

SUMMER DAYS IN THE AMERICAN SECTORS



There is such a thing as being tired; there is such a thing as being absolutely all in; and there is such a thing as going into battle so clean tickered out that, as soon as it's over—well, here's an instance.

In the gray dawn of the morning after the fight, a chaplain was walking over the scene of the encounter on a hunt for anyone, friend or foe, who might need help.

Loud snores attracted him. Sneaking cautiously in the direction of the sound—for even a Hun snore, the chaplain came upon a Marine lying in the shallow trench he had dug for himself with his head pillowed on level ground.

He was slowing the steps of the tired warrior. And he was so soundly asleep that he didn't know, and wouldn't have cared if he had known, that four dead Germans were sprawled letter-skelter across his legs.

Lying side by side at the dressing station, they were telling each other how they got there. Gas, shrapnel, gas and shrapnel, machine gun bullets—every refinement of war was represented in their disabilities.

Only a phone Artilleryman did not join in the exchange of experiences. Someone asked him why.

"Nothing happened to me," he said. "What are you doing here, then?"

"Sprung into a shell hole and sprained my ankle."

The attack had been made with a dash in the woods, and though it was not yet dawn, the Yanks were getting their breath in their new positions.

From his dugout which a late lamented Heine had borrowed, one of them spied something which another and less fortunate member of the bunch had regarded as so precious that he had carried it into the attack. It was a banjo, made out of a cigar box.

He crawled forward, crawled over dead men, got his hands on the trophy and retreated with it to his shelter. He was battered and two of the strings had snapped, but in another moment that whole nervous, frazzled group were humming as he played:

"I wanta go back, I wanta go back, I wanta go back to the farm."

High officers of a certain unit are holding forth in a recently evacuated barn. The stalls have been removed and tables improvised. The managers, ideal racks for maps and documents. The only traces of the previous tenancy are three birds' nests in the rafters.

When the Army moved in, the birds displayed some uneasiness, but this passed in a day or two. Now there are four youngsters in each of the bird nests. The three mothers and fathers fly proudly about sallying out through the windows now and then to return with a worm or two.

into their gas masks and rolling in the dirt to muss up their uniforms a bit. They have come up here into the jaws of death and the only thing they're afraid of is that some one will call them rookies."

The most valuable commodity at the front is matches. There comes a time when the last drop of gasoline or the last inch of tape is gone from the patient lighters, and the conservative fellows known to have matches can be counted on the fingers of one hand. These become the most popular men in the command.

There is a case on record of one regiment which went three weeks on 12 boxes of matches. When these were gone some bold soldier discovered a way of knocking the ball out of a cartridge, pouring out the powder and lighting it. This lasted until some of the officers began to wonder where their ammunition was going.

Then someone found that a tent rope, ignited at one end, would smoulder for hours. This worked until the supply sergeants found out about it.

Finally, a set of watches was arranged, and men were appointed whose duty it was to keep a light going for a certain number of hours. Everybody in the regiment is smoking without difficulty now, though there has been only that one carefully nourished light for a week.

This isn't a true story, but it's a favorite with the wags up front.

A German prisoner was being questioned, and the quiz finally led around to the whys and wherefores of the war. He was asked if he realized the great cause for which the Allies were fighting.

"Certainly," he said. "The Italians are fighting to whip the Austrians; the French are fighting for their country; the British are fighting for the seas; and the Americans are fighting for souvenirs."

Following a night skirmish, a Yank appeared at a field dressing station.

"Got a bullet in the leg," he declared. "Where?" asked the doctor.

"That's the funny thing about it," said the soldier. "I didn't feel it, and I can't find it, and I walked all the way here, but my leg is all blood from the hip down."

"Come into the light," commanded the doctor.

Investigation disclosed a punctured—and empty—cannon. The water had seeped down the soldier's breeches, and he had decided that it was blood.

