ONE MAN AND A BATTLE 60 MILES LONG

When a battle stretches away along a front of more than 60 miles, when a battle which marks a turning point in the history of the world is still bitterly waging, no living man can tell its tale. But one who has been in the thick of it can tell at least what he did and saw and heard.

If on Saturday evening, along a narrow path that skirted a fantastic forest of giant trees not far from the Oureq, you had been watching from the opposite side of the ravine, you might have seen an unforgettable panorama of a regiment of Yankee Infantry. The slanting light of the setting sun was reflected by their helmets as this scarred and victorious regiment came trudging wearily, happily towards the first sleep it had known for three nights.

If you had sat down under the trees with any one of them or listened to this or that group telling its adventures till long after dark settled over the forest, you would have learned more of the battle than all the maps and pieces by military experts will ever tell you.

If by chance you had found yourself in Company K's chow line next a young sergeant from Framingham, Mass., who is the gas non-com of his outfit, and if later you had sat down with him to eat your slum, you might, with a little prodding, have drawn forth his rambling reminiscence of the 72 hours he had just lived through.

This, then, is the story of a sergeant who prefaced his tale by saying that, after all, he had not had much to do with the fight.

It was late Wednesday, just before sundown, that we knew we were going into an attack. The day before—that was Tuesday, the 16th, wasn't it?—we had suddenly pulled up stakes, piled into trucks and started off for somewhere, we didn't know where.

We were going along roads we didn't know through a countryside we'd never seen before. The boys were all singing and kidding because they thought, most of them, that they were going into a rest area. They wanted to do nothing in the world except sleep for about a week. Lord knows, they'd earned it.

We had traveled all that night and all the next day before we ran into some Frenchies, who fell on our necks. They told us there was to be a big advance the next morning and that we were going in, too. They told us it was to be an advance on a 50 kilometer front al the way from Soissons to Château-Thierry.

We laughed at those wild prophets, but a little farther on we saw a lot of French tanks trundling ahead as it they meant business. You should have heard the roar at the sight of them. You could hear the bunch passing the word along. "Oh, hell, there's going to be another party."

Armies Fill the Road

I don't think I can ever tell you what the roads were like that Wednesday night. It seemed to us as if all the soldiers from all the nations in the world were moving, moving, moving — somewhere. French lancers, French of many a uniform, Jasbos and doughboys, doughboys, doughboys—horses snorting, drivers coaxing, cursing, doughboys laughing—tanks, ammunition trains, ambulances, supply trains, mules, horses water carts, wheels, wheels, wheels, guns, guns, guns—all creeping along in the mud and the dark and the rain—all creeping over litle, rotten, twisting country roads that climbed hills and dipped down into valleys, roads all cut up by shell-fire, roads that hadn't been mended since Joan of Arc advanced along them.

There never was such a jam since the world began—all in darkness so black you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. We could hear, we could feel the nightmare confusion. We couldn't see it except when a flare of lightning lighted up the whole country just for a second and then went out and left the blackness blacker than ever.

I passed a colonel, a brigade commander, I think, fresh from a hospital in Paris, trying hard to have his car weave in and out through the traffic in the hopes he could regain his outfit in time for the attack. I heard young shavetails going crazy right before me because while they were carrying orders as to the placing of P.C.'s and other eleventh hour regimental dispositions, their sidecars seemed to move like snails — did move like snails.

Going Over on the Double

One outfit got held up several hours, had to stand there fretting and fuming and cursing, and then later had to double time across a pitch-black country to get to the front line in time to go over winded with the bunch.

We were hungry and thirsty. When a whole army races over the hills and far away, they are pretty apt to get separated from their kitchens. I will say that some of the outfits got hot breakfast in the front line Friday morning. That means the supply boys worked like the devil, I can tell you. But that Wednesday night we had had nothing except iron rations since we started, and hard-tack sure makes you crazy with thirst.

In the woods that evening—a sort of wild enchanted forest, it was, like the places in Andersen's fairy tales—we got a little rest and a little water. It came from the water carts and we filled our canteens. Those of us that had any sense kept a little for use later on. It was just as well, for there were only two wells in all the sector we took. I was pretty busy checking up the gas masks. That was my job, you know. A good many of the bunch had lost theirs. They always do. I had none to give them, so I confiscated—well, stole—some French gas masks and passed them around.

