums forever. No! We're special fishes brought to show the people how rare and wonderful and expensive and beautiful we can be."

"And so that's why we are here, is it?" asked Mr. Goldfish, looking very staid and bright and happy now.

"The very reason," said Mrs. Midnight Blue Fish. "And let me tell you that it does my water heart good when I see society people looking at me with envy. I'll tell you a secret, Mr. Goldfish, only you mustn't tell Mrs. Goldfish for it might make her jealous and envious."

"Tell me the secret," said Mr. Goldfish, wiggling around.

"They call my color midnight blue and it's very fashionable this year. Ladies would give anything to have gowns made of the color I am."

"Doesn't it make you nervous?" asked Mr. Goldfish.

"Why?" asked Mrs. Midnight Blue Fish.

"They might try to use you."

"Oh, dear no," laughed Mrs. Midnight Blue Fish, splashing delightedly. "They never make dresses out of fishes—never, never. If we had but on us then they might, but as we haven't there is no need of worrying."

"And so you're fashionable and yet safe," said Mr. Goldfish. "Well, you are indeed fortunate."

"And my long black tail is much admired," Mrs. Midnight Blue Fish said.

Now at the fish show there were fishes of all colors and ages and from all countries. There were fishes from Siam, Brazil, India, Java, Mexico, China, Japan and from America.

Wausau—It is probable that Wausau will be served by an aerial mail route. Mayor John L. Sell has received a letter from the Aerial League of America asking the city to give consideration to the matter of establishing an aerodrome for the landing of planes.

Wausau—Mrs. Frank L. Gotschalk of this city, has received a letter from her husband, stating that he is now Capt. Gotschalk and is now commanding Company D, 128th infantry.

Kenosha—Kenosha is to have a new \$200,000 theater. It will be built by the Kenosha Amusement Co. at the corner of Main and South streets. The building will be a model theater, suited for all sorts of productions. It is to be completed before the winter of 1919.

Kenosha—Charles Nash, president of the Nash Motor company, who gave up his work to become production manager for the aircraft board, has announced his resignation from government board and his return to the personal management of the great Kenosha motor factory.

Madison—Whitney Seymour, associate editor of The Badger, is circulating a petition to submit to the regents, asking appointment to William H. Taft as successor to President Van Hise. The petition has been signed by more than 200 students.

Manawa—Walter B. Jones, a former resident of this vicinity, was elected to the Oregon state senate at the fall election.

Madison—State Banking Commissioner A. E. Kuhl of Madison has been limited to one and one-half percent of his salary for each member of his family until Jan. 1, by the United States food administration at Washington. He was charged with cashing a sugar certificate after the time had expired.

Manitowoc—The Barrett Boat Building plant has been closed and the discontinuance of work on government contracts is reported from Sturgeon Bay, Green Bay and Marine City.

Madison—Wisconsin state banks increased their resources almost \$25,000,000 in one year. In three weeks the increase was almost \$11,000,000. State banks in a year added over \$10,000,000 to holdings of government securities.

Janesville—Girls and young women from 15 to 24 years of age from all over the state attended the Older Girls' conference, held in this city on Nov. 29-30. Work in the organized Sunday school classes in the state was discussed.

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THE JOY OF MOTHERHOOD

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