A battery of French seventy-fives, pressed to its maximum, can put over an astonishing number of shells. On one occasion such a battery, manned by Americans, fired steadily into a German position for half an hour. When it subsided the Infantry advanced and captured a German officer and four soldiers, all of that were left of the German force.

The German officer was questioned by an intelligence officer. At the conclusion, he said:

ever, still bloom in the red ardor of June. The Yanks see that. Even dignified and not-to-be-trifled-with M.P.'s have been surreptitiously caught watering them.

"They were loading up an ambulance for the long ride back from the field hospital. The patients were being classified into the customary groups of litter and sitting-down cases."

"How about you?" they asked a doughboy who had some shrapnel in his hip. "Can you walk?"

"Sure," he answered. "How far is it?"

"About 40 kilometers."

He scratched his head as though he hated to be shown up. So they explained that they expected him to walk only as far as the ambulance.

The Y.M.C.A. man in the field frequently is the banker for his unit. One was standing alone at the side of a road five or six kilometers behind the lines.

All his pockets were obviously overtaxed, and his coat was bulging so that only the lowermost and topmost buttons could connect with their corresponding buttonholes.

"It's money," he explained. "Money and watches. I've got 17 watches and 20,000 francs. The boys got paid before they went in and most of them turned it over to me. I was going up with the outfit, but they asked me to stay behind and watch their valuables."

Y.M. men also keep an emergency fund for change. There is only one thing that a soldier needs change for: 10 miles from the nearest store.

"Lemme have 20 francs in silver, please," requests one private.

"Can you give a 10 franc note for this chicken feed?" asks another.

"Sure," says the Y.M. man. "How's the luck running?"

"Tough, ain't it?" he commented, as they lifted him into the ambulance.

"Oh, you're all right," said the corpsman cheerfully. "Just a couple of hanks of shrapnel in a couple of places where a couple of hanks of shrapnel can't do any harm."

"That ain't what's worrying me," explained the doughboy. "But here I am going back to a base hospital wounded, and the only Germans I've seen since I came to France were three prisoners."

They call them the Harrison's. There are six of them—the mother and five children, ranging from ten down to two. They still cling to the little farmhouse where the children were born, even though the Hun tide has swept to within less than four kilometers of their home.

them if the Yanks weren't there. And it would be lonesome for the Yanks if the Harrison's weren't there.

An Air Service major who hasn't yet earned his first service chevrons—it isn't his fault—has won two wound stripes to make up for it. He took gas for one and had a Boche bullet hit him in the air for the other. Incidentally, he had enlisted as a private, and to gain the double wings had to have the age limit raised. He is 40 years old, a Spanish war veteran, with a wound brought back from the Philippines as a trophy and a big game hunter.

To an American engineer sergeant serving with the British belongs the distinction of having been wounded on each of three successive days—within a little more than 24 hours, in fact.

He was injured one night at 11:58, shrapnel wounded the ambulance in which he was being carried back and left him another memento.

At last he reached the hospital. Soon after the following midnight the hospital was bombed. The Engineer sergeant became a three-star, three-stripe casualty.

The Hun then gave him up as hopeless. At any rate, they haven't followed him any further.

Except on the night after pay-day, the life of an M.P. in the S.O.S. is pretty soft. When he has directed two newly arrived officers to the mairie, told another where he can get a good beef steak and explained to a fourth that "for on consable le Bullin" does not mean "Here you can confer with a boot-maker," he calls it a day's work.

It is different up front. The M.P. on a shelled cross-road leads no life of Riley. He must be on his toes all the time, for he knows that if he misdirects

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Root camp with flap jacks for breakfast in the morning.

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A report that a quite unidentifiable man, garbed as an American lieutenant-colonel, was prowling through the territory south of Belleau Woods the other day, put every M.P. on his mettle and made utterly miserable the life of every bona-fide lieutenant-colonel who ventured to put his nose out of his quarters during the next few days.

In no time the rumor was current throughout the sector that one M.P. had tracked the villain and brought him in, that the villain aforesaid had turned out

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