Even Light Packs Go

It must have been about midnight when the order came to chuck everything, even our light packs, and start on. That shows what a hurry we were in.

I don't remember much about that part, we were so tired. There's no way I can tell you how tired we were. I saw one lieutenant, game as he could be, stumble and sink down three times before they finally laid him out on the side of the road. Just exhaustion, that's all. I could see the major himself—he was wounded afterwards — standing in the ditch by the road passing out ammunition with his own hands. There's a prince for you—that major.

I remember we marched along the roads in darkness and wondered when the artillery preparatoin would begin. We knew the guns were on hand because we could see them, big guns, powerful, silent and waiting. We never guessed there wasn't going to be any artillery preparation at all. A little later we met the French guides, waiting there to lead us to our positions.

I was with the captain, and was supposed to keep in touch with him from then on. Dawn was just beginning when we came up out of the last ravine and deployed along a wheat field.

We had studied the maps as best we could by candle light. If we could only have had eight hours for a little breathing spell and a chance to study the maps and the country ahead of us! But surprise was the game, and when that's your game, there's no time to lose, no time to put things in order, no time for anything at all.

Zero was 4:35. The captain looked at his watch when we got in line. It was 4:25. We had ten minutes. All along the line as far as you could see, the Germans were signalling for artillery, blue flares and white and pink. It stretched away so far I knew that those Frenchies had been right. It must be a big advance, an advance all along the line.

All along our platoon you could hear the bunch chuckling and whispering and getting set—and some of them were singing ever so softly. I remember hearing "Fair, Harvard." Yes, and "Old Nassau." And a lieutenant was humming "My Little Girl."

Then, at 4:30 sharp, the barrage opened. From the sound of it, I think all the guns, big and little, French and American, from Soissons to Château-Thierry went off in the same moment. They have told me since that that is just what happened, that the watches were synchronized.

These guns spoke as if a single hand had fired a single-gun—the biggest gun the world had ever known. I have been under the guns or within sight of them every day and every night since March—or pretty nearly. I thought I knew what gunfire was but I never knew real gunfire before.

One Minute More

It was 4:34. I could see the captain crossing himself and saying a little prayer to himself. Come to think of it, he wasn't a Catholic, as far as I know. But it doesn't matter. I suppose we all crossed ourselves—mentally.

And then 4:35! Zero! The time to begin! And we began.

Oh, boy, you should have seen the way that platoon went over the top — as pretty a line as ever you saw. I could hear the sergeant swearing like a demon at them. "Right dress, there, you dirty, lousy doughboys; right dress, or I'll drill your damned feet off when I get you back in camp! Right dress!"

And so we went, with a rolling barrage to clear the path.

I don't know much what happened next, except the rush and only Germans hiding in dugouts, Germans at machine guns trying to stop us.

A ravine was our first objective, and we landed there breathless and not much the worse for wear. A moment later and I could hear the colonel's voice behind us: "Is this Company K? Good work—great work—keep it up!"

We kept it up—ten kilometers before midnight. Maybe it was 12. Things aren't very clear in my mind—the order of things. You must remember we had already been two nights without sleep and almost without food and water.

I circulated a good deal. That was my job, to keep in touch with the captain and do liaison work for him each time he established a P.C. I did—until they killed him. Then we sort of wandered about doing what we could.

It was in the second rush, through a rotten swamp, that I lost my cane—my lucky cane. A French Jane had given it to me, and I never was without it. I had carried it on all our battlefields. I carried it this time—and lost it. I can hear the lieutenant now. "Sergeant," he said, with a funny look, "where's your cane?" And I knew what he was thinking and he knew what I was thinking.

It couldn't have been much after six when I got my first prisoners—four of them lying limp on a pile of wire, playing 'possum. I just tapped one of them on the shoulder. "Come on, Heinie." And they came—like lambs.

Once, when an open wheat field was so crowded with our bunch that you couldn't see the wheat, the Boche planes came after us—came 18 strong, I think, and shot us up pretty badly.

Roping a Major General

We opened up on them with our rifles, and we brought two down. Yet they said the day of the rifle was over! I haven't any sharpshooter's medal, but I joined up with a bunch that was taking pot shots at some machine gunners in the woods, and the old rifles seemed to work pretty well.

That night there was gas in a town we took, and that meant plenty of work and some waste hours spent in the masks. It was the next morning, Friday morning, that we captured the major general. They say that's what he was. I don't know myself.

I say it was we who captured him. As a matter of fact, when a dozen of us finally got down into his dugout, which was deep as a well with several flights of steps, there were French soldiers from three different outfits, and there were three of our regiments represented in the dozen. That shows you how things got mixed up in that pell-mell rush.

He was very tall—the general—and he was standing with his great cape drawn around him when we stumbled in on him. He rose and went up the steps and out without saying anything.

As he walked along, a little doughboy sitting by the roadside was smoking the makin's. The big prisoner stopped dead short, reached under his cape, drew out a gold cigarette case, put a cigarette to his lips, bent over and took a light from the doughboy. Then, with never a word, he stepped back into line and marched away. The doughboy was left sitting by the road, his cigarette hanging loose between his fingers, his mouth wide open.

A Stray German Shell

It was that day, Friday, that we passed the German aviation field with the hangars all burned in the wake of their retreat. It was that afternoon, in a little town ten kilometers from where we started, that a stray German shell caught a group of us standing in the little court.

It was about 4 in the afternoon, and the officers and men of several outfits had come together to hold a hurried council. Some of us—15, I think—were killed outright. Some were wounded, badly wounded. Some of us were merely knocked flat. I was merely knocked flat.

But the major was hurt and the captain—my captain and one of the best men that ever walked—they killed him. He didn't suffer, I think. He was conscious only a minute before he died. But he knew me. "Goodbye, Jack," he said—just that—and died, with me bending over him. He had been a wonderful friend to me.

We didn't have much time to think about it—those of us who weren't hurt, for there were plenty who were, and they had to be carried away and patched up. You can guess how dazed and how rushed we were.

Another Helmet in Salvage

The doctor at the first aid station thought I was wounded, and it was not until then that I found there was blood splashed all over my face—the blood of my friends. Yet there was one little thing that happened that I noticed under all the stress. It sticks in my mind now.

Up on the roof of a little building facing on that court, a Signal Corps private was stringing a wire, and a pal of his was feeding him the wire from the ground below. When the shell fell, it knocked the ground man against the wall, but part of it struck the one on the roof with such force that it knocked off the back half of his steel hat—split it clean and knocked it off. He himself wasn't hurt. He was merely dazed.

Three minutes later I saw him sti sitting on the roof holding the end of th broken wire in his hand. "Well," he called down to his side-kick: "I guess we'd better splice this wire." And he went on with his work.

Platoon All Over France

By this time our platoon was scattered pretty much over France. The lieutenant was gone and I had no captain to work for. There were so many strays about that we decided to form a platoon, and I took command of the queerest bunch of soldiers you ever saw—doughboys from several regiments, some French lancers who had lost their horses, and other soldiers in blue who seem to like the Yanks and like to work with them.

We got into position, but pretty soon a runner came with the news that 25 of the boys of my company had assembled, and that I must come and take charge. I got them some food—bread and tomatoes and coffee that the Red Cross or somebody had managed to get up that far. We set up a gas guard and let the bunch drop down for a little sleep—the first they had had in three whole days.

BACK FROM PATROL, HE'S A SECOND LOOT

Newly - Made Shavetails Find No Roses Strewn in Path

How would you feel if you had been out in No Man's Land all night as a sergeant in charge of a patrol; if you had been almost beaned by a couple of hand grenades flung at you by mistake by your own men; if they told you, on reaching your platoon headquarters way up for'ard, tired, dirty, and very much in favor of going to sleep right there, that there were "further orders" for you; and you found out that those orders made you—you, all fagged out and muddy and everything—into a real live second lieutenant?

The course of events just outlined above actually hapened to one of a batch of 1,200 odd newly appointed shavetails. Then, on top of that night, they made him march in full kit from 3:30 until 7:30 in the morning in order to reach a headquarters further back in time to get transportation and things to a place where he could get outfitted.

Another man took his place at dusk in an observation post up front. Soon after he was treated to a shower of Boche 77 shells, one kerplunking by him and his companions every three minutes. He was then a sergeant, and a newly made sergeant at that. He stayed a sergeant all of that anxious night—that is, as far as he knew. Then, when he crawled out the following morning and made his way to the P.C. he reported to, he was tagged and told, "You're a loot, you are; good work!" And oh, boy! Ain't it a grand and glorious feelin'?

Trained at Camp Upton

This particular batch of 1,200 odd sprouters of gold bars represent the product of the Third Officers' Training Camp, held at Camp Upton, back home, early this year. Nearly three-quarters of them were picked from the ranks of the troops training at Upton, some of the remainder being drawn from civil life. The latter class received the pay and allowances of privates, first class. It wasn't until June 3 that they were made sergeants, and not until a few days ago that their commissions came through.

They had a pretty fast record, also, in that the school ended on April 5, and on April 6 they set sail for France. It wasn't long after that they got into the line, and put to practical use the things they had learned in training camp. And, whether or not Fritzy was wise to what was going on, it is significant that, on the very day when they were called away on their last full-marching-order hike with rifles and all, Fritz attacked five times on the very front which they had just left.

All of Fritz's attacks, it may be added, were busted up in orthodox style by the American artillery.

BARGE LINE ON MISSISSIPPI

[By Cable to THE STARS AND STRIPES]

AMERICA, July 25.—A Government barge line will begin to operate on the Mississippi River in September. It will have 6 towboats and 20 barges, according to present plans, and will care for a million and a quarter tons of freight.

OLD O.D. MADE OVER FOR OUR PRISONERS

Torn, Stained Uniforms to Be Patched and Dyed for Boche

You remember that old uniform of yours that you turned in when you came out of the line—the old one, all over slum and tobacco stains on the front and grass stains on the rear, with the sleeve ripped when you tried to wrestle with your bunk mate and the pants torn when you were in too much of a hurry to get through the wire?

A sight, wasn't it? And you thought that when they handed you out a new one that you'd never see the old one again?

But you may, though. No, it won't be issued back to you or to any of your gang. When you see it again, it will be fairly well patched up, dyed green, and worn by a rather beery-weary looking person, presumably blond, who will be trudging along the road or working by the side of it with some others all rigged up the same way.

You will hardly know the old uniform. The blouse will have a large, stenciled "P.W." in the middle of the back The pants will have a large stenciled "P.W." covering the large and (presumably) unstenciled area beneath. And the "P.W." stands for——

You guessed it: "Prisoner of War."

TROUBLE HUNTERS SHOW THEIR WORTH WHEN DRIVE OPENS

Continued from Page 1

gaged doing it, were all picked specialists, men who had proved they could do anything under the sun in the trouble line before they left the States, and who were now proving that they could keep it up under conditions not exactly like those under which American trouble men had ever worked before.

They all volunteered for the work, and every man of them knew what it meant. They worked in pairs, and sometimes one, sometimes both, were struck at their task. The order in which they were to go out was on a roster, and the only difficulty was to prevent them from squeezing in ahead of their turns.

Flanked by Germans

Four Signal Corps men, a sergeant and a corporal among them, and 15 Infantrymen were in a front-line trench when the Germans came romping in on both sides. The 19 Yanks were aparently caught—flanked on both sides, with no means of escape in the rear.

The only clear spot was forward, out toward the river, from which the enemy was advancing. So the 19 went forward. They reached the shelter of a railway embankment and the Germans, 150 strong, occupied the trench.

The 19 were isolated, but they didn't intend to stay that way. They just left the embankment, charged their own occupied trench, and bagged the 150. A few seconds later they were leading the whole kit and boodle off to the rear.

$15,000,000 TO YALE

[By Cable to THE STARS AND STRIPES]

AMERICA, July 25.—John W. Sterling, whose name is hardly known to the present generation of New Yorkers, has left $15,000,000 to Yale. Governor Elihu Yale, whose name Yale took more than 200 years ago, gave the infant college only £900, or something under $4,500.

Mr. Sterling's bequest is one of the greatest lump gifts ever made to an American university.

Yale's productive funds in 1916 were less than $19,000,000.

Mr. Sterling organized the Canadian Pacific Railroad, and was personal attorney for H. H. Rogers, James J. Hill, James Stillman, William Rockefeller, Lord Strathcona, and Lord Mount Stephen. He graduated from Yale in 1864.

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